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An Assessment Of Factors Influencing Student Enrollment Within The Southern Union Conference Of Seventh-Day Adventist Secondary Schools

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**AN ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT ENROLLMENT
WITHIN THE SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

by

OLIVIA D. BEVERLY

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2010

MAJOR: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Approved by:

Advisor

Date

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the following individuals:

- My husband, Dr. Creigs Beverly, who has been my anchor, the wind beneath my wings and the proud supporter of my life and work.
- My parents, Edward and Gladys Gilbert, who sacrificed endlessly for my nine brothers and sisters and me, and instilled in us the inspiration to set high goals and the confidence to achieve them.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Within the United States public educational institutions and private religious educational institutions have co-existed for many years. This co-existence, this existential interface within American society is rooted in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Specifically, Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government, for a redress of grievances (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

At the core of the concept of separation of church and state is the belief that no publicly funded educational institution should promote any particular religious orientation or theological worldview (i.e., no state sanctioned religion). Further, that in a multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual and multi-religious nation, no one religious orientation should take precedent or have hegemony over any other belief system or orientation.

In recent years, even the pledge of allegiance has become controversial as a ritual in public school systems. Proponents of the separation of church and state concept argue that the portion of the pledge which states, "...one nation under God..." constitutes an imposition or represents an intrusion by the state of a particular religious point of view into the domain of public education, thus, a violation of the separation of church and state clause.

Given this precedent set forth in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, what happens when the deeply held convictions and beliefs of parents become inconsistent or are felt to be incompatible with the very concept of public education? To state this differently, what

happens when the common good, the very foundation upon which public education is based, is deemed contrary to the personal good (wishes) of parents who seek reinforcement and reaffirmation of their personal beliefs within public educational settings?

When faced with the inability to find a goodness of fit between their personal religious orientation and permissible practices within public educational institutions, parents consciously seek out compatible educational alternatives (institutions) for their children. These parental searches for compatible educational alternatives have most often resulted in parents sending their children to religious educational institutions which reinforce their religious belief system(s) or home-schooling their children.

Most cultural anthropologists and sociologists agree that institutions are designed to meet the needs of its members. Even the most casual observer is able to recognize at a minimum five institutional forms woven together for societal sustainability. Gerth and Mills (1964) identify these institutions as political, economic, military, kinship and religious. Though the Gerth and Mills taxonomy does not include education, every society has some means of teaching its youth. Neil Kagan's (2006) work, entitled *Concise History of the World* provides an evolutionary perspective on societal institutional development over time (Kagan, 2006).

Lincoln (1971), a professor of sociology and religion stated that:

The true objective of an institution should be to strengthen the fabric of society, to enhance the quality of life-experience of the individual, and to project the values of the culture out of which it arises. Now the function of culture is to make possible an ordered social life in which individuals may more nearly realize their fullest potentials as persons. The function of an institution is to relate discrete social experiences in such a way as to infuse life with a quality of meaning which accentuates its social value. Hence, an institution is a social instrument directed toward the enhancement of the individual human experience to the ultimate benefit of the whole society. It is created as a response to a need that is felt to be fundamental, and its singularity is that it transcends time and circumstance, addressing itself to successive generations of men and women. (p. 606)

The operative phrase from Lincoln which had particular relevance for this discussion is, “The function of an institution is to relate discrete social experiences in such a way as to infuse life with a quality of meaning which accentuates its social value” (Lincoln, 1971, p. 606) For some parents this outcome is achievable within public educational settings. For others it is achievable only through the matriculation of their children in religious educational settings. At the core of this search for educational compatibility is the concept of parental choice.

An elaboration on the concept of parental choice in the selection of educational settings for their children is covered in some detail in the review of literature chapter. Suffice it to say here that many factors go into decisions by parents as to the best educational setting for their children. Beyond religious preferences, Molnar (1996) stated that considerations such as proximity to the school, work schedules, availability of after school care, and extracurricular activities get thrown into the mix. Also, the ability of parents to choose the best school for their children requires more than the freedom to walk away from schools they don’t like: they also must be able to get their children into schools they like better.

The development of religious based educational institutions over time historically has served two primary purposes. First, such institutions provide a means to sustain the particular worldview of the sponsoring denomination. This is done through an immersion of its members in the particular teachings, doctrines and ideology of the sponsoring denomination. Second, such institutions provide parents with an alternative to public educational systems which do not permit immersion into a particular religious orientation or doctrine.

An examination of the historical backgrounds of three religious educational institutions will help to place the above discussion in context beginning with Catholic education, which represents the largest faith-based school system in American society.

Catholic Education

According to the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA, 2009), Catholic education goes back deep into U.S. history- to at least 1606. In 1606, expressing their desire “to teach children Christian doctrine, reading and writing” (p. 1, para. 2) the Franciscans opened a school in what’s now St. Augustine, Fla. Further north and a bit later, Jesuits instructed such dedicated Native American students as Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-1680), who became a Catholic in New York and taught Indian children in a Christian settlement near Montreal (NCEA, 2009).

By the latter 1600s English colonists had set up their own, publicly supported schools. But since all the colonies were overwhelmingly Protestant, the rudimentary education often had a heavily fundamentalist Protestant (if not blatantly anti-Catholic) cast. Even in Catholic- founded Maryland, Catholics were a minority, although with a bit more freedom, and in 1677, in Newtown, the Jesuits established a preparatory school, mostly to instruct boys considered candidates for later seminary study in Europe. The Newtown school eventually closed, but the Jesuits opened another in the 1740’s at Bohemia Manor, Md. Well into the 18th Century, however, more affluent parents often chose overseas schools for their children, including girls dispatched to European convent schools. Meanwhile the Catholic population continued to expand, reaching approximately 25,000 in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York State alone by about 1776. (p. 1, para. 3).

Through many more years (over 400 since the inception) of development and struggle, Catholic education has grown to represent a formidable choice for many parents. Today, the 8,000 Catholic schools across the United States are regarded as a gift to the church and a gift to the nation. Groom, professor of theology and religious education, wrote in the 1995 *HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, “Throughout history, there is no more compelling instance of Catholic commitment to education than the school system created by the U.S. Catholic community” (NCEA, 2009, p. 2, para. 5).

Moreover, Catholic education has long been characterized by a commitment to high and appropriate standards in all aspects of the educational mission. The history of Catholic schooling

embodies a constant effort to promote academic excellence for a diverse group of students in an environment permeated by religious values and beliefs. However, the mission and purpose of Catholic schools is larger than attainment of academic competency. Commitment to the full development of the spiritual as well as the academic potential of the student cannot be compromised in a standards driven movement toward academic assessment (NCEA, 2009).

Lutheran Education

The impressive number and quality of schools that are supported by ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) congregations are testimony to the many different strands and priorities of predecessor church bodies and the faithful dedication of many individuals who very often work for substandard pay. Lutheran schools have always had a prominent role in the Lutheran church. (Kieschnick, 2006, p. 1, para. 1).

When Lutherans came to this country they often brought with them a determination to educate the young using a curriculum that included religious instruction. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg arrived in America in 1742 to assist the scattered Lutheran churches and their schools, especially in Pennsylvania. In addition to assisting with parish schools, Muhlenberg conducted one of the first “charity schools” in Pennsylvania. St. Matthew Lutheran School (LCMS) was established in New York City in 1752 (Kieschnick, 2006, p.1, para. 2).

The emphasis on parish schools was even greater among the Saxon Lutherans who immigrated to the Midwest. Their goal was that every parish support a school. So important were parochial schools to them that, when they organized what is now The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), “the establishment and support of congregation parochial schools” was listed as one of the primary purposes for the establishment of that Synod. (Kieschnick, 2006, p. 1, para. 3)

Though much smaller in number, Lutheran schools, similar to Catholic schools, have continued to evolve over time. Kieschnick (2006) stated that today, congregation sponsored schools are a massive, if often unnoticed, ministry in the ELCA. There are some 1,600 early-childhood centers ministering to more than 100,000 children and their families and 275 elementary schools ministering to some 50,000 students.

Lutheran schools at all levels are probably the most ethnically inclusive agencies in the ELCA. The percentage of non-Anglos goes up at each age level. Thus, the

non-Anglos in preschools total 13 percent, in elementary schools 24 percent, and in high schools 33 percent. (Kieschnick, 2006, p. 3, para. 7)

Conservative Protestant Christian Education

Most schools falling in the conservative, Protestant Christian category of parochial schools were founded between the mid-1960s and the early 1980s by evangelical and fundamentalist Christians. (Private Schooling, 2009) Some scholars have argued that the emergence of many of these schools coincided with the desegregation movement in the South and evolved as an attempt to maintain a segregation status quo. The civil rights movement was at its height in the 1960s and 1970s. Many parents for various reasons who did not want their children to attend desegregated school systems opted out of public schools and selected schools founded by evangelical, Christian fundamentalists.

The number of these private school institutions has been estimated as between 4,000 and 18,000, with an enrollment range from 250,000 to more than 1.5 million students. The best estimates seem to be between 9,000 and 11,000 schools with a student population of approximately 1 million (Private Schooling, 2009).

Many of the other faith-based schools not covered in this brief summary have similar historical developments. Each faith-based/ religious based school system was created to promote, transmit, and thereby preserve particular worldviews and theological perspectives. Paraphrasing Lincoln (1971), each was created as a response to a need that was felt to be fundamental, and its singularity is that it transcends time and circumstance, addressing itself to successive generations of men and women.

In summary as expressed in the document, “Preserving a Critical National Asset” (2008-09):

The United States has a long, proud tradition of faith-based K-12 education. Long before the Declaration of Independence proclaimed America's emergence and the Constitution guaranteed all citizens religious freedom, faith-based schools were proliferating on these shores. To this day, faith-based schools remain an important part of the American K-12 education landscape. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in the 2005-06 school year, there were more than 22,000 faith-based schools in operation- more than three times the number of non-religious private schools. In fact, more than one of every six K-12 schools in the United States is faith-based. As of the 2005-06 school year, these schools were educating more than 4.1 million students, comparable to the entire population of the state of Kentucky. (p. 2, para. 1 and 3)

Several integrative threads run through the historical backgrounds of private religious educational institutions, the most prominent of which is the promotion of a particular theological worldview. Another is the infusion of religious education into the curricula of private educational institutions. A third is the perceived benefits of parents choosing a school consistent with and supportive of their religious orientation.

The value of these various institutions over time within American culture has been documented. However, in recent years another integrative thread or trend has begun to emerge. This new development portends serious problems for religious schools. This new development is a significant decline in overall enrollment patterns within faith-based schools. In affirmation of this trend toward significant enrollment declines, particularly in urban faith-based schools, a report entitled "Preserving a Critical National Asset" (2008-09) previously referred to the following.

In total, since the 1999-2000 school year, the faith-based urban schools sector has suffered a net loss of 1,162 schools and 424,976 students (Table 1). To put these figures into perspective, closing every single public school in the Los Angeles Unified School District (the second largest public school district in the Nation) would be roughly equivalent to the net loss of faith-based urban schools during this six year period. And the recent net loss of students suffered by faith-based urban schools is greater than the entire enrollment of Chicago Public Schools, the Nation's third largest public school district. (US Department of Education, 2008-09, p. 8, para. 2)

Table 1

Cumulative Change in Numbers of Faith-based Urban Schools
and Their Students, by Religion: 2000-06

Religion	Schools	Students
Assembly of God	-65	-13,435
Baptist	-185	-44,927
Catholic	-564	-257,756
Christian (no specific denomination)	-69	-35,751
Episcopal	-60	-25,461
Islamic	7	2,885
Jewish	50	6,566
Lutheran	-41	-9,821
Pentecostal	-71	-7,596
Seventh-day Adventist	-71	-3,898
All other religions	-93	-35,782
Total	-1,162	-424,976

National Center for Education Statistics, Private School Universe Survey 1999-2000
And National Center for Education Statistics, Private School Universe Survey 2005-06.

The report goes on to state,

While sadly, this sector's deterioration has been going on for years, the sizable losses suffered recently are particularly disturbing. A 2006 study noted the quickening pace of closures between 2000 and 2005, arguing that a critical "tipping point" has been reached. "The demographic changes that had been taking place for more than five decades caught up with the most vulnerable of campuses." In fact, the number of schools lost during this six-year period was approximately four times greater than the number lost during the previous decade. Indeed, in a recent survey of diocesan superintendents, 97 percent said that it is more challenging to finance schools than it was five years ago. It appears that the accelerated rate of closures of recent years is far from an aberration; in fact, it may foreshadow even more troubling times (US Department of Education, 2008-09, p. 8, para. 3).

As seen in Table 1, among the many faith-based schools experiencing enrollment losses, Seventh-day Adventist schools have had their share. It is within, or more appropriately, out of

this crucible of enrollment dilemmas facing Adventist schools that the focus of this research is born.

This research was an attempt to ascertain the most significant factors contributing to enrollment fluctuations, instability and enrollment declines in secondary educational institutions operating within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist schools. Students are the life blood of any educational system. Without them the reason or purpose for the existence of such institutions becomes not only highly questionable, but in some situations may in fact spell their demise.

If factors contributing to enrollment fluctuations, instability and particularly declines can be clearly identified and prioritized, it then becomes possible to fashion intervention strategies and corrective measures. These intervention strategies and corrective measures are designed not only to stop the declines, but also stabilize and ultimately increase enrollment over time.

Cooper (2009) found that in 1950, for every 100 members, there were 26 students in Seventh-day Adventist schools. By 2000, although the total number of students in Adventist schools had surpassed the million mark, the ratio had declined to less than 10 students for every 100 members. Cooper states that though one must be cautious about expecting a direct correlation between church membership and Seventh-day Adventist school enrollment, it is nevertheless important to acknowledge.

Gregorutti (2008) reinforced Cooper's conclusions when he states that, while Adventist church membership has grown in North America, enrollment in Adventist K-12 schools, particularly by church members' children, has consistently declined since the 1980's.

An examination of enrollment data compiled by the Council for American Private Education (Cape, 2009) is highly instructive. As can be seen in Table 2 below, the percent of

Seventh-Day Adventist children attending private schools was 1.6% during the 1989-1990 period. However that percentage dropped to 1.1% during the period of 2007-2008. Other declines are seen among Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, and Calvinist students.

Table 2
Where Do Private School Students Go To School?

