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# Workplace Pressures of PK-8 Teachers in a Midwestern Archdiocese

## Abstract

The intent of this research study was to determine the types of workplace pressures that PK-8 teachers, in a Midwestern Archdiocese, experience. Two hundred eighty teachers participated in the survey. Results from this study indicate that PK-8 teachers express elevated levels of stress in the following areas: income/salary, amount of hours spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks, paperwork required, student behavior/discipline, and implementation of new curricula.

Statistical differences were found in the following areas: female and male stress levels with regard to income; school locale (suburban, urban, and rural) income stress levels; school locale (suburban, urban, and rural) implementation of new curricula stress levels; school locale (suburban, urban, and rural) paperwork stress levels.

Reasons teachers report for wanting to leave their job include salary/benefits, dislike of administration, lack of administrative support, and excessive demands outside of contract hours. Reasons for wanting to stay include that their job offers an increase in pay/salary, relationships with coworkers, and the students that they teach.

Teachers and administrators must be aware of workplace pressures and make necessary adjustments. If schools know how to manage and identify workplace pressures a better school climate can be achieved.

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WORKPLACE PRESSURES FOR PK-8 TEACHERS IN A  
MIDWESTERN ARCHDIOCESE

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A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Carrie O'Donnell Brink

August 2011

Advisor: Kent Seidel, PhD

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ARCHDIOCESE  
Advisor: Kent Seidel, PhD  
Degree Date: August 2011

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## Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Statement of Problem.....	4
Purpose Statement.....	4
Research Question.....	5
Significance of the Study.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	5
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	7
Motivation Theory.....	7
Workplace Stress.....	9
Teacher Stress.....	11
Teacher Burnout.....	15
Private and Public School Characteristics.....	17
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	24
Research Questions.....	24
Study Design.....	24
Data Analysis.....	26
Instrument.....	29
Reliability and Validity.....	31
Population and Participants.....	33
Data Collection and Analysis.....	34
Limitations of the Study.....	35
Assumptions.....	36
Chapter Four: Findings.....	37
Research Questions.....	37
Question 1.....	39
Question 2.....	40
Question 3.....	45
Question 4.....	51
Qualitative Data.....	56
Summary.....	69
Chapter Five: Discussion of the Findings.....	71
Background.....	71
Income Pressures for Female Teachers and Rural School Teachers.....	72
Demands Experienced by the Teaching Profession.....	73
Relationships.....	74
Retention of Teachers.....	75
Faith.....	76
Recommendations for Further Research.....	77
Concluding Remarks.....	78

References.....	80
Appendix A.....	84

## List of Tables

Table 1 <i>Skewness between male and female participants</i> .....	27
Table 2 <i>Male and Female % of surveyed Archdiocese employees compared to Archdiocese data</i> .....	32
Table 3 <i>General Demographics of Survey Participants</i> .....	38
Table 4 <i>Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations (Question 1)</i> .....	39
Table 5 <i>Gender and Amount of Time Spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks (Sub-question 2a)</i> .....	41
Table 6 <i>Gender and Income/Salary (Sub-question 2b)</i> .....	42
Table 7 <i>Gender and Implementation of New Curricula (Sub-question 2c)</i> .....	43
Table 8 <i>Gender and Class Discipline (Sub-question 2d)</i> .....	43
Table 9 <i>Gender and Amount of Paperwork (Sub-question 2e)</i> .....	44
Table 10 <i>Single Classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Determining if school location impacts teacher stress levels with regard to the amount of time spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks (Sub-question 3a)</i> .....	46
Table 11 <i>Single Classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Determining if school location impacts teacher stress levels with regard to salary/income (Sub-question 3b)</i> .....	47
Table 12 <i>Single Classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Determining if school location impacts teacher stress levels with regard to implementation of new curricula (Sub-question 3c)</i> .....	48
Table 13 <i>Single Classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Determining if school location impacts teacher stress levels with regard to student discipline. (Sub-question 3d)</i> .....	49
Table 14 <i>Single Classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Determining if school location impacts teacher stress levels with regard to the amount of paperwork (Sub-question 3e)</i> .....	50
Table 15 <i>Teachers' Education level and time spent outside contract hours (Sub-question 4a)</i> .....	52
Table 16 <i>Teachers' Education level and Income/Salary (Sub-question 4b)</i> .....	53
Table 17 <i>Teachers' Education level and Implementation of New Curricula (Sub-question 4c)</i> .....	54

Table 18 <i>Teachers’ Education Level and Discipline (Sub-question 4d)</i> .....	55
Table 19 <i>Teachers’ Level of Education and Amount of Paperwork (Sub-question 4e)</i> .....	56
Table 20 <i>Identified Themes &amp; Number and Percent of Responses based on School Context—Female Responses- Reasons to Stay</i> .....	58
Table 21 <i>Identified Themes &amp; Number and Percent of Responses based on School Context—Female Responses – Reasons to Leave</i> .....	59
Table 22 <i>Identified Themes &amp; Number and Percent of Responses based on School Context—Male Responses- Reasons to Stay</i> .....	60
Table 23 <i>Identified Themes &amp; Number and Percent of Responses based on School Context—Male Responses – Reasons to Leave</i> .....	61
Table 24 <i>Identified Themes &amp; Number and Percent of Responses based on Grade Level Taught Female Responses- Reasons to Stay</i> .....	62
Table 25 <i>Identified Themes &amp; Number and Percent of Responses based on Grade Level Taught—Female Responses – Reasons to Leave</i> .....	63
Table 26 <i>Identified Themes &amp; Number and Percent of Responses based on Grade Level Taught Male Responses- Reasons to Stay</i> .....	64
Table 27 <i>Identified Themes &amp; Number and Percent of Responses based on Grade Level Taught—Male Responses – Reasons to Leave</i> .....	65
Table 28 <i>Identified Themes &amp; Number and Percent of Responses based on Number of Years as a Teacher at Current School—Female Reasons to Stay – Number of Years Taught at Current School</i> .....	66
Table 29 <i>Identified Themes &amp; Number and Percent of Responses based on Number of Years Taught at Current School—Female Responses – Reasons to Leave</i> .....	67
Table 30 <i>Identified Themes &amp; Number and Percent of Responses based on Number of Years as a Teacher at Current School—Male Reasons to Stay – Number of Years Taught at Current School</i> .....	68
Table 31 <i>Identified Themes &amp; Number and Percent of Responses based on Number of Years Taught at Current School—Male Responses – Reasons to Leave</i> .....	69

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Teachers are the backbone of the educational system. Low salaries, increased work demands, student and parent issues, and administrative issues are just some of the many pressures and stresses that teachers face (Mrozek, 2005). Recognizing the pressures that teachers face is imperative for the vitality of our school systems. Discovering the stresses, and work conditions, related to teaching will allow districts an opportunity to make necessary adjustments so that their teachers can perform their jobs in an optimal fashion, benefiting the students and overall community. If teachers' work conditions are unfavorable it is likely that the students will experience a lower quality education. School staffing problems attributed to high teacher turnover can lead to substandard instruction and low student achievement (Liu, S., & Meyer J., 2005). Research supports attending to workplace conditions as a means to retain teachers. Teacher retention is becoming an educational crisis (McLaurin, Smith, & Smillie, 2009). When teachers are given adequate time to prepare, are respected as professionals, and are properly supported, they are more likely to remain in the profession (Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2007). Without adequate research in this area, it is possible that school climates could be affected, thus causing a negative ripple effect. Additionally, if schools know how to manage and identify workplace pressures a better school climate can be achieved.

Motivation theory, workplace stress, teacher stress, teacher burnout, and private and public school characteristics can, and should be, investigated when discussing an ideal working climate, specifically in PK-8 private school settings. These areas must be discussed so that proper planning and analysis can take place to create a better working environment.

This research focused on PK-8 teachers in a Midwestern Archdiocese. The city studied contained a large Catholic population of approximately 220,000 people (Midwest Archdiocese, 2009). Approximately one-third of students in the Midwestern city are educated in the Catholic School system (Midwest Archdiocese, 2010). This research investigated the workplace conditions that PK-8 teachers in the Catholic school system face.

Schools want a stable teaching population and it is important to retain quality teachers. If teachers are dissatisfied with their school environment they are more likely to leave their situation. If private schools want to keep their current teachers it is important that they attend to their teachers' job satisfaction and investigating current workplace conditions is a way to do that. Without attention to this area, teachers may gravitate to another school or perhaps leave their current system. Private school teachers may choose to work in a public school setting, and public school teachers may decide to abandon the public sector in hopes that the private sector will bring them less pressures and higher job satisfaction. Schools compete to make their employees more satisfied.

Teacher turnover rates are higher in private school settings than in public schools; in 2000-2001, 21% of private school teachers had switched schools or left the teaching

force since the previous school year compared with 15% of public school teachers (Luekens, Lyter, and Fox 2004).

Information regarding overall teacher stress, pressure, and workload is abundant; however, additional research that investigates private school teachers' work-related pressures is needed. With approximately six million students attending private schools in the United States, it is essential that data are collected so that necessary adjustments to workplace stressors can be made to ensure effective teaching and learning environments (Council for American Private Education, 2010).

Additional research into work-related pressures, for teachers, is imperative in order to retain and recruit future teachers. Teachers' workloads and pressures are increasing with constantly changing policies and demands. Recognizing that work-related pressures do exist, and being aware of the implications that accompany teachers feeling too much stress or pressure is the first step towards creating the ideal school climate.

Identifying work-related pressures will provide administrators with information needed to make decisions relative to creating humane systems. By identifying what pressures teachers experience, it is possible that school districts can promote and help to create ideal working situations.

Research indicates that "teachers with positive perceptions about their working conditions are much more likely to stay at their current school than educators who are more negative about their conditions of work, particularly in the areas of leadership and empowerment" (Hirsch & Emerick, 2007, p. 14). Teachers' perceptions can inform

policymakers of problem areas in which intervention measures might bring about real improvement in their professional commitment (Liu, S., & Meyer J., 2005).

### **Statement of Problem**

There is a need for further research regarding teacher workload pressures and work conditions. If left unaddressed teacher pressures will escalate, the teacher burnout rate will increase, and the educational system will deteriorate. School systems want to hire and retain the best educators to ensure a top-notch education for students. In order for schools to recruit and retain teachers, it is important that workplace pressures and conditions be recognized and addressed so that school districts can make decisions that best fit the needs of the teachers and students.

Recently there has been a lot of research about school workplace conditions, with much analysis of the relationship between conditions, staying/leaving, teacher distribution, pay and other rewards, leadership, professional development, professional learning communities, teacher and group efficacy and student achievement. This research study will build on the findings of those other studies using a previously ignored group of teachers.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this research project was to determine what workplace conditions were reported as stressful by PK-8 Catholic teachers in a Midwest Archdiocese.

This study focused on self-reported teacher work pressures adapted from a Wellington/Mana branch of the New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI) survey titled, "The Workloads of Primary School Teachers" ("Teacher survey," n.d.).

## **Research Question**

The purpose of the research study was to gather information regarding the workplace pressures and conditions teachers report as stressful in a Midwestern Archdiocese. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What workplace conditions do PK-8 teachers report as stressful in a Midwestern Archdiocese?
2. Is there a difference in the responses based on gender, school location, and level of education?

## **Significance of the Study**

The literature regarding private school teachers, with regard to workplace pressures, is limited. According to Boyer-Colon, “To date research has been limited in scope, focusing primarily on public school teachers” (2009). This study added to the scarce research and more specifically to knowledge of teacher workplace pressures. The results may be used to enhance educational decisions to create an ideal school climate.

## **Definition of Terms**

*Public Schools:* Schools that are funded with tax revenue and administered by a government or governmental agency.

*Private Schools:* Schools under the financial and managerial control of a private body or charitable trust, accepting mostly fee-paying pupils.

*Public School Teachers* are defined as certified teachers that are employed by a public school district.

*Private School Teachers* are defined as certified teachers that are employed by a private school.

*PK-8 Teachers* are teachers that teach students in pre-kindergarten through grade 8.

