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Utah Public School and LDS Released-Time Program Relations: Perspectives and Practices of Principals from Both Institutions

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UTAH PUBLIC SCHOOL AND LDS RELEASED-TIME PROGRAM RELATIONS:
PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES OF PRINCIPALS
FROM BOTH INSTITUTIONS

by

Casey W. Ashcroft

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
Education
(Curriculum and Instruction)

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
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2011
ABSTRACT

Utah Public School and LDS Released-Time Program Relations: Perspectives and Practices of Principals from Both Institutions

by

Casey Wayne Ashcroft, Doctor of Philosophy
Utah State University, 2011

Major Professor: Dr. Brian K. Warnick
Program: Curriculum and Instruction

This qualitative study examined the relationship between Utah public high schools and Latter-day Saint (LDS) released-time seminaries through the perspectives and practices of principals from both institutions. The study followed methods consistent with phenomenological research. Data were analyzed through a theory of social exchange. Sites and participants were purposefully selected using a criterion phenomenal variation strategy. Sites included six Utah public high schools with LDS seminaries adjacent. Participants included the public school and seminary principals at those sites. The overarching question that guided the study was: How is the professional relationship between the public schools and LDS seminaries in Utah perceived and practiced by principals of both institutions? The three subquestions used to support the central question were: (1) What are principals’ perceptions of the relationship? (2) How is the relationship maintained? (3) Why is the relationship maintained?
Findings from the study suggested that public school and seminary principals, for the most part, perceived the public school-LDS seminary relationship to be: (a) working well; (b) valuable and mutually beneficial; and (c) equitable. Findings further suggested that the relationships were maintained: (a) through reciprocal efforts to accommodate, support, and show appreciation for each other; (b) by following historically established norms; and (c) by being sensitive to legal parameters established for the relationship. Findings also suggested that the relationships were maintained because: (a) each institution has become dependent upon the other; (b) the relationship benefits both parties; (c) the benefits received outweigh any challenges that result from the relationship; (d) the relationship has become an expectation and ingrained part of the culture of the state; (e) positive emotions result from the relationship; and (f) the relationship is beneficial to the students.

(200 pages)
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Last, and certainly not least, I express gratitude to my family. I express gratitude to my grandfather, Gaylen Ashcroft, whose acquirement of a doctoral degree provided an example for me to follow. Most of all, I express gratitude to my wife, Katie Ashcroft, and my two little children, Liberty and Stockton, for their unconditional love despite many hours spent husbandless and fatherless as I had to dedicate much time to my studies and research. Particularly, I express gratitude to my wife. Her motivational words and unfailing confidence in my abilities steadied my nerves on multiple occasions and helped me stay the course.

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Casey Wayne Ashcroft
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DEFINITIONS

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS): The religious organization established in 1830 by its founder Joseph Smith and is commonly called the “Mormon” church.

Released-Time Religious Instruction: The practice of releasing students from public school with permission from their parents or guardians to attend religious classes in trailers, buildings, or churches off school property.

LDS Seminary: The released-time program of the LDS church.

LDS Wards: Large groups of LDS church members organized geographically. Each ward is presided over by a bishop and other leaders. Multiple wards form a stake.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In 1978 a lawsuit between the Logan City School District and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Utah ensued. The case involved an allegation that the high level of coordination experienced between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ (LDS) released-time program (seminary) and the public school to which it was adjacent, Logan High School, violated the First Amendment of the constitution. This allegation sought to displace a public school-LDS seminary relationship that had grown throughout Utah since 1912 (Berrett, 1988). After a 3-year battle, the court struck down the public school’s practices of offering academic credit for Bible courses taken in the seminary and of tracking the seminary’s attendance because both required too much entanglement between church and state. However, the court upheld all other aspects of the relationship and coordinating efforts between the two as a constitutional accommodation of the spiritual needs of the students (Lanner v. Wimmer, 1981).

The importance of this court case to the public school-LDS seminary relationship in Utah cannot be underestimated. There is an understanding and cooperation between the public schools and adjacent seminaries based on a long standing tradition. In fact, LDS seminary has been a part of the Utah educational scene for so long that a symbiotic relationship has formed in which both institutions benefit from and are dependent upon each other. For example, a 1993 Deseret News article estimated a 10% cost increase to the state of Utah if LDS seminaries were removed; meaning a $120 million per year hike that would place an added burden not just on schools, but taxpayers as well (Van Leer,
1993). This economic benefit and dependent relationship is supported in two other studies (Bishop, 1958; Harris, 1983) and was a topic of conversation in the Logan City School District court case (Lanner v. Wimmer, 1981).