	1989-1990	2007-2008
Catholic	54.5%	42.5%
Nonsectarian	13.2%	19.4%
Conservative Christian	10.9 %	15.2%
Baptist	5.8%	5.5%
Lutheran	4.4%	3.7%
Jewish	3.2%	4.7%
Episcopal	1.7%	2.1%
Seventh-day Adventist	1.6%	1.1%
Calvinist	0.9%	0.6%
Friends	0.3%	0.4%

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (PSS Survey)

Anderson (2009) summarized the enrollment dilemma best in schools within the North American Division (NAD) when he posited that:

In light of such statistics, the resulting stories coming from our schools are predictably grim. Each successive school year brings word of yet another of our approximately 1,000 NAD school campuses either struggling mightily to survive or closing its doors altogether. Local school boards across the land meet late into the night, trying to figure out how to deal with still further declines in enrollment. Conference executive committees stare in despair as still another request for hundreds of thousands of dollars in “special subsidy” comes rolling in from their conference academy. And even some of our colleges, comparative giants though they may be, are having their share of severe financial and enrollment crises. (In fact, as I write this, one more of our longtime colleges is gearing up for a pivotal meeting that will seriously consider the destiny of the school- as in whether or not it will remain open). (p. 13)

Within the educational matrix of educational institutions K-12 parochial schools have been hit especially hard by the recession. A classic case example is provided by what is happening to parochial schools in the Silver Springs, Maryland area. Moore (2009) indicated that “with more families holding tighter to their dollars in this economy, several county parochial schools within the Silver Springs area are struggling, as parents pull their children out of tuition based institutions and enroll them in public schools” (p. 1, para. 1). Moore further stated that public school enrollments are going up and parochial school enrollments are going down. Annual tuition in many of these parochial schools ranges between \$4000.00 and \$6710.00 per child with a slight reduction if two or more children attend.

Still another example is what has happened in California. A report by Ed Source (2009) indicated that:

For many years, about 10% of California’s K-12 students enrolled in private schools. However, private school enrollment began to decline in 2001-02 after the economy experienced a downturn due to the dot-com crash. Although the economy recovered before the latest recession, private school enrollment was closer to 8% in 2007-08” (p. 1, para. 1).

In the meantime, students and their parents looking for alternatives to traditional public schools have been increasingly choosing charter schools. Table 3 below shows K-12 enrollment over time in California. As can be seen on Table 3, between the school years 1989-99 to 2007-08 enrollment in charter schools rose from 67,924 to 248,639.

Table 3

K-12 Enrollment over Time in California

	Private	Charter	Public (noncharter)	Total
1989-99	628,746	67,924	5,776,187	6,472,857
1999-00	640,802	99,048	5,852,564	6,592,414
2000-01	648,564	115,390	5,935,505	6,699,459
2001-02	635,719	132,909	6,014,466	6,783,094
2002-03	609,483	156,696	6,087,707	6,853,886
2003-04	599,605	164,808	6,133,961	6,898,374
2004-05	591,056	179,810	6,142,357	6,913,223
2005-06	594,597	199,916	6,112,187	6,906,700
2006-07	584,983	222,942	6,064,001	6,871,926
2007-08	564,734	248,639	6,026,830	6,840,203

Data: California Department of Education (CDE)
EdSource 6/09

Interestingly Milwaukee, Wisconsin has been recognized as one of the few places in the country where the educational playing field has been at least partially leveled by a variety of choice programs: a thriving charter school program: the parental choice program: and open enrollment, a statewide program that allows students to transfer to other public schools within the city (Covino, 2003).

One element of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, for example, is the largest school voucher program in the United States, serving low-income families in religious and nonreligious private schools. The program grew from 341 students in seven private schools in 1990-91 to 10,882 students in the 106 private schools in 2001-02. To be eligible for the vouchers, families must be at or below 175% of the federal poverty level (\$30,913 for a family of four in 2001-02) and reside in the city of Milwaukee. Private schools that participate in the

program must agree to accept eligible students and use a random selection process when applications exceed available space. (Caire, 2002)

The experience in Milwaukee was not unlike that of other school districts around the country trying to implement schools of choice. Most opposition groups preferred to strengthen existing public educational institutions rather than create alternatives. Fusarelli (2002) stated that despite the appearance of widespread bipartisan support, increasing opposition to charter schools is surfacing. Local teacher unions, public school administrators, and school districts in many areas are openly hostile toward charter schools, erecting multiple obstacles to block efforts at expanding and strengthening charter school laws.

Southern Union Conference

As stated previously, this research centers on an assessment of factors influencing student enrollment within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools.

The Southern Union Conference is one of nine unions (including Canada) which comprise the North American Division of the World Church of Seventh-day Adventists. Housed in the eight southern states that comprise the Southern Union, are more than 244,000 church members and a wide multi-disciplinary organization of ministries and institutions. The eight states which comprise the Southern Union are: North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Alabama. (Southern Union Conference, May 2009)

Consistent with other parochial schools, secondary schools operating within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist have not been immuned to fluctuations in student enrollments. Secondary enrollment data compiled by the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist (2009) schools for the years 2004 to 2008 provide a mixed enrollment picture. Some schools within the conference show marginal increases in enrollment, while other schools

show a steady decline in enrollment. In some instances schools show an increase in enrollment in one year and a decrease the following year. Still other schools reflect very minor enrollment variations and may be classified as steady state schools.

Ironically, at the secondary level, between the years 2004 to 2008, there was an increase from 2,335 to 2,593 students enrolled in day and boarding schools combined. However, the enrollment increases realized within secondary schools were not equally distributed among all schools. In effect, increases in some schools offset decreases in other schools, thereby skewing the true enrollment picture.

Table 4 represents the enrollment for secondary day and boarding academies within the Southern Union Conference.

Table 4

Day and Boarding Schools Enrollment for Southern Union Conference
Day Academy Enrollment

SCHOOL YEAR	AAA	CA	GAAA	GMA	MA	MUA			
2004-05	79	348	120	162	99	99			
2005-06	72	374	137	160	100	90			
2006-07	86	415	162	148	116	95			
2007-08	122	406	177	158	120	85			
Boarding Academy Enrollment									
School Year	BA	FA	FLA	GCA	HHA	HrA	HA	LA	MPA
2004-05	122	82	612	240	25	36	121	40	150
2005-06	126	112	605	248	25	39	122	45	176
2006-07	103	152	654	251	20	32	122	44	146
2007-08	119	154	630	258	16	43	115	43	147

Specifically, of the six day academies (commuter campuses) that are part of this research, four showed enrollment increases between the academic years 2004 to 2008. These four were Atlanta Adventist Academy, Collegedale Academy, Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy, and Madison Academy. Only two of the six day academies, Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy and Madison Academy had a steady increase in student enrollment from 2004 to 2008. The remaining four day academies fluctuated in enrollment over the time period, down in some years, up in others.

Of the nine schools within the boarding academy category, five showed enrollment increases between the academic years 2004 to 2008. These schools were Fletcher Academy, Forest Lake Academy, Georgia Cumberland Academy, Heritage Academy, and Laurelbrook Academy. Of these five schools which showed enrollment increases over the period of time, only two had steady enrollment increases from 2004 to 2008. All other schools experienced fluctuations in enrollment from year to year, sometimes up, sometimes down.

As stated, these data provide a mixed enrollment profile of the secondary schools within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. What is clear, however, is that the only consistency in enrollment patterns among the secondary schools is their enrollment inconsistency. These enrollment fluctuation patterns present a planning nightmare for both local and regional school administrators.

In response to enrollment fluctuations within the Southern Union Conference, conference administrators developed an initiative entitled the Adventist EDGE program. This was an educational program designed for the comprehensive improvement of Adventist education Pre K-12. One of the program initiatives was to achieve a 30% increase in enrollment by the year 2010, along the continuum of Pre K-12. This research focused only on secondary schools within

the Southern Union Conference. Within the secondary schools, between 2004-2008, enrollment increased by only 258 students, as compared to an increase of 700 students which would have met the 30% target goal.

Three educational strategies constitute the Adventist EDGE initiative.

- 1, Redesigning education in the Southern Union by changing the focus of classroom teaching from a teacher/ textbook centered method to a student centered approach, taking into account the various learning styles of every student;
2. Redouble efforts by conference leaders, members and pastors to touch every person in the Southern Union with the good news of the saving power of Jesus and his second coming; and
3. Promote the union's lay evangelism goals of spiritual growth, community involvement, personal witness, city outreach, church planting, evangelistic programming and media ministry.

Within the above three articulated strategies both for increasing enrollment in Southern Union schools, and stabilizing enrollment, the implied reasons for enrollment fluctuations, and in some cases declines, can be accounted for and addressed if these strategies are successfully implemented. This deduction assumes that other possible causative factors such as personal relationships and finances, (Araya, 1991), issues of safety and caring teachers, (Hunt, 1996), and lack of commitment and distance to schools, (Fink, 1989) among others, have no relevance.

To this point Baldwin (2001) asserted that recruitment concerns Adventist education from the elementary to higher education levels. Enrollment numbers are the lifeblood of an institution's growth, a necessity for continual development of staff, technology, and facilities. In many cases, the school's budget is held hostage to the dictates of a particular year's enrollment.

Reinforcing Baldwin's assertion is the insight provided by Bartlett (1982). Bartlett states that among the cacophony of voices heard by the academy principal is that of the board of directors emphasizing the importance of enrollment. Unless the principal is personally attuned to the need, it is easy to allow this voice to be drowned out by other needs and responsibilities such as curriculum planning, academic leadership, discipline, finance, plant construction, maintenance, personnel, and student labor. Bartlett (1982) continues by stating that it is easy to rationalize that if these are done well, enrollment will take care of itself or that enrollment is a responsibility of the conference director of education, the conference youth leader, or the church pastors.

Since student enrollment drives everything in the system, if enrollment instability isn't interrupted, fluctuations stabilized and enrollments ultimately consistently grown, the efficacy of maintaining a secondary educational program within the region, and in some schools in particular, would appear to be in jeopardy.

In summary, it is essential for relevant stakeholders and critical decision makers to get a handle on factors influencing enrollment in Seventh-day Adventist schools. But how is the real question. The how must be rooted in the why. To the extent that this study can shed some light on the "why" it may provide a sound basis for mounting a campaign to address an increasingly serious problem.

Metaphorically, students are to schools as engines are to cars. They are the driving force for why schools exist. A steady increase in student enrollment, even marginally, is a good indicator of sustainability. The converse is equally true, enrollment declines, if not interrupted will eventually spell doom for both day schools (commuter campuses) and boarding schools so affected.

Research Focus

This research focused on 15 day and boarding schools operating in the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. The Southern Union Conference was chosen because the researcher served as Principal in one of the secondary schools within the Southern Union Conference. However, in order to minimize bias, the particular academy for which the researcher was Principal was excluded from this study. For purposes of definition and distinction day schools are essentially non-residential commuter institutions and boarding schools are residential-live in institutions.

Research Question

The guiding question for this research was what are the most salient factors leading to enrollment instability and fluctuations and in particular declines in secondary schools within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists? Based upon these findings an intervention strategy was developed in order to address the problem and presented to relevant stakeholders for appropriate decision making.

Survey data for this research were obtained from stakeholders within the secondary educational systems of the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Survey stakeholders were defined as those people whose actions and decisions have a direct bearing on secondary school enrollment. These stakeholders were: students, pastors, parents (Adventist parents with children attending Adventist schools, and Adventist parents with children not attending Adventist schools), teachers, school board members, conference administrators, and school administrators.

Research Design

Considerable research has been conducted on factors which contribute to enrollment trends across educational institutional types. Although this study was specifically focused on secondary enrollment instability and fluctuations and had a particular emphasis on enrollment declines within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist schools, it was useful to examine enrollment factors across institutional lines as these provided some insights into Adventist enrollment patterns. As such the literature review chapter covers not only Adventist specific enrollment findings, but also charter, public and private schools.

Drawing on the results of previous research (literature review) and allowing for a write in section, factors identified for declining enrollment within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, as well as cross institutional patterns, were extrapolated. These factors were compiled without regard for rank order, so as not to pre-influence how stakeholders chose to rank order the factors.

Once the extrapolation process was completed, a questionnaire was developed listing all of the identified factors and sent out to secondary representatives of each stakeholder group within the eight state Southern Conference region. In the first iteration of the questionnaire, secondary stakeholders were asked to rank the pre-identified factors in order of most significant or influential to least significant or influential using a numerical value system.

The results of the first questionnaire iteration were analyzed using a percentage clustering format and the top factors were deduced from the analysis. Once this process was completed, a second iteration of the questionnaire was sent back to the initial respondents with a request to rank order the highest percentage causative factors. The results were then analyzed and a final rank-order deduced. When this phase was completed, the results were analyzed and intervention

strategies developed which were shared with administrative representatives from the Southern Union Conference.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

For purposes of historical perspective, the introductory chapter of this research included select histories covering the origins of some faith-based K-12 institutions. In addition, attention was given to dilemmas facing faith-based schools currently with particular emphasis both on institutional losses across denominational lines as well as substantial losses in student enrollments. (See Table 1) The point being made is that though this research is primarily concerned with enrollment losses within secondary schools operating within the Southern Union Conference, institutional and corresponding enrollment losses across faith-based institutional lines portend significant, if not grave concerns.

This conclusion is especially important given the historical and current role faith-based institutions play in the education of America's youth. The researcher is reminded here that only a few years ago, many argued that there was no longer a need for historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The rationale was that desegregation had opened up higher educational opportunities for all youth, independent of race, and therefore support to HBCUs was no longer required (Lincoln, 1971). The counter argument was that HBCU's served a special and unique role in American higher education and should not only be preserved, but also enhanced.

Similar affirmative arguments can be made for and about faith-based K-12 institutions. Without question enrollment trends and patterns within and between faith-based K-12 institutions are key ingredients for not only survival, but also sustainable quality over time.

Keeping in mind that the focus of this research is specific to enrollment declines and fluctuations within secondary schools operating in the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-

day Adventist, a portion of this literature review will focus on public schools, charter schools and private/parochial schools other than Seventh-day Adventist institutions. This is necessary and important because Adventist schools do not operate in a vacuum. They are part of a much larger national educational consortium of schools and as such both influence and are influenced by events, challenges and opportunities thereto appertaining. This interconnectedness is expressed quite succinctly by Hargreaves and Fink (2006) who cited Powell, Edwards, Whitty, and Wigfall, 2003 and Wells, 2002, stating that:

The fates of schools are increasingly intertwined. What leaders do in one school necessarily affects the fortunes of students and teachers in other schools around them; their actions reverberate throughout the system like ripples in a pond. As exemplary or high-profile institutions draw the most outstanding teachers and leaders, they drain them away from the rest. For every magnet or lighthouse school that attracts most of the local resources and attention, dozens of surrounding schools may operate like outhouses-low-status places in which districts dump their difficult students and weaker staffs. The more schools systems run on the market principles of competition and choice, the tighter these interconnections become. (p. 1, para. 1)

Additionally, a considerable portion of enrollment literature focuses on K-12 enrollment trends and patterns as a continuum. In effect K-8 enrollment patterns are viewed as a precursor to high school enrollment patterns. Thus impact deductions can be made from reviewing the K-12 continuum.

As can be seen, major attention is given to research specific to Seventh-day Adventist enrollment trends and patterns. The extrapolations from these research studies combined with those associated with other educational institutions provide the basis for identifying the initial list of factors to be used in construction of the first research questionnaire for respondents.

A starting point for this review of literature chapter is a National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES; 2009) report put out in answer to the question, what are the enrollment trends in public and private elementary and secondary schools? As can be seen in Table 5 below, except

for minor aberrations between the years 2003-2008, elementary schools have shown steady increases in enrollment and are expected to continue these increases through 2017. Similarly, public school enrollment in the upper grades rose from 11.3 million in 1990 to 15.1 million in 2006. NCES projects that public secondary enrollment will show a decrease of 3% between the years 2006-2011 and then increase again through 2017.