*Midwestern Archdiocese* is defined as an area where schools are considered to be within a specific Midwestern Archdiocese's boundaries.

*Stress*: The Canadian Centre of Occupational Health and Safety defines stress as, "The harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is conflict between job demands on the employee and the amount of control an employee has over meeting these demands" (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2010 n.p.).

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This literature review covers the following areas in relation to teacher workplace pressures: 1) motivation theory, 2) workplace stress, 3) teacher stress, 4) teacher burnout, and 5) private and public school characteristics. It is important to investigate these component parts as they relate to workplace conditions of PK-8 private school teachers, with specific focus on gender, school location, and teachers' levels of education.

### **Motivation Theory**

For the purpose of this study one aspect within motivation theory will be discussed. Delving into the aspect of stress is helpful to people in any profession. Stress is a part of everyone's life, yet stress affects people in different ways. Information on workplace stress and teacher stress are presented to add to the theoretical framework of this study.

Some teachers stay in education their entire career, whereas some teachers leave shortly into their career. To better understand employee attitudes and motivation, Frederick Herzberg performed studies to determine which factors in an employee's work environment caused satisfaction and dissatisfaction. He called the *dissatisfiers* hygiene factors and the *satisfiers* motivators. The term hygiene refers to the factors that are necessary to avoid dissatisfaction but that by themselves do not provide satisfaction (Herzberg et. al., 1957).

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory includes motivation factors and hygiene factors. Motivation factors such as growth, work itself, responsibility, achievement, advancement, and recognition deal with job content and lead to job satisfaction (Chapman, 2003). Workers who are "not satisfied" do not tend to restrict productivity, rather they just don't get involved in their job or put forth the extra effort to do a good or better job. Workers who are "satisfied" put forth extra effort and productivity increases.

Factors that involve job context, hygiene factors, tend to lead toward job dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors include company policies/administration, supervision, interpersonal relations, status, working conditions, security, and salary. When these factors are considered good, or acceptable, workers do not tend to become "satisfied," they simply become "not dissatisfied." When workers become dissatisfied with any of these factors they tend to restrict output (Chapman, 2003).

Understanding why teachers are dissatisfied with their jobs is important for school district leaders and administrators. If school personnel are able to identify areas that cause employees to become dissatisfied it is likely that they can make the necessary adjustments to create a better school climate. In a close link to Herzberg's findings it has been found that teachers who left their school or the profession were more likely to report relatively low levels of administrative support, salary, student discipline, and teacher input in classroom and school decisions than those who remained in the same school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). The identification of these categories indicates a link between them and working conditions for teachers.

Motivation theory can be applied to all work settings, not just educational settings. The complexities of an organization are certainly numerous and the ability to identify pressures within a particular work organization allows for learning and growth to take place. Reflecting on and identifying workplace conditions can contribute to a better working environment, which can retain teachers and increase student achievement. Twenty-one percent of private school teachers and fifteen percent of public school teachers left the profession during the 2000-2001 school year (National Center for Education Statistic, 2005). This turnover can cause decreased student achievement and can increase the amount of money that districts must spend to fill vacated positions.

### **Workplace Stress**

Stress is a fact of life in contemporary Western society (Hylton, 1989). The Canadian Centre of Occupational Health and Safety defines stress as, “The harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is conflict between job demands on the employee and the amount of control an employee has over meeting these demands” (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2010, n.p.). Research has shown that while occasional bouts of stress are not likely to have lasting adverse effects, regular or constant doses of it tend to lead to negative health implications (Williams, 2003).

Individuals may experience stress in their work environments from more than one source. The most commonly cited source of stress in the workplace is lack of time or excessive workload demands (Williams, 2003). Full-time employees (30 or more hours a week) were significantly more likely than their part-time counterparts to cite workplace

stress such as working too many hours, fear of injury, fear of layoff, poor interpersonal relationships, or having to learn new computer skills (Williams, 2003). A study by Hardie-Boys indicated connections between workload and work stress. Half of the respondents who expressed work stress often or almost always were significantly more likely than other staff to report an increase in workload in recent year (Hardie-Boys, 1996).

The most common source of workplace stress is too many demands or excessively long hours on the job (Canadian Centre for Occupation Health and Safety, 2010). Self-employed and full-time workers are most likely to feel the time crunch of too many demands or hours, while shift workers and employees in the health occupations tend to worry more about the risk of accident or injury. Women 45 and older feel stressed about hours and demands, while men of all ages worry much more than their younger counterparts about computer technology in the workplace (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2010).

Poor interpersonal relationships at work can be also major source of stress. This is especially true in today's workplace where employees are often expected to work in groups or as part of a team. Research has shown that individuals function best in a work setting that places reasonable demands on them (Williams, 2003).

Workplace stress can lead to poor performance within organizations, negative employee attitudes, and other counter-productive and cost prohibitive factors. All occupations are accompanied by a certain level of stress. Teachers, for example, experience workplace stress. According to multiple studies, the outcomes of teachers'

work-related stress are serious and may cause one to leave the profession (Klassen, 2010 & Betoret, 2006). As discussed in the next section, teachers experience many types of stress such as: low salaries, teacher work demands while at home, curriculum, student behavior, and others.

### **Teacher Stress**

According to Klassen (2010), “Teaching is a stressful occupation and high levels of occupational stress have a strong effect on teachers’ performance, career decisions, physical and mental health, and overall job satisfaction” (p. 342). One reoccurring factor that can lead to attrition throughout all disciplines and grade levels is ones capability to manage stress (McLaurin et al., 2009). Schools are facing a crisis in regard to retaining experienced teachers, and stress is a major reason why teachers leave the profession (Blase, 1986). Annual teacher turnover is higher when compared with turnover of all other occupations. Teacher turnover was 15.7% compared with 11.0% for other occupations (Mrozek, 2005).

Issues of teacher shortages have pervaded policy discussions for decades (Hanusek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). Although the exact nature of the concerns-lack of trained teachers in specific subjects such as math or science, recruiting difficulties in urban center, or elements of quality such as availability of fully certified teachers – has varied over time and across location, the perceived need to act has not varied (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). Several causes of teacher attrition have been identified: lack of teacher preparation, absences of stress management skills, non-supportive environment and administrators (McLaurin et al., 2009).

In recent years, teacher stress has received increased attention as a topic of empirical research (Blase, 1986). Teacher stress is not a temporary problem that will disappear quickly. Rather, it is a profound problem that must be attended to if the quality and productivity of American education are to be substantially improved (Blase, 1986). The causes of teacher stress are complex, and the solutions are neither simple nor cosmetic (Raschke & And Others, 1985).

According to a research study by Mrozek (2005) some common stressors that teachers experience include: low salaries, teachers work demands while at home, curriculum, student behavior, and many others. Constant change, pace of change, increase in administrative demands, and developing new assessment and appraisal systems were identified as pressure factors in the research study by Livingstone (1994). Most phenomena experienced as stressful by teachers are those that deprive them of time, interfere with instruction, and are considered too demanding, quantitatively and qualitatively (Blase, 1986). Vandenberghe and Huberman (1999) report that for secondary school teachers, the pupils and their parents are the most important source of stress. Many teachers have problems with children's negative attitudes, their lack of motivation, and their disruptive behavior in class (Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999). Blase sampled 392 teachers of all levels and found that student behavior was a major source of teacher stress. Additionally, sources of stress were perceived as directly interfering with instructional time (Blase, 1986).

Stressors also indirectly affected instructional time by requiring extra work on the part of the teachers (Blase, 1986). Several stressors associated with indirect interference

were related to administrative behavior. Unclear expectations, inconsistency, indecisiveness, lack of opportunities for input, lack of follow-through, and failure to provide essential resources are examples of stress-provoking administrative behaviors. These examples would likely cause more work for the teacher. Other sources of stress requiring extra work included excessive paperwork, lack of preparation time, lack of materials, extra duties (e.g., committee work, noon-hour supervision), student absences, travel (from school to school), teacher incompetence and irresponsibility, and parental interference and nonsupport (Blase, 1986).

The psychological and emotional problems of children from broken families can be a burden for teachers. Many teachers (about 20%) admitted that they had disciplinary problems and felt handicapped by students because they knew that, in many cases, their director and/or the parents would not support them (Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999).

Teachers cope with stress differently. Some don't give as much homework or give busy work so they can work at their desk (Blasé, 1986). Additionally, Blase found that, as a result of dealing with chronic work stress in relatively ineffective ways, teachers tended to develop a common behavioral and attitudinal perspective on work. **\*\*how so\*\*** This perspective, which appears to evolve over time, represents a major negative departure from the qualities, attitudes, and behaviors perceived as essential to effective classroom instruction. Blasé (1986) reports,

The constant pressure of school demands interferes with the development and expression of teachers' creative abilities. Time and other supportive resources related to creativity are usually not available at school. Reading materials, access to other professionals, preparation periods, and opportunities for experimentation, which teachers believe are important to creative classroom instruction, are rarely

available in schools on a systematic basis. Consequently, innovative materials, techniques, and processes are seldom introduced. Instead, teachers use old materials and techniques time and again, quite often to the point where teachers themselves can no longer maintain the level of interest and enthusiasm necessary to motivate students” (p. 21).

Not only do teachers’ stress levels impact their interactions with students, they also impact relationships with the fellow teachers, administrators, and parents. Work stress was linked to strong negative feelings in teachers. When teachers feel negative towards one another it can be difficult to work together for the betterment of the students and overall school community. The study data also suggests that teachers experience anger toward others as a result of dealing with work stress (Blase, 1986). This anger can be released in different ways and is counterproductive to the working environment. Teachers can be less patient with one another, become negative toward their work environment, and help to foster an environment that is unhealthy and/or unproductive.

While under stress, teachers behave differently with students; they become less tolerant, less patient, less caring, and, overall, less involved (Blasé, 1986). If this cycle continues, it is likely that the educational system will become broken, causing future teachers to look elsewhere for professional careers. Finding successful methods of reducing stress could increase teacher retention, which is critical to maintaining a full staff of qualified teaching professionals (Blase, 1986).

The link between teacher stress and burnout leads researchers to examine the causes of teacher stress (Evans, Ramsey, Johnson, Evans, 1985). While some stress is essential to life, prolonged and excessive stress, left unchecked, eventually leads to burnout (Hamann, 1990).

## **Teacher Burnout**

Research has shown that along with service men, social workers and linguists, teachers have been identified as the most afflicted with rising stress (Mrozek, 2005). The teaching occupation suffers from chronic and relatively high annual turnover (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Compared to other professions, employee attrition rate is disproportionately high in education (Liu & Meyer, 2005). At the end of the 2003–2004 school year, 17% of the elementary and secondary teacher workforce (or 621,000 teachers) left the public and private schools where they had been teaching (National Center for Education Statistics & Fast facts, 2009). Burnout is a complex phenomenon requiring the close attention of all educators (Livingstone, 1994). According to Haberman, (2004), behavioral burnout can be defined as

...a condition in which teachers remain as paid employees but stop functioning as professionals. They go through the motions of teaching with no emotional commitment to the task and no sense of efficacy. They have come to believe that what they can do will make no significant difference in the lives of their students and see no reason to continue daring or expending any serious effort. They have become detached job-holders who feel neither responsible nor accountable for students' behavior, learning, or anything else." (p. 1)

Chicago Public Schools spend an extra \$83 million per year for teacher turnover (Barnes & Crowe, 2007). Some of this turnover is due to teacher burnout. According to a study from the National Education Association half of new U.S. teachers are likely to quit within the first five years because of poor working conditions and low salaries (Lambert, 2010). Thousands of classroom educators are leaving the teaching profession; some leave primarily for economic reasons, but many others have found teaching to be

unrewarding in light of public criticism, conflicting societal expectations, and unsupportive parents and administrators (Raschke, 1985).

Many teachers entered the profession during the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, an era of promise and abundance for public education. Educators were allowed to decide what was best for their students. The public was supportive of educational programs and optimistic about their impact. Times have changed.

