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# Parents' Reasons for Choosing Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for Low Socioeconomic Students in Alabama: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Parents' Reasons for Choosing Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for  
Low Socioeconomic Students in Alabama: A Mixed-Methods Study

by

Kyle Francis-Thomas

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Educational Administration (UNL-UNO)

Under the Supervision of Professor Jody Isernhagen

Lincoln, Nebraska

December, 2015

Parents' Reasons for Choosing Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for  
Low Socioeconomic Students in Alabama: A Mixed-Methods Study

Kyle Francis-Thomas, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 2016

Advisor: Jody Isernhagen

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine parents' reasons for choosing Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama. Low socioeconomic students were defined as students who qualified for free/reduced lunches. The research was designed as a mixed methods study with data being collected via an online survey and interviews. This study fills a gap in the literature about parents' reasons for choosing Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama.

Based on the literature there are many possible reasons for parents choosing to send their children to private schools. The literature indicated that parents send their children primarily to avoid the lack of strict discipline, lack of parent-approved values, sex education, and certain aspects of curriculum and instruction in the public schools (Crawford & Freeman, 1996).

Based on the results from the survey and interviews, parents chose these schools because they offered more discipline than public schools, they offered better teacher-student ratios, and they also offered Christian based curriculum.

Parents overall had very high expectations for their children. They also wanted a more Christian-based environment for their children. There was limited significance between the two schools studied even though School B only had ten representatives.

## Acknowledgements

“I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me.” Philippians 4:13

I’ve had the privilege of working with many wonderful people throughout my life, too many to mention each by name, but two of whom could not go without my personal thanks and gratitude. Dr. Jody Isernhagen, my advisor, my mentor, and friend. Thank you for teaching me, guiding me, and encouraging me. It has been an honor and a pleasure to complete my program under your guidance. I will be forever grateful! It was Dr. Marilyn Grady who gave me the courage to begin this journey. Thank you for encouraging me to begin this journey.

I am grateful for the support I received from faculty and friends at the University of Nebraska Education Administration Department. A special thanks to the NEAR Center staff who were so receptive to my many questions and guided me through the data analysis process.

To Cindy DeRyke, your help and support has been priceless! Your knowledge of technology and APA were invaluable. Knowing I had great support to lean on while preparing the final paper eased the anxiety along the way, thank you!

My sincere thanks to my committee: Dr. Jody Isernhagen, Dr. Larry Dlugosh, Dr. Barbara LaCost, and Dr. Allan Donsig. I will forever be grateful for your words of encouragement, guidance throughout the research, and preparation of the final paper.

A special thanks to my pastor Alex Ahiabor. You have been more than a pastor to me. You have been a mentor, a father, and a friend. Your prayers, encouraging words, and words of wisdom have helped me on this long journey.

To my friends who sent kind wishes, notes, emails and prayers while on the journey and encouraged me to “stay the course”. You meant a lot to me.

With a heart filled with love and gratitude, I thank my daughter for supporting me on this journey with her unfailing love. My mother who encouraged me to attend college, and always believed I could reach this “mountain peak”. My brother who gave encouraging words to keep me going.

Most importantly, I want to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Without You, none of this would have been possible. You have showed me undeserving favor. Thank You for not giving up on me. You have always been there, my faithful Father.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Statement of the Problem

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2013a, 2013b), in fall 2013 private schools in the US were serving 5.1 million students at the elementary and secondary levels. In 2011-12 private schools enrolled about 10% of all students (U.S. Department of Education, 2013a). According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics:

There were differences in private elementary and secondary school attendance by school type within racial/ethnic groups. For all racial/ethnic groups other than Black, higher percentages of private school students attended Catholic schools than other religious schools or nonsectarian schools in 2011–12. For example, 60 percent of Hispanic private school students attended Catholic schools, while 24 percent attended other religious schools and 15 percent attended nonsectarian schools. In contrast, there was a higher percentage of Black private school students attending other religious schools (42 percent) than attending Catholic schools (35 percent). The percentage of Black private school students attending Catholic schools was also higher than the percentage attending nonsectarian schools (23 percent). (U.S. Department of Education, 2013b)

Supporters believe that private schools perform a lot better than public schools in terms of academics (Shanker, 1993; Tooley, 2005). Opponents believe that private schools are not responsible for the academic performance, but instead the demographics of the student population yield the successful performance as they enroll mostly advantaged students who obviously do better academically than disadvantaged students who mostly attend public schools (Lubienski, Lubienski, & Crane, 2008).

Some private schools offer scholarships to assist low-income students and in other cases parents pay tuition based on their income (Tooley, 2005). However, of the 8.5



million families with children in grades K-12 with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more (the highest income bracket measured), 85% have children only in public schools and 12% have children only in private schools (United States Census Bureau, 2009). So it seems that most of the students attending public schools have more family wealth.

Nationally, the number of students who receive free and reduced lunch in schools is 19,700,000 (National Center for Education Statistics, School Nutrition Association, 2013). Over the past 50 years, the achievement gap between high income and low-income students has grown by about 40% and is now nearly twice as large as the black-white achievement gap (Reardon, 2011). Statistics show that dropout rates and math failure rates are also highest among minority students (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2008) with some having learning disabilities and needing special attention.

Another area that could affect academic performances is the cultural barrier. With public schools becoming more diversified, teachers are having a difficult time relating to students from different cultures. In 2011, 84% of the teachers in the United States (US) were white and the number of minority students was quickly rising (Feistritzer, 2011, p. 15). However, the awareness of cultural differences in the classroom must increase in order for teachers to have positive and effective relationships with their students and parents.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine parents' reasons for choosing Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama. Low socioeconomic students were defined as students who qualify

for free and reduced lunches. The research was designed as a mixed methods study with data being collected via an online survey and interviews. This study fills a gap in the literature about the parents' reasons for choosing Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students.

### **Research Questions**

For the purpose of this mixed-methods study, there was a central research question and four sub-questions. They were as follows:

**Central research question.** What are parents' reasons for choosing Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama?

#### **Four sub-Questions.**

1. What are parents' expectations for their child's academic development?
2. What are parents' expectations for their child's spiritual development?
3. What are parents' expectations for their child's social development?
4. What are parents' invested expectations for their child's academic, spiritual, and social development?

### **Background**

**Private schools.** Private schools attract high-ability, low-income students by offering them tuition discounts and sometimes fellowships (Epple & Romano, 1998). According to a research study by Williby and Hill (2010), Catholic schools that have a high percentage of low socioeconomic students, and experience average and above average achievement in eighth-grade test results, have students with positive high school experiences and values, and their parents are committed to ensuring continued and

consistent student participation and enrollment. The effects of these traits can be seen by consistency in paying tuition, and the obvious effort students put into their studies and attending school.

**Non-public schools of Alabama.** There were 1,629 schools in the state of Alabama at the time the study was conducted. Of those 1,629 schools, almost 400 of them were non-public. Of the almost 400 non-public schools, 344 had elementary grades. Of the 344 non-public elementary schools; 70 were non-denominational, 37 were Catholic, 6 were Lutheran, 9 were Seventh Day Adventist, 1 was Jewish, 17 were Presbyterian, 10 were Assembly of God, 74 were Baptist, 5 were Church of God, 9 were Pentecostal, 10 were Church of Christ, 7 were Episcopal, 5 were Islamic, 10 were Methodist, 1 was Church of Nazarene, 1 was Church of God in Christ, and 72 were non-religious. (Alabama Department of Education, 2010-2011).

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following terminology is defined.

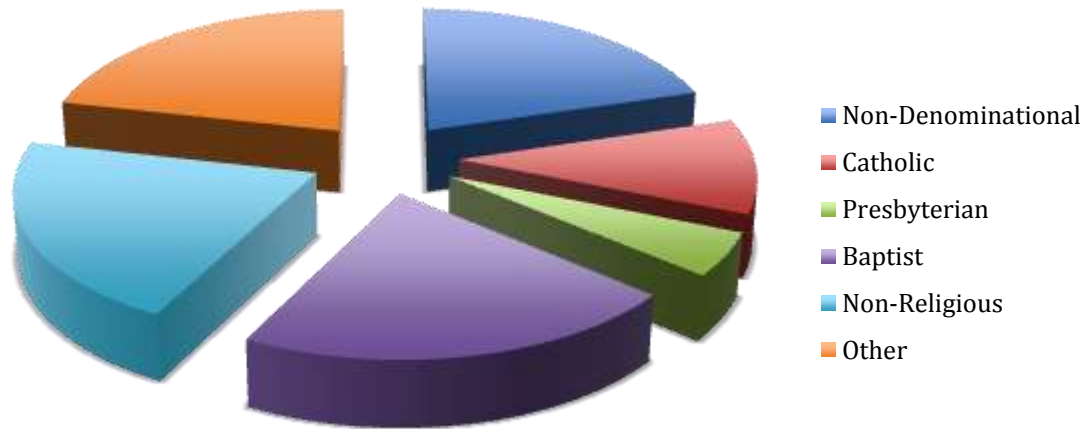
*Non-public non-denominational schools*—These are private Christian schools with no affiliation with any denominational religious organizations.

*Low socioeconomic students*—Students who would qualify for free/reduced lunch while attending a private school.

*Parents*—Any parents 19 years or older.

*Private parochial school*—A non-public religion based school in Alabama.

*Elementary schools*—Schools with any grades between kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.



Source: Alabama Department of Education: Statistics and Facts about Alabama Schools (2010-2011)

*Figure 1.* Types of non-public elementary schools in Alabama.

*Schools with a high percentage of low socioeconomic students*—Schools with 90% or more of their student body made up of students of color

### **Assumptions**

As a researcher, my assumption was that the parents of children in non-public non-denominational elementary schools would be honest in responding to the survey and participating in interviews about their expectations for low socioeconomic students.

### **Limitations**

Limitations were imposed by the researcher to note potential weaknesses in the study (Creswell, 2003). The limitations for this study was:

1. One of the limitations was convenience sampling as two schools in the study were within minutes of each other.
2. Another limitation was that there were only 10 participants that volunteered from School B and only 27 participants who volunteered from School A.
3. Another limitation was that only 3 parents volunteered for the interview.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations were imposed by the researcher as boundaries and/or restrictions that helped to narrow the scope of the study (Creswell, 2003). The delimitations for this study were:

1. The researcher only examined 2 of the 70 non-public non-denominational elementary schools in the state of Alabama, serving a population of low socioeconomic students.
2. The researcher only examined 2 of the 5 non-public non-denominational elementary schools in the state of Alabama, serving a high population of low socioeconomic students.

### **Target Audience**

The target audience for this study were parents in two non-public non-denominational elementary schools in Alabama.

### **Significance**

Research has shown that strong parent-teacher relationships and strong teacher-student relationships help to foster an atmosphere for increased student learning and achievement (Klem & Connell, 2009). This study is significant due to a gap in the

literature regarding parents' reasons for choosing non-public non-denominational elementary schools for low socioeconomic students. The results from this study may help administrators and teachers in non-public non-denominational elementary schools, make more effective connections with their low socioeconomic students and parents, and help them become more effective in increasing learning for low socioeconomic students' academic, spiritual, and social development. Administrators may also find information about parents' invested expectations helpful in establishing family budget plans that help reduce the financial burdens parents encounter.