In contrast the percentage of students in private elementary and secondary schools declined from 11.7% in 1995 to 11.0% in 2005. In 2008, a projected 6.1 million students were enrolled in private schools at the elementary and secondary levels. Between 2008 and a NCES projection to 2017, the number of students in grades 9 through 12 is expected to decrease from 1,372,000 to 1,290,000. This expected decrease in ninth through twelfth grade enrollment portends a substantial enrollment impact for private secondary institutions including, at least potentially, Seventh-day Adventist day and boarding schools.

Table 5

Enrollment in Elementary and Secondary Schools, by Level and Control of Institution: Selected Years, Fall 1970 through Fall 2017 [In thousands]

Year			<u>Public</u>					<u>Private</u> ¹
	Total	Total	Grades Pre K-8	Grades 9-12	Total	Grades Pre K-8	Grades 9-12	
1970	51,257	45,894	32,558	13,336	5,363	4,052	1,311	
1980	46,208	40,877	27,647	13,231	5,331	3,992	1,339	
1985	44,979	39,422	27,034	12,388	5,557	4,195	1,362	
1990	46,864	41,217	29,878	11,338	5,648	4,514	1,134	
1995	50,759	44,840	32,341	12,500	5,918	4,756	1,163	
2000	53,373	47,204	33,688	13,515	6,169 ²	4,906 ²	1,264 ²	
2001	53,992	47,672	33,938	13,734	6,320	5,023	1,296	
2002	54,403	48,183	34,116	14,067	6,220 ²	4,915 ²	1,306 ²	
2003	54,639	48,540	34,202	14,338	6,099	4,788	1,311	
2004	54,882	48,795	34,179	14,617	6,087 ²	4,756 ²	1,331 ²	
2005	55,187	49,113	34,205	14,908	6,073	4,723	1,350	
2006	55,394	49,299	34,221	15,078	6,095 ³	4,711 ³	1,384 ³	
2007 ³	55,710	49,644	34,589	15,055	6,066	4,681	1,385	
2008 ³	55,879	49,825	34,903	14,922	6,054	4,681	1,372	
2009 ³	56,116	50,067	35,240	14,826	6,049	4,695	1,355	
2015 ³	59,127	52,910	37,711	15,199	6,217	4,976	1,241	
2016 ³	59,786	65,503	38,052	15,451	6,283	5,021	1,262	
2017 ³	60,443	54,087	38,399	15,689	6,356	5,066	1,290	

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2009). Digest of Education Statistics, 2008 (NCES 2009-020), Chapter 1.

¹Beginning in fall 1980, data include estimates for an expanded universe of private schools. Therefore direct comparisons with earlier years should be avoided.

²Estimated.

³Projected.

Much of the aforementioned enrollment data can be accounted for in part by major demographic changes in society. These demographic changes reflect not only the impact of the

baby-boom generation, but also multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual changes. Sack-Min (2008) affirmed this conclusion when she stated that “More students will attend U.S. public schools than ever before, with record setting enrollments being driven by immigration and the nation’s growing diversity” (p.1, para.1).

Portman (2009) stated that

Currently, U.S. public schools are filled with student populations that are “multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual” (Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2007, p.75). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) reports, in the 1990s, racial and ethnic minorities made up 80% of the nation’s population growth. In the 2000s, there were roughly 87 million people of minority backgrounds living in the country, corresponding to a 43% increase from the 1990 population data (Roseberry-McKibbin, Brice, & O’Hanlon, 2005). An examination of the U.S. Census Bureau reports during the past 20 years indicates that the White, non-Hispanic population grew by 7.6 % because the population of individuals from racial minority backgrounds grew by more than 90%. (p. 1, para. 3)

Singh (2009) placed the aforementioned demographic data into its impact on Adventist specific education.

Were the English language learners (ELLs) population homogeneous, the challenge to meet their learning needs would be big enough; however, given their great diversity, the challenge is enormous. ELLs in American schools come in almost endless variety, with shades of differences within primary categories-age, primary language, culture, years in the country, socio-economic status, parental support, and level of English proficiency-plus a small percentage who have identified learning disabilities. To find ways to meet ELLs’ learning needs, to create ELL-friendly classrooms, and to successfully incorporate ELLs into mainstream classrooms are the ever-present challenges to teachers and school administrators. Since the trend points toward increasingly multicultural classrooms, it is imperative that educators find effective strategies to teach these students. (p. 4)

Additional efforts by the Adventist educational system to successfully incorporate students from multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual backgrounds can be found in the writings of Campbell et al., 2009; Carrigan, 2009; Gilkeson, 2009; Greig & Bryson, 2009; Kim, 2009; Lambert, 2009; Salazar, 2009; Wahlen, 2009.

What is emerging is that enrollment patterns whether public or private are influenced by multiple factors. These multiple factors are inclusive of, but not limited to, the impact of the baby-boomer generation, immigration, as well as parental perceptions of quality of education and costs among others.

Charter Schools

Another national trend affecting enrollment patterns in American K-12 education is the growth of charter schools. Robelen (1998) pointed out that the dramatic growth of the charter school movement in the United States has quickly placed this new brand of school reform prominently on the public education map.

Fusarelli (2002) defined a charter school as an autonomous publicly funded entity that operates on the basis of a contract between the group that organizes the school and a sponsor, usually the local school district or state education agency. Fusarelli further explained that the charter specifies how the school is to be operated and the educational outcomes by which it is to be judged.

What exactly is the appeal of charter schools? First, public schools throughout the United States have been consistently looking for ways to improve the educational achievement of their students and maintain a competitive advantage over other educational options. Whitte, Schlomer, and Shober (2007) posited that charter schools, first created in Minnesota in 1991, became an option for public school districts in Wisconsin in 1993. Charter schools can potentially free their administrators from many of the state regulated mandates on schools that charter proponents argue drag down the overall level of instruction that can be offered in traditional educational settings. (Whitte, Schlomer, & Shober, 2007)

Second, according to Fife (2008):

The charter school movement is part of a national trend that emphasized more choice elements in public education in the 1990s that still continues in the first decade of the twenty-first century (Spring 2005). By way of illustration, charter school legislation was initially created in Minnesota in 1991. Since then, all states, including the District of Columbia, have done the same with the exception of Alabama, Kentucky, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia. (p. 1, para. 2)

Third, Kennedy (2002) indicated that charter schools can be created in different ways, overseen by a variety of organizations, have various philosophies and academic focuses, and can be found in all types of facilities. Kennedy concludes by outlining the characteristics of successful charters as identified by Patsy O'Neill, executive director of the Charter School Resource Center of Texas. These specific characteristics are: strong governance structure, rigorous curriculum, stable faculty and staff, extended-day schedule or after-school programs, high parental involvement, and financial and academic accountability. These same characteristics can be translated into why parents may choose charter schools over traditional K-12 schools. These factors notwithstanding choice appears to be a major cause in parents opting for charter schools over traditional K-12 public schools.

Molnar, (1996) in an article entitled, "Charter Schools: The Smiling Face of Disinvestment" offered three particularly instructive insights. "First, everyone, it seems, loved charter schools" (p. 1, para. 1). *Time* magazine has called them the "New Hope for Public Schools" (Wallis 1994). *The New Democrat*, the Democratic Leadership Council's journal, says charter school advocates are "Rebels with a Cause" (Mirga 1994). And *The New York Times* (in an unusual note of irony) calls them the "Latest 'Best Hope' in U.S. Education" (Applebome, as cited in Molnar, 1996)

American Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker launched the movement when, in a 1988 National Press Club speech, he called for empowering teachers by creating

charter schools that focused on professional development and had a clear commitment to improving student achievement (Sautter, 1993). Since then, the rise of charter schools to the top of the educational reform agenda has been spectacular (Molnar, 1996).

To many educators, parents, and politicians, the charter school idea represented a public education alternative to private school voucher proposals. It was an idea they could embrace enthusiastically because it seemed to protect public education as an institution and at the same time provide for fundamental reform and systemic restructuring (Molnar, 1996).

Buckley and Schneider (2006) stated that existing research, without exception, has found that parents are more satisfied with schools they have chosen. Perhaps the strongest explanation for this finding is *allocative efficiency* (i.e., education is a complex, multifaceted good) and choice allows parents to select schools that emphasize the kind of education they want for their children (Schneider, Teske, & Marschall, 2000).

An expansion on the aforementioned concepts of charter schools is provided by Nathan (1998). Nathan stated that the charter idea, as it has evolved, has a number of defining characteristics. These are as follows:

- Allows the creation of new public schools or the conversion of existing ones;
- Stipulates that the schools be nonsectarian and prohibits admissions tests;
- Requires that these schools be responsible for improved student achievement over a period of three to five years or be closed;
- Waives most state rules and regulations, along with local contract provisions, in exchange for explicit responsibility for results;
- Permits several public bodies- such as state and local school boards, universities, and city governments- to authorize creation of charter schools;
- Permits educators and families to select these schools, rather than being assigned to them; and

- Requires that average per-pupil funding follow students to the schools, along with other appropriate funds such as Title I and special and compensatory education funds.

The charter school movement is less than 20 years old and considerable controversy continues to exist. This controversy surrounds their usefulness and effectiveness. Approximately one million students attend charter schools nationally which represents about 1% of all students attending K-12 institutions.

Issues surrounding charter schools range from conclusions that for-profit educational management organizations (EMOs) running charter schools can have both positive and negative effects on low-income and minority enrollment depending on EMO type and urban location (Lacireno-Paquet, 2006), to the value of state university roles in the charter school movement (Metcalf, Theobald, & Gonzalez, 2003), to the infusion of choice and vouchers (Caire, 2002), in the public education domain.

No effort is made here to draw any final conclusions on the merits of charter schools, however, like any other new paradigm; they must successfully challenge the prevailing paradigm of traditional K-12 education.

As noted by Condeluci (1995):

In understanding paradigms, it is important to note that prevailing paradigms are not threatened until new approaches are found to be successful. Kuhn called these new approaches anomalies. These are actions with roots outside the existing paradigm that are found to work. Most often, these anomalies are approaches developed by entrepreneurs and targeted to the most difficult of paradigm challenges. As these anomalies are found to be successful, they begin to threaten the existing paradigm. (p. 43)

What can be said is that each new K-12 paradigm added to the national consortium of K-12 institutions, based on the theory of interconnectedness, (also known as Systems Theory) will in some measure affect and be affected by what currently exists in private/parochial and public K-12 educational institutions. When one million plus students are removed from existing

institutions, there is no question of enrollment impacts throughout all systems (Buckley & Schneider, 2006; Grimes, 1994; Howell, 2006; Nathan, 1998; Zimmer & Buddin, 2007).

Private Education

It would appear fitting that any discourse on private education would be introduced by quoting the rationale for its existence as articulated by the Council for American Private Education (CAPE 1990 modified 1997). Specifically,

Private schools, by definition, help fulfill the ideal of pluralism in American education. America's first schools were private schools established in the early 17th century. Today, one in four of the nation's elementary and secondary schools is a private school; eleven percent of all K-12 students attend them. These schools are continuing to flourish and are identified by strong statements of mission and purpose. They are religious and secular, large and small, urban and rural. They serve diverse populations, and are multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. Almost all vest the school's principal with the authority and the ability to implement change. Faculty, parents, and when appropriate, students, are actively engaged in the decision-making process. A sense of common community and common goals and an emphasis on values pervade these schools. The goals of private schools include academic excellence, meeting the needs of individual students and families, and a concern about the social, moral, spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual development of each child. (p. 1, para. 1)

It is stipulated in this research that the classification, private school, encompasses religiously-affiliated schools. The Council for American Private Education (CAPE) (2009) using data compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has summarized key facts about private K-12 schools.

Among these key facts are the following:

- Pre K-12 enrollment in 2009 was 6,049,000 or 11% of all U.S. students.
- During the year 2007-2008 there were 33,740 private schools or 25% of all U.S. schools.
- Most private school students (81%) attend religiously affiliated schools.

- Most private schools are small (e.g., 86% have fewer than 300 students; See Table 1 in Chapter 1).

Additionally, CAPE (2009) reported that students attending private schools (grades 4 & 8) on average consistently scored better on national achievement tests in math and reading. In one survey, parents, when asked the question, “In your local area, is it the public schools or the private schools that generally provide a better education?” 52% indicated private schools and 19% indicated public schools. In answer to the question, “Which type of institution did a better job teaching academic skills?” parents indicated that private schools did a better job 53% to 20%. In answer to the question, “Which type of institution did a better job maintaining discipline and order?” the response was 74% to 9% in favor of private schools. Only on the question, “Which type of institution did a better job teaching students to get along with people from different backgrounds?” parent responses were evenly distributed (38% to 38%).

The belief that both public and private schools were felt to do equally well in teaching students to get along with people from different backgrounds is perhaps not so surprising in light of the fact that public schools are increasingly experiencing the influx of student populations that are multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual. It is essential to find effective ways and means to integrate these students not only into the system, but also equip them with respectful interpersonal relationship skills. Most private schools are small with an average of 300 students, and though many have students of diverse multiethnic, multicultural and multigenerational backgrounds, on proportionality alone, the challenge is unequal.

Under the heading “Efficiency of Public and Private Schools,” Goldhaber (2002) after reviewing numerous studies, concluded that private school students in general, out perform their public school counterparts on standardized tests, and they are more likely to graduate from high

school and attend college. Goldhaber stipulates, however, that positive private school effects have tended to be found predominately for minority students in urban settings. There is, however, mixed evidence about whether this is an effect of the schools they attend or a result of student factors, such as family background.

Grimes (1994) reported that the success of private education has been based on a wide variety of factors. He stated that the most important of these factors include the demand for religious education and training, the perceived social status and externalities associated with private educational institutions, and the popular perception that private schools provide a higher quality service than public schools.

At this point, the question becomes, what differences or deductions can be drawn from the literature to ferret out factors influencing enrollment trends and patterns across institutional lines? In no order of priority or importance, the following factors have emerged:

- Public school enrollment is going up as fewer parents are able to afford the cost of private schools. According to the United States Department of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate in the United States in August of 2010 was 9.6%. Among this number, some people have been out of work for over 14 months. People falling in this category are known as “99ers”. As a consequence, families have had to make tough economic choices. One choice has been to remove their children from private schools and enroll them in public schools which are essentially free or at least substantially less costly than private, tuition based schools.
- The introduction of more educational options, i.e. magnet schools and charter schools, as alternatives to traditional public K-12 schools, have impacted private school enrollment;

- Demographic trends, particularly immigration, have created an influx of multiethnic, multilingual, and multigenerational students into K-12 systems, thereby elevating the issue of diversity and its impact;
- Parental perceptions of the quality of education received by their children is a critical determinate in choice of school;
- Size of schools, thus size of classes may bear heavily on the amount of individualized attention students receive. The average enrollment in private schools is 300 as compared to public schools which are often in the thousands;
- Many parents are looking to religious education and training as part of the K-12 experience.

