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ANNOTATION

Mueller, Frederick Charles. "The Perceived and Preferred Goals of Principals, De La Salle Christian Brother Teachers, and Lay Teachers in Lasallian Secondary Schools." Doctoral dissertation, Boston College, 1994.

The purpose of Frederick Charles Mueller's dissertation, "The Perceived and Preferred Goals of Principals, De La Salle Christian Brother Teachers, and Lay Teachers in Lasallian Secondary Schools," is to "explore goal congruence and consensus for perceived and preferred Lasallian school goals as reported by principals, De La Salle Christian Brother teachers, and lay teachers in Lasallian secondary schools in the United States." (ix) His thesis is that principals, Christian Brothers, and lay teachers will attach a greater degree of importance to each of the preferred goals than to the perceived goals, will differ in the degree of importance attached to each of the perceived and preferred goals, and will disagree in their opinions of the most and least important goals. (13-14) These are three sub-problems that will be addressed later in the paper.

Mueller defines key terms and addresses the limits and assumptions of his research. He defines the terms: goal, Lasallian goals as defined in *Characteristics of Lasallian Schools*, principal, lay teacher, and De La Salle Christian Brother teacher. It is most important for his research to understand the distinction between the terms "perceived goal" and "preferred goal," and also between "goal congruence" and "goal consensus." Mueller suggests 18 perceived and 18 preferred goals to be explored in this research.

Mueller outlines four assumptions important to his study: that Lasallian schools' goals are the official goals of Lasallian secondary schools in the United States, that perceived goals reflect operative organizational goals, that perceived and preferred goals are influenced by role expectations and personality needs, and that goals characterized by strong perception or preference congruence or incongruence are significant goals for the institution or particular groups therein, and have implications of harmony or discord in the overall condition of the institution.

Mueller acknowledges four factors limiting the generalizability of his results. All principals were portrayed as being from the same population, without distinction between principals who were Christian Brothers and those who were not. Groups of Lasallian school employees who were not categorized as a principal, Christian Brother teacher, or lay teacher were excluded from the study. Because of the limited scope, timeframe, and design of this descriptive survey, an exhaustive analysis of the findings was not completed. The formulation of Lasallian school goals was done using terminology from *Characteristics of Lasallian Schools*, with which participants likely had quite varied familiarity prior to the study, thus possibly accounting for some variation in responses.

Mueller's method for this descriptive study begins with a literature review that examines goal theory, school organizational theory, goals in organizations, and the role of goals in schools. Mueller's survey instrument is designed with substantial reference to *Characteristics of Lasallian Schools* and to Gross and Grambsch's perceived and preferred format with a four point Likert-type scale. A "Most/Least Important" response frame with open-ended questions is used to examine preferred goals. Respondents included 53 principals, 112 De La Salle Christian Brother teachers, and 107 lay teachers.

A t-test is used to compare the means of perceived and preferred goals for each group in order to determine goal congruence. To determine goal consensus between and among groups, a chi-square test and a one-way analysis of variance with post hoc multiple comparisons is employed. The Most/Least Important preferred goals are established using percentages. The results of this study are examined using material in the literature review on the nature of goals and change in goals. Because the Lasallian school system is a unique organization, this study uses the theoretical model of a school as a social system to analyze its goals within the context of the relationship of role and needs. Appended to the paper are the materials used to conduct the research, including a structured list of the goals of Lasallian schools, letters, and surveys.

Mueller organizes his findings based upon the three sub-problems: perceived and preferred goals, goal consensus, and most and least important preferred goals. Regarding goal congruence, each preferred goal possesses a significantly higher degree of importance attached to it by each group than does the perceived goal. The Christian Brother teachers have the most discrepancy between what they believe the perceived and preferred goals to be, followed by principals and lay teachers. Regarding goal consensus, 16 of the 18 preferred goals exhibit no significant differences in importance between and among the three groups. Christian Brother teachers and lay teachers possess the greatest number of significant differences between them. Though there was some consensus among the three groups on the perceived goals, there was a lack of consensus on nine of the 18 goals included in this study. These results suggest that there is considerable consensus on what Lasallian school goals should be and that they are viewed in light of their "operationality" while ongoing steps are taken to create consensus on any perceived goals noted as problematic.

Mueller's work is important and helpful for the overall study of Lasallian higher education. For each of the three sub-problems identified in Lasallian secondary schools in the United States, Mueller identifies conclusions that can be drawn from his study and the practical implications of his findings. One suggestion that Mueller offers is testing the hypothesis of this study regarding goal congruence, consensus, and priority with variables outside the scope of this paper, for example: the gender of lay teachers, the religion of lay teachers, and years of experience in education. Done with respect to specific goals such research could help determine which variables have greater influence on how Lasallian educators perceive and value the goals of Lasallian schools. Further research regarding goals in Lasallian secondary schools could indicate the significance of Lasallian schools' leadership in the United States, and by extension, to other Catholic schools faced with similar internal and external changes.