From the mid-1970s to the present, resources for education have been reduced substantially due to changing economic conditions and the public's growing dissatisfaction with the quality of its schools. Now legislators are determining much of what is being taught in schools. Mrozek (2005) identified High-Stakes Testing as one of the common stressors that teachers experience. As changing conditions have made teaching more stressful, some teachers have left the profession. Of those remaining, some are having difficulty coping with stresses and are experiencing symptoms of teacher burnout (Iwanicki, 1983). Despite the growing consensus regarding the cause of burnout, the distinction between burnout and stress has not been clearly delineated (Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999).

Researchers have found that individuals most frequently affected by burnout are those who are the most productive, dedicated, and committed in their fields (Hamann, 1990). Teachers with strong feelings of vocation are more at risk of stress. Work environments that were rated low on their ability to support innovative teaching were consistently associated with significant increases in burnout levels (Goddard, O'Brien, & Goddard, 2006).

## **Private and Public School Characteristics**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, and secondary school teachers held about 3.5 million jobs in 2008 (United States Department of Labor, 2010). Teachers make up about 10 percent of all college educated workers (United States Department of Labor, 2010).

Reyes and Pounder (1993) found that differences in commitment and job satisfaction levels exist between public and private teachers. Private schools yielded significantly higher teacher commitment and job satisfaction than did public schools (Reyes & Pounder, 1993).

The influence of school climate on teacher morale seems to depend primarily on whether a school is public or private. Public and private schools do not institute the same culture in school administration, and they affect teacher morale and career commitment differently (Liu, S., & Meyer J., 2005). Byrk, Lee, and Smith (1990) argue that the unified mission and sense of community in Catholic schools contribute to the high quality of education and that the lack of organizational unity in public schools is linked to less effective education. Private and public school districts both share a common goal of educating students, however the way that these systems function are different.

**Governance.** In the United States, local school boards control decisions for the school district. The school board members are either elected or appointed officials. Public school buildings belong to the people of each district, and the people as voters have the final say as to their use (Blanshard, 1947). For example, the public can choose whether or not to vote for a bond issue, which directly impacts the school system.

Teachers and administrators, in public schools, are likely to feel stress since a majority of decisions are made for them. School district employees may feel a lack of control. These district employees are the people on the front lines, yet they are not the people making many of the decisions that directly impact the day-to-day school activities.

Private schools, specifically Catholic schools, are owned by a priest, bishop, corporation, or board controlled by a priest or bishop. People of the parish do not own their churches or schools; they do not determine whether a school shall be built, and they have nothing to say about its continuation or its policies. All control of education is in the hands of the parish priest and his bishop, subject only to the veto of the Pope (Blanshard, 1947). This hierarchal organization means that a small number of people make most of the decisions for a large number of people.

**Unions.** Although unions have long been a fact of life in American public education, Catholic school teachers have been slow to organize (Archer, 1996). Until the 1960's, most Catholic schools were staffed by nuns. Catholic school unions cannot appeal unfair labor practices to the National Labor Relations Board. In 1979, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that the NLRB, which handles disputes between private employers and their workers, had no jurisdiction over parochial schools. Supporters of the decision say it appropriately protected a religious institution from government meddling (Archer, 1996). It is uncommon for private school teachers to belong to a union. Lack of union representation, for private school teachers, can cause a lot of stress on a teacher. The hierarchal structure of private religious schools can make it difficult for teachers to feel heard.

As established by Congress and confirmed by the Supreme Court, no teacher is required to be a member of any union (Center for Union Facts). The two main public school teacher unions are the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA). Public school teachers pay dues to belong to unions, and, in turn, have support for legal questions, bargaining power, and other benefits.

**Students.** Over 75.5 million students (nursery school through college) are enrolled in school. Public schools have, on average, over twice the number of enrolled students, 804 students per school versus 385 in private schools (Forster & D'Andrea, 2009). Over 6 million students in grades PK-12 are enrolled in private schools, accounting for 11% of all U.S. students (Council for American Private Education, 2010). More specifically, it is estimated that parents of Catholic school students save taxpayers more than \$150,000,000.00 a year (Midwestern Archdiocese, 2010). There are 33,740 private schools in the United States. Private schools account for over 25% of the nation's schools (Council for American Private Education, 2010).

Private schools overall have fewer students and less diverse student bodies than public schools, and Catholic schools tend to be larger and have greater diversity in enrollment than other types of private schools. The average private school had 193 students in 1999-2000, while the average public school had 535 students (U.S. Department of Education & National Center for Education Statistics, 2003).

**Salary.** Total spending on teacher salaries in U.S. public schools is more than \$160 billion a year (United States Department of Labor, 2010). Data suggests that private school teachers earn only 87 percent on average of what public school teachers earn

(Podgursky, 2006). The average salary for public school teachers in 2006–2007 was \$50,816, about 3 percent higher than in 1996–1997, after adjustment for inflation. The salaries of public school teachers have generally maintained pace with inflation since 1990–1991 (National Center for Education Statistics & Fast facts, 2009). Private school teachers may experience more stress since they are likely to make less money than their public school counterparts.

Public school districts are most likely to use a salary schedule to determine base salaries for teachers, compared to private and public charter schools which may not use a salary schedule. An estimated 96.3% of public school districts used a salary schedule. This contrasts with 65.9% of private schools and 62.2% of public charter schools (National Center for Education Statistics & Fast facts, 2009). Salaries in nonsectarian private schools start at 78% of those in public schools; climb as high as 92% of public school salaries in a teacher's 12<sup>th</sup> year; and decline thereafter (Podgursky, 2003).

Teachers in Catholic schools were more likely than other private school teachers to report strong dissatisfaction regarding their salary. They were also more likely to report relatively low levels of input at the school level (NCES, 2005).

**Benefits.** Almost all public school teachers are included in benefit plans in which teachers receive pension payments according to a defined schedule on retirement. Private schools may choose whether or not to offer similar investment opportunities. Health insurance coverage is a benefit for private and public school teachers. Benefits are lower in private schools. The median nonsectarian private school reports fringe costs at 18

percent of payroll, while the comparable figure for public schools is 21.5% (Podgursky, 2003).

**Class size.** Class size is also different between private and public schools. As reported by teachers in 1999-2000, average class size for self-contained classes tended to be somewhat larger in traditional public and public charter elementary schools than in private elementary schools (National Center for Education Statistics & Fast facts, 2009). A common stressor for teachers, according to Mrozek, 2005 is having a high number of students.

**Workload.** Forster and D'Andrea (2009) found that measurements of teacher workload (class sizes, hours worked, and hours teaching) are similar in public and private schools (Forster & D'Andrea, 2009). Teachers' workloads contribute to their stress level and job satisfaction. Mrozek (2005) found that teachers' workloads and daily take home tasks were a common stress among teachers.

**Student behavior.** Nearly one in five public school teachers have been physically threatened by a student, compared to only one in twenty private school teachers. Nearly one in ten public school teachers has been physically attacked by a student, three times the rate in private schools (Forster & D'Andrea, 2009). Student behavior can be major cause of teacher stress and can lead to teacher attrition. Mrozek (2005) found that physical and mental abuse, by students, were a source of stress that teachers experience.

**Staff development.** Staff development participation shows, across all sectors, that among full-time traditional public school teachers, 59.3 percent participated in professional development activities and 43.1 percent of full-time private school teachers

(National Center for Education Statistics & Fast facts, 2009). Directly related to professional development is the integration and development of technology.

Full-time traditional public school teachers were more likely than full-time teachers in other sectors to participate in professional development activities on the uses of computers for instruction. An estimated 70.7 percent of full-time teachers in traditional public schools participated in such professional development activities. This contrasts with 52.1 percent of full-time teachers in private schools (National Center for Education Statistics & Fast facts, 2009).

The ability to improve education in the American public schools will depend in large measure on the ability of those schools to recruit and retain talented teachers. If teaching is widely viewed as an undesirable occupation, the talented personnel needed to implement and sustain the recent educational programs are likely to seek other outlets for their professional aspirations (Sedlak & Schlossman, 1986). A high-quality education is critical to the future well-being of children and society (Loeb, Rouse, & Shorris, 2007).

**School location.** School location can be a source of stress for teachers. Each school, no matter where it is located, comes with its own unique factors.

According to Guarino et al. (2006),

The research revealed fairly consistent evidence that schools with higher proportions of minority, low-income, and low-performing students tended to have higher attrition rates. Urban school districts tended to have higher attrition rates than suburban and rural districts, although one study found that novice teachers in small towns had higher attrition rates than urban teachers. (191).

**Gender.** Three studies found that women have higher attrition rates than men. Male teachers were less likely to quit teaching than female teachers, and males remained in their teaching positions longer than females (Guarino, 2006).

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

The purpose of this research study was to determine what workplace conditions PK-8 private school teachers in a Midwestern Archdiocese reported as stressful. The study analyzed data obtained from individual, self-administered teacher surveys.

#### **Research Questions**

This study looked at the differences in teacher work-related pressures among PK-8 private school teachers in a Midwestern Archdiocese. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What workplace conditions do PK-8 teachers report as stressful in a Midwestern Archdiocese?
2. Is there a difference in the responses based on gender, school locations, and level of education?

#### **Study Design**

A survey method was used because there was an identifiable audience whose attitudes could be measured. Participants were asked to complete a survey since the research study was looking for first-hand information from practicing PK-8 Midwestern Archdiocese teachers. There is no existing data set that answered the research questions posed to this population. Non-randomized, convenience cluster sampling was used for the research study. Surveying teachers in one Midwest Archdiocese can be helpful when

comparing to other similar sized cities. Additionally, teachers were surveyed, first-hand, so that research findings could be provided to appropriate school personnel in hopes to retain teachers and make any necessary adjustments within the system. This descriptive research gathered self-reported data about teacher stress and demographic information. Survey questions were derived from Ian Livingstone's survey, "The Workloads of Primary School Teachers: A Wellington Region Survey" (Livingstone, 1994).

Comparative analysis of responses from male and female participants was conducted using independent t-tests to examine the significance of any differences. The alpha level was set at .10 to control for Type 1 errors. While a p value of .05 is more common, a p value of .10 is common in exploratory social science research, and was selected to cast a wider "net for findings of interest." Means and standard deviations are displayed in tables.

Specific analysis questions are:

**Question 1:** How did PK-8 Catholic private school teachers, in a Midwestern Archdiocese, rate 28 workload factors in terms of workload pressure or stress?

**Question 2:** Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of male and female participants with regard to their self-reported levels of stress on the five areas identified as stressful?

**Question 3:** Is there a statistically significant difference among the responses of teachers who work in urban, suburban, or rural school settings with regard to their self-reported levels of stress on the 5 five areas identified as stressful? Five areas were

selected based on the statistical evidence found by the survey responses. The five areas selected were ranked higher with regard to stress than the other 23 areas.

**Question 4:** Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of teachers with Bachelor's degrees compared to teachers with advanced degrees with regard to their self-reported levels of stress on the five areas identified as stressful?

### **Data Analysis**

Comparative analysis of responses from rural, urban, and suburban school settings were analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine the main effect between stress levels and school location. An *F* ratio was calculated. If a statistically significant main effect was observed *post hoc* contrast analysis were conducted utilizing independent *t* tests. Because multiple statistical tests were conducted, a .10 alpha level was employed to help control for Type I errors. Means and standard deviations are displayed in tables.

Paired sample *t*-tests and a one-way ANOVA were used to compare individual responses related to the aforementioned areas of stress when the "N" size was 50 or greater. Comparative analysis of responses from education level was conducted using independent *t*-tests to examine the significance of any differences. The alpha level was set at .10 to help control for Type 1 errors. Means and standard deviations are displayed in tables.

Raw mean scores were analyzed using an independent *t*-test. The alpha was set at .10 since the research is new, exploratory and in the social sciences realm. There were

some non-normal curves on some responses and Table 1 shows the skewness between male and female participants.

At the end of the survey participants had an opportunity to answer two open-ended questions: What is one thing that would make you leave your job? What is one thing that would make you stay at your job? Respondents' answers to these questions were categorized into themes and results displayed in Chapter 4.