These factors will now be integrated with Seventh-day Adventist K-12 enrollment trends and patterns as requisite to identifying the range of variables specifically impacting secondary enrollment declines within the Southern Union Conference.

Adventist Specific Literature Review

This section is introduced by returning to the insights or perhaps more appropriately, the laments of Anderson (2009) in his treatise, “How to Kill Adventist Education.” In response to declining student enrollments among the 1,000 North American Division school campuses of Seventh-day Adventist, he wrote:

In the face of such problems, many of our school boards and staff members have taken heroic measures to right their respective ships. But honesty demands a painful admission: *More often than not, in spite of our best efforts, the decline has continued.* And the lack of progress has led many of us to give up, plop down in one of the deck chairs on our educational *Titanic*, and speak wistfully of the good old days when our schools (and perhaps even our coffers) were full. Too often we are a people both tired and grieved, waiting for the inevitable vortex of death to suck us down. (p. 13)

The concerns expressed herein by Anderson are reverberating throughout the Seventh-day Adventist community nationally and specifically within the Southern Union Conference. As previously stated, so concerned are administrators and church leaders about enrollment fluctuations and declines in K-12 institutions in the Southern Union, that an aggressive recruitment strategy has been devised. This strategy is referred to as The Adventist EDGE and is designed to increase enrollment by 30% by the year 2010.

The justification for the concerns within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions are borne out in substantial measure in Table 6 below. Table 6, entitled, Academy Enrollment in the Southern Union shows that in the year 2000, 2,438 students were enrolled in schools across the Southern Union. By the year 2004, the number of students enrolled decreased to 2,373.

Table 6

Academy Enrollment in the Southern Union Conference

Year	Student Enrollment
2000	2,438
2003	2,380
2004	2,373

It could be asked, why is such a small decrease between the years 2000 and 2004 cause for alarm? For one, decrease in enrollment is not a good indicator of either viability or sustainability. But more importantly, one would assume that as membership in Seventh-day Adventist church communities increase, there would be a corresponding proportionate increase

in student enrollment within Seventh-day Adventist schools. The converse is the case. (See Table 7.)

Table 7

Membership Growth and SDA School Enrollment

Year	Membership Growth	SDA School Enrollment
1950	756,812	148,144
2000	11,687,229	1,056,090

Table 8 entitled, Academy Enrollment in NAD (North American Division), illustrates that between the years 1979 and 2003, the number of secondary schools increased from 97 to 110. At the same time, enrollment declined from 18,563 in 1979 to 15,334 by 2003.

Table 8

Academy Enrollment in NAD (North American Division)

Year	Student Enrollment	Number of Secondary Schools
1979	18,563	97
2003	15,334	110

Though these data cover all of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, there is a direct impact on the Southern Union Conference. Table 9 shows a significant decrease in the average number of academy students enrolled. In 1979 there were 197 students enrolled. By the year 2003 the average number of students enrolled decreased to 139.

Table 9

Average Academy Enrollment in the North American Division

Year	Student Enrollment
1979	197
2003	139

Within the Southern Union Conference, the average student enrollment in both day and boarding schools fell below the national enrollment average of 139 students. Two schools within the Southern Union Conference, Collegedale Academy and Forest Lake Academy did not comport with the national trend. These two schools have been excluded from Table 10 below.

Table 10

Average Enrollment for Day and Boarding Schools
Within the Southern Union Conference

School Year	Average Day School Enrollment	Average Boarding School Enrollment
2004-2005	112	123
2005-2006	112	112
2006-2007	121	108
2007-2008	132	112

Source: Analysis of the Day and Boarding Schools Enrollment for Southern Union Conference taken from Table 4.

Factors influencing enrollment fluctuations and particularly enrollment declines in Seventh-day Adventist schools are multifaceted in nature. Adventist literature is replete on the subject giving added credence not only to the significance and import of the subject matter, but also and perhaps most importantly, added credence to the need to find successful solutions to the problem.

Gregorutti (2008) reviewed over 19 studies, both nationally and internationally relative to factors influencing Adventist enrollment. As a result Gregorutti inferred that Adventist enrollment is affected by the following set of beliefs, perceptions, and factors:

1. *Parents' perceptions.* Several studies have pointed out that limited curriculum, staff, and amount of available involvement were among the reasons for withdrawal; however, at the same time, parents seemed to agree that Adventist education is very good. Perceptions about teachers' and administrators' training and qualifications are mixed and in some cases might negatively affect enrollment. Perceptions of spiritual environment, such as teachers and school climate, were considered important factors in the decision to enroll children at Adventist K-12 schools.
2. *Identification with Adventist education.* Parents exposed to Adventist education tended to send their children to an Adventist K-12 school. Also, having both parents Adventist increased the probability of a child being enrolled at an Adventist school. A paradoxical situation was observed that effected enrollment. Namely, parents had a tendency to agree that Christian education is good as a conviction rather than a preference, since many of them did not enroll their children at Adventist schools.
3. *External factors.* Whether in international or national settings, distance and cost of tuition were the most cited and influential factors affecting enrollment. For most K-12 students, distance is a very difficult obstacle to overcome, as was analyzed and demonstrated in the majority of the studies. Beyond a certain distance, parents tended to hesitate to enroll their children in or tended to withdraw their children from Adventist schools.
4. *Promotional factors.* Greater availability of information through pastors, teachers, and church leaders, especially to newly converted parents, would improve enrollment rates.
5. *Church leadership.* Pastors and church leaders perceived themselves as cooperative and supportive of Christian education; however, some parents saw these leaders as less supportive, which negatively impacted enrollment. (p. 7)

Though Christian education for parents is an important consideration for enrolling their children in Adventist schools, Christian education in and of itself is insufficient to make the final enrollment decision. More is needed. Baldwin (2001) stated that

One way to increase the number of students attending your school is through the effective use of extracurricular activities. Putting it simply: *Students recruit*

students. But what is the most effective approach? Although academics, caring staff, location, campus amenities, and spiritual tone all play important roles, one of the best enticements for prospective students is extracurricular activities. Whether or not prospective students are actively involved in the specific activity, they will see the best a school has to offer. There are many options: sports, drama, music, ministry teams, etc. (p. 32)

In 1982, Bartlett (1982) stated that school enrollment will rise and fall in direct proportion to the amount of personal contact with parents and students. The clear inference here is that the less personal contact had with parents and prospective students, the more likely that schools other than Seventh-day Adventist will be chosen.

Brown (2001) reinforced the importance of personal contacts, especially when trying to recruit for boarding academies. He stated that research and experience have shown that the more personal the strategy, the more effective the persuasion.

Rasi (2000) inferred that enrollment declines in many instances can be traced directly to the degree to which Adventist schools have a clear statement of mission; the level of commitment of administrators, teachers and support staff; projection of a positive image; and the level of supportive alliance with the local church families and leaders.

Stevenson (2001) suggested that the lack of an effective recruitment strategy operating within K-12 Adventist schools is at the heart of enrollment struggles. He concludes with the notion that with a concerted effort, most schools can increase their enrollment, but it takes organization and a systematic approach.

On the international scene Lekic (2005) investigated perceptions and attitudes toward Adventist schools in Canada. He found that for Adventist parents, the top three reasons for sending children to church schools were spiritual focus a safe and caring environment, and dedicated school personnel. For non-Adventist parents, the three main reasons were a safe and caring environment, high-quality academics, and spiritual focus. Adventist parents who did not

send their children to church schools gave the following reasons; distance from home, high cost of tuition, and lack of high-quality academics.

In the area of tuition costs, it is instructive to examine the costs associated with the fifteen day and boarding schools comprising this study. These data are provided in Table 11. As can be seen, the cost to attend day schools ranges \$591 to \$866 per month. In the case of boarding schools, the range is \$925 to \$1815 per month. In a time of severe economic uncertainty and job instability, these costs may indeed be a contributing factor both in terms of not enrolling youth in Adventist schools or pulling them out in favor of less costly alternatives.

Table 11

Tuition Costs for Secondary Schools in the Southern Union Conference

Day Schools	Tuition Cost Per Month (Approximate)	
Atlanta Adventist Academy	\$866	
Collegedale Academy	\$638	
Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy	\$475	
Greater Miami Academy	\$670	
Madison Academy	\$750	
Miami Union Academy	\$591	
Boarding Schools	Tuition (Approximate)	Room & Board (Approximate)
Bass Academy	\$740	\$550
Fletcher Academy	\$722	\$500
Forest Lake Academy	\$1,815	
Georgia Cumberland Academy	\$911	\$698
Harbert Hills Academy	\$1,200 (books, tuition, room & board)	
Heritage Academy	\$925	
Highland Academy	\$1,557	
Laurelbrook Academy	\$1,190	
Mt. Pisgah Academy	\$810	\$620

Among the factors most often cited as reason to choose Adventist schools is the quality of education to which students are exposed. The quality of education to which students are exposed is clearly related to the quality of instruction received. The quality of instruction is correspondingly correlated with the extent to which teachers are current with developments in their field. Brantley and Hwangbo (2000) report the results of a survey which should at a minimum raise a red flag. The question was posed to North American Division Curriculum Committee (NADCC) members, teachers, conference personnel and teacher educators; do you feel that you are adequately able to keep up to date with new developments in your field? Table 12 below gives the results of the survey.

Table 12

Do you feel that you are adequately able to keep up-to-date
with new developments in your field?

Category	Percent Responding "Yes"
Elementary teachers	57%
Academy teachers	52%
Conference personnel	76%
Teacher educators	81%
NADCC	84%

These data would suggest that there is a substantial gap between classroom teachers' currency relative to developments in their field and that of conference personnel, teacher educators (trainers) and North American Division Curriculum Committee members. In effect, front line classroom teachers are less current in their fields of instruction than are their supervisors/trainers/educators. An informed parent constituency group, if aware of such discrepancies, might well interpret this as bearing negatively on the quality of education experienced by their children in Adventist schools.

Literature Synthesis

It is probably safe to say that no educational administrator, whether the institution is public, quasi-public as in a charter school or private/parochial is indifferent to enrollment trends and patterns as these affect their particular educational setting. As previously indicated, student enrollment is to a school system as an engine is to a car. Without students the purpose for schools ceases. Equally, a car without an engine will not run.

What the review of literature has revealed is that enrollment patterns and trends are multifaceted in nature. As such, no single factor affecting enrollment is sufficient to account for the many variations thereto appertaining.

Second, among the consortium of K-12 schools in American society, there is a systemic interconnectedness between and among them. What happens in one type of educational setting creates ripple effects in other settings. To restate Hargreaves and Fink (2006), the fate of schools are increasingly intertwined. What leaders do in one school necessarily affects the fortunes of students and teachers in other schools....

Third, because of the interinstitutional connectedness, factors influencing enrollment trends and patterns have applicability across institutional lines. Thus, when attempting to extrapolate factors influencing enrollment declines specific to secondary schools within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, enrollment indices across institutional lines is appropriate.

It should also be noted that the list of factors deduced from the literature may not be exhaustive. As a result, in the questionnaire construction phase, provision was made for write in responses. The identified factors were as follows.

1. Recruitment strategies on the part of school officials
2. School Mission Statement

3. Personal contacts with potential parents and students
4. The commitment of administrators
5. The commitment of teachers and support staff
6. Training/preparedness of administrators
7. Training/preparedness of teachers
8. Quality of education received in school
9. Needs of multiethnic and multilingual students (diversity)
10. Support systems for special needs children
11. Local governance structures
12. Enrollment in K-8 schools
13. Extra-curricular activities
14. Christian educational experiences at other schools
15. The cost of education
16. The availability of quality choices within public schools, i.e. magnet schools and charter schools
17. The distance between the location of school and where families live is too great
18. Infrastructure and facilities- i.e. gymnasium, classrooms, state of the art technology, etc.
19. Projection of a positive school image
20. Constituent pastors' support
21. Support alliance necessary between schools and local church families and leaders

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The original intent of this research was to survey 15 secondary schools operating within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist schools. At the outset of the study, 16 secondary schools were identified as affiliated with the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist schools. The principal investigator served as the administrator of one of the schools and this institution was omitted from the sample to avoid a conflict of interest.

As the research unfolded, it was discovered that two of the remaining 15 schools had become established as independent schools and were therefore no longer under the Office of Education for the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist schools. The elimination of these two secondary schools reduced the number of participating institutions to 13. Of the remaining 13 schools, 4 chose not to participate in the study. As a result, 9 schools made up the institutional respondent pool. This reduced the population sample from 370 to 226 possible participants.

Nine constituent groups were identified as major stakeholders within each institutional setting. Members of each stakeholder group were included in the sample. The institutional stakeholders were identified as follows: teachers, parents, students, school board members, pastors/ church leaders, principals, area and regional administrators and parents of non-enrolled students.

Since this study was localized to the Southern Union Conference and narrowed to include only secondary institutions, in some instances 100% of particular stakeholders of participating institutions were surveyed. The stakeholders falling in this category included:

- Each of the secondary school principals (9)
- All area and regional administrators for Southern Union Conference (10)
- Each school board chairperson (9)
- One at-large parent, per school, selected by the parent council (9)
- Six additional parents, per school, of students not attending an SDA academy (54)
- The pastor/ church leader who represents the primary clerical liaison person to each institution (9)
- The president of each parent council or home and school organization (9)
- The lead teacher representative from each institution (9)
- Students in grades 9-12 (108)

The student respondents for the study were drawn from grades nine to twelve in each institution. Not less than three members of each class who volunteered to participate were included. At a minimum, 108 total student respondents were sought from this group.

Table 13 below is a graphic representation of the study sample for questionnaires #1 and #2.

Table 13

Study Sample Participants for Questionnaires #1 and #2

Category	Number	Percentage
1. Institutional Principal	9	100
2. School Board President/Chairperson	9	100
3. President of Parent Council	9	100
4. Lead Pastor/ Church leader ¹	9	100
5. Area Regional Administrator ²	10	100
6. Lead Institutional Teacher ³	9	100
7. Parent At-large ⁴	9	unknown
8. Students- 12-Per School ⁵	108	unknown
9. Parents of non-enrolled students-6 per school area	54	unknown
Total Sample	226	

¹ Each institution has a key or major church sponsor. This was the pastor/church leader used in the study.

² There were 7 regional conferences utilized in this study, with 1 Education Superintendent representing each region. In addition, there were 3 Southern Union Conference office administrators who participated in the study, making a total of 10 area regional administrators.

³ Each school usually has a lead teacher or some other related title for a person who is in charge of the school in the absence of the principal.

⁴ The parent at-large was selected by the parent council association

⁵ Three students per grade, grades 9 to 12, were requested for the student respondents

The final participants in the research study consisted of a focus group. The focus group makeup consisted of an associate director for education for the Southern Union Conference, a teacher within the Southern Union Conference, a principal within the Southern Union Conference and a current board member within the Southern Union Conference who had previously occupied roles as a teacher, principal and regional superintendent.

Materials

Literature review.