### **Summary**

One of 10 students in the U.S. attends a private school (U.S. Department of Education, 2013a). The majority of students that attend private school attend Catholic schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2013b). However, in the state of Alabama, only about 10% of students attend Catholic elementary schools, but 1 in 5 students attend non-denominational elementary schools (Alabama Department of Education, 2010-2011).

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

#### Introduction

Over 34 million children are currently enrolled in elementary and junior high schools in the United States. Of these about 15% are attending non-public religious schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). The two largest church bodies supporting such schools are the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982). Substantial attention has been given to the effects of Catholic primary and secondary schooling on student achievement. Catholic schools have a positive effect on verbal and mathematics achievement growth (Coleman et al., 1982; Evans & Schwab, 1995; Figlio & Stone, 2000; Greeley, 1982; Ludwig, 1997; Murnane, 1984; Neal, 1997; Rouse, 1998; Sandler, 1996, 1997; Sandler & Krautmann, 1995).

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine parents' reasons for choosing non-public non-denominational elementary schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama. Parents' expectations for their children were examined in four areas: academic development, spiritual development, social development, and invested expectations required in each of these areas.

This literature review contained the following components: Attributes of Low Socioeconomic Students; History of Christian Education in Light of the Evolution of Public Schools (across the United States and internationally); History of the Teachers Role and Expectations in Private Schools, Reasons for Parents Selecting Parochial

Schools for their child; and Parent-Teacher Relationships and Student Achievement in Parochial Schools.

### **Attributes of Low Socioeconomic Students**

According to the American Psychological Association (2014), the following was stated about Education and Socioeconomic Status (SES):

Research indicates that children from low-SES households and communities develop academic skills more slowly compared to children from higher SES groups (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier, & Maczuga, 2009). Initial academic skills are correlated with the home environment, where low literacy environments and chronic stress negatively affect a child's pre-academic skills. The school systems in low-SES communities are often under resourced, negatively affecting students' academic progress (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). Inadequate education and increased dropout rates affect children's academic achievement, perpetuating the low-SES status of the community. . . . Children's initial reading competence is correlated with the home literacy environment, number of books owned, and parent distress (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). . . . In a nationwide study of American kindergarten children, 36% of parents in the lowest-income quintile read to their children on a daily basis, compared with 62% of parents from the highest-income quintile (Coley, 2002).

Low socioeconomic students were defined as students who qualify for free and reduced lunches. This study filled a gap in the literature about parents' expectations for low socioeconomic students in Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools.

Historical research suggested that students in Catholic schools had higher levels of educational attainment than students in public schools (Perlmann, 1989). However, research done by Sandler in 2000 suggested that even though there is a positive correlation between parochial school attendance and high school graduation rates; it is a result of positive selection rather than superior parochial schooling. According to a study by Boehm (1962), Catholic parochial working-class students of average intelligence scored higher than academically gifted students in public schools, and Catholic parochial



school children scored higher at an earlier age than public school children, regardless of socioeconomic class or intelligence level. In Catholic parochial schools, working-class students scored much higher than working-class students in public schools.

Fichter (1958) found that children in parochial schools come from stronger religious backgrounds than public school children and they have a higher incidence of parents with parochial school education. Parochial school children are more knowledgeable about their religion (Fichter, 1958). Catholic school attendees are more likely to be female, to be from urban hometowns, to have higher socioeconomic status, and come from more religious families (Greeley, Rossi, & Pinto, 1964).

There was not much research about non-denominational schools with high percentages of low socioeconomic students. Even though research has been done on the effects of Catholic or Lutheran parochial education on academic achievement, not much is known about the effects of non-public non-denominational elementary schools upon academic achievement. This study provided some insight into two non-public non-denominational elementary institutions in Alabama from a parent's perspective. This study also provided some insight into parents' expectations for these schools and for their child, and how those expectations affect their child's overall school performance (spiritual, academic, and social).

Religious institutions can help minority students create their own spaces of learning and empowerment (Ek, 2009). A study by McMillon and Edwards (2000) found that African American preschoolers demonstrated "superstar" behavior and social skills in a Baptist Sunday school setting compared to unacceptable social behavior in the

preschool setting. The Sunday school setting encouraged the increase in not only social skills, but also literacy skills. This was due to the incorporation of Christian lifestyles into the daily curriculum. These types of studies suggest that the church setting plays an essential role in developing not only social skills, but also literacy skills in children.

### **History of Christian Education in Light of the Evolution of Public Schools across the United States**

According to Kennedy and Newcombe (1994), virtually all education (mostly boys) in America was private and Christian from 1620 until 1837. Private and Christian education formed the foundation for America. The result of over 200 years of private, Christian education has yielded a steady increase in academic achievement, and literacy in particular (Kennedy & Newcombe, 1994).

According to Kennedy and Newcombe (1994), the modern public education system was born in Massachusetts in 1837 under the influence of Horace Mann, who denied the Trinity and the deity of Christ. He also did not believe in the inspiration and the authority of the Bible. He was disgusted with the notion of a public education system being influenced by the Christian Church. Mann (1796-1859) devoted his time to establishing an education system separate from the Christian Church, but it was not until John Dewey came on the scene that this vision came to fruition (Kennedy & Newcombe, 1994).

John Dewey (1859-1952) was a humanist and atheist and thus did not believe in Christianity (Kennedy & Newcombe, 1994). He believed that Christianity was the main problem that needed to be solved by the public education system. During the 200 years of

Christian education the country produced a .004% illiteracy rate (Kennedy & Newcombe, 1994, p. 49). However, in the public education era, in which more than a trillion dollars had been “pumped” into the system to try and make improvements, we find that the illiteracy rate had increased 32 times (Kennedy & Newcombe, 1994, p. 49).

### **History of the Teacher’s Role and Expectations in Private Schools**

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century there will be over 2 million teacher openings across all school levels (Simmons, 2000, p. 2). This is due to the nearly 50 million school age children resulting from the increased immigration and birth rates (O’Keeff, 2003). The shortage of teachers is also due to the high median age of teachers which is 44, and also the fact that one quarter of the nation’s teachers are over the age of 50 (Simmons, 2000, p. 2).

The first schools were established in America in the 1640’s (Kennedy & Newcombe, 1994). Laws were passed to ensure that children (mostly boys) were educated in the colonies. There was usually one teacher for every town and the teacher was responsible for teaching the children how to read and write the Bible. “The materials the Puritans used to teach the children to read and write were, of course, the Bible and other Christian materials” (Kennedy & Newcombe, 1994, p. 47).

As the colonies grew so did the number of teachers (Kennedy & Newcombe, 1994). However, the demographics of the teacher population didn’t. The Christian based curriculum did not change until the 1830’s when public education was born. The first teachers were just that - teachers. They simply taught the children to read and write the biblical scriptures (Kennedy & Newcombe, 1994).

Today mothers work outside the home because they are either single parents or have to bring in additional money to provide for the family in a demanding economy. The result is that teachers today take on many of the responsibilities that were once handled by parents. Many children today spend more time with their teachers than they do with their parents.

### **Reasons for Parents Selecting Parochial Schools for their Child**

Research suggests that parents send their children to parochial schools for religious purposes (Chang-Ho & Boyatt, 2007; Hall & Nattinger, 2012). The first schools were established to ensure that children knew how to read and write the Biblical scriptures.

### **Parent-Teacher Relationships and Student Achievement in Parochial Schools**

Research shows that when children's learning is supported in the home, academic achievement follows (Warren, Young, & Hanifin, 2003). Teachers and parents can help ensure that this support is present by having a healthy and consistent parent-teacher relationship. Parent involvement is important for student achievement (Cairney, 2000). When parents exhibit greater interest and participation in their child's education, learning improves (Epstein, 1992).

### **Summary**

In 2006, 54% of the public school children in Alabama were low-income (Suits, 2007, p. 13). According to the *Associated Press/Chattanooga Times Free Press* (2014): On Feb. 28, 2013, in the state of Alabama,

(A) legislative conference committee controlled by the Republican majority tripled the bill in size and added state tax credits for parents who chose to send

their children to a private school rather than a public school rated as failing. Parents can also send their children to a non-failing public school rather than a failing school. For parents who can't afford private school tuition, the bill sets up a scholarship program, with people and businesses getting tax credits for contributing.

As a result of scholarships being set up by this new bill, low-income families now have the opportunity to send their children to private schools. Therefore, there was a strong possibility that within the state of Alabama, the researcher would be able to identify Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools with a large population of low socioeconomic students. This assumption was made based on student demographic data provided to the researcher by a superintendent of one of these types of schools.

## Chapter 3

### Methods

#### Introduction

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine parents' reasons for choosing non-public non-denominational elementary schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama. Low socioeconomic students were defined as students who qualify for free/reduced lunches and parents were defined as those 19 years or older. The research was designed as a mixed methods study with data being collected via an online survey and interviews. This study filled a gap in the literature about parents' reasons for choosing non-public non-denominational elementary schools for low socioeconomic students.

#### Research Questions

For the purpose of this mixed-methods study, there was a central research question and four sub-questions. They are as follows:

**Central research question.** What are parents' reasons for choosing two non-public non-denominational elementary schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama?

**Four sub-questions.**

1. What are parents' expectations for their child's academic development?
2. What are parents' expectations for their child's spiritual development?
3. What are parents' expectations for their child's social development?

4. What are parents' invested expectations for their child's academic, spiritual, and social development?

### **IRB and Ethical Considerations**

Lipson (1994) groups ethical issues into informed consent procedures, deception or covert activities, confidentiality toward participants, sponsors, and colleagues, benefits of research to participants over risks, and participant requests that go beyond social norms.

The researcher has IRB approval (Appendix I). The purpose of the study was explained to participants, and the researcher refrained from engaging in any form of deception about the nature of the study. Finally, the researcher did not share personal experiences with the participants, which minimized the “bracketing” that was essential to construct the meaning of participants' experiences and reduced information shared by participants.

### **Mixed Methods Study**

**Rationale for a mixed-methods design.** The researcher's desire to utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods led to the selection of a mixed-methods design.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) defined mixed methods research as a study which

involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and/or qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research. (p. 165).