The Problem

The symbiotic relationship that has formed over the years between the LDS seminary and Utah public schools is supported by a theory of social exchange originated by Homans (1958). He argued that social behaviors involve an exchange of material and non-material goods in such a way that a relationship is formed in which one, or both, partners become dependent upon the other. When exchanges are perceived by both parties as being fair, the relationship remains intact; otherwise it does not. A review of literature regarding released-time religious instruction reveals that no study regarding the relationship between public schools and LDS seminaries in Utah has inquired what is exchanged between the public school and the seminary and how those exchanges are perceived by both parties in order to explain how and why the relationship is maintained.

The Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe the relationship between public high schools and LDS seminaries in Utah as perceived and practiced by principals of both institutions. Social exchange theory and relevant literature were used as lenses through which the study was framed and findings were interpreted. The relationship was generally defined as the connection between the public schools and
the adjacent LDS seminaries; especially with regards to the way the principals of both institutions behave toward and feel about one another.

**Research Questions**

Following Creswell’s (2007) suggestion, the current study was reduced to a single, overarching question with several sub-questions. The central question which guided the study was: How is the professional relationship between the public schools and LDS seminary in Utah perceived and practiced by principals of both institutions? The three sub-questions used to support the central question were: (1) What are principals’ perceptions of the relationship? (2) How is the relationship maintained? (3) Why is the relationship maintained?

**Context of the Study**

Utah state law authorizes for school districts to allow for released-time religious education as long as state standards and procedures of separation and accommodation are followed. These laws define released-time religious instruction as

…a period of time during the regular school day when a student attending a public school is excused from the school, at the request of the student’s parent, to attend classes in religious instruction given by a regularly organized church. (*Utah Administrative Code*, 2010)

While the majority of the requests for released-time in the state of Utah have come from the LDS church, other religious groups have made similar requests. For example, the Catholic Church established seminaries in Price, Roosevelt, Layton, and Magna. However, reliance on volunteer teachers kept the programs from continuing (Van Leer,
1993). Similar to religious released-time, most Utah high schools have other programs where students can be released from school to pursue other educational opportunities, such as advanced curriculum courses, vocational classes, and student employment (ACLU of Utah, 2007).

The released-time program of the LDS church is called seminary. Since its beginnings in 1912, LDS seminary in Utah has grown from one seminary with 70 students to multiple seminaries with 83,634 students (S&I Annual Report, 2010). LDS seminary programs in Utah provide daily weekday religious education for students in grades nine through twelve and function at the junior and senior high school level. The purpose of the program is to help youth and adolescents learn the doctrines of the LDS church and prepare themselves for family and church service. The seminary curriculum consists of courses in accepted LDS scripture (i.e., Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price) and church history.

When a new high school is being built an initial request to the school district to start a seminary program adjacent comes from local LDS church leaders and parents with approval from the administrators of the Seminary and Institutes of Religion (S&I) of the LDS Church Education System (CES), located in Salt Lake City. Each seminary has a board of education made up of the seminary principal and leaders of the local LDS congregations. Members of this board approve and correlate seminary calendar items, discuss challenges facing the seminary, review reports on enrollment and attendance, and make plans for enrolling youth in seminary. Recruitment and enrollment in the program is done through the local ward leadership who work with a representative of the seminary
to collect lists of potential students and help parents fill out forms releasing their child from the public school for one class period to attended seminary. Students enroll in seminary by indicating their desire to take it on the school’s registration form. By enrolling in seminary they forgo taking a credit based class at the school and use seminary in place of an elective class. In Utah public school schedules are often adjusted to allow students to be able to take seminary and still earn all the required academic and elective credits for graduation, barring they do not fail any school classes and become credit deficient.

The seminary classes are held during school hours on each day school is in session. In some cases, a different schedule is authorized in order to conform to the type of class schedule and/or length of class periods of the public school. Classes are taught in church-owned buildings adjacent to the public school by full-time and part-time teachers and administrators employed by CES (S&I Policy Manual, 2010). The seminary instructors go through a 2-year preservice program as part of the application process for being hired to teach seminary full time. They hold bachelor degrees in the field of their choice. Their salaries are comparable to public school teachers in Utah. They rotate administrative responsibilities, are predominately male, and report high job satisfaction (Van Leer, 1993). Seminary principals, unlike most public school principals, teach classes as well as attend to administrative duties. Seminary administrators and teachers are to ensure the separation of public school, while at the same time work to develop and maintain cordial, cooperative relationships with public school personnel and support the public school programs (S&I Policy Manual, 2010).
In addition to released-time seminary, the LDS church also operates daily seminary and home-study seminary. Daily seminary consists of classes held outside of school hours in the morning, afternoon, or evening. Home study seminary consists of students studying from home, sometimes on the internet, and then reporting their completed study to teachers assigned by local wards or stakes. Adapted needs classes are also offered for students with disabilities and are most often incorporated into released-time programs. While released-time seminary is the basic and most prevalent program in Utah, daily and home-study seminary constitute the church’s effort of providing religious instruction to students throughout the world in varying circumstances. In consequence of this effort, seminary (released-time, daily, or home-study) is offered in all 50 states of the United States and in more than 140 other countries (S&I Policy Manual, 2010).