Table 1

*Skewness between male and female participants*

	Female					Male			
	N	Mean	Skewness	Std. Std.	N	Mean	Skewness	Std. Std.	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Error	
1. Job Security	260	3.35	.40	.15	.30	19	2.89	.20	.52
2. Promotion & Career Opportunities	259	2.72	.36	.15	.30	19	2.63	.42	.52
3. Amt. Hours Spent Outside Contract Time	259	4.33	-.34	.15	.30	19	3.95	-.18	.52
4. Income	260	4.37	-.22	.15	.30	19	3.42	.49	.52
5. Class Size	258	3.62	.16	.15	.30	19	3.11	-.17	.52
6. Implementation of New Curriculum	259	3.77	-.07	.15	.30	19	3.68	.01	.52
7. Student Discipline	260	3.79	.40	.15	.30	19	3.47	-.75	.52
8. Working with Diverse Learners	259	3.68	-.01	.15	.30	19	3.26	-1.25	.52
9. School Policies	260	3.57	.16	.15	.30	19	3.47	-.31	.52
10. Change Implementation	258	3.78	.28	.15	.30	19	3.42	.06	.52
11. Amount of Paperwork	258	3.92	.20	.15	.30	19	3.74	-.42	.52
12. Building Facilities	258	3.26	.57	.15	.30	19	2.89	.91	.52
13. Accountability for Student Results	259	3.57	.09	.15	.30	19	3.16	.57	.52

	Female					Male			
	N	Mean	Skewness	Std.		N	Mean	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Error	Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Error
14. Parental Involvement	259	3.32	.57	.15	.30	19	3.42	.06	.52
15. Taking Sick Leave	260	3.28	.51	.15	.30	19	2.42	.01	.52
16. Personnel Matters	258	3.41	.31	.15	.30	19	3.11	-.23	.52
17. Evaluation	259	3.55	.49	.15	.30	19	3.37	.07	.52
18. Grievance Procedures	257	2.87	.48	.15	.30	19	2.37	-.18	.52
19. General School Admin	259	3.49	.39	.15	.30	19	2.95	.88	.52
20. Level of Financial Resources Avail.	259	3.80	.19	.15	.30	19	3.21	.41	.52
21. Amount of Professional Support	258	3.27	.52	.15	.30	19	3.05	.70	.52
22. Competition with Other Schools	259	2.95	.42	.15	.30	19	2.74	2.12	.52
23. Educational Standards	260	3.43	.07	.15	.30	19	3.26	.55	.52
24. Relations with Colleagues	260	3.09	.59	.15	.30	19	3.00	.00	.52
25. Relations with Administration	259	3.28	.70	.15	.30	19	2.79	.17	.52
26. Changing Demographics	258	3.36	.19	.15	.30	19	2.89	-.05	.52
27. English Language Learners	259	2.19	.65	.15	.30	19	2.00	.00	.52
28. Expressing Opinions to Supervisors	258	3.44	.65	.15	.30	19	2.84	.21	.52

The analysis of the means for all responses had a skewness of  $-.5$ . Absolute values above  $.2$  indicate great skewness (Hildebrand, 1986) and should be noted in the research findings. Items 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 16, 19, 21, 22, and 28 indicated a great skewness in both the female and male responses. A t-test was not reasonable to do because 19 male respondents participated in the survey. The skewness indicates that it violates assumptions of normal curves.

## **Instrument**

The survey used in this study was based on a previous research study titled, “The Workloads of Primary School Teachers: A Wellington Region Survey.” This study was conducted by Ian Livingstone, and was published in 1994. Correspondence with Mr. Livingstone was conducted and permission to use to the survey instrument was granted (I. Livingstone, personal communication, April 22, 2010). Participants in Livingstone’s study were asked to answer questions in 5 survey sections. Section D, work pressures, was used to guide this research study. In Livingstone’s study there were 40 questions to improve validity for his research, a representative advisory committee (guidance group) was set up to guide the research, and the sample survey was trialed in February 1994. Livingstone’s proposal was submitted and a contract accepted. An important constraint was that all questionnaires be coded, the data analyzed and the final report written and presented to the advisory group before May 20, 1994.

Livingstone’s research study focused on teacher self-reported work pressures and conditions. The survey, in Section D, asked teachers to rate various workload factors using a key, in terms of whether or not they are a source of pressure. Teachers chose from the following responses: *NOT APPLICABLE* (You have no significant involvement with this aspect of school life); *NEVER STRESSFUL* (The feeling does not exist for you); *RARELY STRESSFUL* (The feeling exists about 25% of the time); *SOMETIMES STRESSFUL* (The feeling exists about 50% of the time), *OFTEN STRESSFUL* (The feeling exists about 75% of the time); *ALWAYS STRESSFUL* (The feeling exists about

100% of the time). Teachers were asked to answer 40 questions using the above responses (Livingstone, 1994).

Livingstone surveyed primary elementary teachers' workloads. While his study provided many details, it did not take into account teachers in the intermediate and upper elementary grades. Livingstone's study was also conducted in New Zealand, therefore a detailed study in the United States can offer new insights. Finally, Livingstone focused on public school teachers while this researcher chose to examine similar workload and stress factors for private school settings. The research study presented here asked 28 Likert scale questions, as well as 2 open-ended questions. Items were deleted from Livingstone's study if they were not judged by the researcher to be applicable to the private school setting. Additionally, survey questions, presented in this dissertation, were slightly modified and updated based on the researcher's experience in private school education for over 12 years.

Twenty-eight survey items were grouped into eight categories. The categories and number of questions per category are as follows: career stresses/pressures (4); instruction and/or curriculum (3); building facility (1); accountability (2); health/personal safety (2); administration (8); interpersonal (3); diversity (3), and external factors (2). The 28 questions were not presented as grouped into categories on the survey, so that participants would not identify patterns, which may have influenced their responses.

It should be noted that one survey question, "*Do you live in the school community in which you teach,*" was asked per a request from the surveyed Archdiocese. This

information, the location in which the teacher lives, was not analyzed in this research study.

### **Reliability and Validity**

In Livingstone's study, two sets of statistical analyses were run, the first giving frequency tabulations, cross-tabulations and analyses of differences between means on the sample of 160 teachers, with biases towards small schools. A separate, more limited, set of weighted analyses was also calculated counteracting the sample bias statistically; to examine results for what then became, for all intents and purposes, an unbiased, random sample of 160 "notional" teachers. This made little difference to the results (Livingstone, personal communication, April 22, 2010).

In adapting the Livingstone survey for use with a new set of participants (private school teachers in the U.S.), this researcher conducted no additional procedures with regard to content validity of the questions except to apply judgment from many years of experience in private school settings when vetting the Livingstone questions to create the final survey used.

Because this is an exploratory study of a group that has not been researched before, it is hoped that the response rate of 28% reflective of the Archdiocese provides assurance that the findings are valid and reliable, for the Archdiocese surveyed.

The instrument used in the research study consisted of 28 survey questions in relation to teacher stress, along with two open-ended questions regarding a reason to stay/leave their current job. The Midwest Archdiocese that was surveyed contained a teaching population of 88% females and 12% males, and survey results indicated a

response rate of 93.2% females and 6.8% males (Midwestern Archdiocese, 2010). Given this information, the response rate is skewed due to the larger percentage of female respondents and the smaller percentage of male respondents.

Using a chi square analysis the ratio of the survey groups' participants (males and females) was statistically different that the Archdiocese's make up of males and females. The following table displays the frequency and percent of male and female teachers included in the study and in the Archdiocese. The chi-square ( $X^2$ ) test for independence comparing the number of male and female teachers surveyed compared to the number of male and female teachers in the surveyed Archdiocese. The results of  $X^2$  displayed in the table directly below were statistically significant ( $X^2 (1, N = 994) = 6.16, p = .01$ ). The null hypothesis of no difference for male and female responses compared to the number of male and female teachers in the Archdiocese was rejected.

Table 2

*Male and Female % of surveyed Archdiocese employees compared to Archdiocese data*

Gender	Study N (%)	Archdiocese N (%)	$X^2$
Male	19 (7%)	119 (12%)	
Female	262 (93%)	875 (88%)	
Total	281 (100%)	994 (100%)	6.16

$X^2 = 6.16, p = .01$

## **Population and Participants**

Surveying teachers in one Midwest Archdiocese can be helpful when comparing to other similar-sized dioceses. Teachers were surveyed to obtain feedback so that research findings might inform school leaders in their efforts to retain teachers and make any necessary adjustments within the system to reduce stress. This descriptive research gathered self-reported data about teacher stress and demographic information. Convenience sampling was used for the researched population.

The Midwestern Archdiocese has 58 Catholic elementary schools and 18 secondary schools. Over 21,500 students were enrolled in these schools and 1,400 teachers were employed in these schools (Midwestern Archdiocese, 2010). Nine hundred ninety-four full time and part time PK-8 teachers were employed by this Midwestern Archdiocese at the time of the research study. Of the 994 full and part time teachers, 12.6% are male and 87.3% are female. (B. Sch, personal communication, October 15, 2010).

Participants in this research study were composed of PK-8 full-time and part-time teachers in a Midwest Archdiocese. Teachers were asked via email, by their building principals, to participate in an online survey regarding workplace pressures. The response rate was still reflective of the general population except that male respondents accounted for 6.8% (19 responses), however 12.6% males are employed by the Archdiocese. Female respondents accounted for 93.2% (262 responses). When trying to research possible reasons why the low response rate for males, the researcher contacted the Human Resources Department of the surveyed Archdiocese to obtain information as

to how many females and males teach at the various grade levels. The researcher was told that this information was not collected.

Building principals received an email invitation from the human resources administrator in the Midwestern Archdiocese in August 2010 to participate in the research study. The emailed invitation to participate in the study contained all of the necessary information needed for the teachers to complete the survey and included the consent information. Principals were asked to forward the researcher's email to their PK-8 teaching staff. Principals received two additional email reminders, from the human resources administrator, to forward to their teaching staff. The first reminder was sent in September 2010 and the second reminder was sent in October 2010. Survey collection ended on October 30, 2010. Participation in this study was voluntary, and participants were not compensated for participating in the survey.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The surveys were confidential, and administered via an online survey company, *Survey Monkey*. Participants' information was stored using this website, and the information obtained from the survey was downloaded and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. All survey responses were anonymous, so, participants were at no risk for invasion of privacy. Demographic data was collected and disaggregated as presented in chapter 4 using SPSS software. Respondents' age, years completed as a teacher, school location, grade level taught, school enrollment, and level of teacher education are presented in Chapter 4 using percentages and the number of respondents.

Qualitative data was analyzed by the identification of themes based on word repetition. Commonly used words and phrases were identified and the responses were tallied and the top themes identified. Results from this data are presented in Chapter 4 based on the number of times that the response was given.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The research participants were from a comparatively small percentage of the teaching population. Information gathered through the survey process is self-reported making conclusions subject to potential error. Out of a total of 994 teachers surveyed 973 were white (98%) which is not representative of the demographics of the community where the diocese is located. The sampled population is a heterogeneous group of teachers who teach PK-8 in the same diocese. Although the sample size was 280 teachers, the findings may not generalize to all PK-8 teachers. Generalizations made from the results are limited to populations similar to the sample.

The results of the study are not representative of all elementary teachers in the United States as the study is conducted within the confines of one diocese. An overall response rate of 28.2% was obtained through this research study. While a 30-35% response rate is desired for survey research, it is not uncommon for electronic surveys to be at the low end of response rates. This does create a limitation for the study, as does having a lower percentage of males respondents (6.8%) compared to the overall male Archdiocesan percentage (12.6%). Response rates were lower than ideal, and only limited checks for validity and reliability were possible. Caution should be used when considering the results in relation to other settings.

School building principals were asked to forward the survey link on to their teaching staff. It is possible that all teachers were not given an opportunity to participate in the study due to the manner in which the survey was delineated to the teaching staff, which might have contributed to the response rate falling below 30%. It is impossible to know if any pattern exists among principals who did not make the survey available to their teachers, and if such a pattern might have impacted the survey findings.