A review of literature on factors influencing student enrollment trends and patterns across educational institutional lines yielded 21 variables that affect student enrollment trends and patterns. No attempt was made in the review of literature process to categorize these variables

relative to their weighted significance in influencing enrollment trends and patterns. This list of variables provided the data necessary to construct the first of three research questionnaires.

Research questionnaire #1

The research process called for the construction of a survey questionnaire which consisted of the 21 variables influencing student enrollment trends and patterns as identified in the review of literature. It is important to note here that the factors perceived to be contributing to enrollment declines are stated in neutral terms so as not to sway respondent responses positively or negatively. These 21 variables were sub-divided into five categories to facilitate participant responses. These five sub-divided categories were: administration, parent's perceptions, external factors, promotional factors and church leadership. See Appendix F for the breakdown of factors under each category for Questionnaire #1.

Research questionnaire #2.

A second questionnaire was constructed based on the data analysis from the administration of Questionnaire #1. The purpose for Questionnaire #2 was to further prioritize those variables deemed to be the most significant in influencing enrollment trends and patterns. Questionnaire #2 consisted only of those variables which were rated by research respondents to be in the top 50% of influencing factors. See Questionnaire #2 in Appendix H for the factors which constituted Questionnaire #2.

Focus group questionnaire.

The final phase of the research was in the form of a questionnaire based on data analysis from Questionnaire #2 which was used by the researcher to conduct a focus group. The focus group consisted of key educational Adventist K-12 stakeholders in the Southern Union Conference.

Procedures

Questionnaire #1 was pre-tested within the Huntsville, Alabama Adventist community to discover and correct any glitches which could have hampered data collection processes. The questionnaire was then sent out to key stakeholders with directions to rank order the pre-identified factors from most important to least important as reasons for enrollment declines using a numerical weighting system. In the event research participants felt that none of the pre-identified factors accounted for enrollment declines, an opportunity to write in such factors was provided on the questionnaire.

After respondents had ranked the pre-identified factors from most important to least important and returned them, the results were analyzed. The top factors deemed to be the most important in explaining enrollment declines were returned to study respondents who were then asked to re-rank them from most important to least important.

The final stage of data collection was in the form of a focus group. The primary intent of the focus group was not so much a third level validation of key enrollment factors found in data collection phases one and two, but rather as a process to fashion recruitment and enrollment strategies resulting from findings in phases one and two.

Focus groups typically use a questioning route, similar to an interview guide that should grow directly from the research questions (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990), (Goltzman, Kollar &

Trinkle, 2010). Given this directive, focus group questions were formulated consistent with the findings and rankings obtained from questionnaire #2. A convenience sampling plan was used to select focus group participants. As a result members of the focus group were not representative of all categorical respondents by states, rather by their proximity to and ease of access to the Southern Union Conference office in Atlanta, Georgia.

Four previously identified focus group participants met with the researcher in Atlanta, Georgia on June 30, 2010. A fifth member who was unable to attend the Atlanta session availed herself to the researcher in a subsequent interview.

The principal investigator opened the focus group with a general introduction of why the focus group was formed and a description of the purpose and findings of the research. This was followed by a brief orientation to the expectations and outcomes sought. Specific attention was given to crafting strategies to address the factors found to be the most influential in determining enrollment patterns within secondary Seventh-day Adventist schools operating within the Southern Union Conference. A questionnaire was provided to each focus group member to facilitate the discussion and for ease of recording specific strategic initiatives. See Appendix K.

Study data were analyzed utilizing the statistical program for the social sciences SPSS. Specifically, the latest version, PASW 18, was used in the research study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify from among key stakeholders affiliated with secondary schools in the Southern Union Conference, their perceptions of factors which most significantly influenced enrollment patterns among and within these schools. A thorough review of research literature on factors influencing student enrollment across institutional lines yielded 21 such factors. These data provided the basis for constructing the questionnaire for phase one of the data collection process.

The 21 pre-identified factors were sub-divided into five categories to facilitate ease of response. These categories were administration, parent's perceptions, external factors, promotional factors, and church leadership. Respondents were asked to rank each factor from the most significant to the least significant with 1 being the most significant, to 2 for the next most significant and so on until all factors had a numerical value. Data were analyzed using the latest version of PASW.

To make maximum efficient use of PASW as a tool to analyze data for this research, it was necessary to numerically reverse the order of responses within each subcategory during the data input process. Under the category administration, for example, seven factors were ranked by respondents. In inputting the data into SPSS, a respondent ranking of 1 for the most significant factor was inputted as 7, 2 was inputted as 6; 3 was inputted as 5, 4 was inputted as 4; 5 was inputted as 3, 6 was inputted as 2 and 7 was inputted as 1.

The second subcategory, Parents' Perceptions, also contained seven factors that were ranked by the respondents. The same reversal of data input was applicable for this subcategory as

in the category Administration. The third subcategory, External Factors, had only 3 factors; thus, the numerical weighting reversal occurred accordingly, i.e. 1 was inputted as 3; 2 was inputted as 2; and 3 was inputted as 1. The fourth subcategory, Promotional Factors, contained only 2 factors; as a result 1 was inputted as 2 and 2 was inputted as 1. The final subcategory, Church Leadership, also contained only 2 factors, and subsequently followed the same weighting as Promotional factors. This reversal in numerical significance in weighting the responses of respondents in no way altered or biased the outcomes of the study.

As a result of this change, the higher the cumulative responses were to each research variable (factor), the greater the perceived significance of the variable to stakeholders as an influence on enrollment patterns. The converse was equally true, specifically, the lower the cumulative responses, the less the perceived significance to stakeholders. See Appendix L for illustrations of the numerical reversal of the inputted factors for all five subcategories as they appeared on Questionnaire #1.

Table 14 below provides the categorical breakdown for boarding schools represented in the study, the number of possible respondents per category, the number of responses returned and the percentage of responses returned for each category.

Table 14

Number of Respondents in the Research Study from
Boarding Schools in the Southern Union Conference

Category	Number of Research Respondents	Number of Responses Returned for Questionnaire #1	Percent
Principals	5	4	80.0
School Board Presidents	5	3	60.0
Parent Council Presidents	5	2	40.0
Lead Pastors	5	1	20.0
Lead Teachers	5	2	40.0
Parents-At-Large	5	1	20.0
Students	60	18	30.0
Parents of Students Not Attending SDA Schools	0	0	0.0
Total Boarding School Responses	90	31	34.0

Note: Boarding schools are residential institutions

Tables 15 and 16 below provide the categorical breakdown of day schools and regional superintendents represented in the study, the number of possible respondents per category, the number of responses returned and the percentage of responses for each category.

Table 15

Number of Respondents in the Research Study From
Day Schools in the Southern Union Conference

Category	Number of Research Respondents	Number of Responses Returned for Questionnaire #1	Percent
Principals	4	3	75.0
School Board Presidents	4	0	0.0
Parent Council Presidents	4	1	25.0
Lead Pastors	4	1	25.0
Lead Teachers	4	2	50.0
Parents-At-Large	4	3	75.0
Students	48	5	10.0
Parents of Students Not Attending SDA Schools	0	0	0.0
Total Day School Responses	72	15	21.0

Note: Day schools are commuter institutions.

Table 16

Regional Superintendent Responses in the Southern Union Conference

Category	Number of Research Respondents	Number of Responses Returned for Questionnaire #1	Percent
Regional Superintendents	10	6	60.0

Table 17 below provides the combined responses from both day and boarding schools, and regional superintendents, including the number of potential respondents, the number of questionnaires returned and the percentage of all responses.

Table 17

Combined Responses Returned From Day and Boarding Schools and
Regional Superintendents in the Southern Union Conference

Category	Number of Research Respondents	Number of Responses Returned for Questionnaire #1	Percent
Boarding Schools	90	31	34.0
Day Schools	72	15	21.0
Regional Superintendents	10	6	60.0
Total Responses	172	52	30.0

Tables 18 to 22 below provide the frequency scores, by subcategory, for the twenty-one research factors from questionnaire #1. The percent response category in each table represents the cumulative sum of significant values of 5, 6 and 7 from all of the respondents for each specified research variable.

Table 18

Frequency of the Research Variables by Factor Category
for Questionnaire #1

Administration

Research Variable	Percent
Recruitment strategies on the part of school officials	46.2
School Mission Statement	32.6
Personal contacts with potential parents and students	63.5
The commitment of administrators	61.5
The commitment of teachers and support staff	61.5
Training/preparedness of administrators	11.5
Training/preparedness of teachers	26.9

Table 19

Frequency of the Research Variables by Factor Category
for Questionnaire #1

Parents' Perceptions

Research Variable	Percent
Quality of education received in school	90.4
Needs of multiethnic and multilingual students (diversity)	27.0
Support systems for special needs children	25.0
Local governance structures	25.1
Enrollment in K-8 schools	28.9
Extra-curricular activities	52.0
Christian experiences at other schools	50.0

Table 20

Frequency of the Research Variables by Factor Category
for Questionnaire #1

External Factors

Research Variable	Percent
The cost of education	65.4
The availability of quality choices within public schools, i.e. magnet schools	7.7
The distance between the location of school and where families live is too great	15.4

Table 21

Frequency of the Research Variables by Factor Category
for Questionnaire #1

Promotional Factors

Research Variable	Percent
Infrastructure and facilities-i.e. gymnasium, classrooms, state of the art technology	25.0
Projection of a positive school image	1.9

Table 22

Frequency of the Research Variables by Factor Category
for Questionnaire #1

Church Leadership

Research Variable	Percent
Constituent pastors' support	1.9
Support alliance necessary between schools and local church families and leaders	44.2

Table 23 below provides the combined frequency of the research factors identified as significant by the respondents in the research study in descending order, from most significant to least significant.

Table 23

Statistical Ranking of All of the Research Variables for Questionnaire #1
In Descending Order

Research Variable	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Respondents Per Variable	Percent
Quality of education received in school	52	47	90.4
The cost of education	52	34	65.4
Personal contacts with potential parents and students	52	33	63.5
The commitment of administrators	52	32	61.5
The commitment of teachers and support staff	52	32	61.5
Extra-curricular activities	52	27	52.0
Christian experiences at other schools	52	26	50.0
Recruitment strategies on the part of school officials	52	24	46.2
Support alliance necessary between schools and local church families and leaders	52	23	44.2
School Mission Statement	52	17	32.6
Enrollment in K-8 schools	52	15	28.9
Needs of multiethnic and multilingual students (diversity)	52	14	27.0
Training/preparedness of teachers	52	14	26.9
Local governance structures	52	13	25.1
Infrastructure and facilities-i.e. gymnasium, classrooms, state of the art technology	52	13	25.0
Support systems for special needs children	52	13	25.0
The distance between the location of school and where families live is too great	52	8	15.4
Training/preparedness of administrators	52	6	11.5
The availability of quality choices within public schools, i.e. magnet schools	52	4	7.7
Projection of a positive school image	52	1	1.9
Constituent pastors' support	52	1	1.9

Survey One Results

Using the technique of percentage clustering, the significant factors influencing student enrollment were determined based on all variables with a percent response of 50% or greater. The inherent assumption in this reductionist approach was that if the most significant factors affecting enrollment patterns could be identified and subsequently addressed in an effective recruitment and retention strategic plan, then those factors deemed less significant would be minimized, if not neutralized.

After analyzing the data from Questionnaire #1, seven factors received the highest cumulative scores and were deemed to be perceived as the most significant factors by study respondents. These seven factors were quality of education received in school, the cost of education, personal contacts with potential parents and students, the commitment of administrators, the commitment of teachers and support staff, extracurricular activities and Christian experiences at other schools. Table 24 below provides the factors identified from questionnaire #1 which received a percentage response of 50% or greater.

Table 24

Top Significant Research Factors Identified From Respondents From Questionnaire # 1

Research Variable	Percent
Quality of education received in school	90.4
The cost of education	65.4
Personal contacts with potential parents and students	63.5
The commitment of administrators	61.5
The commitment of teachers and support staff	61.5
Extra-curricular activities	52.0
Christian experiences at other schools	50.0

Additionally, it was deemed insightful to assess which category of respondents ranked which influencing factors as the most significant. Most significant is defined as ranking the research variable with a numerical value of 1 with SPSS inputting in the reverse as presented in Appendix N. The subcategories Administration and Parents' Perceptions each contained seven research variables. The most significant factor was therefore inputted into PASW as a numerical value of 7. The subcategory External Factors contained only three research variables; therefore the most significant value was inputted into SPSS with a value of 3. The subcategories Promotional Factors and Church Leadership had only two research variables each, therefore the most significant value was inputted into SPSS with a value of 1. This was important because the possibility of enrollment strategies may have to factor in different institutional settings. Table 25 below provides data in answer to this question from boarding school respondents.

Table 25

**Most Significant Factors Influencing Enrollment
By Boarding School Respondents**

Research Variable	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Respondents Per Variable	Percent
Quality of education received	31	19	61.29
The cost of education	31	20	64.52
Personal contacts with potential parents and students	31	6	19.36
The commitment of administrators	31	6	19.36
The commitment of teachers and support staff	31	3	9.68
Extracurricular activities	31	3	9.68
Christian experiences at other schools	31	6	19.36

Table 26 below provides data on the most significant enrollment factors as perceived by day school respondents.

Table 26

Most Significant Factors Influencing Enrollment
By Day School Respondents

Research Variable	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Respondents Per Variable	Percent
Quality of education received	15	12	80.0
The cost of education	15	9	60.0
Personal contacts with potential parents and students	15	4	26.7
The commitment of administrators	15	3	20.0
The commitment of teachers and support staff	15	3	20.0
Extracurricular activities	15	1	6.7
Christian experiences at other schools	15	0	0.0

Table 27 provides data on the most significant enrollment factors as perceived by superintendents as respondents.

Table 27

Most Significant Factors Influencing Enrollment
By Superintendents as Respondents

Research Variable	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Respondents Per Variable	Percent
Quality of education received	6	1	16.7
The cost of education	6	4	66.7
Personal contacts with potential parents and students	6	2	33.3
The commitment of administrators	6	1	16.7
The commitment of teachers and support staff	6	0	0.0
Extracurricular activities	6	0	0.0
Christian experiences at other schools	6	0	0.0

When the responses of boarding schools, day schools and superintendents are aligned, the quality of education received, the cost of education and personal contacts with potential parents and students closely approximate a one to one correspondence. In effect, there is near unanimity between the three respondent categories on the causes of enrollment fluctuations and declines in secondary schools operating in the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. This conclusion should be useful in fashioning the focus group discussion in phase three of the data collection process.

Further reinforcement of the top seven most significant factors, by respondent categories, can be seen in Table 28 below which illustrates the top two most significant responses, by category, from the research respondents.