**Limitations**

As with all qualitative studies, because of the analytical and subjective nature of the design, there are certain limitations. Because the phenomenon was studied from the perspectives of human beings and because the key instrument for the study was the researcher, the information gathered and analyzed is subjective (Bamberger, Rugh, & Mabry, 2006; Glesne, 2006).

Another limitation has to do with the relationship of the researcher with the phenomenon studied. Because the researcher is employed by the LDS church and functions as a seminary instructor, the study is what Glesne (2006) called “backyard research” (p. 31). Findings, therefore, were interpreted through the researchers’ own
perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of and with the phenomenon under study. Furthermore, researcher ties to the phenomenon carry with it expectations that can create confusion with respect to the role of the researcher. Therefore, the emotional attachment, along with the investment in and experience with the phenomenon are biases that were carefully monitored (Glesne, 2006) and bracketed out (Moustakas, 1994) in the current study so as to minimize potential effect on the data collection and analysis. Ways in which this was done are discussed along with the methodological procedures in chapter three.

Bamberger and colleagues (2006) pointed out that another one of the weaknesses of qualitative research, beside its subjective nature, is its inability to be generalized or widely applied to other populations and settings. Because the phenomenon studied was LDS seminary in Utah, it may be limited in its ability to be generalized to LDS released-time programs or public schools in states other than Utah, or countries other than the United States. It also may be limited in its ability to be generalized to released-time programs of other faiths. These limitations are due to the uniqueness of the Utah seminary-public school relationship (Poore, 1983) and the degree to which legal parameters affecting the relationships between released-time programs and public schools vary from state to state (Time for God, 2000).

Furthermore, whereas the phenomenon studied has a legal aspect attached, this study could be limited if participants felt in anyway threatened by legal ramifications. Though the legal aspect of the relationship was not the intent of the current study and efforts were made to ensure confidentiality and protection of human subjects, it was
anticipated that because it is an aspect of the relationship it would be a topic of discussion. Such discussion might have made participants feel uncomfortable because research shows that most educators and educational leaders are not sure what the legal parameters of church-state are in their respective schools (Campbell, 2002).

Lastly, it must be pointed out that findings in the study are limited with respect to the perspectives of participants selected for the study and may not be representative of all public school and LDS seminary personnel. Because principals are operational leaders their perspective of the relationship is operational as well. Therefore, how the principals who participated in the study perceived the relationship might differ from how teachers, school board members, or higher-level school and seminary administrators would perceive it. This limitation is important for readers to recognize and fellow researchers interested in the topic to be aware of because it defines the parameters of the research study and provides direction for future research. The choice to narrow the perspective of the phenomenon for the current study to principals was due to findings in literature regarding their responsibility of maintaining legal relationships between public schools and released-time programs. Most states have given public school principals sanction to establish rules and regulations with respect to students’ constitutional rights and have placed them as the gatekeepers for and monitors of church-state relations in the public school (Berlin, 2009; McCarthy, 2009). If anyone is caught more “squarely in the battle line, as opposing forces pound each other on matters of church and state” it is the principal of the public school (Epley, 2007, p. 181). With respect to released-time, it is the responsibility of the public school principals and administrators to ensure that the
state and school guidelines ensuring separation and accommodation of the program are
followed and that the teachers are fully informed respecting such (Religious Expression
in Public Schools, 1998). Similar responsibility is placed upon the seminary principal by
S&I (S&I Policy Manual, 2010). Due to these responsibilities shouldered by public
school and seminary principals, their perspectives and practices with respect to the
relationship were the focus of the current study.