Data obtained from the research study may inform thinking about workplace stress factors in other settings, but due to sampling and response patterns, great care should be taken in generalizing the findings. Caution should be used when generalizing the results to other private or public school settings. The survey only investigated teacher workplace pressures, and not all types of stress.

### **Assumptions**

Every PK-8 school in the Midwestern Archdiocese was given the opportunity to participate in the research study. It is assumed that the survey participants answered their surveys honestly.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

A total of 280 survey responses were completed for this research study resulting in a 28.2% response rate. There were 994 full-time and part-time PK-8 teachers in the Midwestern Archdiocese for the 2010-2011 school year.

Paired sample t-tests and a one-way ANOVA were used to compare individual responses related to the aforementioned areas of stress.

### **Research Questions**

This study looked at the differences in teacher work-related pressures among PK-8 private school teachers in a Midwestern Archdiocese. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What workplace conditions do PK-8 teachers, in a Midwestern Archdiocese, report as stressful?
2. Is there a difference in the responses based on gender, school location, and level of education?

The survey consisted of 28 items regarding teachers' perceptions of workplace stress. Of those 28 items, more than 60% of the respondents identified critical areas; amount of time outside contract hours on instructional tasks, income/salary, implementation of new curricula, behavior/discipline, and paperwork.

Table 3 shows general demographic information of survey participants. Information provided in this table includes: gender, age, years completed as a teacher,

school location, grade level taught, school enrollment, and teachers' education levels.

Two hundred eighty PK-8 teachers participated in the survey.

Table 3

*General Demographics of Survey Participants*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Participant data (n=280)</b>
Gender	6.8% male 93.2% female
Age	20-25 years – 6.4% 26-30 years – 8.9% 31-35 years – 11.0% 36-40 years – 12.5% 41-45 years – 11.4% 46-50 years – 9.6% 51-55 years – 17.8% 56-60 years – 12.5% 60+ years – 10.0%
Years Completed as a Teacher	0-1 year – 5.8% 2-3 years – 8.0% 4-5 years – 6.5% 6-7 years – 4.0% 8-15 years – 27.2% 16+ years – 48.6%
Location of School	Rural: 15.2% Suburban: 42.2% Urban: 42.6%
Grade Level Taught by Research Participant	Primary: PK-2: 30.1% Intermediate: Grades 3-6: 41.3% Middle School: Grades 7-8: 25.4%
School Enrollment	Under 100 students: 6.8% 101-200 students: 22.2% 201-400 students: 13.3% 401-600 students: 7.2% 601-800 students: 29.0% 801-1,000 students: 21.5%
Teachers' Level of Education	Bachelor's Degree – 63.9% Master's Degree – 35.4% Ph.D. or Ed.D. - .7%
Teachers' Personal Home Location	Live in school community: 51.3% Do not live in school community: 48.7%

## Question 1

How did PK-8 Catholic school teachers, in the Midwestern Archdiocese, rate 28 workload factors in terms of workload pressure or stress?

As evidenced in Table 4, five of the highest rated items were identified. The five identified areas with over 60% of respondents indicating an elevated level of stress were: income/salary, amount of time spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks, paperwork, behavior/discipline of students, and implementation of new curricula.

Frequencies, means and standard deviations for each of the items are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

### *Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations (Question 1)*

	N		Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing			
1. Income / Salary	279	2	4.31	4.00	1.13
2. Amount of Time Spent Outside Contract Hours on Instructional Tasks	278	3	4.30	4.00	1.09
3. Amount/Nature of Paperwork Required	278	3	4.30	4.00	1.09
4. Behavior of Children / Discipline	279	2	3.77	4.00	.82
5. Implementation of New Curricula	278	3	3.77	4.00	.94
6. Level of Financial Resources Available	278	3	3.76	4.00	1.10
7. Ways in which Change is Being Implemented	277	4	3.76	4.00	1.04
8. Working with Diverse Learners	278	3	3.65	4.00	.89
9. Class Size	277	4	3.58	4.00	1.07
10. Development of New School Policies	279	2	3.56	4.00	1.05
11. Accountability for Student Results	278	3	3.54	3.00	1.03
12. Teacher Evaluations by Administration	278	3	3.54	3.00	1.08
13. General School Administration	278	3	3.46	3.00	1.06
14. Maintaining/Raising Educational Standards	279	2	3.42	3.00	.92

	N		Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing			
15. Expressing Opinions & Ideas to Supervisors	277	4	3.40	3.00	1.10
16. Personnel Matters	277	4	3.39	3.00	1.03
17. Parental Involvement	278	3	3.33	3.00	.87
18. Changing Demographics and Needs of Students	277	4	3.32	3.00	1.01
19. Job Security	279	2	3.32	3.00	1.08
20. Amount of Professional Support	277	4	3.25	3.00	.95
21. Relations with Administration	278	3	3.24	3.00	1.03
22. Classroom Space / Facilities	277	4	3.24	3.00	1.04
23. Taking Sick Leave	279	2	3.23	3.00	1.24
24. Relations with Colleagues	279	2	3.08	3.00	.87
25. Competition with Other Schools	278	3	2.93	3.00	.99
26. Grievance Procedures	276	5	2.84	3.00	1.29
27. Promotion / Career Opportunities	278	3	2.71	3.00	1.18
28. English Language Learner Needs	278	3	2.18	2.00	1.14

## Question 2

Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of male and female participants with regard to their self-reported levels of stress on the five areas identified as stressful?

**Sub-question 2a.** Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of males and females with regard to the amount of time spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks?

Inferential analysis was conducted utilizing an independent *t*-test to examine the significance of the difference between the responses of male and female responses. An alpha level of .10 was chosen to control for Type I errors. Results for question 2a are displayed on Table 5. As seen in Table 5, the responses for male teachers ( $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD$

= 1.08) compared to responses for female teachers ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) were not statistically significantly different,  $t(276) = 1.47$ ,  $p = .14$  (two-tailed),  $d = 0.35$ . Male and female responses were not significantly different with regard to amount of time spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks.

Table 5

*Gender and Amount of Time Spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks (Sub-question 2a)*

	Male Teacher Responses		Female Teacher Responses		$d$	$t(276)$	$p$
	$M$	$SD$	$M$	$SD$			
Time Spent Outside Contract Hours	3.95	1.08	4.33	1.09	0.35	1.47	.14

**Sub-question 2b.** Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of males and females with regard to income/salary?

Inferential analysis was conducted utilizing an independent  $t$ -test to examine the significance of the difference between the responses of male and female responses. An alpha level of .10 was utilized to control for Type I errors. Results for question 2b are displayed on Table 6. As seen in Table 6, the responses for male teachers ( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ) compared to responses for female teachers ( $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) were statistically significant and lower,  $t(277) = 3.62$ ,  $p < .001$  (two-tailed),  $d = 0.86$ . Female teachers rated their stress levels higher than males with regard to income/salary.

Table 6

*Gender and Income/Salary (Sub-question 2b)*

	Male Teacher Responses		Female Teacher Responses		<i>d</i>	<i>t</i> (277)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Income/Salary	3.42	1.35	4.37	1.09	0.86	3.62	<.001*

\*significant

**Sub-question 2c.** Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of males and females with regard to implementation of new curricula?

Inferential analysis was conducted utilizing an independent *t*-test to examine the significance of the difference between the responses of male and female responses. An alpha level of .10 was utilized to control for Type I errors. Results for question 2c are displayed on Table 7. As seen in Table 7, the responses for male teachers ( $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ) compared to responses for female teachers ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ) were not statistically significantly different,  $t(276) = 0.39$ ,  $p = .695$  (two-tailed),  $d = 0.09$ . Male and female teachers did not report any significant difference with regard to implementation of new curricula.

Table 7

*Gender and Implementation of New Curricula (Sub-question 2c)*

	Male Teacher Responses		Female Teacher Responses		<i>d</i>	<i>t</i> (276)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Implementation of New Curricula	3.68	0.82	3.77	0.95	0.09	0.39	.695

**Sub-question 2d.** Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of males and females with regard to behavior and discipline in the classroom?

Inferential analysis was conducted utilizing an independent *t*-test to examine the significance of the difference between the responses of male and female responses. An alpha level of .10 was utilized to control for Type I errors. Results for question 2d are displayed on Table 8. As seen in Table 8, the responses for male teachers ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) compared to responses for female teachers ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ) were not statistically significantly different,  $t(277) = 1.64$ ,  $p = .103$  (two-tailed),  $d = 0.39$ . Male and female teachers did not report any significant difference with regard to discipline.

Table 8

*Gender and Class Discipline (Sub-question 2d)*

	Male Teacher Responses		Female Teacher Responses		<i>d</i>	<i>t</i> (277)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Behavior/Discipline	3.47	0.96	3.79	0.81	0.39	1.64	.103

**Sub-question 2e.** Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of males and females with regard to the amount of paperwork?

Inferential analysis was conducted utilizing an independent *t*-test to examine the significance of the difference between the responses of male and female responses. An alpha level of .10 was utilized to control for Type I errors. Results for question 2e are displayed on Table 9. As seen in Table 9, the responses for male teachers ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ) compared to responses for female teachers ( $M = 3.92$ ,  $SD = 0.995$ ) were not statistically significantly different,  $t(275) = 0.77$ ,  $p = .44$  (two-tailed),  $d = 0.18$ . Male and female teachers did not report any significant difference with regard to the nature and amount of paperwork.

Table 9

*Gender and Amount of Paperwork (Sub-question 2e)*

	Male Teacher Responses		Female Teacher Responses		<i>d</i>	<i>t</i> (275)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Amount of paperwork	3.74	1.24	3.92	0.99	0.18	0.77	.44

Questions 2a-2e were analyzed using independent t-tests to examine the significance of the difference between male and females survey results. Because multiple statistical tests were conducted a two-tailed .10 alpha level was employed to help control for Type 1 errors. Means and standard deviations were displayed on tables.

### Question 3

Is there a statistically significant difference among the responses of teachers who work in urban, suburban, or rural school settings with regard to their self-reported levels of stress on the five areas identified as stressful?

**Sub-question 3a.** Is there a statistically significant difference among the responses of teachers who work in urban, suburban, or rural school settings with regard to the amount of time spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks?

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the main effect of school setting (urban, suburban, or rural) on the amount of time spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks. As seen in Table 10, there was no significant difference in the responses among teachers from urban ( $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ), suburban ( $M = 4.24$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ), and rural ( $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) school settings,  $F(2,271) = 0.42$ ,  $p = .66$  (two-tailed). There is no main effect for school setting with regard to the amount of time spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks. Rural, urban, and suburban teachers' stress levels with regard to time spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks are not significantly different from one another.

Table 10

*Single Classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Determining if school location impacts teacher stress levels with regard to the amount of time spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks (Sub-question 3a)*

ANOVA: Single Factor					
Groups	Count		<i>M</i>		<i>SD</i>
Rural	42		4.36		1.10
Suburban	115		4.24		1.00
Urban	117		4.37		1.15
ANOVA					
Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	.99	2	.49	.42	0.66
Within Groups	316.02	271	1.12		
Total	317.01	273			

**Sub-question 3b.** Is there a statistically significant difference among the responses of teachers who work in urban, suburban, or rural school settings with regard to income/salary?

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the main effect of school setting (urban, suburban, or rural) on income/salary. As seen in Table 11, there was a significant difference in the responses among teachers from urban ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ), suburban ( $M = 4.14$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ), and rural ( $M = 4.74$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) school settings,  $F(2,272) = 4.51$ ,  $p = .01$ . There was main effect for school setting with regard to income/salary. *Post Hoc* tests indicated that the responses from teachers from rural

settings were significantly higher than responses of teachers from suburban settings.

Rural teachers are significantly more stressed about their income than suburban teachers.

Table 11

*Single Classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Determining if school location impacts teacher stress levels with regard to salary/income (Sub-question 3b)*

ANOVA: Single Factor					
Groups	Count		<i>M</i>		<i>SD</i>
Rural	42		4.74		.089
Suburban	115		4.14		1.16
Urban	118		4.34		1.13
ANOVA					
Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	11.143	2	5.57	4.51	0.01*
Within Groups	336.334	272	1.237		
Total	347.476	274			

\* = significant

**Sub-question 3c.** Is there a statistically significant difference among the responses of teachers who work in urban, suburban, or rural school settings with regard to implementation of new curricula?