Table 28

Top Two Most Significant Responses by Category of Respondents

Respondent Category	Research Variable	Number of Respondents in the Study	Frequency of Respondents per Variable	Category Ranking Score**	Percent
Principals					
	1. Quality of education	7	6	7	85.7
	2. Cost of education	7	5	3	71.4
	2. Projection of positive school image	7	5	2	71.4
School Board President					
	1. Projection of positive school image	3	3	2	100.0
	2. Quality of education	3	2	7	66.7
	2. Commitment of administrators	3	2	7	66.7
Parent Council President					
	1. Quality of education	3	3	7	100.0
	2. Cost of education	3	2	3	66.7
	2. Infrastructure and facilities	3	2	2	66.7

Respondent Category	Research Variable	Number of Respondents in the Study	Frequency of Respondents per Variable	Category Ranking Score**	Percent
*Pastors	2. Support alliance between school and church families and leaders	3	2	2	66.7
	1. Quality of education	2	2	7	100.0
	1. Cost of education	2	2	3	100.0
	1. Pastors' support	2	2	2	100.0
Teachers	1. Projection of positive school image	4	4	2	100.0
	1. Pastors' support	4	4	2	100.0
	2. Quality of education	4	3	7	75.0
	2. Cost of education	4	3	3	75.0
Parents	1. Cost of education	4	3	3	75.0
	1. Projection of positive school image	4	3	2	75.0
	1. Pastors' support	4	3	2	75.0
	2. Quality of education	4	2	7	50.0
	2. Available quality choices within public schools	4	2	2	50.0
Students	1. Projection of a positive school image	23	15	2	65.2
	2. Cost of education	23	14	3	60.9
	2. Support alliance between school and church families and leaders	23	14	2	60.9
Superintendents	1. Cost of education	6	4	3	66.7
	1. Projection of a positive school image	6	4	2	66.7
	1. Pastors' support	6	4	2	66.7
	2. Support alliance between school and church families and leaders	6	3	2	50.0

*There were only two Pastors as respondents. All remaining research variables received a frequency of responses per variable of 50% for the second most significant factor(s).

**For purposes of clarification, column 5 above, Category Ranking Scores, was discussed in the introduction to the data analysis, and illustrated in tables 15- 19.

As can be seen in Table 28, with minor variations, quality of education and cost of education received near unanimous support as the most significant factors influencing student enrollment. Projection of a positive school image also received a high ranking, particularly among principals, school board presidents, teachers, and students. One could reasonably argue, among other possibilities, that board presidents, principals, and teachers, in particular view projection of a positive school image as a direct reflection on them and therefore perceived as a critically significant factor influencing student enrollment. It could also be argued that if an institution is perceived as having an excellent quality of education rating, then the image of the institution would already have been branded as having a positive school image. Further refinement of these results will be discussed in phase two of the data collection and analysis process.

Survey Two Results

Phase two of the data collection process was designed to resubmit the top perceived significant factors identified to be the most important in influencing student enrollment as identified by study respondents. Seven factors were then resubmitted to study respondents in the form of a second questionnaire. (See Appendix H) The same instructions applicable in responding to Questionnaire #1 were applicable to Questionnaire #2. Specifically, study respondents were asked to rank the top significant factors identified in Questionnaire #1, from the most significant to least significant using a numerical value system of one to seven with one being the most significant to two as the second most significant up to seven being the least significant.

The same numerical weighting for questionnaire #2 was used so as to minimize respondent confusion. Data from questionnaire #2 were also analyzed utilizing the SPSS

statistical computer program. As was the case with questionnaire #1 data input was reversed for questionnaire #2. In effect, 7 became 1, 6 became 2, 5 became 3, 4 remained 4, 3 became 5, 2 became 6 and 1 became 7. The second questionnaire was mailed out to study respondents with a two week window for return responses.

The number of questionnaires sent out for phase two of the study corresponded with the number of categorical responses received from study institutions and individuals in phase one. The one exception occurred with students in questionnaire #2. Since there was no way due to confidentiality, to know which students, by school, responded to questionnaire #1, the number of students receiving questionnaire #2 varied by participating institutions. In other words, student questionnaires were sent only to those schools from which students responded to the first questionnaire. If a school received questionnaire #2 for students, all of the students identified by the school received questionnaire #2. Thus, the total number of questionnaires mailed for phase two of the study, including students, was 89. Of this number 42 study respondents returned questionnaires for a rate of return of 47.19%.

Table 29 below shows the rank ordering of factors by phase two respondents from most important to least important as factors influencing enrollment. Consistent with the rank order of factors found in phase one data analysis, quality of education and cost of education accounted for the most important factors influencing enrollment.

Table 29

Ranking of Questionnaire #2 Factors by Order of Significance

Research Factor	Percent
Quality of education	35.7
Cost of education	26.2
Christian experiences at other schools	19.0
Commitment of teachers/ support staff	9.5
Personal contacts with potential parents and students	7.1
Commitment of administrators	4.8
Extracurricular activities	2.4

Personal contacts were ranked third in importance from questionnaire #1, but fell significantly in questionnaire #2. Christian experiences in other schools ranked third in questionnaire #2. The spread of the remaining factors was insignificant and in their composite were deemed approximately equal in value.

These data analysis results sharpened greatly the parameters of the research focus group which represented the final data collection phase, stage three. Five factors formed the core of the focus group discussion, specifically, quality of education, cost of education, Christian experiences at other schools, personal contacts with potential parents and students and commitment of teachers and support staff. A word of caution is apropos here concerning the factor, “Christian experiences at other schools”. It is unclear whether respondents were suggesting that Christian experiences in schools other than Seventh-day Adventist institutions were acceptable options to Seventh-day Adventist schools or whether they interpreted the quality of Christian experiences in Seventh-day Adventist schools as a key factor in their choice of a Seventh-day Adventist school.

Table 30 below provides the combined responses, for Questionnaire #2, from both day and boarding schools, and regional superintendents, including the number of potential respondents, the number of questionnaires returned and the percentage of all responses.

Table 30

Combined Responses Returned From Day, Boarding Schools and Regional Superintendents in the Southern Union Conference for Questionnaire #2

Category	Number of Research Respondents	Number of Responses Returned for Questionnaire #2	Percent
Boarding Schools	52	17	33%
Day Schools	27	18	67%
Regional Superintendents	10	7	70%
Total Responses	89	42	47%

Focus Group Results

The following categorical recommendations were put forth by focus group members in response to research findings. These recommendations were seen by focus group members as parameters within which recruitment and enrollment strategies could be developed.

Quality of education

- Highlight the qualifications of Seventh-day Adventist school teachers/administrators
- Encourage state certification for Seventh-day Adventist school teachers/administrators
- Strive for/encourage Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)/Advanced Ed Accreditation for Seventh-day Adventist schools, principals and teachers

- Offer more advanced placement courses
- Market each school to emphasize its uniqueness; have a great public relations plan
- Update school facilities and equipment, such as the science labs, media centers/libraries
- Move from teacher driven instruction to student centered learning through teacher accountability, classroom observations, professional development, teacher/administrative mentoring programs
- Emphasize student test scores on both the ACT and SAT when compared to national averages, as well as other standardized tests taken during the school year
- Emphasize schools graduates are accepted to and scholarships awarded
- Consider special summer enrichment programs in language arts, science and mathematics. The idea here is to give each student a competitive edge.

Cost of education

- Establish endowment funds at each school
- Support and modeling from leadership to invest financially in Christian education
- Assist the church in recognizing that Christian education is a form of evangelism that should be supported financially by diverting/allocating funding targeted for evangelism
- One church conference diverted a portion of evangelism funds to provide scholarships and funding for students throughout the area
- Identify support from industries to support Christian education
- Identify student work opportunities in the community
- Encourage training in work opportunities

- Canvassing/literature evangelism (a work program within the Seventh-day Adventist church that provides work opportunities for students to sell literature and materials published by the Seventh-day Adventist church.)
- Conduct parent asset surveys to determine areas of expertise which can be used in the educational enterprise in exchange for either lowering or offsetting tuition costs (e.g., an engineer could possibly teach a mathematics course or run a special seminar for students in science, etc.)
- Explore the range of educational scholarship options available to Seventh-day Adventist students including public sector opportunities, e.g. the state of Georgia offers a tax scholarship program

Christian experiences at other schools

- Promote what is right not wrong, positive not negative in SDA schools
- Provide an exit questionnaire for parents to identify reasons for withdrawing students from an SDA school
- Market SDA schools positively (revisit the value of branding)
- Many non-SDAs view SDA schools as private schools; some SDA members tend to view SDA schools as the only choice for their children, though this view has begun to erode.

Personal contacts with potential parents and students

- Establish recruitment teams with trained individuals
- Create opportunities for personal contacts
- Create multimedia such as DVDs to positively promote each school
- Provide extensive customer training and implementation to all school personnel

- Establish strong alumni associations at each school
- Ensure that lead Pastors and churches fully support their affiliated school

Commitment of teachers and support staff

- Strengthen communication within the school and the school community
- Require consistent follow up by school teachers to parents
- Provide teacher support for needed resources and materials
- Include teacher input in school decision making
- Ensure that all school personnel have access to world class educational staff development opportunities in a variety of venues.
- Encourage and provide support for teachers and administrators to continuously update and modernize their educational portfolios.
- Examine the use of teacher portfolios as an evaluation measure (tool)

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to ascertain those factors felt to be the most influential in determining enrollment trends and patterns within secondary schools operating under the aegis of the Southern Union Conference of Seventh - day Adventist. Officials within the Seventh-day Adventist educational establishment had expressed deep concerns over the inconsistent and unpredictable enrollment numbers in secondary schools within the conference and had embarked upon some strategies to combat these anomalies known as the Adventist EDGE program.

Though this study was targeted to secondary schools within the Southern Union Conference, enrollment fluctuations and declines have been felt and discussed throughout the entire North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist. As expressed by Baldwin (2001), recruitment concerns Adventist educators from the elementary to higher education levels. Enrollment numbers are the lifeblood of an institution's growth, a necessity for continual development of staff, technology, and facilities. In response to an Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventist study which noted a marked imbalance between the growth in membership and the enrollment of Adventist children and youth in its schools and universities Simmons (2010) stated, "if we improve the quality of our schools and their campus facilities, and provide the necessary tools for our teachers to better their education,... churches will support our schools more and send their children to them" (p. 38). Brown (2001) stated that:

Today, especially in North America, many Adventist church schools, academies, and colleges and universities are asking themselves, "Where have all the students gone?" . . . Despite enrollment declines, the prospects can be better than they imagined. With hard work and focus, most schools can grow their enrollments. (p. 4)

In 1982, Bartlett (1982) stated, “Among the cacophony of voices heard by the academy principal is that of the board of directors emphasizing the importance of enrollment” (p. 8)

It should be noted that enrollment concerns are not limited to Seventh-day Adventist institutions and schools as these concerns can be found throughout the country in both private and public school settings. (See the review in Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion).

Of the five top influencing factors, quality of education and cost of education were deemed to be the most critical. One could surmise that if quality of education and cost of education could be effectively addressed, other influencing factors could, if not eliminated, be at least minimized.

Various studies on enrollment trends and patterns within Adventist educational institutions vary in their conclusions, however, parental perceptions of the quality of education received and cost of education are nearly universal. Concurrent with quality of education and cost of education, the spiritual aspects of an Adventist education are viewed as extremely important (Gregorutti, 2008). The above conclusions would clearly suggest that any effective strategy designed to stabilize student enrollment trends and patterns within Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools, must not only incorporate these findings as the foundation upon which student enrollment is based, but must also deeply appreciate the significance of their influence.

Recommendations

Generally speaking, administrators and leaders within Seventh-day Adventist educational establishments must fully recognize and deeply appreciate the fact that Seventh-day Adventist schools don't exist in a vacuum. To this point, educators and leaders in the Adventist educational world would do well to read Thomas Friedman's book, *The World is Flat* (Friedman,

2006). Though such leaders rely heavily on the faith of Seventh-day Adventist parents to send their children to Seventh-day Adventist schools, this is no longer a guaranteed certainty. Such educators and leaders would also do well to revisit the wisdom of Lincoln (1971) who stated,

Every human experience rests upon some previous experience, and every possibility for tomorrow is contingent to some other possibility which was realized yesterday. Human possibility is created at the intersection of time, place, and circumstance. Manipulate any one of these variables and the life chances of any given individual will be changed....The great benefactors of society are so often the visionaries who have the peculiar perceptivity to see beyond the exigencies of the present that is here, and to address the future that is to be. Human society is dynamic; it is never a static accomplishment capable of complete realization in a lifetime or a generation. Rather it is always in process-always becoming what it is, always different from what it was; yet never what it will be. (p. 605)

The continued viability of Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions is deeply dependent on the extent to which these institutions adjust and effectively respond to the ever changing environments in which they operate. As previously stated, parents of Seventh-day Adventist students don't automatically send their children to Seventh-day Adventist schools simply because they are themselves Seventh-day Adventist. Seventh-day Adventist schools must compete with an ever widening range of options open to parents for educating their children, inclusive of, but not limited to charter schools, magnet schools, other private denominational institutions, public schools with excellent reputations for educational excellence and even home schooling. (Anderson, 2009)

Another factor worthy of consideration in the context of devising effective recruitment and enrollment strategies is that though Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools operating in the Southern Union Conference are interconnected, they are simultaneously unique institutions. Thus, recruitment and enrollment strategies must not only address regional issues and concerns, but each must also address its own particular and unique needs. In effect, while some recruitment

and enrollment strategies have universal application, some may need to be tailored to the specific institution developing them.

A third consideration is the need to develop institutional interfaces and programs outside of the Seventh-day Adventist world. An example of this would be to enter into agreements with schools offering advanced placement courses to allow Seventh-day Adventist students, if such courses aren't available in their own schools, to participate in them. Many states have distance learning programs that can be utilized by schools throughout the state. Such partnerships can only enhance the quality of education students receive. Anecdotically, the researcher is aware of efforts to limit education to systems and organizations found only within the Seventh-day Adventist church structure. This would seem to suggest that networking outside of the confines of the Seventh-day Adventist church organization is not largely encouraged.

Study Implications

This study has attempted to identify those factors which most significantly account for enrollment fluctuations and in some institutional cases declines in Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools operating in the Southern Union Conference. A list of 21 factors was originally developed from a literature review covering a broad range of educational institutional types on factors which impact enrollment. The research process undertaken narrowed this list to five factors deemed to be the most significant in determining secondary school enrollment among schools operating within the Southern Union Conference.

These five factors were quality of education, cost of education, Christian experiences at other schools, personal contacts with potential parents and students and commitment of teachers and support staff. It is critically important to note that the five factors deemed to most influential in determining enrollment trends and patterns in secondary schools are consistent for both

boarding and day schools. One could speculate that enrollment issues impacting day schools would be different from those impacting boarding schools. Clearly venue does not matter. Quality of education and cost of education transcend venue.

Ultimately, each school will need to revisit on a case by case basis the components of a marketing strategy of need analysis, such as outlined by McKillip. (McKillip, 1987) Specifically: (a) selection of the target population, those actually or potentially eligible for the service and able to make the necessary exchanges; (b) choice of competitive position, distinguishing the agency's services from those offered by other agencies and providers; and (c) development of an effective marketing mix, selection of a range and quality of services that will maximize utilization by the target population.