**Delimitations**

The boundaries of the current study were kept within the state of Utah and
involved only public senior high schools and adjacent LDS seminaries, though there are
released-time programs of other faiths in the state and LDS seminaries adjacent to junior
high schools as well. The choice to not include other released-time programs was due to
their differences. Released-time programs of other faiths do not have the same status,
longevity, and relationship with the Utah schools that the LDS seminaries have. The
choice not to include the junior high schools in the study dealt with an administrative
structural change in S&I. Recently responsibilities for leadership of the junior high
seminaries was delegated to the seminary principal of the senior high school from which
the junior high feeds.

The current study did not take as its main focus the legal aspects of the
relationship. Whereas this is an important part of the relationship and has been the
primary focus of other studies (Stone, 2006) the current study focused on other aspects of
the relationship as well.
The current study did not focus on relationships between LDS seminaries and local church leaders or the community, but only on the relationship between the public high schools. It focused exclusively on the perspectives and practices of the principals of the public schools and adjacent LDS seminaries.

**Significance of the Study**

Despite released-time for religious instruction existing for nearly 100 years, only a handful of academic studies exist on the subject. While these studies have contributed substantially to the body of knowledge on released-time for religious instruction, none explore the perceptions of the public-LDS seminary relationship in Utah from the perspectives of both the public school and LDS seminary administrators simultaneously. Nor have they used a social exchange theory to explain the relationship. Therefore, the current study fills a gap in the literature and adds to the body of knowledge of school leadership in Utah by studying an aspect of this phenomenon that has never been discussed, as well as doing it through an entirely new theoretical lens.

It was anticipated that the findings in the study may help public school and seminary administration and practitioners in strengthening professional relations between public schools and LDS seminaries in Utah by making participants aware of the nature of the relationship and providing practical suggestions for maintaining it. It was also anticipated that findings in the study could help inform the population at large about the relationship and aspects of it that are rarely discussed openly. It was further anticipated that any findings that may reflect negatively upon the relationship could only lead to
resolutions that would enhance the relationship or bring it more in line with state and S&I guidelines.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The use of a review of literature varies in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007). For the purpose of the current study a review of literature was primarily used to (a) place the phenomenon being studied (public school-LDS seminary relationship) in its historical and cultural context, (b) discuss findings of academic studies relevant to the phenomenon, (c) provide background and rationale for the theoretical lens used in studying the phenomenon, and (d) provide a rationale for why the study is important and how it fits into and extends the literature available on the topic.

**Historical and Cultural Context**

McCarthy (2009) suggested that religion is “one of the most contentious issues in public schools” and pointed out that “there are no signs that the disputes will disappear” (p. 714). Whereas in the past prudent and reasonable educators did not have to worry about litigation, that is not the case anymore. As school populations have become more diverse and challenging, the risk of litigation has grown (Berlin, 2009). For example, Americans United, a legal department, reports a dozen complaints a year regarding issues of separation of church and state (Boston, 2009). Topics in which religion and public school have continually clashed in the courtroom include: student-led devotionals, prayers at graduation ceremonies, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, prayer sessions, displaying or distributing religious material, religious references on signs at school sponsored sporting events, the wearing of religious apparel, religion in curriculum, and
released-time for religious instruction. While many of these practices have not been allowed to take place, released-time for religious instruction has. In order to understand how and why a student’s participation in release time has survived legal battles, when other efforts to express their religious beliefs during their public school day have not, requires an understanding of two legal ideologies that have been formed over the years in court cases dealing with church-state issues founded in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution—namely, separation and accommodation.

**Separation and Accommodation**

**The First Amendment.** In winning independence from a king the colonists had the unique opportunity of establishing a new government based on the principle of popular sovereignty and forming their own constitution (Oaks, 2009). However, because of the religious intolerance the settlers experienced while in their native lands from the European state churches, they were hesitant to ratify the new constitution unless it specifically protected them against the formation of a national church—like the Anglican Church in England, for example. Therefore, the founding fathers were compelled to address the issue of religion and government before ratification. This led to the formation of a ten member congressional sub-committee which presented to the U.S. House of Representatives a Bill of Rights with ten amendments (Passe & Willox, 2009). The amendment specifically meant to address the fears of the people against an official religion supported by the government was the First Amendment, which states: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” (Urofsky, 1990, p. 20). Therefore, with the passage of the Bill of Rights, the
term *religious freedom* became “the official policy of the new nation” (Passe & Willox, 2009, p. 103).

Legally the First Amendment has been broken up into two parts—the Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause (McCarthy, 2009). The Establishment Clause—congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion—was intended to prevent a national church like those of Europe. The Free Exercise Clause—or prohibiting the free exercise thereof—was intended to afford people the right to choose religious beliefs without government interference (Oaks, 2009). These two clauses “taken together,” for the early colonists “meant that the new national government should have no power over religion in *any* matter” (Urofsky, 2002, p. 55).