**Quantitative method.** Creswell (2009) defined quantitative research as:

a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numerical data can be analyzed using statistical procedures. The final written

report has a set structure consisting of introduction, literature and theory, methods, results, and discussion. (Creswell, 2009, p. 4)

Qualtrics (Appendix IV) was used as the online survey program for the quantitative part of the research. The advantages of using the online survey were many:

Speed—an email questionnaire can be sent to hundreds or thousands of people by entering or importing a distribution list and hitting the send button. Responses typically are received quickly, and data can be described and distributed via the software tool in real time. Economy—Most email software vendors offer free versions of their services. The free software often limits the number and types of questions and responses allowed. . . . Convenience—online survey software allows researchers to create the questionnaire, write the e-mail invitation, upload a distribution list, and send reminders directly from the software. In most cases, it is a seamless approach that automatically insets such elements as the survey link and a link for respondents to opt out of the survey if they so choose. Simplicity—Online survey software . . . does not require technical expertise on the part of the survey developer. (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 16)

The quantitative method was in the form of an online survey of parents' academic, spiritual, social, and invested expectations for low socioeconomic children in non-public non-denominational elementary schools. Research questions focused upon these four areas, and Table 1 indicates the relationship between survey questions and research questions.

Table 1

*Alignment of Survey Questions to Research Questions*

Question Numbers	Focus
Survey Questions 1-6	Parent Demographics
Survey Questions 7-11	Academic Expectations
Survey Questions 12-16	Spiritual Expectations



**Quantitative population/sample.** The participants of the survey were parents whose children attended two non-public non-denominational elementary schools in Alabama. The survey was administered in paper format. Parents of children qualifying for free and reduced lunches were self-selected from questions 5 and 6 of the survey (Appendix F, questions 5 & 6). Results from these two questions were analyzed using a national chart (see Table 2) for free and reduced lunches, to determine which parents have children that qualify for free and reduced lunches.

Table 2

*Free & Reduced Lunch Statistics*

Household Size	Annual Income according to Federal Poverty Guidelines	Annual Income for Families qualifying for Reduced Priced Lunches
1	11,490	21,257
2	15,510	28,694
3	19,530	36,131
4	23,550	43,568
5	27,570	51,005
6	31,590	58,442
7	35,610	65,879
8	39,630	73,316

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, School Nutrition Association (2013). *Free and Reduced Lunch Statistics*. <http://www.statisticbrain.com/free-and-reduced-lunch-statistics/> Department of Agriculture- Food and Nutrition Service- Child Nutrition Programs; Eligibility Guidelines- Federal Register Vol. 78, No. 61, Friday, March 29, 2013.

The sample was a non-probability sampling as the researcher was interested in surveying all the parents of low socioeconomic students at two non-public non-denominational elementary schools.

Approximately 72 parents of children qualifying for free and reduced lunch were eligible to participate in the study from these two schools. In using the sampling calculator the researcher created a sampling size chart based on the sampling errors noted below:

<b>Sampling Error:</b>	<b>Sample Size:</b>
.03	71
.04	67
.05	63

**Qualitative method.** Qualitative research is:

(A) situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that the qualitative researcher studied things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3)

A qualitative instrument was used to gather data on parents' academic, spiritual, social, and invested expectations for low socioeconomic children in non-public non-denominational elementary schools and was in the form of a qualitative interview. Research questions focused upon four areas and Table 3 indicates the relationship between the interview questions and research questions.

Table 3

*Alignment of Interview Questions to Research Questions*

Interview Questions	Focus
Interview Questions 1-4	Academic Expectations
Interview Questions 5-9	Spiritual Expectations
Interview Questions 10-13	Social Expectations
Interview Questions 14-17	Invested Expectations

**Qualitative population/sample.** The qualitative population consisted of parents of students who qualified for free and reduced lunches in the non-public non-denominational elementary schools studied. The researcher gave the administrator the Administrator Consent Form (Appendix B) and the administrator informed parents through an online newsletter. The researcher gave parents the Participant Consent Form (Appendix C) via email as well. Parents of children qualifying for free and reduced lunches were self-selected through the survey from questions 5 & 6 (Appendix FV, questions 5 & 6).

Prior to being interviewed, the survey prompted parents who were interested in participating in an interview to provide contact information such as an email or a phone number. The sample was described as a random sample as the researcher randomly selected and contacted six parents of low socioeconomic students at both of the two non-public non-denominational elementary schools to be interviewed individually.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine parents' reasons for choosing non-public non-denominational elementary schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama. Low socioeconomic students were defined as students who qualify for free and reduced lunches. The research was designed as a mixed methods study with data being collected via an online survey and interviews. This study filled a gap in the literature about parents' expectations for low socioeconomic students in non-public non-denominational elementary schools.

The researcher administered consent forms to parents via email, informing them of the study and asking for their participation. Then, on a set date, surveys were administered for completion by parents in paper form. Telephone contacts and/or emails for parents with children qualifying for free and reduced lunches were obtained through the survey, and randomly selected parents from that pool were contacted for interviews. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in a conference room at the public library. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed.

Once all surveys and interviews had been completed, the researcher summarized all data so that the study's findings could be shared.

## Chapter 4

### Quantitative Results

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine parents' reasons for choosing non-public non-denominational elementary schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama. Low socioeconomic students were defined as students who qualify for free and reduced lunches. The research was designed as a mixed methods study with data being collected via an online survey and interviews.

#### **Research Questions**

There was a central research question and four sub-questions. They were as follows:

**Central research question.** What were parents' reasons for choosing two non-public non-denominational elementary schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama?

#### **Four sub-questions.**

1. What were parents' expectations for their child's academic development?
2. What were parents' expectations for their child's spiritual development?
3. What were parents' expectations for their child's social development?
4. What were parents' invested expectations for their child's academic, spiritual, and social development?

## **Research Method**

An explanatory, sequential mixed methods design was used for the study, collecting quantitative, survey data first as the priority study, with qualitative data to elaborate and explain the quantitative results (Creswell, 2005).

Efforts were made to maximize the survey return rate. Before the survey was distributed, the researcher informed parents about the study and administration of the survey via email a couple weeks before the actual survey was administered. Letters with information about the survey were also sent out to parents with the superintendents' authorization. These letters were sent about two weeks before the survey was available.

## **Instrument**

Qualtrics survey software was used to implement the survey instrument online. The survey was developed by the researcher and was reviewed by four experts in the field of education, both current and past administrators. The 26 item survey was intended to determine parents' demographics (questions 1-6); parents' expectations for their child's academic development (questions 7-11); parents' expectations for their child's spiritual development (questions 12-16); parents' expectations for their child's social development (questions 17-21); and parents' invested expectations for their child's academic, spiritual, and social development (questions 22-26).

A four-point Likert scale was used mainly for the categories of (1) Academic Expectations, (2) Spiritual Expectations, and (3) Social Expectations. Participants were asked to check one of the following four answers: Not Important, Somewhat Important,

Important, and Very Important. Demographic and Invested Expectation questions consisted mainly of 'Yes' or 'No' responses.

### **Survey Participants**

**School participation.** The sample population chosen for the study was all the parents of students in two of the five non-public non-denominational elementary schools in the state of Alabama with a high percentage of low socioeconomic students. One hundred and twenty-six (126) parents participated in the survey and 37 completed the entire survey. Of these 37 survey participants, two non-public non-denominational elementary schools were represented.

**Parent participation.** Of the 2 schools, there were 150 parents, thus 2 schools share 75 parents. The sample population chosen for the study was all the parents of students in 2 of the 5 non-public non-denominational elementary schools in the State of Alabama with a high percentage of low socioeconomic students. Fifty (50) parents participated in the survey at School B and 10 parents completed the entire survey for a response rate of 20%. Seventy-six (76) parents participated in the survey at School A and 27 parents completed the entire survey for a response rate of 36%. The response rate for both schools was almost 30%.

About 54.1% of the parents surveyed said they attended public school. Parents who attended private school had the second highest rate with 16.2% (see Table 4).

Approximately 55.6% of parents surveyed said they attended public school. Parents who attended private school or both private and public school had the second highest rating with 18.5% (see Table 5).

Table 4

*School A and School B—Survey Question 1*

Question 1	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	3	8.1	8.1	8.1
2	6	16.2	16.2	24.3
3	20	54.1	54.1	78.4
4	2	5.4	5.4	83.8
5	5	13.5	13.5	97.3
7	1	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 5

*School A—Survey Question 1*

Question 1	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	5	18.5	18.5	18.5
3	15	55.6	55.6	74.1
4	1	3.7	3.7	77.8
5	5	18.5	18.5	96.3
7	1	3.7	3.7	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Fifty percent (50%) of parents surveyed said they attended public school (see Table 6).



Table 6

*School B—Survey Question 1*

Question 1	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	3	30.0	30.0	30.0
2	1	10.0	10.0	40.0
3	5	50.0	50.0	90.0
4	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Almost 38% of the parents surveyed in School A and School B said that the highest level of education that they received was high school (see Table 7).

Table 7

*School A and School B—Survey Question 2*

Question 2	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	3	8.1	8.1	8.1
2	1	2.7	2.7	10.8
3	14	37.8	37.8	48.6
4	8	21.6	21.6	70.3
5	11	29.7	29.7	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Almost 41% of the parents surveyed in School A said that the highest level of education that they received was college graduate (see Table 8).

Table 8

*School A—Survey Question 2*

Question 2	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	3	11.1	11.1	11.1
3	7	25.9	25.9	37.0
4	6	22.2	22.2	59.3
5	11	40.7	40.7	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Seventy percent (70%) of the parents surveyed in School B said that the highest level of education that they received was high school (see Table 9)

Table 9

*School B—Survey Question 2*

Question 2	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
3	7	70.0	70.0	80.0
4	2	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Almost 63% of the parents surveyed in School A and School B said that their church was not the same denomination as the church affiliated with the school (see Table 10).

Table 10

*School A and School B—Survey Question 4*

Question 4	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	9	24.3	37.5	37.5
1	15	40.5	62.5	100.0
Total	24	64.9	100.0	
Missing -9	13	35.1		
Total	37	100.0		

Almost 64% of the parents surveyed in School A said that their church was not the same denomination as the church affiliated with the school (see Table 11).

Table 11

*School A—Survey Question 4*

Question 4	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	8	29.6	36.4	36.4
1	14	51.9	63.6	100.0
Total	22	81.5	100.0	
Missing -9	5	18.5		
Total	27	100.0		

Fifty percent (50%) of the parents surveyed in School B said that their church was not the same denomination as the church affiliated with the school. However, 50% said

that their church was the same denomination as the church affiliated with the school.

Only 10 parents were surveyed at School B (see Table 12).

Table 12

*School B—Survey Question 4*

Question 4	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	1	10.0	50.0	50.0
1	1	10.0	50.0	100.0
Total	2	20.0	100.0	
Missing -9	8	80.0		
Total	10	100.0		

About 35% of the parents surveyed in School A and School B had a household annual income between \$0- \$21,257 (see Table 13).

About 48% of the parents surveyed in School A had a household annual income between \$0- \$21,257 (see Table 14).

Thirty percent (30%) of the parents surveyed in School B had a household annual income between \$43,569- \$51,005 (see Table 15).

Almost 60% of the parents surveyed in School A and School B said that the highest level of education they expected their child to obtain was college-graduate (see Table 16).

Almost 67% of the parents surveyed in School A said that the highest level of education they expected their child to obtain was college-graduate (see Table 17).