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the main effect of school setting (urban, suburban, or rural) on implementation of new curricula. As seen in Table 12, there was a significant difference in the responses among teachers from urban ( $M = 43.80$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ), suburban ( $M = 43.87$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ), and rural ( $M = 3.45$ ,  $SD =$

0.77) school settings,  $F(2,271) = 3.16, p = .04$ . There was main effect for school setting with regard to implementation of new curricula. *Post Hoc* tests indicated that the responses from teachers from suburban settings were significantly higher than responses of teachers from rural settings. Suburban teachers reported a higher level of stress with regard to the implementation of new curricula than teachers in rural settings.

Table 12

*Single Classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Determining if school location impacts teacher stress levels with regard to implementation of new curricula (Sub-question 3c)*

ANOVA: Single Factor					
Groups	Count		<i>M</i>		<i>SD</i>
Rural	42		3.45		0.77
Suburban	115		3.87		1.01
Urban	117		3.80		0.91

  

ANOVA					
Source of Variation	<i>SS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between Groups	5.493	2	2.746	3.155	0.04*
Within Groups	235.927	271	.871		
Total	241.420	273			

**Sub-question 3d.** Is there a statistically significant difference among the responses of teachers who work in urban, suburban, or rural school settings with regard to behavior and discipline in the classroom?

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the main effect of school setting (urban, suburban, or rural) on student discipline. As seen in Table 13, there was no significant difference in the responses among teachers from urban ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ), suburban ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ), and rural ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) school settings,  $F(2,272) = 1.07$ ,  $p = .34$  (two-tailed). There is no main effect for school setting with regard to student discipline.

Table 13

*Single Classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Determining if school location impacts teacher stress levels with regard to student discipline. (Sub-question 3d)*

ANOVA: Single Factor					
Groups	Count		$M$		$SD$
Rural	42		3.64		0.85
Suburban	115		3.75		0.80
Urban	118		3.85		0.82
ANOVA					
Source of Variation	$SS$	$Df$	$MS$	$F$	$p$
Between Groups	1.438	2	.719	1.071	0.34
Within Groups	182.584	272	.671		
Total	184.022	274			

**Sub-question 3e.** Is there a statistically significant difference among the responses of teachers who work in urban, suburban, or rural school settings with regard to the amount of paperwork?

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the main effect of school setting (urban, suburban, or rural) on the amount of paperwork. As seen in Table 14, there was a significant difference in the responses among teachers from urban ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ), suburban ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ), and rural ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ) school settings,  $F(2,270) = 4.17$ ,  $p = .02$ . There was main effect for school setting with regard to the amount of paperwork. *Post Hoc* tests indicated that the responses from teachers from suburban settings were significantly higher than responses of teachers from rural settings. Responses indicate that suburban teachers are more stressed than rural teachers, urban teachers are more stressed than rural, and there was no difference between urban and suburban and urban teachers' responses.

Table 14

*Single Classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Determining if school location impacts teacher stress levels with regard to the amount of paperwork (Sub-question 3e)*

ANOVA: Single Factor					
Groups	Count		$M$		$SD$
Rural	42		3.52		0.83
Suburban	114		4.04		0.98
Urban	117		3.94		1.08

  

ANOVA					
Source of Variation	$SS$	$df$	$MS$	$F$	$P$
Between Groups	8.839	2	4.195	4.166	0.02*
Within Groups	271.838	270	1.007		
Total	280.227	272			

\* = significant

Research sub-questions 3a-e were analyzed using a single classification Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine the main effect between stress levels and school location. An  $F$  ratio was calculated. If a statistically significant main effect was observed *post hoc* contrast analysis were conducted utilizing independent  $t$  tests. Because multiple statistical tests were conducted, a .10 alpha level was employed to help control for Type I errors. Means and standard deviations are displayed on tables.

#### **Question 4**

Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of teachers with Bachelor's degrees compared to teachers with advanced degrees with regard to their self-reported levels of stress on the five areas identified as stressful?

**Sub-question 4a.** Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of teachers with Bachelor's degrees compared to teachers with advanced degrees with regard to the amount of time spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks?

Inferential analysis was conducted utilizing an independent  $t$ -test to examine the significance of the difference between the responses of male and female responses. An alpha level of .10 was utilized to control for Type I errors. Results for question 4a are displayed on Table 15. As seen in Table 15, the responses for teachers with Bachelor's degrees are ( $M = 4.31$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) compared to responses for teachers with advanced degrees ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) were not statistically significantly different,  $t(273) = 0.29$ ,  $p = .77$  (two-tailed),  $d = 0.04$ . Teachers with different levels of education did not report any significant difference with regard to the to amount of time spent outside contract

hours on instructional tasks. The amount of education a teacher has does not seem to impact their stress level.

Table 15

*Teachers' Education level and time spent outside contract hours (Sub-question 4a)*

	Bachelor's Degree		Advanced Degree(s)		<i>d</i>	<i>t</i> (273)	<i>P</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Time Spent Outside Contract Hours on Instructional Tasks	4.31	1.09	4.27	1.09	0.04	.29	.77

**Sub-question 4b.** Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of teachers with Bachelor's degrees compared to teachers with advanced degrees with regard to income/salary?

Inferential analysis was conducted utilizing an independent *t*-test to examine the significance of the difference between the responses of teachers with Bachelor's degrees and teachers with advanced degrees. An alpha level of .10 was utilized to control for Type I errors. Results for question 4b are displayed on Table 16. As seen in Table 16, the responses for teachers with Bachelor's degrees are ( $M = 4.38, SD = 1.05$ ) compared to responses for teachers with advanced degrees ( $M = 4.17, SD = 1.25$ ) were not statistically significantly different,  $t(274) = 1.46, p = .15$  (two-tailed),  $d = 0.19$ . Teachers with different levels of education did not report any significant difference with regard to their income/salary.

Table 16

*Teachers' Education level and Income/Salary (Sub-question 4b)*

	Bachelor's Degree		Advanced Degree(s)		<i>d</i>	<i>t</i> (274)	<i>P</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Income/Salary	4.38	1.05	4.17	1.25	0.19	1.46	.15

**Sub-question 4c.** Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of teachers with Bachelor's degrees compared to teachers with advanced degrees with regard to implementation of new curricula?

Inferential analysis was conducted utilizing an independent *t*-test to examine the significance of the difference between the responses of teachers with Bachelor's degrees and teachers with advanced degrees. An alpha level of .10 was utilized to control for Type I errors. Results for question 4c are displayed on Table 17. As seen in Table 17, the responses for teachers with Bachelor's degrees are ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) compared to responses for teachers with advanced degrees ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ) were not statistically significantly different,  $t(273) = 0.27$ ,  $p = .79$  (two-tailed),  $d = 0.03$ . Teachers with different levels of education did not report any significant difference with regard to the implementation of new curricula.

Table 17

*Teachers' Education level and Implementation of New Curricula (Sub-question 4c)*

	Bachelor's Degree		Advanced Degree(s)		<i>d</i>	<i>t</i> (273)	<i>P</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Implementation of New Curricula	3.76	0.96	3.79	0.93	0.03	0.27	.79

**Sub-question 4d.** Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of teachers with Bachelor's degree compared to teachers with advanced degrees with regard to behavior and discipline in the classroom?

Inferential analysis was conducted utilizing an independent *t*-test to examine the significance of the difference between the responses of teachers with Bachelor's degrees and teachers with advanced degrees. An alpha level of .10 was utilized to control for Type I errors. Results for question 4d are displayed on Table 18. As seen in Table 18, the responses for teachers with Bachelor's degrees are ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ) compared to responses for teachers with advanced degrees ( $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ) were not statistically significantly different,  $t(274) = 1.38$ ,  $p = .17$  (two-tailed),  $d = 0.01$ . Teachers with different levels of education did not report any significant difference with regard to discipline.

Table 18

*Teachers' Education Level and Discipline (Sub-question 4d)*

	Bachelor's Degree		Advanced Degree(s)		<i>d</i>	<i>t</i> (274)	<i>P</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Discipline of Students	3.82	0.82	3.68	0.83	0.01	1.38	.17

**Sub-question 4e.** Is there a statistically significant difference between the responses of teachers with Bachelor's degree compared to teachers with advanced degrees with regard to the amount of paperwork?

Inferential analysis was conducted utilizing an independent *t*-test to examine the significance of the difference between the responses of teachers with Bachelor's degrees and teachers with advanced degrees. An alpha level of .10 was utilized to control for Type I errors. Results for question 4e are displayed on Table 19. As seen in Table 19, the responses for teachers with Bachelor's degrees are ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ) compared to responses for teachers with advanced degrees ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) were not statistically significantly different,  $t(272) = 0.64$ ,  $p = .52$  (two-tailed),  $d = 0.06$ . Teachers with different levels of education did not report any significant difference with regard to the amount of paperwork.

Table 19

*Teachers' Level of Education and Amount of Paperwork (Sub-question 4e)*

	Bachelor's Degree		Advanced Degree(s)		<i>d</i>	<i>T</i> (272)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Amount of paperwork	3.94	1.04	3.86	0.98	0.06	0.64	.52

Questions 4a-e were analyzed using independent t-tests to examine the significance of the difference between levels of education. Because multiple statistical tests were conducted, a two-tailed .10 alpha level was employed to help control for Type 1 errors. Means and standard deviations were displayed on tables 15-19.

**Qualitative Data**

This section discusses the qualitative data gathered to further explore teachers' reasons for wanting to stay or leave their current job. The qualitative data came from two open-ended response questions: *What is one thing that would make you stay at your current job?* *What is one thing that would make you leave your current job?* Most of the survey respondents answered the open-ended questions, but some did not. Out of 280 survey respondents, 29 people did not complete the two opened ended questions (10.4%). Responses were coded by theme. Eight themes emerged for reasons to stay, and eleven themes emerged for reasons to leave. It should be noted that some responses had multiple codes if survey participants answered more than one reason for wanting to stay and/or wanting to leave. Survey responses that did not fall into the identified themes were

collected into one category called “other.” Results were coded and disaggregated according to school context, grade level, and number of years at current school.

The qualitative section of this study was designed to better understand why teachers stay and/or leave their current job position. The responses are categorized by theme.

### **Female Teachers’ Reasons to Stay Based on School Context**

Female urban teachers indicated staying at their job for the top 3 following reasons: compensation, coworkers, and students. Female rural teachers indicated the reasons for staying at their current job as: compensation, school community/parents, and students. Suburban teachers indicated reasons for staying at their job as compensation, coworkers, and students. Female teachers indicated compensation as the top identified theme for teachers based on context, however, the next highest theme varied dependent upon school context. Urban teachers cited ‘students’ as their second reason for wanting to stay, rural teachers cited the ‘school community/parents’ as a reason to stay, and suburban teachers indicated their ‘coworkers’ as a reason to stay. Results are displayed in Table 20.

Table 20

*Identified Themes & Number and Percent of Responses based on School Context—  
Female Responses- Reasons to Stay*

Theme	Urban	Rural	Suburban
Compensation	17 (14.0%)	9 (25.7%)	23 (18.7%)
Coworkers	17 (14.0%)	3 (8.6%)	23 (18.7%)
Students	15 (12.4 %)	7 (20.0%)	17 (13.8%)
School Community & Parents	13 (10.7%)	8 (22.9%)	14 (11.4%)
Administration Support	10 (8.3%)	2 (5.7%)	9 (7.3%)
Job Security	10 (8.3%)	2 (5.7 %)	4 (3.3%)
Job Satisfaction / Appreciation	10 (8.3%)	-----	13 (10.6%)
Faith	6 (4.9%)	1 (2.8%)	-----
Other:	21 (17.4%)	3 (8.6%)	20 (16.3%)
Total Responses:	121	35	123

### **Female Teachers' Reasons to Leave Based on School Context**

Female urban, rural, and suburban teachers indicate compensation as the number one identified theme. Urban female teachers indicated administration and job security concerns as reasons to leave their school. Female rural teachers indicated the top three reasons to leave their job include compensation, administration, and job security (school closing, position being cut, staffing changes). Suburban female teachers reported compensation, administration, outside hours, and job security as the top four themes. Urban and rural female teachers reported higher levels of job security as a reason that they would leave their job. Results are displayed in Table 21.