A wall of separation of church and state. “Separation of church and state” has become a common phrase used in discussing religion as it comes into contact with the public sector. While the concept of separation of church and state is founded in the First Amendment the phrase, *separation of church and state*, appears nowhere in the Bill of Rights or Constitution. The phrase actually comes from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson, then President of the United States, to the Association of Baptists in Danbury, Connecticut (Cureton, 2009). Concerned that the First Amendment was not specific enough to protect them from having their rights of worship taken away, the Danbury Baptists petitioned the President for help. Jefferson responded,

> I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should “make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” *thus building a wall of separation between Church & State*.

He then went on to assure them that their rights of worship would remain intact because of this wall of separation.

While this statement by Jefferson was given as personal opinion and not public policy, it eventually evolved into the latter when it was cited in U.S. Supreme Court case Reynolds v. United States (1878). The case addressed the practice of polygamy among members of the LDS church, referred to as Mormons. The central issue in the case was whether the free exercise of one’s religious beliefs and practices could override the power of congress to make a religious practice a criminal act when a person’s beliefs led them to act contrary to the law. Chief Justice Waite in delivering the opinion of the court argued, “Religious freedom is guaranteed everywhere throughout the United States, so far as congressional interference is concerned. The question to be determined is, whether the law now under consideration [Anti-Bigamy Act of 1862] comes within this prohibition” (p. 162). He then cited, for the first time in a legal setting, Thomas Jefferson’s letter to the Danbury Baptists quoting the phrase “a wall of separation between church and state” and concluded:

In our opinion, the statute immediately under consideration is within the legislative power of Congress.... Laws are made for the government of actions, and while they cannot interfere with mere religious belief and opinions, they may with practices...it is provided that plural marriages shall not be allowed. Can a man excuse his practices to the contrary because of his religious belief? To permit this would be to make the professed doctrines of religious belief superior to the law of the land, and, in effect, to permit every citizen to become a law unto himself. Government could exist only in name under such circumstances. (Reynolds v. United States, 1878, pp. 166-167)

It was then decided from this case that the civil government had power to determine the bounds of marriage, thus giving authority to the state to denounce any religious practice
found offensive to society and contrary to the law.

This decision changed the way courts have viewed the concept of religion in the Constitution. The concept of church in Jefferson’s metaphor of a wall of separation was changed from meaning a national or state church, as originally intended by the Establishment Clause, to any religious practice or activity (Cureton, 2009). From this decision “the concept and principle of separation of church and state became part of American law and American culture” (Stone, 2006, p. 15).

The next time, and perhaps the most well-known time, Jefferson’s metaphor was cited, with the Reynolds interpretation, came 69 years later in the U.S. Supreme court case Everson v. Board of Education (1947). Whereas Reynolds dealt with the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment, Everson was the U.S. Supreme Courts “first significant Establishment Clause decision” (McCarthy, 2009, pp. 714-715).

In the Everson case the court, through Justice Hugo Black, upheld a state law which allowed school boards to financially aid the transportation of students to public and private schools as being constitutional by adopting a broad interpretation of the Establishment Clause. Citing Reynolds, Justice Black pronounced:

In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect “a wall of separation between church and State....” That wall must be kept high and impregnable. We could not approve the slightest breach. (Everson v. Board of Education, 1947, pp. 16-17)

Jefferson’s metaphor introduced again in the Everson case “became prominent in church-state litigation for more than 30 years,” particularly with regards to religion in public schools (McCarthy, 2009, p. 715). From the ruling there emerged a belief in a two-way separation of religion from government and vice versa, instead of a one-way
separation of government from religion—as intended by Jefferson when speaking to the Danbury Baptists, and as intended by the founding fathers (Cureton, 2009). Through the ruling both of the First Amendment’s religion clauses became applicable “not only to the federal government but also to the states” (Urofsky, 2002, p. 53).

In the time since *Everson* the separation ideology has gained momentum in the United States. In the opinion of many, it has been used to silence religion in the public arena (Oaks, 2009), remove moral influences from the public schools (Donovan, 2001; Faust, 1992), and create a religion-hostile environment (Oaks, 1992). However, supporters of this ideology claim that efforts for complete and strict separation has protected public schools from religious exploitation brought on by fundamentalist Christian groups and their sponsors, while at the same time, giving proper balance to the public and religious sectors (Boston, 2009; Redlich, 2000).