Table 13

*School A and School B—Survey Question 5*

Question 5	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	13	35.1	35.1	35.1
2	1	2.7	2.7	37.8
3	4	10.8	10.8	48.6
4	3	8.1	8.1	56.8
5	11	29.7	29.7	86.5
6	1	2.7	2.7	89.2
8	2	5.4	5.4	94.6
9	2	5.4	5.4	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 14

*School A—Survey Question 5*

Question 5	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	13	48.1	48.1	48.1
2	1	3.7	3.7	51.9
3	2	7.4	7.4	59.3
4	1	3.7	3.7	63.0
5	8	29.6	29.6	92.6
8	1	3.7	3.7	96.3
9	1	3.7	3.7	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Table 15

*School B—Survey Question 5*

Question 5	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 3	2	20.0	20.0	20.0
4	2	20.0	20.0	40.0
5	3	30.0	30.0	70.0
6	1	10.0	10.0	80.0
8	1	10.0	10.0	90.0
9	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Table 16

*School A and School B—Survey Question 7*

Question 7	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	4	10.8	10.8	10.8
2	11	29.7	29.7	40.5
3	22	59.5	59.5	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Table 17

*School A—Survey Question 7*

Question 7	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	3	11.1	11.1	11.1
2	6	22.2	22.2	33.3
3	18	66.7	66.7	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Fifty percent (50%) of the parents surveyed in School B said that the highest level of education they expected their child to obtain was college-undergraduate (see Table 18).

Table 18

*School B—Survey Question 7*

Question 7	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
2	5	50.0	50.0	60.0
3	4	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Almost 94% of the parents in School A and School B believed that their child could receive a similar or better education in their child's school as opposed to a public school (see Table 19).

Table 19

*School A and School B—Survey Question 8*

Question 8	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	2	5.4	6.1	6.1
1	31	83.8	93.9	100.0
Total	33	89.2	100.0	
Missing -9	4	10.8		
Total	37	100.0		

Almost 92% of the parents in School A believed that their child could receive a similar or better education in their child's school as opposed to a public school.

Table 20

*School A—Survey Question 8*

Question 8	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	2	7.4	8.3	8.3
1	22	81.5	91.7	100.0
Total	24	88.9	100.0	
Missing -9	3	11.1		
Total	27	100.0		

One hundred percent (100%) of the parents in School B believed that their child could receive a similar or better education in their child's school as opposed to a public school (see Table 21).



Table 21

*School B—Survey Question 8*

Question 8	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	9	90.0	100.0	100.0
Missing -9	1	10.0		
Total	10	100.0		

Almost 95% of the parents in School A and School B expected their child to perform at a level that was above average (see Table 22).

Table 22

*School A and School B—Survey Question 9*

Question 9	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	35	94.6	94.6	94.6
2	2	5.4	5.4	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Almost 93% of the parents in School A expected their child to perform at a level that was above average (see Table 23).

One hundred percent (100%) of the parents in School B expected their child to perform at a level that was above average (see Table 24).

About 35% of the parents in School A and School B expected their child to take homework home 2-3 times each week (see Table 25).

Table 23

*School A—Survey Question 9*

Question 9	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	25	92.6	92.6	92.6
2	2	7.4	7.4	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Table 24

*School B—Survey Question 9*

Question 9	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	10	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 25

*School A and School B—Survey Question 10*

Question 10	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	4	10.8	10.8	10.8
3	13	35.1	35.1	45.9
4	8	21.6	21.6	67.6
5	12	32.4	32.4	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the parents in School A expected their child to take homework home 2-3 times each week and another 37% expected their child to take homework home every day (see Table 26).

Table 26

*School A—Survey Question 10*

Question 10	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	1	3.7	3.7	3.7
3	10	37.0	37.0	40.7
4	6	22.2	22.2	63.0
5	10	37.0	37.0	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Thirty percent (30%) of the parents in School B expected their child to take homework home 1-2 times each week and another 30% expected their child to take homework home 2-3 times each week (see Table 27).

Table 27

*School B—Survey Question 10*

Question 10	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	3	30.0	30.0	30.0
3	3	30.0	30.0	60.0
4	2	20.0	20.0	80.0
5	2	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

One hundred percent (100%) of the parents in School A and School B said that education is very important for their child (see Table 28).

Table 28

*School A and School B—Survey Question 11*

Question 11	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 4	37	100.0	100.0	100.0

About 89% of the parents in School A and School B said that Christianity (Relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ) in their child's education was very important (see Table 29).

Table 29

*School A and School B—Survey Question 12*

Question 12	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	2	5.4	5.4	5.4
3	2	5.4	5.4	10.8
4	33	89.2	89.2	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

One hundred percent (100%) of the parents in School A said that Christianity (Relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ) in their child's education was very important (see Table 30).

Sixty percent (60%) of the parents in School B said that Christianity (Relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ) in their child's education was very important (see Table 31).

Table 30

*School A—Survey Question 12*

Question 12	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 4	27	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 31

*School B—Survey Question 12*

Question 12	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	2	20.0	20.0	20.0
3	2	20.0	20.0	40.0
4	6	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Almost 60% of the parents in School A and School B said that it was very important that their child's teachers be Christians (see Table 32).

Table 32

*School A and School B—Survey Question 13*

Question 13	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	2	5.4	5.4	5.4
2	4	10.8	10.8	16.2
3	9	24.3	24.3	40.5
4	22	59.5	59.5	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

Sixty-three percent (63%) of the parents in School A said that it was very important that their child's teachers be Christians (see Table 33).

Table 33

*School A—Survey Question 13*

Question 13	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	2	7.4	7.4	7.4
3	8	29.6	29.6	37.0
4	17	63.0	63.0	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Fifty percent (50%) of the parents in School B said that it was very important that their child's teachers be Christians (see Table 34).

Table 34

*School B—Survey Question 13*

Question 13	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	4	40.0	40.0	40.0
3	1	10.0	10.0	50.0
4	5	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

About 82% of the parents in School A and School B believed that worship service should be incorporated into the worship service at their child's school (see Table 35).

Table 35

*School A and School B—Survey Question 14*

Question 14	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	4	10.8	14.3	14.3
1	23	62.2	82.1	96.4
9	1	2.7	3.6	100.0
Total	28	75.7	100.0	
Missing -9	9	24.3		
Total	37	100.0		

About 86% of the parents in School A believed that worship service should be incorporated into the worship service at their child's school (see Table 36).

Table 36

*School A—Survey Question 14*

Question 14	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	2	7.4	9.5	9.5
1	18	66.7	85.7	95.2
9	1	3.7	4.8	100.0
Total	21	77.8	100.0	
Missing -9	6	22.2		
Total	27	100.0		

About 71% of the parents in School B believed that worship service should be incorporated into the worship service at their child's school (see Table 37).

Table 37

*School B—Survey Question 14*

Question 14	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	2	20.0	28.6	28.6
1	5	50.0	71.4	100.0
Total	7	70.0	100.0	
Missing -9	3	30.0		
Total	10	100.0		

One hundred percent (100%) of the parents in School A and School B believed that a bible course should be offered as part of the curriculum (see Table 38).

Table 38

*School A and School B—Survey Question 15*

Question 15	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	33	89.2	100.0	100.0
Missing -9	4	10.8		
Total	37	100.0		



About 65% of the parents in School A and School B believed that it is very important that their child's extracurricular activities be centered on the Gospel and Jesus Christ (see Table 39).

Table 39

*School A and School B—Survey Question 16*

Question 16	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	4	10.8	10.8	10.8
3	9	24.3	24.3	35.1
4	24	64.9	64.9	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

About 70% of the parents in School A believed that it is very important that their child's extracurricular activities be centered on the Gospel and Jesus Christ (see Table 40).

Table 40

*School A—Survey Question 16*

Question 16	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	3	11.1	11.1	11.1
3	5	18.5	18.5	29.6
4	19	70.4	70.4	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Fifty percent (50%) of the parents in School B believed that it is very important that their child's extracurricular activities be centered on the Gospel and Jesus Christ (see Table 41).

Table 41

*School B—Survey Question 16*

Question 16	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
3	4	40.0	40.0	50.0
4	5	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

About 54% of the parents in School A and School B believed that extracurricular activities were very important in their child's education (see Table 42).

Table 42

*School A and School B—Survey Question 17*

Question 17	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	3	8.1	8.1	8.1
2	2	5.4	5.4	13.5
3	12	32.4	32.4	45.9
4	20	54.1	54.1	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

About 56% of the parents in School A believed that extracurricular activities were very important in their child's education (see Table 43).

Table 43

*School A—Survey Question 17*

Question 17	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	3	11.1	11.1	11.1
2	1	3.7	3.7	14.8
3	8	29.6	29.6	44.4
4	15	55.6	55.6	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Fifty percent (50%) of the parents in School B believed that extracurricular activities were very important in their child's education (see Table 44).

Table 44

*School B—Survey Question 17*

Question 17	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
3	4	40.0	40.0	50.0
4	5	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

About 54% of the parents in School A and School B believed that extracurricular activities should be offered during regular hours, before school, and after school (see Table 45).

Table 45

*School A and School B—Survey Question 18*

Question 18	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	10	27.0	27.0	27.0
3	7	18.9	18.9	45.9
4	20	54.1	54.1	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

About 44% of the parents in School A believed that extracurricular activities should be offered during regular hours, before school, and after school (see Table 46).

Table 46

*School A—Survey Question 18*

Question 18	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	10	37.0	37.0	37.0
3	5	18.5	18.5	55.6
4	12	44.4	44.4	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Eighty percent (80%) of the parents in School B believed that extracurricular activities should be offered during regular hours, before school, and after school (see Table 47).

Table 47

*School B—Survey Question 18*

Question 18	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 3	2	20.0	20.0	20.0
4	8	80.0	80.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

About 89% of the parents in School A and School B thought that extra-curricular activities should consist of academics, spiritual content, social activity, and physical activity (see Table 48).

Table 48

*School A and School B—Survey Question 19*

Question 19	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	1	2.7	2.7	2.7
2	1	2.7	2.7	5.4
3	1	2.7	2.7	8.1
4	1	2.7	2.7	10.8
5	33	89.2	89.2	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

About 89% of the parents in School A thought that extra-curricular activities should consist of academics, spiritual content, social activity, and physical activity (see Table 49).

Table 49

*School A—Survey Question 19*

Question 19	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	1	3.7	3.7	3.7
2	1	3.7	3.7	7.4
4	1	3.7	3.7	11.1
5	24	88.9	88.9	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Ninety percent (90%) of the parents in School B thought that extra-curricular activities should consist of academics, spiritual content, social activity, and physical activity (see Table 50).

Table 50

*School B—Survey Question 19*

Question 19	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 3	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
5	9	90.0	90.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

About 49% of the parents in School A and School B thought that co-education (having both sexes in the classroom) encourages social development (see Table 51).

Table 51

*School A and School B—Survey Question 20*

Question 20	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	18	48.6	48.6	48.6
2	2	5.4	5.4	54.1
3	12	32.4	32.4	86.5
4	5	13.5	13.5	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

About 48% of the parents in School A thought that co-education (having both sexes in the classroom) encourages social development (see Table 52).