Table 21

*Identified Themes & Number and Percent of Responses based on School Context—  
Female Responses – Reasons to Leave*

Theme	Urban	Rural	Suburban
Compensation	26 (25.5%)	12 (34.3%)	24 (24%)
Coworkers	1 (1.0%)	1 (2.8%)	3 (3.0%)
Students	1 (1.0%)	3 (8.6%)	-----
Parents	2 (1.9%)	-----	1 (1.0%)
Administration	20 (19.6%)	5 (14.3%)	23 (23%)
Job Security	15 (14.7%)	5 (14.3%)	7 (7.0%)
Lack of Job Satisfaction / Appreciation	2 (1.9%)	1 (2.8%)	3 (3.0%)
Outside Hours	6 (5.9%)	2 (5.7%)	7 (7.0%)
Class Size	6 (5.9%)	-----	5 (5.0%)
Other:	23 (22.5%)	8 (22.8%)	27 (27%)
Total Responses:	102	35	100

### **Male Teachers' Reasons to Stay Based on School Context**

Male urban teachers' top three reasons to stay were faith, administration support, and job satisfaction/appreciation. Male rural teachers' top two themes were job security and job satisfaction and appreciation. Male suburban teachers' top two themes were administration support and job security. Male teachers in urban, rural, and suburban settings indicated job satisfaction/appreciation as a reason to stay. Results are displayed in Table 22.

Table 22

*Identified Themes & Number and Percent of Responses based on School Context—Male Responses- Reasons to Stay*

Theme	Urban	Rural	Suburban
Compensation	1 (6.7%)	-----	-----
Students	1 (6.7%)	-----	-----
School Community & Parents	1 (6.7%)	-----	-----
Administration Support	3 (20.0%)	-----	2 (50.0%)
Job Security	-----	1 (33.3%)	1 (25.0%)
Job Satisfaction / Appreciation	2 (13.3%)	1 (33.3%)	1 (25.5%)
Faith	3 (20.0%)	-----	-----
Other:	4 (27.0%)	1 (33.3%)	-----
Total Responses:	15	3	4

**Male Teachers' Reasons to Leave Based on School Context**

Urban male teachers indicate job security as the main theme identified followed by compensation and coworkers. Rural male teachers indicated career advancement and administration as reasons to leave their job. Suburban male teachers indicated that nothing would make them leave, followed by job security. Results are displayed in Table 23.

Table 23

*Identified Themes & Number and Percent of Responses based on School Context—Male Responses – Reasons to Leave*

Theme	Urban	Rural	Suburban
Compensation	2 (14.3%)	-----	-----
Coworkers	2 (14.3%)	-----	-----
Administration	1 (7.1%)	1 (33.3%)	-----
Job Security	4 (28.6%)	-----	1 (25.0%)
Outside Hours	2 (14.3%)	-----	-----
Nothing	-----	-----	2 (50.0%)
Career Advancement	-----	2 (50.0%)	-----
Other:	3 (21.4%)	-----	1 (25.0%)
Total Responses:	14	3	4

**Female teachers’ reasons to stay based on grade level taught.** Female primary teachers indicated compensation, coworkers, and students as reasons to stay at their job. Intermediate female teachers indicated compensation, coworkers, and students as the top three themes. Coworkers, compensation, and administration support were the top three themes identified by middle school female teachers. Primary and intermediate female teachers reported compensation as their number one theme, whereas middle school female teachers reported their coworkers as the top reason to stay at their job. Intermediate teachers also reported a higher percentage of job satisfaction/appreciation than the primary and middle school teachers reported. Results are displayed in Table 24.

Table 24

*Identified Themes & Number and Percent of Responses based on Grade Level Taught  
Female Responses- Reasons to Stay*

Theme	Primary (PK-2)	Intermediate (3-6)	Middle (7-8)
Compensation	18 (18.4%)	22 (17.5%)	8 (13.6%)
Coworkers	16 (16.3%)	19 (15.1%)	14 (23.7%)
Students	16 (16.3%)	17 (13.5%)	5 (8.5%)
School Community & Parents	12 (12.2%)	13 (10.3%)	2 (3.4%)
Administration Support	9 (9.2%)	7 (5.6%)	6 (10.2%)
Job Security	5 (5.1%)	4 (3.2%)	3 (5.1%)
Job Satisfaction / Appreciation	3 (3.1%)	16 (12.7%)	7 (11.9%)
Faith	3 (3.1%)	4 (3.2%)	1 (1.7%)
Other:	16 (16.3%)	24 (19.0%)	13 (22.0%)
Total Responses:	98	126	59

**Female teachers' reasons to leave based on grade level taught.** Female primary teachers report compensation, administration, and job security as the top three themes identified as reasons to leave their job. Intermediate female teachers reported compensation, administration, and job security as the top three reasons to leave their job. Administration, job security, compensation, and the amount of outside hours were the top four identified themes by middle school female teachers. Middle school teachers were the only group to report administration as their highest percentage as a reason to leave. Results are displayed in Table 25.

Table 25

*Identified Themes & Number and Percent of Responses based on Grade Level Taught—  
Female Responses – Reasons to Leave*

Theme	Primary (PK-2)	Intermediate (3-6)	Middle (7-8)
Compensation	17 (21.8%)	31 (30.4%)	6 (10.7%)
Coworkers	4 (5.1%)	2 (1.9%)	3 (5.4%)
Students	1 (1.3%)	2 (1.9%)	-----
Parents	1 (1.3%)	2 (1.9%)	2 (3.6%)
Administration	16 (20.5%)	18 (17.6%)	13 (23.2%)
Job Security	10 (12.8%)	12 (11.8%)	8 (14.3%)
Lack of Job Satisfaction / Appreciation	1 (1.3%)	2 (1.9%)	1 (1.8%)
Outside Hours	5 (6.4%)	5 (4.9%)	6 (10.7%)
Class Size	6 (7.7%)	4 (3.9%)	2 (3.6%)
Nothing	3 (3.8%)	1 (1.0%)	1 (1.8%)
Career Advancement	-----	-----	1 (1.8%)
Other:	12 (15.4%)	25 (24.5%)	13 (23.2%)
Total Responses:	78	102	56

**Male teachers' reasons to stay based on grade level taught.** Male primary teachers report that administration support and school community/parents as the two reasons to stay at their job. Intermediate male teachers reported that faith, students, and administration support as the top three themes to stay at their current job. Middle school male teachers indicated job satisfaction/appreciation and the most important followed by

compensation, administration support, and job security. Middle school teachers were the only group to report that job satisfaction/appreciation as a reason to stay at their current school. Results are displayed in Table 26.

Table 26

*Identified Themes & Number and Percent of Responses based on Grade Level Taught Male Responses- Reasons to Stay*

Theme	Primary (PK-2)	Intermediate (3-6)	Middle (7-8)
Compensation	-----	-----	1 (10.0%)
Students	-----	1 (16.7%)	-----
School Community & Parents	1 (33.3%)	-----	-----
Administration Support	2 (66.6%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (10.0%)
Job Security	-----	-----	1 (10.0%)
Job Satisfaction / Appreciation	-----	-----	4 (40.0%)
Faith	-----	2 (33.3%)	1 (10.0%)
Other:	-----	1 (16.7%)	2 (20.0%)
Total Responses:	3	6	10

**Male teachers’ reasons to leave based on grade level taught.** Male primary teachers indicated that lack of job satisfaction/appreciation and job security as the two reasons that they would leave their current school. Intermediate male teachers reported that job security and compensation as their reasons to leave. Male middle school teachers reported coworkers, administration, and job security as the top three identified themes to leave their position. Intermediate male teachers were the only group to report compensation as a reason to leave. Results are displayed in Table 27.

Table 27

*Identified Themes & Number and Percent of Responses based on Grade Level Taught—  
Male Responses – Reasons to Leave*

Theme	Primary (PK-2)	Intermediate (3-6)	Middle (7-8)
Compensation	-----	1 (16.7%)	-----
Coworkers	-----	-----	2 (16.7%)
Students	-----	-----	1 (8.3%)
Administration	-----	-----	2 (16.7%)
Job Security	1 (33.3%)	3 (50.0%)	2 (16.7%)
Lack of Job Satisfaction / Appreciation	2 (66.6%)	-----	-----
Nothing	-----	-----	1 (8.3%)
Other:	-----	2 (33.3%)	4 (33.3%)
Total Responses:	3	6	12

**Female teachers’ reasons to stay based on the number of years as a teacher at current school.** Female teachers with 1-7 years of experience reported compensation, school community/parents, and coworkers as the top three reasons to stay at their current school. Female teachers with 8 or more years of experience indicated compensation, coworkers, and students as the top three themes identified. Results are displayed in Table 28.

Table 28

*Identified Themes & Number and Percent of Responses based on Number of Years as a Teacher at Current School—Female Reasons to Stay – Number of Years Taught at Current School*

Theme	1-7 Years	8+ Years
Compensation	20 (17.1%)	29 (16.7%)
Coworkers	19 (16.2%)	29 (16.7%)
Students	15 (12.8%)	26 (14.9%)
School Community & Parents	20 (17.1%)	22 (12.6%)
Administration Support	10 (8.5%)	10 (5.7%)
Job Security	3 (2.6%)	8 (4.6%)
Job Satisfaction / Appreciation	10 (8.5%)	16 (9.2%)
Faith	-----	8 (4.6%)
Other:	20 (17.1%)	26 (14.9%)
Total Responses:	117	174

**Female teachers’ reasons to leave based on number of years taught at current school.** Female teachers with 1-7 years of experience indicated compensation, administration, and job security as the top three identified themes to leave their current job. Female teachers with 8+ years experience reported compensation, administration, and lack of job satisfaction/appreciation as the top three themes to leave their position. Results are displayed in Table 29.

Table 29

*Identified Themes & Number and Percent of Responses based on Number of Years Taught at Current School—Female Responses – Reasons to Leave*

Theme	1-7 Years	8+ Years
Compensation	28 (28.0%)	37 (26.4%)
Coworkers	2 (2.0%)	5 (3.6%)
Students	3 (3.0%)	1 (0.7%)
Parents	1 (1.0%)	3 (2.1%)
Administration	17 (17.0%)	30 (21.4%)
Job Security	15 (15.0%)	14 (10.0%)
Lack of Job Satisfaction / Appreciation	2 (2.0%)	4 (2.9%)
Outside Hours	5 (5.0%)	11 (7.9%)
Class Size	6 (6.0%)	6 (4.3%)
Nothing	2 (2.0%)	3 (2.1%)
Career Advancement	1 (1.0%)	-----
Other:	18 (18.0%)	26 (18.6%)
Total Responses:	100	140

**Male teachers' reasons to stay based on the number of years as a teacher at current school.** Male teachers with 1-7 years of experience reported job satisfaction/appreciation as the top theme to stay at their current job followed by job security and faith as the second most popular identified theme. Males with 8 or more years of teaching experience indicated that administration support was the most important reason to stay at their job. Male teachers that have been teaching from 1-7 years did not

indicate an increase in compensation as a reason to stay at their current position. Results are displayed in Table 30.

Table 30

*Identified Themes & Number and Percent of Responses based on Number of Years as a Teacher at Current School—Male Reasons to Stay – Number of Years Taught at Current School*

Theme	1-7 Years	8+ Years
Compensation	-----	1 (10.0%)
Coworkers	1 (8.3%)	-----
Students	1 (8.3%)	-----
School Community & Parents	-----	1 (10.0%)
Administration Support	1 (8.3%)	3 (30.0%)
Job Security	2 (16.7%)	-----
Job Satisfaction / Appreciation	3 (25.0%)	1 (10.0%)
Faith	2 (16.7%)	1 (10.0%)
Other:	3 (25.0%)	3 (30.0%)
Total Responses:	12	10

**Male teachers’ reasons to leave based on number of years taught at current school.** Male teachers with 1-7 years of experience reported job security and coworkers as the top two identified themes. Male teachers with 8 or more years of experience indicated students, administration, and job security as the top three reasons to leave their job. Results are displayed in Table 31.