Despite its controversial interpretation and application to law, Jefferson’s metaphor, *a wall of separation between church and state*, as interpreted in *Reynolds* and *Everson* and applied to the Establishment Clause, was “prominent in church-state litigation for more than 30 years,” and was continually used by the Supreme Court “to strike down school-sponsored religious activity” for much of the century. However, in the later part of the century a shift began to take place in the courtrooms with a greater focus on the accommodation of individual religious rights granted through the Free Exercise Clause (McCarthy, 2009, p. 715).

**A shift away from the wall.** In *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971), a case dealing again with state financial aid to parochial schools, the court stated, “Judicial caveats against
entanglement must recognize that the line of separation, far from being a ‘wall,’ is a blurred, indistinct, and variable barrier depending on all the circumstances of a particular relationship.” In making this statement they argued that “total separation is not possible in an absolute sense” because “some relationship between government and religious organizations is inevitable” (p. 614). Therefore the court decided:

In the absence of precisely stated constitutional prohibitions, we must draw lines with reference to the three main evils against which the Establishment Clause was intended to afford protection: “sponsorship, financial support, and active involvement of the sovereign in religious activity.” (p. 612)

As a result, the court articulated a three-pronged test for determining whether a proposed law or practice violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The test established public aid to religion to be constitutionally permissible if: (1) there is a “secular legislative purpose;” (2) “its principal or primary effect...neither advances nor inhibits religion;” and (3) if it does not “foster ‘an excessive government entanglement with religion’” (pp. 612-613).

From 1971 until 1992, the Supreme Court consistently applied this test, which became known as the Lemon Test, on cases dealing with separation of church and state (McCarthy, 2009). Despite criticism and reinterpretation the test remained the “standard of analysis in virtually all church/state cases” and the “touchstone for deciding the constitutionality of a wide range of government-supported religious practices” including those dealing with public schools (Redlich, 2000, p. 27).

Another test was eventually developed and used in conjunction with the Lemon Test. It came out of the U.S. Supreme Court case Lynch v. Donnelly (1984). In this case the court upheld the constitutionality of a municipal nativity scene that was placed with
other seasonal Christmas decorations in a park owned by a nonprofit organization and sponsored by the City, despite arguments that the nativity violated the Establishment clause of the First Amendment.

The main issues in the case dealt with accommodation verses separation. Justice Burger argued that the concept of a wall of separation between church and state, though a useful metaphor, did not accurately describe the practical aspects of the current case, and that the constitution provided for the accommodation of religion as opposed to complete separation. He also argued that the court could not be confined to one test of establishment, namely the Lemon Test. In addition, Justice O’Connor argued that the Lemon Test only tested whether a government practice endorsed or disapproved of religion, regardless of the intent (Lynch v. Donnelly, 1984). Her arguments led to the Establishment Test which evaluates a government action through the perspective of an outside viewer to determine whether the government intended to endorse or disapprove the religious practice in question (Epley, 2007).

These two tests led litigation afterwards to focus not solely on the Establishment Clause and the idea of complete separation, but also on the accommodation of private religious practices and beliefs afforded in the Free Exercise Clause. Examples of this shift in focus can be seen in two acts by Congress—Equal Access Act (1984) and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (1993).

The Equal Access Act (1984) forced federal-aided secondary schools to recognize student-initiated groups, who meet during non-instructional time, regardless of their religious, political, or philosophical speech and content. The act was ruled constitutional
in the *Board of Education of the Westside Community Schools v. Mergens* (1990) when it was used to decide whether a Christian group being denied official school recognition was constitutional or not.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act (1993) was designed to restore the protections for religious freedom that existed before the Supreme Court decision in *Oregon Employment Division v. Smith* (Ballard, 1992). In general, the act specifies that government cannot burden a person's exercise of religion even if the burden applies to everyone.

With the development of the *Lemon Test, Establishment Test*, and the passage of the Equal Access and Religious Freedom Acts, “the concepts of equal access for religious groups and equal treatment of religious expression seem to have replaced the metaphor of a wall of separation between church and state” (McCarthy, 2009, p. 715). As a result, while still attempting to maintain separation, courts have begun to emphasize accommodation of private religious expression. The public schools have done the same.