Table 52

*School A—Survey Question 20*

Question 20	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	13	48.1	48.1	48.1
2	2	7.4	7.4	55.6
3	8	29.6	29.6	85.2
4	4	14.8	14.8	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Fifty percent (50%) of the parents in School B thought that co-education (having both sexes in the classroom) encouraged social development (see Table 53).

Table 53

*School B—Survey Question 20*

Question 20	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	5	50.0	50.0	50.0
3	4	40.0	40.0	90.0
4	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

About 78% of the parents in School A and School B thought that school uniforms were a good idea (see Table 54).

Table 54

*School A and School B—Survey Question 21*

Question 21	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	1	2.7	2.7	2.7
2	29	78.4	78.4	81.1
3	6	16.2	16.2	97.3
4	1	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	



About 85% of the parents in School A thought that school uniforms were a good idea (see Table 55).

Table 55

*School A—Survey Question 21*

Question 21	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	1	3.7	3.7	3.7
2	23	85.2	85.2	88.9
3	2	7.4	7.4	96.3
4	1	3.7	3.7	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Sixty percent (60%) of the parents in School B thought that school uniforms were a good idea (see Table 56).

Table 56

*School B—Survey Question 21*

Question 21	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2	6	60.0	60.0	60.0
3	4	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

About 62% of the parents in School A and School B believe that they are financially responsible for 100 percent of their child's education (see Table 57).

Table 57

*School A and School B—Survey Question 22*

Question 22	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	1	2.7	2.7	2.7
2	1	2.7	2.7	5.4
3	6	16.2	16.2	21.6
4	4	10.8	10.8	32.4
5	2	5.4	5.4	37.8
6	23	62.2	62.2	100.0
Total	37	100.0	100.0	

About 74% of the parents in School A believe that they are financially responsible for 100 percent of their child's education (see Table 58).

Table 58

*School A—Survey Question 22*

Question 22	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	1	3.7	3.7	3.7
2	1	3.7	3.7	7.4
3	4	14.8	14.8	22.2
5	1	3.7	3.7	25.9
6	20	74.1	74.1	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Forty percent (40%) of the parents in School B believe that they are financially responsible for 51-75% of their child's education (see Table 59).

Table 59

*School B—Survey Question 22*

Question 22	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 3	2	20.0	20.0	20.0
4	4	40.0	40.0	60.0
5	1	10.0	10.0	70.0
6	3	30.0	30.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Seventy percent (70%) of the parents in School A and School B said that they would let their child perform work-study duties to help cover their financial obligations (see Table 60).

Table 60

*School A and School B—Survey Question 23*

Question 23	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	9	24.3	30.0	30.0
1	21	56.8	70.0	100.0
Total	30	81.1	100.0	
Missing -9	7	18.9		
Total	37	100.0		

About 77% of the parents in School A said that they would let their child perform work-study duties to help cover their financial obligations (see Table 61).

Table 61

*School A—Survey Question 23*

Question 23	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	5	18.5	22.7	22.7
1	17	63.0	77.3	100.0
Total	22	81.5	100.0	
Missing -9	5	18.5		
Total	27	100.0		

Fifty percent (50%) of the parents in School B said that they would let their child perform work-study duties to help cover their financial obligations (see Table 62).

Table 62

*School B—Survey Question 23*

Question 23	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	4	40.0	50.0	50.0
1	4	40.0	50.0	100.0
Total	8	80.0	100.0	
Missing -9	2	20.0		
Total	10	100.0		

About 96% of the parents in School A and School B believe that their child's teachers should receive wages comparable to those received by teachers in public schools (see Table 63).

Table 63

*School A and School B—Survey Question 24*

Question 24	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	1	2.7	3.8	3.8
1	25	67.6	96.2	100.0
Total	26	70.3	100.0	
Missing -9	11	29.7		
Total	37	100.0		

About 95% of the parents in School A believe that their child's teachers should receive wages comparable to those received by teachers in public schools (see Table 64).

Table 64

*School A—Survey Question 24*

Question 24	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	1	3.7	5.3	5.3
1	18	66.7	94.7	100.0
Total	19	70.4	100.0	
Missing -9	8	29.6		
Total	27	100.0		

One hundred percent (100%) of the parents in School B believe that their child's teachers should receive wages comparable to those received by teachers in public schools (see Table 65).

Table 65

*School B—Survey Question 24*

Question 24	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	7	70.0	100.0	100.0
Missing -9	3	30.0		
Total	10	100.0		

Eighty-five percent (85%) of the parents in School A and School B think that the annual cost to educate their child should be comparable to the cost to educate a child in a public school (see Table 66).

Table 66

*School A and School B—Survey Question 25*

Question 25	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	3	8.1	15.0	15.0
1	17	45.9	85.0	100.0
Total	20	54.1	100.0	
Missing -9	17	45.9		
Total	37	100.0		

About 83% of the parents in School A think that the annual cost to educate their child should be comparable to the cost to educate a child in a public school (see Table 67).

Table 67

*School A—Survey Question 25*

Question 25	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	3	11.1	16.7	16.7
1	15	55.6	83.3	100.0
Total	18	66.7	100.0	
Missing -9	9	33.3		
Total	27	100.0		

One hundred percent (100%) of the parents in School B think that the annual cost to educate their child should be comparable to the cost to educate a child in a public school (see Table 68).

Table 68

*School B—Survey Question 25*

Question 25	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	2	20.0	100.0	100.0
Missing -9	8	80.0		
Total	10	100.0		

Eighty-four percent (84%) of the parents in School A and School B said that if their child's school offered the opportunity to develop a budget plan for their family, they would consider the practice fair (see Table 69).

Table 69

*School A and School B—Survey Question 26*

Question 26	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	4	10.8	16.0	16.0
1	21	56.8	84.0	100.0
Total	25	67.6	100.0	
Missing -9	12	32.4		
Total	37	100.0		

About 78% of the parents in School A said that if their child's school offered the opportunity to develop a budget plan for their family, they would consider the practice fair (see Table 70).

Table 70

*School A—Survey Question 26*

Question 26	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	7	70.0	100.0	100.0
Missing -9	3	30.0		
Total	10	100.0		



One hundred percent (100%) of the parents in School B said that if their child's school offered the opportunity to develop a budget plan for their family, they would consider the practice fair (see Table 71).

Table 71

*School B—Survey Question 26*

Question 26	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	4	14.8	22.2	22.2
1	14	51.9	77.8	100.0
Total	18	66.7	100.0	
Missing -9	9	33.3		
Total	27	100.0		

The researcher took all the comments into account and integrated the comments with the open/ended questions on the qualitative interview protocol. These results will be discussed further in Chapter 5 (Qualitative Results) and Chapter 6 (Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations).

### **Summary**

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine parents' reasons for choosing Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama. Parents overall had very high expectations for their children. They also wanted a more Christian-based environment for their children.

There was limited significance between the two schools studied even though School B only had ten representatives. Qualitative data results to enrich and better define the survey responses are discussed in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Qualitative Results**

#### **Introduction**

Creswell (2005) suggested a mixed method study to offer a more in depth understanding than either a quantitative or qualitative study used in isolation. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used for this study, with quantitative data collected as the priority study, and qualitative data used to elaborate and explain the quantitative results (Creswell, 2005). A mixed methods research design was chosen in order to gain as much information as possible in addressing the primary and secondary research questions. This allowed for additional information to be gathered gaining a more thorough understanding of the perception of the parents surveyed.

#### **Sample and Selection Process**

Interviews with three parents were scheduled during the summer of 2015. Two face-to-face interviews and one phone interview were conducted with three parents from School A. A convenience sampling method was used to select the schools because they were within minutes of each other.

#### **Interview Protocol**

After the quantitative survey data were analyzed, the interview protocol questions that were originally developed were re-visited to align with the survey results. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), “The information from this analysis (database from first stage/quantitative study) is then reviewed, and in Stage 2 decisions are made about

what information is most useful for Stage 3, the collection and analysis of the second database” (qualitative study) (p. 144).

Two categories emerged in the quantitative results that encouraged a modification to the interview protocol to gain more in-depth information in these specific areas. The data from two survey categories that emerged with the highest and lowest ranked categories, as well as having the greatest differences among the schools were “What were parents’ expectations for their child’s social development?” and “What were parents’ invested expectations for their child’s academic, spiritual, and social development?” The interview protocol was modified to add additional probes to these questions and to gather more in-depth information.

The 18 questions used as the basis for the semi-structured open-ended interview protocol with additional probes aligned with the survey, were as follows:

- Question 1     What basic academic skills do you want taught to your child at this school and why?
- Question 2     Describe what role education should play in your child’s life?
- Question 3     Do you think your child can receive a similar or better education in a public school and why?
- Question 4     How far do you want your child to go academically and why?
- Question 5     Describe what basic biblical principles you want taught to your child at this school.
- Question 6     Describe what role faith should play in your child’s life.

- Question 7 Do you think a bible course should be offered as part of the curriculum and why?
- Question 8 Do you think that a worship service should be incorporated into the curriculum at your school and why?
- Question 9 How important is it to you that your child's teachers are Christians and why?
- Question 10 Describe what basic social skills you want taught to your child at this school.
- Question 11 Describe what role extra-curricular activities should play in your child's life.
- Question 12 Describe the kind of extra-curricular activities you want to see offered at your child's school.
- Question 13 Describe how you feel about school uniforms. Explain why you feel it is a good or bad idea.
- Question 14 Do you find educating your child a financial burden?
- Question 15 Do you find the payment arrangements you have with your child's school reasonable? Why?
- Question 16 What are your thoughts on individual budget plans between a school and parents?
- Question 17 Do you think it cost more to educate a child in public school than in a non-public school and why?

Question 18 Do you think faith or education should be the most important component in your child's education and why?

### **Emerging Themes**

Through a process of transcribing, organizing, and analyzing the data for major topics, then coding and condensing the codes, common themes were identified (Creswell & Plano, 2007). The four themes that emerged were consistent with the online survey categories: (a) Parents' expectations for their child's academic development? (b) Parents' expectations for their child's spiritual development? (c) Parents' expectations for their child's social development? and (d) Parents' invested expectations for their child's academic, spiritual, and social development?

### **Theme Summaries**

**Introduction.** In this section, each of the four themes will be discussed:

(a) parents' expectations for their child's academic development, (b) parents' expectations for their child's spiritual development, (c) parents' expectations for their child's social development, and (d) parents' invested expectations for their child's academic, spiritual, and social development.

Parent comments associated with each theme will be discussed.

#### ***Theme 1: Parents' expectations for their child's academic development.***

Parents' expectations for their child's academic development from interviewees were consistent, viewing it as important to critical. All interviewees stressed the importance of education playing a major role in helping the child have a successful life, keeping them out of trouble, and out of the "streets."

One parent said, “I want them to complete college so they will be able to have a successful future. Not if they just make a lot of money but doing something they like to do that they can get a job in.”