In politics the first rule applicable in election processes is to "secure your base". Using the data provided from this study, overlaid with particularization based on local circumstances, secondary schools need to "secure their student enrollment base" in the Southern Union Conference. Once the base is secured, continuing to expand the enrollment base beyond the Seventh-day Adventist community might not be such a bad idea.

It is noted that though the numbers of non-Adventist students are increasing in Adventist schools, this trend is not always seen as a positive. Dulan, World Director of Education in the most recent issue of the Journal of Adventist Education (Summer, 2010) stated, "In addition, the increasing non-Adventist enrollment in church-operated schools, while providing an opportunity for missions, increases the burdens of the first two challenges, and to that extent can diminish the 'Adventist-ness' of the education offered to church members' children" (p. 4)

In the same issue of the journal, Rasi (2010) stated,

While we rejoice in this trend, we need to critically evaluate whether we are diluting our identity and evangelistic mission in order to accommodate the large

influx of students of other faiths. We also need to find out why many church members are not enrolling their children and youth in our schools. Statistics reveal a steady decline in the percentage of Adventist students at all levels of education. (p. 8)

Study Limitations

Several limitations of this study are necessary for discussion. The first limitation was the inability of the researcher in cooperation with respondent alliance partners to get Seventh-day Adventist parents of secondary school age children, not enrolled in a Seventh-day Adventist school, to participate in the study. The researcher relied heavily on the Pastors of churches affiliated with the various schools to identify this population and seek their participation. This particular population cohort would have been a valuable source of information on the topic under review.

As principal of one of the Seventh-day Adventist schools operating in the Southern Union Conference the researcher has had the opportunity to speak directly with parents falling in the above category. It should be kept in mind that the particular school in which the researcher held the position of principal was omitted from the study institutions so as to avoid/ minimize a conflict of interest. Nevertheless, a few anecdotes are instructive. A few Seventh-day parents falling in the category of having secondary children not enrolled in a Seventh-day Adventist institution have given the researcher the following reasons: not enough individualized attention to children with special needs; non-rigorous curriculum; some inept/incompetent teachers; insufficient mechanisms for parental input, and just too expensive for the family.

A second limitation of the study was the reduction of a potential institutional respondent pool from 16 institutions to 9. This reduction resulted from one school being eliminated due to the researcher's former role as principal, two schools were determined to be independent schools and were therefore not under the Southern Union Conference guidelines, and four schools chose

not to participate in the study. Had all fifteen schools participated the results of the study may have been significantly different. Equally, institutional participation of these schools could have given increased credibility to the study results. There is no way to tell.

Finally, eight focus group members had agreed to meet with the researcher in Atlanta, Georgia on June 30, 2010. However, three for various reasons had to cancel their participation. A fifth participant made herself available post June 30, 2010 for an individual interview. The recruitment and enrollment strategies which evolved from the focus group process may have been substantially enriched had all members participated.

Implications for Future Research

The results of this study point to the need for additional studies on recruitment and enrollment trends and patterns within Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions.

- (1) An in depth study on Seventh-day Adventist parents with school age children not enrolled in Seventh-day Adventist schools: causes and explanations.
- (2) An in depth case study of a Seventh-day Adventist K-12 institution not experiencing enrollment fluctuations/declines: specifically the culture, operations and behaviors of such an institution.
- (3) An in depth study, where applicable, on the divide between some Seventh-day Adventist schools and the churches which represent their major constituent cohort.
- (4) Finally, with Seventh-day Adventist church membership going up and student enrollment going down, what is the future of Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions in an ever changing world.

APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

Dear Respondent,

You are being asked to participate in a research study to assist in determining those factors which most significantly affect student enrollment patterns within secondary schools operating in the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This study is being conducted in 15 day and boarding secondary schools operating in the 8 state Southern Union Conference. The results of the study may be instrumental in uncovering key factors influencing enrollment within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The school Principal will assist in distribution of the research questionnaire for this study. A package of questionnaires has/will be sent to each Principal with materials for each of the participants. The research participants for each school include: teachers, principals, school board chairs, parent council presidents, students, lead teachers/ vice principals, parents and church pastors.

You will be asked to complete the questionnaire twice, in two different settings. The first questionnaire is designed to determine respondent perceptions to categorical lists of 21 factors extracted from research literature which are deemed to influence student enrollment.

You are asked to rank these factors under each categorical heading from most significant to least significant. The number one (1) should be used for the most significant. The number two (2) should be used for the second most significant and so on until all factors have a numerical value. In the event you feel that none of the pre-identified factors, in a particular category, account for enrollment declines, write in your response on the line item labeled "other" and give it a numerical value.

You will be provided with an envelope for the respondent category within which you fall. Once you complete the questionnaire, please put it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided and return it to the principal investigator. **Please DO NOT sign your name to either the questionnaire or the envelope.** This is to ensure your privacy and confidentiality.

Thank you for participating in this research study.

Sincerely,

Olivia Beverly
Doctoral Student
Wayne State University

APPENDIX B**AN ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT ENROLLMENT
WITHIN THE SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SECONDARY SCHOOLS****Behavioral Research Informed Consent
Adult Respondent Consent Form**

Principal Investigator (PI): Olivia Beverly

Purpose

As an adult stakeholder in the Southern Union Conference, you are being asked to participate in a research study. This research study is an attempt to identify those factors which most significantly affect student enrollment patterns within secondary schools operating in the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This study is being conducted in 15 day and boarding secondary schools operating in the 8 state Southern Union Conference. The estimated number of study participants, including students, is about 370.

A review of the literature has identified factors which contribute to enrollment trends across various educational institutions (public, private and charter). Consistent with other parochial schools, the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist has not been immuned to the national trend of declining student enrollments. While church membership has grown, K-12 enrollment in Seventh-day Adventists schools has undergone fluctuations. This study is specifically focused on secondary enrollment within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist schools.

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Study Procedures

If you agree to take part in this research study, you will be asked to:

1. Complete two questionnaires, in two different sessions. The first questionnaire includes five categories found in research literature which influence student enrollment. The five categories are: administration, parents' perceptions, external factors, promotional factors and church leadership. Under each category is a list of sub-factors which you are asked to rank in order of importance/significance beginning with (1) one as most significant and continuing with 2, 3, 4, etc. until all factors have been ranked under each category. In the event you feel that none of the pre-identified factors, in a particular category, account for enrollment declines, write in your response on the line item labeled "other" and give it a numerical value.

Once the results from the first questionnaire have been tabulated, a second questionnaire will be developed. You will be asked to make a final ranking of the key factors having the

highest level of significance identified from the results of the first questionnaire. For example the top 8 to 10 factors deduced from the first questionnaire will be ranked in order of significance from 1-10 with 1 again being the most significant etc.

2. It should take no more than 20-30 minutes to complete each questionnaire, perhaps less. This will be a paper and pencil exercise. Both questionnaires should be completed over a 4-6 week period of time.

3. If for some reason you choose not to answer a question, this will not prevent you from remaining in the study, though it is hoped that you will answer all questions

4. The questionnaires will be filled out by participant categories i.e. students, parents, teachers, pastors, etc. You will be provided with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the respondent category within which you fall. Once you complete the questionnaire, please place it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided, seal it and return it by postal mail to the principal investigator indicated on the return envelope. Please DO NOT sign your name to either the questionnaire or the envelope. This is to ensure your privacy and confidentiality.

Benefits

As a participant in this research study, there will be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may assist the Southern Union Conference in long-term planning and development strategies to sustain Adventist education.

Risks

There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

Study Costs

Participation in this study will be of no cost to you.

Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality

There will be no personal information about you collected. The responses you provide on the research questionnaire will be identified by category of respondent. All respondents in a particular category will be grouped for data analysis. For example, in the category of students, there will be no way to match a student questionnaire to a particular student. The same is true for all other categories. No individual names will appear anywhere in the research to ensure confidentiality.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact the school Principal at the school, or the principal investigator, Olivia Beverly at . If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

Participation

By completing the questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in this study.

APPENDIX C**AN ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT ENROLLMENT WITHIN
THE SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SECONDARY SCHOOLS****Parents Research Information Sheet**

Principal Investigator (PI): Olivia Beverly, Doctoral Student-Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan
(256) 852-5109

Purpose

Because you are the parent of a student attending one of the secondary schools in the Southern Union Conference, you are being asked to give permission for your child to participate in a research study to determine those factors which most significantly affect student enrollment patterns within secondary schools operating in the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This study is being conducted in 15 secondary schools in the Southern Union Conference.

Study Procedures

Your child will be asked to:

1. Complete two questionnaires, in two different sessions. The first questionnaire includes five categories found in research literature which influence student enrollment. The five categories are: administration, parents' perceptions, external factors, promotional factors and church leadership. Under each category is a list of sub-factors which your child will be asked to rank in order of importance/significance beginning with (1) one as most significant and continuing with 2, 3, 4, etc. until all factors have been ranked under each category. In the event your child feels that none of the pre-identified factors, in a particular category, accounts for enrollment declines, he/she can write in their response on the line item labeled "other" and give it a numerical value. Once the results from the first questionnaire have been tabulated, a second questionnaire will be developed. Your child will be asked to make a final ranking of the key factors having the highest level of significance identified from the results of the first questionnaire. For example the top 8 to 10 factors deduced from the first questionnaire will be ranked in order of significance from 1-10 with 1 again being the most significant etc.
2. It should take no more than 20-30 minutes to complete each questionnaire, perhaps less. This will be a paper and pencil exercise. Both questionnaires should be completed over a 4-6 week period of time.

3. If for some reason your child chooses not to answer a question, this will not prevent him/her from remaining in the study, though it is hoped that your child will answer all questions.
4. Your child will be provided with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the respondent category within which he/she falls. Once your child completes the questionnaire he/she will place it in the envelope provided, seal it and return it to the principal investigator indicated on the return envelope. Your child will not sign his/her name to either the questionnaire or the envelope. This is to ensure their privacy and confidentiality.

Benefits

As a participant in this research study, there will be no direct benefit for your child; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

Risks

There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

Costs

There will be no costs to your child for participation in this research study.

Compensation

Your child will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality

All information collected about your child during the course of this study will be kept without any identifiers.

Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. Your child is free to not answer any questions or to withdraw at any time.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact the principal at the school or the principal investigator at . If you have questions or concerns about your child's rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

Participation

If you do not contact the principal investigator (PI) within a 2-week period, to state that you do not give permission for your child to be enrolled in the research trial, your child will be enrolled into the research. You may contact the PI by telephone to _____, email address: obevery313@aol.com or you may use the optional tear off sheet below and return it to the principal investigator.

Optional Tear Off

If you do not wish to have your child participant in the study, you may fill out the form below and return it to the principal investigator at:

Olivia Beverly
380 Dan Crutcher Road
Toney, Alabama 35773

I do not allow my child _____ to participate in this research study.

Name

Printed Name of Parent

Signature of Parent

Date

APPENDIX D

INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

Dear Respondent,

You are invited to participate in a research study to help us understand some factors that influence student enrollment in grades 9 through 12 within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This study will include students in 15 day and boarding schools in the Southern Union Conference. Since you are a student attending one of these schools, you are eligible to participate in this study. The results of this study may be instrumental in identifying key factors influencing enrollment within the Southern Union Conference.

If you decide to participate in the study, you will complete two questionnaire surveys, during two different sessions. Each survey should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

The first survey will ask you to rank a list of 21 factors in order from most significant to least significant. These factors have been organized under five different headings. The five headings are administration, parents' perceptions, external factors, promotional factors, and church leadership. Under each heading place the number one to the left of the factor you feel is most important, followed by the number two and so forth until all factors have a number value. In the event you feel that none of the pre-identified factors, in a particular category, account for the enrollment declines, write in your response on the line item labeled "other" and give it a numerical value. The results from the first questionnaire will be analyzed.

A second survey will be developed from the most significant factors identified from the first survey. In the second questionnaire, you will be asked to repeat the ranking process; however, the number of factors will be smaller. You will use the same numbering system to rank the factors in the second questionnaire.

Once you complete the questionnaire, place it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided, seal it and return it to the principal investigator. **Please DO NOT sign your name to either the questionnaire or the envelope.** This is to ensure your privacy and confidentiality.

Thank you for participating in this research study.

Sincerely,
Olivia Beverly
Doctoral Student, Wayne State University

APPENDIX E
AN ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT ENROLLMENT WITHIN
THE SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Behavioral Documentation of Adolescent Assent Form

Assent Information Sheet

Study Investigator: Olivia Beverly

Why am I here?

This is a research study. Only people who choose to take part are included in research studies. You are being asked to take part in this study because you are a 9th to 12th grade student attending a secondary school in the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. Please take time to make your decision. Talk to your family about it and be sure to ask questions about anything you don't understand.

Why are you doing this study?

This study is being done to assist in identifying factors which most significantly affect student enrollment patterns within secondary schools in the Southern Union Conference.

What will happen to me?

You will be asked to:

1. Complete two questionnaires, in two different sessions, on what you believe influences student enrollment at your school. The first questionnaire includes five categories found in research literature which influence student enrollment. The five categories are: administration, parents' perceptions, external factors, promotional factors and church leadership.

Under each category is a list of sub-factors which you are asked to rank in order of significance beginning with (1) one as most significant and continuing with 2, 3, 4, etc. until all factors have been ranked under each category.

In the event you feel that none of the pre-identified factors, in a particular category, account for enrollment declines, write in your response on the line item labeled "other" and give it a numerical value.

Once the results from the first questionnaire have been tabulated, a second questionnaire will be developed. You will be asked to make a final ranking of the key factors having the highest level of significance identified from the results of the first questionnaire. For example the top 8 to 10

factors identified from the first questionnaire will be ranked in order of significance from 1 to 10 with 1 again being the most significant etc.

2. It should take no more than 20-30 minutes to complete each questionnaire, perhaps less. This will be a paper and pencil exercise. Both questionnaires should be completed over a 4-6 week period of time.
3. If for some reason you choose not to answer a question, this will not prevent you from remaining in the study, though it is hoped that you will answer all questions
4. You will be provided with an envelope for the respondent category within which you fall. Once you complete the questionnaire, please place it in the self-address, stamped envelope provided, seal it and return it by postal mail to the principal investigator identified on the return envelope. Please DO NOT sign your name to either the questionnaire or the envelope. This is to ensure your privacy and confidentiality.

How long will I be in the study?

You will be in the study for approximately 20-30 minutes for two different sessions.

Will the study help me?

You may not benefit from being in this study; however information from this study may help the Southern Union Conference in long-term planning and development strategies to sustain Adventist education.

Will anything bad happen to me?

There are no risks to you for participation in this study.

Do my parents or guardians know about this?

Information explaining this study has been given to your parents/guardian to allow you to participate in this research study. You can talk this over with them before you decide.

What about confidentiality?

Do not write or sign your name on the questionnaire or the envelope when you complete the questionnaire. There will be no personal data collected on you in this study and there will be no way to link you with your responses.

What if I have any questions?

If you have any questions about the study, discuss it with your school principal. You may also call the principal investigator, Olivia Beverly at (256) 852-5109. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee can be contacted at (313) 577-1628.

Do I have to be in the study?