**Separation and accommodation in the public school.** Attempts by public school officials to keep religion separate from school affairs, while at the same time accommodating an individual students’ rights to worship is evident in a document produced by the United States Department of Education under the direction of Bill Clinton, then President of the United States. The document produced in 1995 and reissued in 1998 is titled *Religious Expression in Public Schools*. It was distributed to public schools across the country to provide guidelines for what was permissible with respect to religion in public schools in order to
...allow school districts to avoid contentious disputes by developing a common understanding among students, teachers, parents, and the broader community that the First Amendment does in fact provide ample room for religious expression by students while at the same time maintaining freedom from government sponsored religion. (*Religious Expression in Public Schools*, 1998, para. 5)

Hence, these guidelines reflect the two important obligations of separation and accommodation that the First Amendment imposes on public school officials. First, students acting on their own may not be forbidden from expressing personal views or beliefs solely because they are religious, but must be given the same right to engage in religious activity or discussion as in any other comparable activity. Second, religious activities or doctrine may not be endorsed by the school, nor may a student be coerced into participating in a religious activity by an administrator or teacher (*Religious Expression in Public Schools*, 1998).

The lowering of the wall of separation of church and state and the climate of religious accommodation discussed here has created a legal environment that provides for released-time religious instruction. Although the practice of released-time does not resolve the core religious tensions in public education, it is one legal measure that provides educational leaders a way to balance ideologies of *separation of church and state* and the *accommodation* of religious belief (*Time for God*, 2000).

**Released-Time for Religious Instruction**

The *beginning of released-time*. Released-time religious instruction was first proposed at a teacher’s conference in New York in 1905 by a teacher in attendance. The original proposal was to close public school one day a week so that parents could send their children to classes for religious instruction. This proposal did not go unnoticed and
in 1914 William Wirt, the superintendent of Gary Schools in Indiana, implemented a released-time program. His program consisted of students being released from their school classes to attend religion classes. The religion classes were taught in the public school by local clergymen invited by Wirt. The program grew and inspired similar programs to begin throughout the United States under the names of released-time, release time, weekday religious education (WRE), and dismissed time (Time for God, 2000).

Though William Wirt’s program is often cited as the first released-time program implemented in the United States, historical records reveal that an LDS released-time program had already been running in Utah since 1912. This program was started by a local religious leader of the LDS church named Joseph Merrill. In order to implement the program, Merrill petitioned the superintendent of Salt Lake City’s Granite School District along with the principal of the Granite High School to allow students to be released from public school for one hour each day to attend religious instruction in an LDS church building that would be constructed across the street. After local and state approval, the program began with 70 students. Upon noticing the success of the Granite seminary, other local LDS congregations started petitioning their school districts for a released-time program as well. By 1919, 13 LDS seminaries were in operation in Utah, with 1,528 students. By 1925, seminaries were adjacent to all but 18 high schools in the state (Berrett, 1988).

In the years since Merrill’s Utah and Wirt’s Indiana programs, released-time has grown tremendously. For example, the LDS church reports students registered in released-time seminary classes across the world to be 115,787 (S&I Annual Report,
The Fellowship of Christian Released Time Ministries estimates on their website over 250,000 students in kindergarten through high school participating in over 1,000 released-time programs throughout the United States. In the years since its humble beginning, not only has it grown, but it has increasingly become solidified in the courtroom as an established legal practice with respect to religion and public schools.

Establishing released-time as a legal practice. At first, released-time programs of all different religious denominations grew rapidly throughout the United States. However, this growth began to stagnate in 1948 when a U.S. Supreme Court ruled an Illinois released-time program unconstitutional (Soderlund, 2008). The case was *McCollum v. Board of Education* (1948) and involved a released-time program consisting of teachers from different religious denominations entering the public school classrooms and providing religious instruction once a week, for thirty minutes; while those students who did not participate studied in the library. Justice Hugo Black, speaking for the court, found the program to be in violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment claiming, “This is beyond all question a utilization of the tax-established and tax-supported public school system to aid religious groups to spread their faith” (p. 210). Then, in citing *Everson*, he argued:

Both religion and government can best work to achieve their lofty aims if each is left free from the other within its respective sphere. Or, as we said in the *Everson* case, “the First Amendment has erected a wall between Church and State which must be kept high and impregnable.” (p. 212)

Therefore, the released-time program was struck down.

Before the *McCollum* hearing no federal court had held released-time programs unconstitutional. After the ruling many feared that the very concept was considered
unconstitutional. However, these fears abated four years later as a result of the U.S. Supreme Court case Zorach v. Clauson (Ericsson, Colby, Payne, & Crawford, 1996).