Another parent explained, “Education is going to play a very important role. I want him to go further and putting him in this school will take him further. Take him to college.”

Another parent stated,

I want him to go as far as he can because it will better his life in the future. I want him to get his PhD because he is a black male and it would make his life better if he would go on and get an education and he would not have to go to the streets. He could afford a family and most of all, he could take care of himself.

***Theme 2: Parents’ expectations for their child’s spiritual development?***

Parents’ expectations for their child’s spiritual development were consistent, viewing it as important to critical. Parents believe that their children need faith exercised in their lives in order to be successful academically. They believe that without faith, their children will not be able to handle the struggles of life.

One parent said, “Faith should play a big role because if they don’t have faith, when it comes to struggles they would not know how to handle the stress of struggles.”

Another parent explained, “That’s an important part in his life. Without faith you are not going to make it. It will make him strong as a man.”

Another parent stated, “Knowing how to interact with each other and how to treat people, and knowing about the love of God because if they are taught that then they won’t go astray.”

***Theme 3: Parents' expectations for their child's social development?*** Parents' expectations for their child's social development were consistent, viewing it as important to very important. Parents believe that social skills are essential for helping their children interact with each other and hence stay out of conflict and trouble. They also believe that being involved in social activities can help their children stay off the "streets" and out of trouble.

One parent said, "Social skills will help them learn how to interact with others and also help them learn how to treat others and how to accept people for who they are and not to look down on other people."

Another parent stated, "Basketball plays a good part in his life because he loves basketball. It will keep him off the street."

***Theme 4: Parents' invested expectations for their child's academic, spiritual, and social development?*** Most parents believed it was their financial responsibility to educate their child. They see it as a sacrificial investment into their child's future. Most parents liked the idea of schools working with parents who may need financial support to educate their child.

One parent stated, "Educating my child is not a burden but an investment. It may not payoff for me, but it will payoff for him."

## **Summary**

The interview data seemed to reflect the survey data. Parents all shared the belief that the institution's stricter policies, smaller teacher-student ratios, and faith-based



curriculum gave their child more discipline, more one-on-one help, and helped their child stay out of trouble and be a better person and citizen.

Responses that seemed to garner the most reaction evolved around the themes of “parents’ expectations for their child’s academic development,” “parents’ expectations for their child’s spiritual development,” “parents’ expectations for their child’s social development,” and “parents’ invested expectations for their child’s academic, spiritual, and social development.”

Chapter 6, “Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations,” will expand on the topics, “parents’ expectations for their child’s academic development,” “parents’ expectations for their child’s spiritual development,” “parents’ expectations for their child’s social development,” and “parents’ invested expectations for their child’s academic, spiritual, and social development.” Additional recommendations for future studies will be shared in the hopes to better bridge the gap in achievement disparities, for ‘at risk’ children, and to improve school-parent relationships.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Summary of Findings, Discussion, and Recommendations**

#### **Introduction**

Mixed-methods study results from parents whose children attended Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students presented an influential case that similar programs can be used as a tool to improve teacher-parent relationships, and close the achievement gap. Yet how much of this information is known to administrators? Are good parent-teacher relations considered as an intervention strategy to close the achievement gap in Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Alabama schools?

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to determine parents' reasons for choosing Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama. Forty percent (40%) of Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama participated in the study, allowing the researcher to extract some conclusions and provide some common group and subgroup analysis.

#### **Limitations of the Study**

Only ten parents participated in the study from School B and none of those parents volunteered to participate the interview process. If the researcher had been able to anticipate this, another school might have been selected for the study.

## **Discussion and Implications of Mixed Methods Study Findings**

To address the purpose of this study, four sub-questions were used to guide the research. The research questions are addressed below, grouped according to conclusions and recommendations offered. Both quantitative and qualitative results were used to address the research questions.

### **Research Question #1: What are parents' expectations for their child's academic development?**

*Conclusion.* Responses to survey question #7 found almost 60% of the parents in School A and School B said that the highest level of education they expected their child to obtain was college-graduate. Responses to survey question #8 found almost 94% of the parents in School A and School B believed that their child could receive a similar or better education in their child's school as opposed to a public school. Responses to survey question #9 found almost 95% of the parents in School A and School B expected their child to perform at a level that was above average. Responses to survey question #10 found about 35% of the parents in School A and School B expected their child to take homework home 2-3 times each week. Responses to survey question #11 found that 100% of the parents in School A and School B said education is very important for their child.

*Discussion.* Parents' expectations for their child's academic development from interviewees were consistent, viewing it as important to critical. All interviewees stressed the importance of education playing a major role in helping their child go further and have a successful life and keeping them out of trouble.

**Research Question #2: What are parents' expectations for their child's spiritual development?**

*Conclusion.* Responses to survey question #12 found about 89% of the parents in School A and School B said that Christianity (Relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ) in their child's education was very important. Responses to survey question #13 found almost 60% of the parents in School A and School B said that it was very important that their child's teachers be Christians. Responses to survey question #14 found about 82% of the parents in School A and School B believed that worship service should be incorporated into the worship service at their child's school. Responses to survey question #15 found 100% of the parents in School A and School B believed that a bible course should be offered as part of the curriculum. Responses to question #16 found about 65% of the parents in School A and School B believed that it is very important that their child's extracurricular activities be centered on the Gospel and Jesus Christ.

*Discussion.* Parents' expectations for their child's spiritual development were consistent, viewing it as important to critical. Parents believed that their children needed faith exercised in their lives in order to be successful academically. They believed that without faith, their children would not be able to handle the struggles of life.

**Research Question #3: What are parents' expectations for their child's social development?**

*Conclusion.* Responses to survey question #17 found about 54% of the parents in School A and School B believed that extracurricular activities were very important in their child's education. Responses to question #18 found about 54% of the parents in

School A and School B believed that extracurricular activities should be offered during regular hours, before school, and after school. Responses to question #19 found about 89% of the parents in School A and School B thought that extra-curricular activities should consist of academics, spiritual content, social activity, and physical activity. Responses to question #20 found about 49% of the parents in School A and School B thought that co-education (having both sexes in the classroom) encouraged social development. Responses to question #21 found about 78% of the parents in School A and School B thought that school uniforms were a good idea.

*Discussion.* Parents' expectations for their child's social development were consistent, viewing it as important to very important. Parents believed that social skills were essential for helping their children interact with each other and hence stay out of conflict and trouble. They also believe that being involved in social activities can help their children stay off the "streets" and out of trouble.

**Research Question #4: What are parents' invested expectations for their child's academic, spiritual, and social development?**

*Conclusion.* Responses to question #22 found about 62% of the parents in School A and School B believed that they are financially responsible for 100% of their child's education. Responses to question #23 found 70% of the parents in School A and School B said that they would let their child perform work-study duties to help cover their financial obligations. Responses to question #24 found about 96% of the parents in School A and School B believed that their child's teachers should receive wages comparable to those received by teachers in public schools. Responses to question #25

found 85% of the parents in School A and School B thought that the annual cost to educate their child should be comparable to the cost to educate a child in a public school. Responses to question #26 found 84% of the parents in School A and School B said that if their child's school offered the opportunity to develop a budget plan for their family, they would consider the practice fair.

*Discussion.* Most parents believed it was their financial responsibility to educate their child. They see it as a sacrificial investment into their child's future. Most parents liked the idea of schools working with parents who may need financial support to educate their child. Recommendations suggested were:

Recommendation #1: Develop budget plans to assist parents' financial responsibilities. Develop individual payment plans with parents to help them meet their financial responsibilities for their child's enrollment.

Recommendations #2: Partner with community organizations to establish fellowships and scholarships for students who need financial assistance.

### **Future Studies**

This was not a large study. There were only 37 participants from both schools. For future studies the researcher should consider studying larger schools where more participants would volunteer. A larger study could reveal more helpful data. Also, this study only highlighted parents' reasons for choosing non-public non-denominational elementary schools for low socioeconomic students. Another study could be done that looks at administrators' expectations for low socioeconomic students at non-public non-denominational elementary schools. This may show similarities and differences in both

parents' and administrators' expectations for low socioeconomic students at non-public non-denominational elementary schools.

### **Summary**

Most of the research about low socioeconomic students in private Christian schools was done in either Catholic or Lutheran schools. This study filled a gap in research involving parents' reasons for choosing Non-public Non-Denominational Christian schools for low socioeconomic students. Based on the results from the survey and interviews, parents chose these schools because they offered more discipline than public schools, they offered better teacher-student ratios, and they also offered Christian based curriculum.

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**Appendix A**

**IRB Form**

	University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (IRB) 312 N. 14 <sup>th</sup> St., 209 Alex West Lincoln, NE 68588-0408 (402) 472-6965 Fax (402) 472-6048 irb@unl.edu	<b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</b>
		IRB# _____
		Date Approved: _____
		Date Received: _____
		Code #: _____

**IRB NEW PROTOCOL SUBMISSION**

<b>Project Title:</b>	
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**Investigator Information:**

Principal Investigator:	Kyle Francis-Thomas	Secondary Investigator or Project Supervisor:	Dr. Jody Isernhagen
Department:	Educational Administration	Department:	Educational Administration
Department Phone:	402-472-3729	Department Phone:	402-472-3729
Contact Phone:	334-505-1092	Contact Phone:	402-472-1088
Contact Address:	1634 West C St	Contact Address:	132 Teachers College Hall
City/State/Zip:	Lincoln, NE 68522	City/State/Zip:	Lincoln, NE 68588-0360
E-Mail Address:	kaft28@gmail.com	E-Mail Address:	jisernhagen3@unl.edu

\* Student theses or dissertations must be submitted with a faculty member listed as Secondary Investigator or Project Supervisor.

**Principal Investigator is:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Faculty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post Doctoral Student
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Graduate Student	<input type="checkbox"/>	Undergraduate Student	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

**Type of Project:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research	<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstration	<input type="checkbox"/>	Class Project
<input type="checkbox"/>	Independent Study	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Does the research involve an outside institution/agency other than UNL*?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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\* Note: Research can only begin at each institution after the IRB receives the institutional approval letter

If yes, please list the institutions/agencies.	<b>Restoration Academy and Ellwood Christian Academy</b>
Where will participation take place (e.g., UNL, at home, in a community building, etc)	Parent interviews on the phone

### Project Information:

Present/Proposed Source of Funding:	None		
Project Start Date:	August 1, 2014	Project End Date:	August 31, 2016

\*Please attach a copy of the funding application.