Table 31

*Identified Themes & Number and Percent of Responses based on Number of Years Taught at Current School—Male Responses – Reasons to Leave*

Theme	1-7 Years	8+ Years
Compensation	-----	1 (9.1%)
Coworkers	2 (20.0%)	-----
Students	-----	2 (18.2%)
Parents	-----	1 (9.1%)
Administration	-----	2 (18.2%)
Job Security	4 (40.0%)	2 (18.2%)
Nothing	1 (10.0%)	1 (9.1%)
Career Advancement	1 (10.0%)	-----
Other:	2 (20.0%)	2 (18.2%)
Total Responses:	10	11

### Summary

Male and female teachers did not report any significant difference with regard to the amount of time spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks, implementation of new curricula, discipline, and the amount/nature of paperwork. They, did, however, report a significant difference with regard to income/salary. Female teachers reported higher levels of stress with regard to income/salary than male teachers.

There was no main effect for school setting (urban, suburban, and rural) with regard to the amount of time spent outside contract hours on instructional tasks and student discipline. There was, however, main effect for school setting with regard to

income/salary. Teachers' responses, from rural school settings, were significantly higher than responses from suburban settings; rural teachers are more stressed about their income than suburban teachers. Suburban teachers' responses were also significantly higher than rural teacher responses with regard to implementation of new curricula. Additionally, suburban teachers' responses showed significantly higher levels of stress than rural teachers with regard to the amount of paperwork required. Responses indicate that suburban teachers are more stressed than rural teachers, urban teachers are more stressed than rural teachers, and there was no difference between urban and suburban teachers' responses with regard to the amount/nature of paperwork.

No statistical significant differences were found with regard to teachers' levels of education when analyzed with contract hours, income/salary, implementation of new curricula, student behavior/discipline, or the amount of paperwork required.

Qualitative data indicates specific reasons, or themes, as to why teachers would stay or leave their current job. Gender, school context, grade level taught, and the number of years at current school all played a part in the emerging themes that survey participants indicated. While compensation was the most popular identified theme, many other themes came to surface and were reported and displayed in tables relative to the factor being investigated. Some of the emerging themes, in addition to compensation, included job security, administration, coworkers, outside hours, faith, and job satisfaction/appreciation.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion of the Findings**

### **Background**

The purpose of this research was to determine what workplace conditions PK-8 Catholic teachers in a Midwest Archdiocese reported as stressful. Teacher stress is not a temporary problem but one that will continually persist given that employees always have stressors. It must be attended to if the quality and productivity of American education are to be substantially improved (Blase, 1986). The causes of teacher stress are complex, and the solutions are neither simple nor cosmetic (Raschke & And Others, 1985). With this information in mind, the present research investigation contributes to the field of education. This research study adds to current research that indicates teachers' levels of stress can be elevated by different factors within the workplace. Understanding, dialoguing, and offering solutions about teacher workplace pressures can create a more optimal working environment, and lead to informed decisions when implementing new policies throughout and within schools and school districts.

In the presented research study various themes emerged and should be discussed, in more detail, for a greater understanding surrounding the aspects of workplace pressures. The following areas are presented and discussed: income pressures for women teachers and rural teachers, demands of the teaching profession, relationships,

teacher retention, and faith. Recommendations for further research are presented and concluding remarks are addressed.

### **Income Pressures for Female Teachers and Rural School Teachers**

According to NCES (2005) teachers in Catholic schools were more likely than other private school teachers to report strong dissatisfaction regarding their salary, and this research can be supported by the research presented in this study. Quantitative results indicated that female teachers were significantly more stressed than male teachers with regard to income. Additionally, qualitative data gathered in this research study indicated that the number one reason that female teachers would leave their job was because of compensation, regardless of the school setting in which they were employed. A plausible reason for this may be that women experience pressure to contribute to their family's financial stability and women predominately completed the survey. Economic stability, especially in a time where the economy has been unpredictable, becomes a bigger stress for families, including women. Additionally, no tenure is available for the surveyed Archdiocesan participants, which increases the pressure of a yearly contract renewal in order to maintain financial stability.

Quantitative and qualitative findings from this study also indicated that teachers from rural schools were more stressed than teachers from suburban or urban schools with regard to income. A possible reason for this could be that many rural schools are smaller in size and may not have a solid financial backing of a church to help subsidize the operational expenses of a school, which might lead to the school closing, consolidating, or eliminating positions.

In order to address these issues, the Archdiocese could establish and invest in an emergency assistance program for employees with financial, emotional, and spiritual support available for teachers feeling a heightened sense of stress. A diocese-wide salary study would either highlight inequities or assure people that there are no differences in salary based on gender or school locale. Creating a long-term, Archdiocesan-wide plan to stay competitive with the local public school teachers' salaries would also be a step that could help alleviate stress caused by income.

### **Demands Experienced by the Teaching Profession**

Quantitative data suggests that time spent outside contract hours and the amount of required paperwork causes stress for teachers within the surveyed Archdiocese. These findings support Mrozek's (2005) research that common stressors teachers experience include low salaries and teachers work demands while at home. Blasé (1986) found that a source of stress requiring extra work included excessive paperwork. Conversely, qualitative data did not indicate outside hours a top reason to stay or leave a position. Qualitative data did, however, suggest that compensation was the leading reason teachers indicated as a reason to leave their position.

In this economic climate, employees are often being asked to do more with less. Teachers may have growing families and have many commitments outside the school day, and when their time, away from school, is spent doing schoolwork, increasing stress can arise. Financial remuneration is not the only reason that teachers enter the profession. Often teachers choose this profession because they feel like they have a calling or that they can make a difference. Goddard, O'Brien, & Goddard (2006), found

that teachers with strong feelings of vocation are more at risk of stress. Along with this sense of duty or obligation might come stress; teachers may not easily leave their professional concerns at work when the final bell rings at 3:00 p.m.; rather teaching is a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week job. In order to help alleviate some of the stresses that teachers feel regarding work outside of the school day, schools could limit class size, increase teacher planning time, and offer counseling services for those teachers needing to share their day to day job frustrations. The Archdiocese and each individual school could also look at eliminating unnecessary paperwork by examining current practices and inviting input from various teachers' regarding how to make planning, and documentation of student progress and needs less complicated.

### **Relationships**

Qualitative data suggested many reasons why teachers would stay and leave their current position; many of which involved relationships of some sort. Female middle school teachers indicated a lack of administration support as a top reason to leave their job, whereas the female primary and intermediate teachers indicated compensation. Male teachers, in all grade levels, indicated administration support as the only common theme as a reason to stay in their current position. Rural, suburban, and urban male teachers all indicated job satisfaction/appreciation as a reason to stay as well. Next to an increase in compensation, female teachers indicated that they wanted to stay at their current job because of their relationships with others (students, coworkers, parents).

The importance of relationships and relationship building is apparent in both the quantitative and qualitative data presented in this study. Investing in opportunities to

nurture relationships should be an important priority for school and district administration. Staff retreats and community building activities such as school night socials could help with building a positive working environment for all involved parties.

### **Retention of Teachers**

An in-depth study and action-plan might be implemented and executed to prevent teachers from leaving the private school system. As identified in the quantitative portion of this research study, teachers indicated they are most likely to leave their current job because of income, a dislike of their current administration, lack of support by administration, and the amount of additional workload/demands. Qualitative data suggested a variety of reasons to leave such as compensation, job security, career advancement, and administration.

Rural male teachers indicated career advancement as a reason to leave their current position, whereas no women reported career advancement as a reason to leave. Suburban males were the only subgroup to report that “nothing” would make them leave their current position.

A comprehensive evaluation process for school administrators, including input from teachers could be implemented, analyzed, and discussed as a step toward creation of a more optimal working environment. Administrators’ awareness of areas in which improvements can be made may lead to the creation of a more optimal working environment.

Quantitative data indicated reasons why teachers would stay at their current job and the three most popular reasons were an increase in salary/benefits, relationships with

coworkers, and the students that they teach. Qualitative data suggests that teachers are likely to stay at their job because of an increase in salary and their relationships with others (students, coworkers, and parents).

This is crucially important information as it provides school leadership with positive motivators for job satisfaction. A diocese-wide finance committee might be convened to do an in-depth salary study of the schools and develop an action plan for raising income levels in order to stay competitive with the public sector. Additionally, the formation of a teachers' union, within the surveyed Archdiocese, would allow for collective bargaining practices and give teachers a stronger voice.

### **Faith**

Qualitative data suggests that male teachers report faith as a reason to stay in their current position. Within the male subgroup, males with 1-7 years of teaching experience indicated faith as a reason to stay at their current job, whereas males with 8 or more years of experience did not indicate this, nor did female teachers, regardless of the number of years of teaching experience. This qualitative data goes hand-in-hand with the quantitative data, gathered in this research study, suggesting that females hold compensation as a big reason to leave their current position.

This study attempted to add to existing literature, as well as provide a clearer understanding of private school teachers' workplace pressures through quantitative and qualitative measures. Although this study only sampled 280 PK-8 teachers, it has contributed to the knowledge base for both private and public school educators and administrators.

## Recommendations for Further Research

This study attempted to identify elevated workplace pressures and factors that would lead a teacher to stay or leave their current job. It did not, however, address several questions related to workplace stress and the underpinning reasons why and how these pressures are manifested. The following is a list of suggestions for further research as an expansion of this study:

- Investigate why suburban teachers indicated that they are more likely to leave than urban/rural teachers because of their administration.
- Investigate, in more detail, why male teachers reported that their faith is a reason to stay at their job.
- Investigate why males indicated career advancement as a reason to leave their job and females did not.
- Some males reported that “nothing” would make them leave their job; this was not a response given by any females. What makes these males so satisfied with their job?
- Middle school teachers reported that their coworkers were a big reason for them to stay at their current position. Investigate why some middle school teachers have such an affinity towards their coworkers.
- Primary teachers indicated that their students were a top reason to stay at their job, whereas other grade level teachers did not indicate this year. Investigate why PK-2 teachers indicate this information.
- A large percentage of middle school teachers reported that their administration was a reason to leave their current job. Investigate what middle school teachers’ rapport is with their administration and why.
- Teachers reported that they would leave their job for a variety of reasons, yet they continued to teach. Investigate what makes them stay in teaching. Delve deeper into their thinking to get at the root of their dedication to the teaching profession.
- Investigate why teachers with 8+ years of experience indicated that a reason to leave their current job is administration whereas teachers with 1-

7 years of experience indicate compensation. What happens with teachers' relationships, with their administrations, as their career lengthens?

- Investigate the cultural norms that exist within a male dominated spiritual community.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Teachers with strong feelings of vocation are more at risk of stress (Goddard, O'Brien, & Goddard, 2006). Therefore, the Archbishop, head of the Archdiocese, school priests, school administrators, teachers, school boards, and finance committee members should be made aware of these findings in order to realize and address the workplace pressures experienced by teachers within the diocese.

The overarching assumption for this study is that in order to create an ideal working environment it is important that the appropriate school personnel are aware of workplace pressures so that they can be identified, discussed, and addressed. The data collected in this study leads to a greater understanding of the pressures that PK-8 private school teachers experience. Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, and Capwell (1957) stated, "Knowing who is dissatisfied is not only a matter of general interest, but is particularly important in enabling industry to focus its morale-building programs where they are most needed" (p. 50).

The accumulation of the data collected in this study leads to a greater understanding of teacher workplace pressures and helps to provide reasons why it is important to address these pressures. Making Archdiocesan administrators aware of the pressures, providing professional development opportunities, and acknowledging that the

pressures are real are seen as possible ways to reduce workplace pressures and achieve the goal of a better working environment and education system.

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## **Appendix A**

The study was done with all appropriate approvals from the Denver University Institutional Review Board and permission from the study location. Such materials are available by request to the author.