You don't have to be in this study if you don't want to or you can stop being in the study at any time. Please discuss your decision with your parents and the Principal of your school. No one will be angry if you decide to stop being in the study.

Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

APPENDIX F

QUESTIONNAIRE #1

Below is a list of factors broken into five categories found in existing research literature which may account for stagnant or decreasing secondary school enrollments in the Southern Union Conference. Please rank these factors, in each category, from most important to least important with one **(1)** being the most significant, to two **(2)** for the next most significant etc. until all factors are ranked. For example, in the category **Administration**, if you think that the *School Mission Statement* is the most significant factor influencing enrollment, then you would rank *School Mission Statement* as #1 in the space provided for that choice. If in your opinion none of the pre-identified factors account for the declines, please write in your thoughts in the space indicated as *Other* and provide a numerical rank.

Administration

_____ Recruitment strategies on the part of school officials

_____ School Mission Statement

_____ Personal contacts with potential parents and students

_____ The commitment of administrators

_____ The commitment of teachers and support staff

_____ Training/preparedness of administrators

_____ Training/preparedness of teachers

_____ Other _____

Parents' Perceptions

_____ Quality of education received in school

_____ Needs of multiethnic and multilingual students (diversity)

_____ Support systems for special needs children

_____ Local governance structures

_____ Enrollment in K-8 schools

- _____ Extra-curricular activities
- _____ Christian educational experiences at other schools
- _____ Other _____
- _____
- _____

External Factors

- _____ The cost of education
- _____ The availability of quality choices within public schools, i.e. magnet schools and charter schools
- _____ The distance between the location of school and where families live is too great
- _____ Other _____
- _____
- _____

Promotional Factors

- _____ Infrastructure and facilities- e.g. gymnasium, classrooms, state of the art technology
- _____ Projection of a positive school image
- _____ Other _____
- _____
- _____

Church Leadership

- _____ Constituent pastors' support
- _____ Support alliance necessary between schools and local church families and leaders
- _____ Other _____
- _____

Please place the completed Questionnaire (only) in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. **Do not write your name on the Questionnaire or the envelope. Seal the envelope and return it to the principal investigator within one week. For convenience, you may leave**

your sealed envelope at the school front office for mailing. Thank you for your input in completing this Questionnaire.

Olivia Beverly, Principal Investigator/ Doctoral Student

Wayne State University

APPENDIX G**AN ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT ENROLLMENT WITHIN
THE SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SECONDARY SCHOOLS****Introductory Letter for Questionnaire #2**

Dear Respondents,

Thank you for your assistance with ranking the 21 factors identified in Questionnaire #1 as factors influencing student enrollment in the secondary schools within the Southern Union Conference. Enclosed please find Questionnaire #2 created from the results of Questionnaire #1.

Your assistance is asked to rank the six factors on Questionnaire # 2 in order of importance from most to least important. Please use **1 for the most important**, followed by 2 for the next most important, then **3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 as the least important factor**.

I would deeply appreciate, if at all possible, to have this questionnaire returned within one week. I recognize that the school year is drawing quickly to a close.

Your input in this research study has been tremendously valuable. Thank you again for participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Olivia Beverly
Principal Investigator/ Doctoral Student

APPENDIX H**AN ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT ENROLLMENT WITHIN
THE SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SECONDARY SCHOOLS****Questionnaire #2**

Please rank the following factors from most important to least important with one **(1) the most significant, (2)** for the next most significant, followed by **3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (7 represents the least significant)** until all factors are ranked.

- _____ Extracurricular activities
- _____ Christian experiences at other schools
- _____ Quality of education received in school
- _____ The commitment of administrators
- _____ Personal contacts with potential parents and students
- _____ The cost of education
- _____ The commitment of teachers and support staff

Please place the completed Questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. **Do not write your name on the Questionnaire or the envelope. Return the questionnaire to the principal investigator within one week, if at all possible, as the school year is drawing to a close.** Thank you for your input in completing this second Questionnaire.

Olivia Beverly, Principal Investigator/ Doctoral Student

Wayne State University

APPENDIX I**AN ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT ENROLLMENT WITHIN
THE SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SECONDARY SCHOOLS****Introductory Letter for Adult Participants
In the Research Study Focus Group**

Dear Focus Group Participant,

You are being asked to participate in a research study focus group to review the findings of a questionnaire administered to determine those factors which most significantly affect student enrollment patterns within secondary schools operating in the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This study was conducted in 15 day and boarding secondary schools operating in the 8 state Southern Union Conference.

The research participants for each school included: teachers, principals, school board chairs, parent council presidents, students, lead teachers/ vice principals, parents and church pastors.

Participants completed two sets of questionnaires which consisted of factors extrapolated from the review of literature which most significantly affected student enrollment patterns within schools. The results of the second questionnaire have identified and ranked the significant factors identified by respondents within the Southern Union Conference.

Thank you for participating in this research study.

Sincerely,

Olivia Beverly
Doctoral Student
Wayne State University

APPENDIX J**AN ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT ENROLLMENT WITHIN
THE SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SECONDARY SCHOOLS****Behavioral Research Informed Consent
Adult Respondent Consent Form**

Principal Investigator (PI): Olivia Beverly
(256) 852-5109

Purpose

As an adult stakeholder in the Southern Union Conference, you are being asked to participate in a research study. This research study is an attempt to identify those factors which most significantly affect student enrollment patterns within secondary schools operating in the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This study is being conducted in 15 day and boarding secondary schools operating in the 8 state Southern Union Conference.

A review of the literature has identified factors which contribute to enrollment trends across various educational institutions (public, private and charter). Consistent with other parochial schools, the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist has not been immuned to the national trend of declining student enrollments. While church membership has grown, K-12 enrollment in Seventh-day Adventists schools has undergone fluctuations. This study is specifically focused on secondary enrollment within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist schools.

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Study Procedures

If you agree to take part in this research study, you will be asked to:

Participate in a focus group discussion regarding the results of a second questionnaire administered to stakeholders in the Southern Union Conference.

Benefits

As a participant in this research study, there will be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may assist the Southern Union Conference in long-term planning and development strategies to sustain Adventist education.

Risks

There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

Study Costs

Participation in this study will be of no cost to you.

Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality

The responses you provide in the focus group will not be recorded by person, only by the questionnaire factor to which the responses are applicable. In effect, there will be no way in the final research results to identify who said what in the focus group.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact the principal investigator, Olivia Beverly at (256) 852-5109. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

Participation

By participating in the focus group you have simultaneously agreed to participate in this study.

APPENDIX K**AN ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT ENROLLMENT WITHIN
THE SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SECONDARY SCHOOLS****Focus Group Questionnaire**

Based upon the findings of this research, five factors have been deemed to be the most influential in determining whether parents choose to enroll their children in SDA secondary schools operating in the Southern Union Conference or not. From your perspective how can secondary schools most effectively address each of these factors for long term recruitment strategic planning?

Quality of education

Cost of education

Christian experiences at other schools

Personal contacts with potential parents and students

Commitment of teachers and support staff

APPENDIX L

NOTICE OF EXPEDITED APPROVAL



HUMAN INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE
 101 East Alexandrine Building
 Detroit, Michigan 48201
 Phone: (313) 577-1628
 FAX: (313) 993-7122
<http://hic.wayne.edu>



NOTICE OF EXPEDITED APPROVAL

To: Olivia Beverly
 College of Education
 From: Ellen Barton, Ph.D. *E. Barton* / *EB*
 Chairperson, Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3)
 Date: February 03, 2010
 RE: HIC #: 125409B3E
 Protocol Title: An Assessment of Factors Influencing Student Enrollment Within the Southern Union
 Conference of Seventh-Day Adventist Secondary Schools
 Sponsor:
 Protocol #: 0912007830
 Expiration Date: February 02, 2011
 Risk Level / Category: 45 CFR 46.404 - Research not involving greater than minimal risk

The above-referenced protocol and items listed below (if applicable) were **APPROVED** following *Expedited Review* (Category 7*) by the Chairperson/designee for the Wayne State University Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3) for the period of 02/03/2010 through 02/02/2011. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals that may be required.

- Introductory Letter for Student Participants
- Introductory Letter for Adult Participants
- Parent Research Information Sheet (dated 1/26/10)
- Assent Information Sheet (dated 1/26/10)
- Adult Respondent Consent Form (dated 1/26/10)

- * Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. You may receive a "Continuation Renewal Reminder" approximately two months prior to the expiration date; however, it is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval **before** the expiration date. Data collected during a period of lapsed approval is unapproved research and can **never** be reported or published as research data.
- * All changes or amendments to the above-referenced protocol require review and approval by the HIC **BEFORE** implementation.
- * Adverse Reactions/Unexpected Events (AR/UE) must be submitted on the appropriate form within the timeframe specified in the HIC Policy (<http://www.hic.wayne.edu/hicpol.html>).

NOTE:

1. Upon notification of an impending regulatory site visit, hold notification, and/or external audit the HIC office must be contacted immediately.
2. Forms should be downloaded from the HIC website at **each** use.

*Based on the Expedited Review List, revised November 1998

APPENDIX M

NOTICE OF EXPEDITED AMENDMENT APPROVAL



HUMAN INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE
 101 East Alexandrine Building
 Detroit, Michigan 48201
 Phone: (313) 577-1628
 FAX: (313) 993-7122
<http://hlc.wayne.edu>



NOTICE OF EXPEDITED AMENDMENT APPROVAL

To: Olivia Beverly
 College of Education

From: Ellison Barton, Ph.D. *E. Barton*
 Chairperson, Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3)

Date: April 15, 2010

RE: HIC #: 125409B3E
 Protocol Title: An Assessment of Factors Influencing Student Enrollment Within the Southern Union
 Conference of Seventh-Day Adventist Secondary Schools

Sponsor:
 Protocol #: 0912007830

Expiration Date: February 02, 2011

Risk Level / Category: 45 CFR 46.404 - Research not involving greater than minimal risk

The above-referenced protocol amendment, as itemized below, was reviewed by the Chairperson/designee of the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board (B3) and is APPROVED effective immediately.

- Protocol - Modified to include description of focus group and addition of follow-up survey (questionnaire #2).
- Introductory Letter and Consent Form for Adult Participants in Focus Group - Addition of Introductory Letter and Consent Form for focus groups.

APPENDIX N**NUMERICAL REVERSAL OF THE INPUTTED DATA FACTORS****Administration**

Respondent Ranking	Reversal Ranking
1	7
2	6
3	5
4	4
5	3
6	2
7	1

Numerical Reversal of the Inputted Data Factors**Parents' Perceptions**

Respondent Ranking	Reversal Ranking
1	7
2	6
3	5
4	4
5	3
6	2
7	1

Numerical Reversal of the Inputted Data Factors

External Factors

Respondent Ranking	Reversal Ranking
1	3
2	2
3	1

Numerical Reversal of the Inputted Data Factors

Promotional Factors

Respondent Ranking	Reversal Ranking
1	2
2	1

Numerical Reversal of the Inputted Data Factors

Church Leadership

Respondent Ranking	Reversal Ranking
1	2
2	1

APPENDIX O**ABBREVIATION LEDGER FOR DAY AND BOARDING SCHOOLS IN THE
SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE****Abbreviation Ledger
Day Schools**

AAA	CA	GAAA	GMA	MA	MUA
Atlanta Adventist Academy	Collegedale Academy	Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy	Greater Miami Academy	Madison Academy	Miami Union Academy

Boarding Schools

BA	FA	FLA	GCA	HHA	HrA
Bass Academy	Fletcher Academy	Forest Lake Academy	Georgia Cumberland Academy	Harbert Hills Academy	Heritage Academy

HA	LA	MPA
Highland academy	Laurelbrook Academy	Mt. Pisgah Academy

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ABSTRACT**AN ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT ENROLLMENT
WITHIN THE SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

by

OLIVIA D. BEVERLY**December, 2010**

Advisor: Dr. Sharon Elliott
Major: Curriculum and Instruction
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Secondary schools operating within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist are experiencing severe enrollment fluctuations and some instances declines. These trends and patterns have set off alarms within the Southern Union Adventist educational establishment and in some quarters have even raised the specter of whether some schools have long-term sustainability or survivability.

As a consequence of this enrollment dilemma, this research was designed to examine those factors perceived by educational stakeholders within the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist deemed to be the most significant in influencing student enrollment trends and patterns.

The methodology for this research consisted of a thorough review of educational K-12 enrollment literature across institutional lines which identified factors influencing student enrollment. This process yielded 21 factors, which were sub-divided into five categories to facilitate ease of respondent responses. The five sub-divided categories were: administration, parents' perceptions, external factors, promotional factors and church leadership. These factors

were formulated into a questionnaire to key stakeholders for ranking from most important to least important using a numerical weighting system.

Once the results from the first questionnaire were analyzed using PASW, the number of factors was reduced from 21 to the 7 that received most significant rankings. These seven factors were: extracurricular activities, Christian experiences at other schools, quality of education received in school, the commitment of administrators, personal contacts with potential parents and students, the cost of education, and the commitment of teachers and support staff. A second questionnaire was developed from these results and sent to key stakeholders to rank the top seven factors. An analysis of these results found two factors deemed to be the most significant among the seven in influencing enrollment patterns within secondary schools. These two factors were quality of education and cost.

A focus group of key Southern Union stakeholders was convened to develop recruitment strategies consistent with the research findings. The essential conclusion was that each school needed to tailor its enrollment and recruitment strategies within the context of its particular circumstances, and draw from focus group recommendations those deemed to be a goodness of fit for each school.

Autobiographical Statement

Olivia D. Beverly

Education: 2010 PhD Wayne State University, Curriculum & Instruction
 1997 Ed.S. Wayne State University, Administration
 1993 M.A.T. Wayne State University, Secondary Science & Social Science
 1975 B.A. Oakwood College Biology and Chemistry

Professional Experience: I have worked in the field of education for over 20 years in various roles and capacities. My experiences have included teaching science and mathematics at middle and secondary levels, Science Department Chair at the secondary level, and as Principal of a K-12 institution. In addition, I have taught in Adult Education and other college level bridge programs.

Additional Professional Experiences:

- Served as a charter board member for over five years for the *Michigan Partnership for New Education*. This became the Office for Charter Schools for the state of Michigan.
- Served on district professional development teams, curriculum writing teams, school improvement teams, and with various mentoring programs.
- Conducted in- service training in multiple venues with a primary focus on curriculum and instruction.
- Conducted research at both the undergraduate level and throughout my professional career in areas of overall educational reform and teacher education.
- Extensive work with “high risk” urban and rural youth in dropout prevention programs.
- Significant post graduate training and internships at:
 Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, and the
 United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado

Selected Publications:

- Beverly, O. (2008). Continuing the vision. *Southern Tidings*. 102(5), 28.
- Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program, High School Curriculum Guide, 1999
- UJIMA Academy- MEAP High School Science Manual, 1998, 1999
- Beverly, C., Patrick, B., Burns, R. & Beverly, O. (1999). The Congress of National Black Churches, Inc. Church rebuilding & arson prevention program: overview, insights and lessons learned.