**Type of Review Requested:** Please check either exempt, expedited, or full board. Please refer to the investigator manual, accessible on our website:

<http://www.unl.edu/research/ReComp1/compliance.shtml>, to determine which type of review is appropriate. **Final review determination will be made by the IRB.**

*Please check your response to each question.*

	Yes	X	No	1. Does the research involve prisoners?
	Yes	X	No	2. Does the research involve using survey or interview procedures with children (under 19 years of age) that is not conducted in an educational setting utilizing normal educational practices?
	Yes	X	No	3. Does the research involve the observation of children in settings where the investigator will participate in the activities being observed?
X	Yes		No	4. Will videotaping or audiotape recording be used?
	Yes	X	No	5. Will the participants be asked to perform physical tasks?
	Yes	X	No	6. Does the research attempt to influence or change participants' behavior, perception, or cognition?
	Yes	X	No	7. Will data collection include collecting sensitive data (illegal activities, sensitive topics such as sexual orientation or behavior, undesirable work behavior, or other data that may be painful or embarrassing to reveal)?
	Yes	X	No	8. For research using existing or archived data, documents, records or specimens, will any data, documents, records, or specimens be collected from subjects after the submission of this application?



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	8a. Can subjects be identified, either directly or indirectly, from the data, documents, records, or specimens?
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**Exempt**       **Expedited**       **Full Board**

**Description of Subjects:**

Total number of participants (include 'controls'): 75-100

Will participants of both sexes/genders be recruited?      Yes       No   
If "No" was selected, please include justification/rationale.

Will participation be limited to certain racial or ethnic groups?      Yes       No   
If "Yes" was selected, please include justification/rationale.

For face-to-face interviews only parents of low socioeconomic students will be interviewed

What are the participants' characteristics?

Participants are parents of students at the two schools being studied during the 2014-15 school year.

**Type of Participant:** (Check all appropriate blanks for participant population)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adults, Non Students	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pregnant Women	<input type="checkbox"/>	Persons with Psychological Impairment
<input type="checkbox"/>	UNL Students	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fetuses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Persons with Neurological Impairment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Minors (under age 19)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Persons with Limited Civil Freedom	<input type="checkbox"/>	Persons with Mental Retardation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Victims	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adults with Legal Representatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	Persons with HIV/AIDS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Explain):				

**Special Considerations:**      Yes       No

If yes, please check all appropriate blanks below.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Audio taping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Videotaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Archival/Secondary Data Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Genetic Data/Samples
<input type="checkbox"/>	Photography	<input type="checkbox"/>	Web-based research	<input type="checkbox"/>	Biological Samples	<input type="checkbox"/>	Protected Health Information



**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

PROTOCOL:

DATE APPROVED:

**1. Describe the significance of the project.**

*What is the significance/purpose of the study? (Please provide a brief 1-2 paragraph explanation in lay terms.)*

The purpose of this mixed-methods study will be to determine parents' reasons for choosing two Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama.

**2. Describe the methods and procedures.**

*Describe the data collection procedures and what participants will have to do.*

The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to determine parents' reasons for choosing two Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama. Low socio-economic students will be defined as students who qualify for free/reduced lunches. The research is designed as a mixed methods study with data being collected via an online survey and interviews. This study fills a gap in the literature about parents' reasons for choosing two Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students.

Once the researcher has IRB approval he will give the administrator the Administrator Consent Form (Appendix II) and the administrator will inform parents through an online newsletter. The researcher will be administering the Participant Consent Form (Appendix III) online as well. Parents of children qualifying for free and reduced lunches will be self-selected through the survey from question 5 & 6 (Appendix IV, questions 5 & 6). Through the quantitative method, a survey will be administered online. Within the survey there will be coded questions (Appendix IV, questions 5 & 6) to help the researcher identify parents whose children qualify for free and reduced lunches.

The survey program will prompt parents who are interested in participating in an interview to leave contact information such as an email or a phone number. The sample will be described as a random sample as the researcher will randomly select and contact twelve parents of low socioeconomic students at two Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools to be interviewed individually. Phone interviews will be conducted and audiotaped, and then the interviews will be transcribed.

Once all surveys and interviews have been completed, the researcher will summarize all data so that the study's findings can be shared.

*How long will this take participants to complete?*

15 to 20 minutes for the survey and 30 minutes for the interviews

*Will follow-ups or reminders be sent? If so, explain.*

no

### **3. Describe recruiting procedures.**

*How will the names and contact information for participants be obtained?*

All parents whose child/children attend the elementary school will be surveyed. The parents will provide information through the survey. From the survey parents will self identify (Appendix VI, questions 5 & 6) if their child qualifies for free and reduced lunches. From this group interviewees will be identified.

*How will participants be approached about participating in the study?*

The administrator will send out emails to parents to inform them of the survey. He will include information about the study to inform parents. Parents will be invited by the researcher to participate in a survey via email. **\*\*Please submit copies of recruitment flyers, ads, phone scripts, emails, etc.**

### **4. Describe Benefits and Risks.**

*Explain the benefits to participants or to others.*

Participants may learn how their expectations for their children affect their children.

*Explain the risks to participants. What will be done to minimize the risks? If there are no known risks, this should be stated.*

There are no known risks.

**5. Describe Compensation.** Will compensation be provided to participants? Yes   
No X

*If 'Yes', please describe amount and type of compensation, including money, gift certificates, extra credit, etc.*

## 6. Informed Consent

*How will informed consent/assent be obtained?*

The researcher will administer the consent forms via email before administering the survey.

**\*\*Please attach copies of informed consent forms, emails, and/or letters. Please refer to the last page for a checklist of the information that needs to be included in the informed consent document.**

## 7. Describe how confidentiality will be maintained.

*How will confidentiality of records be maintained?*

Only the Principal Investigator will have access to records and data. The survey will be completed anonymously unless parents self identify on the survey that they are willing to participate in an interview, and only aggregated data will be shared.

*Will individuals be identified?*

Yes, however the information will be used to select interviewees. Once a selection is made the survey results will be coded by number and all identifiable information will be destroyed. The code sheet will be stored in a locked filing cabinet by the researcher.

*How long will records be kept?*

Records will be kept for 2 years in a locked safe in the office of the researcher

*Where will records be stored?*

A code sheet will be kept for 2 years in a locked safe in the office of the researcher

*Who has access to the records/data?*

Only the principal investigator will have access to the records and data

*How will data be reported?*

Data will be reported as aggregated data, tables, and charts, and will be shared in a final dissertation and journal articles or presentations.

*For web-based studies, how will the data be handled? Will the data be sent to a secure server? Will the data be encrypted while in transit? Will you be collecting IP addresses?*

The data will be encrypted using UNL Qualtrics software.

*If transcriptions are required, how will transcriptions be handled? Who is doing the transcriptions? Please attach a copy of the confidentiality agreement that transcriptionists will sign.*

The researcher will transcribe the interviews.

*\* For studies utilizing Protected Health Information (PHI; e.g., information obtained from a hospital, clinic, or treatment facility), how will this PHI data be obtained and*

*safeguarded? Please provide a copy of the release of authorization that will be used to obtain permission from the participant for the agency/institution to release protected health information for project purposes or a letter from the agency/institution documenting agreement to provide protected health information for project purposes.*

N/A

*\*For studies involving genetic data/sampling/analysis, illegal drug use, or criminal activity that places the participant at risk for legal action, how will confidentiality be maintained? Will a Certificate of Confidentiality be obtained to protect the compelled disclosure of this information?*

N/A

### **8. Copies of questionnaires, survey, or testing instruments.**

*Please list all questionnaires, surveys, and/or assessment instruments/measures used in the project..*

Online survey, permission to participate in online survey, interview protocol and questions with permission to participate

*Please submit copies of all instruments/measures..*

### **Checklist for the Informed Consent Form (cover letter, email, etc): Basic information that must be included**

#### **Project Description**

Y	Is the project title identified?
Y	Is it stated that the study involves research?
Y	Purpose of the research?
Y	How long will it take to participate?
Y	Why participant was selected?
Y	Is the age of participant stated (under 19 needs parental consent)?
Y	Are procedures described?
Y	Where will it take place?
N	Are experimental procedures identified? (include if applicable)

#### **Risks, Benefits, and Alternatives**

Y	Are risks and discomforts to participants explained? If no risks, does it say no known risks?
N	If there are risks, what will be done to minimize the risks? Referrals?
Y	Are benefits to participants and to others that might be expected from the research explained?
N	Are alternative procedures or course of treatment that might be advantageous to the participant identified?
N	If the study offers course credit, are alternative ways to earn the credit explained?

**Confidentiality**

Y	Will confidentiality of records identifying participant be maintained?
Y	How will data be reported: scientific journal, professional meeting, aggregated data?

**Compensation**

N	Is compensation offered?
N	Are medical treatments available if injury occurs?
N	Who will pay for treatments (participant or department)?
N	What conditions would exclude participant from participating?

**Right to Ask Questions**

Y	Is it stated that participants have a right to ask questions and to have those questions answered?
Y	Are the names & phone numbers of persons to contact for answers to questions about the research provided?
Y	Does it state who to contact concerning questions about research participants' rights, "Sometimes study participants have questions or concerns about their rights. In that case you should call the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965."

**Freedom to Withdraw**

Y	Does it state, "You are free to decide not to participate in this study. You can also withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln."
Y	Does it state participation is voluntary?

**Appendix B**

**Sample Administrator Consent-to-Participate Form**



## Parents' Reasons for Choosing Two Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for Low Socioeconomic Students in Alabama: A Mixed Methods Study

Dear Administrator,

The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish for your institution to participate in a research study to better understand parents' expectations for their children.

The purpose of this mixed-methods study will be to determine parents' reasons for choosing two Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama. Low socioeconomic students will be generally defined as students who qualify for free and reduced lunches.

Data collection will involve an online survey. Individuals involved in the data collection will be the researcher and the parents. The duration of the survey will be approximately 15 minutes and it will be administered online. At the end of the survey participants will be given the option to participate in a scheduled, phone interview with the researcher. The researcher will randomly select participants from that pool for those interviews. The survey will also ask that participant for a phone number, and or email address.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with the study. The expected benefits associated with your participation are the information of parents' expectations for their children attending your school, especially those qualifying for free and reduced lunches.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions about the study either before subjects participate or during the time they are participating. I would be happy to share my findings with you after the research is completed. Your name and the school's name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and only the researcher will know the identity of each participant.

You may ask any questions concerning this research at anytime by contacting the principal investigator, Kyle Francis-Thomas at (334) 505-1092 and [kaft28@gmail.com](mailto:kaft28@gmail.com). You may also contact secondary researcher, Jody Isernhagen at (402) 472-1088 and [jisernhagen3@unl.edu](mailto:jisernhagen3@unl.edu). If you would like to speak to someone else, please call the Research Compliance Services Office at 402-472-6965 or [irb@unl.edu](mailto:irb@unl.edu).

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Tabernacle of Praise Christian Academy, Ellwood Christian Academy, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Kyle Francis-Thomas, Education Administration, UNL, Principal Investigator, (334) 505-1092  
Jody Isernhagen, Educational Administration, UNL, Secondary Investigator, (402) 472-1088

**Appendix C**

**Administrator Letter to Parents informing them of study**

Hello Parents,

I want to inform you of a great opportunity. Mr. Kyle Francis Thomas recently moved here from Nebraska where he is attending classes at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is working on his Doctoral Degree. He is currently working on his dissertation that examines Parents' Reasons for Choosing Two Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for Low Socioeconomic Students in Alabama like this school.

The first step in completing his dissertation includes conducting a survey with parents like you who currently have a child attending our school. This survey will help him learn more about what expectations you have for your child and this information will be helpful to our school so we can better meet the needs of your child. He would like to invite you to complete the survey, which will take about 10-15 minutes of your time.

Also, if you are interested, one of the survey questions will ask if you are willing to participate in an interview where you can talk more about how our school can work better with you and your child. I hope you will be willing to take the survey and if interested will say "yes" to the interview. The survey will also ask for your phone number, and or email address if you are willing to be interviewed.

All information that he will receive from the survey and interviews will be confidential and will not use your name or child's name when talking about the findings from the study. Mr. Francis-Thomas would be happy to answer any questions you may have on the day of the survey and share his findings with you after his research is completed.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. I hope that you will be able to participate.  
Thank You!

**Appendix D**

**Sample Human Subjects Consent-to-Participate Form**

## Parents' Reasons for Choosing Two Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for Low Socioeconomic Students in Alabama: A Mixed Methods Study

Dear Parent,

The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in a research study to better understand parents' expectations for their children.

The purpose of this mixed-methods study will be to determine parents' reasons for choosing two Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama. Low socioeconomic students will be generally defined as students who qualify for free and reduced lunches.

Data collection will involve an online survey. Individuals involved in the data collection will be the researcher and the parents. The duration of the survey will be approximately 15 minutes and it will be administered online. At the end of the survey participants will be given the option to participate in a scheduled, phone interview with the researcher. The researcher will randomly select participants from that pool for those interviews. The survey will also ask that participant for a phone number, and or email address.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with the study. The expected benefits associated with your participation are the information of parents' expectations for their children attending your school, especially those qualifying for free and reduced lunches.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions about the study either before subjects participate or during the time they are participating. I would be happy to share my findings with you after the research is completed. Your name and the school's name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and only the researcher will know the identity of each participant.

You may ask any questions concerning this research at anytime by contacting the principal investigator, Kyle Francis-Thomas at (334) 505-1092 and [kaft28@gmail.com](mailto:kaft28@gmail.com). You may also contact secondary researcher, Jody Isernhagen at (402) 472-1088 and [jisernhagen3@unl.edu](mailto:jisernhagen3@unl.edu). If you would like to speak to someone else, please call the Research Compliance Services Office at 402-472-6965 or [irb@unl.edu](mailto:irb@unl.edu).

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Tabernacle of Praise Christian Academy, Ellwood Christian Academy, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Research Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Kyle Francis-Thomas, Education Administration, UNL, Principal Investigator, (334) 505-1092  
Jody Isernhagen, Educational Administration, UNL, Secondary Investigator, (402) 472-1088

**Appendix E**

**Sample Consent Form for Interview**

## Parents' Reasons for Choosing Two Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for Low Socioeconomic Students in Alabama: A Mixed Methods Study

Dear Parent,

The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in a research study to better understand parents' expectations for their children.

The purpose of this mixed-methods study will be to determine parents' reasons for choosing two Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary Schools for low socioeconomic students in Alabama. Low socioeconomic students will be generally defined as students who qualify for free and reduced lunches.

Data collection will involve an online survey, one-on-one interviews or phone interviews (transcripts of interviews with parents), and audio recordings of the interviews. Individuals involved in the data collection will be the interviewer and the parents. The duration of the survey will be approximately 15 minutes and interviews will be approximately 30 minutes.

The survey will be administered online at the end of which the survey participants will be given the option to participate in a scheduled, one-on-one interview with the researcher. The survey will also ask that participant for a phone number, and or email address.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with the study. The expected benefits associated with your participation are the information of parents' expectations for their children attending your school, especially those qualifying for free and reduced lunches.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions about the study either before subjects participate or during the time they are participating. I would be happy to share my findings with you after the research is completed. Your name and the school's name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and only the researcher will know the identity of each participant.

You may ask any questions concerning this research at anytime by contacting the principal investigator, Kyle Francis-Thomas at (334) 505-1092 and [kaft28@gmail.com](mailto:kaft28@gmail.com). You may also contact secondary researcher, Jody Isernhagen at (402) 472-1088 and [jisernhagen3@unl.edu](mailto:jisernhagen3@unl.edu). If you would like to speak to someone else, please call the Research Compliance Services Office at 402-472-6965 or [irb@unl.edu](mailto:irb@unl.edu).

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Tabernacle of Praise Christian Academy, Ellwood Christian Academy, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Research Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Kyle Francis-Thomas, Education Administration, UNL, Principal Investigator, (334) 505-1092  
Jody Isernhagen, Educational Administration, UNL, Secondary Investigator, (402) 472-1088

**Appendix F**

**Online Survey- Parents' Reasons for Choosing Non-Public Non-Denominational  
Elementary Schools for Low Socioeconomic Students**



**Survey Directions:** Read each question carefully and then place a “check” to indicate your response to the question.

1. Did you attend a religious, private, or public school?

- Religious
- Private
- Public
- Public & Private
- Private & Religious
- Public & Religious
- Public, Private, & Religious

2. What is the highest level of education you received?

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- College-undergraduate
- College-graduate

3. Are you a member of the church that this parochial school is affiliated with?

- Yes
- No

4. Is your church the same denomination as the church affiliated with this school?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

5. What is your household annual income (All working parents in the household combined)?

- \$0- \$21,257
- \$21,258- \$28,694
- \$28,695- \$36,131
- \$36,132- \$43,568
- \$43,569- \$51,005
- \$51,006- \$58,442
- \$58,443- \$65,879
- \$65,880- \$73,316
- \$73,317 and above

6. What is your household size including yourself?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9 or more

7. What is the highest level of education you expect your child to obtain?

- High school
- College-undergraduate
- College-graduate

8. Do you believe that your child can receive a similar or better education in this school as opposed to a public school?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

9. As a parent, at what academic level do you expect your child to perform?

- Above Average
- Average
- Below Average

10. How often do you expect your child to take homework home each week?

- Never
- 1-2 times
- 2-3 times
- 3-4 times
- Everyday

11. How important is education for your child?

- Not important
- Somewhat important
- Important
- Very important

12. How important is Christianity (Relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ) in your child's education?

- Not important
- Somewhat important
- Important
- Very important

13. How important is it that your child's teachers are Christians?

- Not important
- Somewhat important
- Important
- Very important

14. Do you think that a worship service should be incorporated into the curriculum at your school?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

15. Do you think that a bible course should be offered as part of the curriculum?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

16. As a parent, how important is it that your child's extracurricular activities be centered on the Gospel and Jesus Christ?

- Not important
- Somewhat important
- Important
- Very important

17. How important are extra-curricular activities in your child's education?

- Not important
- Somewhat important
- Important
- Very important

18. Do you think extra-curricular activities should be offered during regular school hours, before school, after school, or before and after school?

- During regular school hours
- Before school
- After school
- All of the above

19. Do you think extra-curricular activities should consist of academics, spiritual content, social activity, physical activity, or all of the above?

- Academics
- Spiritual content
- Social activity
- Physical activity
- All of the above

20. Do you think that co-education (both sexes educated in the same classroom) encourages social development or distracts students from learning?

- Encourages social development
- Distracts students from learning
- Both
- Neither

21. How do you feel about school uniforms?

- Bad idea
- Good idea
- Doesn't matter
- Not sure

22. What percent of your child's education do you feel responsible for financially?

- 0%  
 1-25%  
 26-50%  
 51-75%  
 76-99%  
 100%

23. Would you let your child perform work-study duties to help cover their financial obligations?

- Yes  
 No  
 I don't know

24. Do you think that your child's teachers should receive wages comparable to those received by teachers in public schools?

- Yes  
 No  
 I don't know

25. Do you think the annual cost to educate your child should be comparable to the cost to educate a child in a public school?

- Yes  
 No  
 I don't know

26. If your child's school offered the opportunity to develop a budget plan for your family, would you consider that practice fair?

- Yes  
 No  
 I don't know

**Parents willing to participate in an interview (approx. 30mins) will be chosen randomly. If you would like to be contacted for an interview please leave your email address and/or phone number**

**Email address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix G**

**Interview Email**

Dear Parents,

I want to first say thank you for participating in the survey. I would like to schedule a time to interview you at your child's school. Please give me a time and date that works best for you. The interview will be audiotaped and should not take anymore than 30 minutes.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with the study. The expected benefits associated with your participation are the information of identifying your expectations for your child while attending a Non-Public Non-Denominational Elementary School.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions about the study either before you participate or during the time that you are participating. I would be happy to share my findings with you after the research is completed. Your name and the school's name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and only the researcher will know the identity of each participant.

You may ask any questions concerning this research at any time by contacting the principal investigator, Kyle Francis-Thomas at (334) 505-1092 and [kaft28@gmail.com](mailto:kaft28@gmail.com). You may also contact my advisor and secondary researcher, Jody Isernhagen at (402) 472-1088 and [jisernhagen3@unl.edu](mailto:jisernhagen3@unl.edu). If you would like to speak to someone else, please call the Research Compliance Services Office at 402-472-6965 or [irb@unl.edu](mailto:irb@unl.edu).

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Tabernacle of Praise Christian Academy, Ellwood Christian Academy, or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Thanks again for your participation and support!

**Appendix H**

**Interview Protocol**



### **Interview Protocol**

1. What basic academic skills do you want taught to your child at this school and why?
2. Describe what role education should play in your child's life.
3. Do you think your child can receive a similar or better education in a public school and why?
4. How far do you want your child to go academically and why?
5. Describe what basic biblical principles you want taught to your child at this school.
6. Describe what role faith should play in your child's life.
7. Do you think a bible course should be offered as part of the curriculum and why?
8. Do you think that a worship service should be incorporated into the curriculum at your school and why?
9. How important is it to you that your child's teachers are Christians and why?
10. Describe what basic social skills you want taught to your child at this school.
11. Describe what role extra-curricular activities should play in your child's life.
12. Describe the kind of extra-curricular activities you want to see offered at your child's school.
13. Describe how you feel about school uniforms. Explain why you feel it is a good or bad idea.
14. Do you find educating your child a financial burden?
15. Do you find the payment arrangements you have with your child's school reasonable? Why?
16. What are your thoughts on individual budget plans between a school and parents?
17. Do you think it cost more to educate a child in public school than in a non-public school and why?
18. Do you think faith or education should be the most important component in your child's education and why?

**Appendix I**

**National Free and Reduced Lunch Chart**

**National Free and Reduced Lunch Chart**

Department of Agriculture- Food and Nutrition Service- Child Nutrition Programs;

Eligibility Guidelines- Federal Register Vol. 78, No. 61, Friday, March 29, 2013

<b>Household Size</b>	<b>Annual Income according to Federal Poverty Guidelines</b>	<b>Annual Income for Families qualifying for Reduced Priced Lunches</b>
1	11,490	21,257
2	15,510	28,694
3	19,530	36,131
4	23,550	43,568
5	27,570	51,005
6	31,590	58,442
7	35,610	65,879
8	39,630	73,316