In Zorach v. Clauson (1952), a released-time program operated under a New York Education Law which permitted its public schools to release students during school hours to attend religious instruction or devotional exercises in buildings off of school property with a written request from their parents. In order to ensure that released students were attending the public school received a report from the participating churches listing the students who failed to report for the religious instruction. The court held that the program was not like the McCollum program in that it did not involve the expenditure of public funds or involve religious instruction being taught in the public school. Therefore, the court decided the program did not breach the First Amendment because it neither made a law respecting an establishment of religion, nor prohibited the free exercise of religion. In making this decision Justice William O. Douglas, speaking for the court, emphasized the difference between a school accommodating the student’s religious needs and supporting religious instruction. He stated:

We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being.... When the state encourages religious instruction or cooperates with religious authorities by adjusting the schedule of public events to sectarian needs, it follows the best of our tradition.... To hold that it may not would be to find in the Constitution a requirement that government show a callous indifference to religious groups. That would be preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe. (pp. 313-314)

In the years since Zorach, “few release time programs have been challenged” despite the outcome of the McCollum case (Time for God, 2000, p. 10). Not only has the Zorach ruling “provided the legal basis for the existence of released-time programs” (p.
6), but has also become “a line of demarcation” because it changed the parameters of the debate with respect to released-time litigation (Stone, 2006, p. 23). Furthermore, it has become a landmark case and the comparison used by other courts in determining the constitutionality of nearly every released-time programs since. Court cases which have used the Zorach decision to uphold other released-time programs include, in chronological order: Doe v. Shenandoah County School Board (1990), Ford v. Manuel (1985), Holt v. Thompson (1975), Lanner v. Wimmer (1981), Perry v. School District No. 81 (1959), and Smith v. Smith (1975).

In Perry v. School District No. 81 (1959) a Washington State’s Supreme Court upheld a released-time program as being constitutional. However, the court found the public school district’s practice of aiding the released-time program in recruitment efforts for the program by explaining it to students and handing out registration cards during public school classes violated the Establishment Clause and struck down the practice. In Holt v. Thompson (1975) the state of Wisconsin’s released-time statute was upheld because it was considered an accommodation of student’s religious needs (Time for God, 2000).

In Smith v. Smith (1975) a released-time program organized and operated by a non-profit organization for elementary school students was held unconstitutional by a federal district court in Virginia. The program consisted of students meeting in trailers parked on the street adjacent to the school or in churches nearby and enjoyed a high level of support from school officials who aided program organizers in coordinating schedules to designate which classes the students could be drawn from for the religious instruction.
The court found that the schools aid provided “an impression of an [e]ndorsement of the program” to “susceptible” children, and therefore “advanced” the released-time program (para. 13).

Despite the decision, the First Federal Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the trial court’s ruling stating that the program was not unconstitutional “in the light of Zorach’s apparent continuing validity” (para. 16). In doing so the higher court argued that the released-time program, like Zorach, was “the schools aim only to accommodate the wishes of the students' parents” and did not “involve more entanglement between the school administration and the religious authorities than was present in the Zorach Program” (para. 12).

In Lanner v. Wimmer (1981), a 9th- to 12th-grade released-time LDS seminary program in Logan, Utah was upheld by the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. The law suit filed by the ACLU of Utah claimed the high level of coordination between the released-time program and the high school officials was a breach of separation of church and state. Coordinating efforts discussed in the case included: (a) school preregistration forms listing released-time as a course option, (b) releasing of students to attend the released-time program for one class period each day of the week, (c) the collection of released-time attendance slips by students sent from the public school’s main office, (d) the installation of a public address system from the school building to the released-time programs building, (e) released-time program personnel holding parent-teacher conferences at the same time as the public school in the school building, (f) a mailbox for the released-time instructors placed in the public school to prevent scheduling conflicts,
(f) the released-time faculty being requested from time to time to assist in public school activities, (h) school recognition of released-time attendance as a fulfillment for requirements to serve as elected student officers, (i) released-time personnel using the school cafeteria; and (j) the school awarding and recording academic credit to students for classes taken in the released-time seminary involving the Old and New Testaments.

Despite this high level of coordination between the public high school and the LDS released-time program the trial court found the program to be a constitutional accommodation of the spiritual needs of the students. However, the court found that “the least entangling administrative alternatives must be elected when a released-time program is instituted” (para. 36). As such, it was decided that the released-time program did not entirely violate the First Amendment but that “certain aspects of this program violate the establishment clause” because they involved too much entanglement between the public school and the released-time seminary (para. 24). Coordinating practices thought to involve too much entanglement that were struck down included; (1) the schools practice of tracking and collecting daily released-time attendance—though the seminary officials were encouraged by the court to report their attendance regularly to the school for purposes of tracking student whereabouts, and (2) the public schools awarding of academic credit for Old and New Testament courses because it required state entanglement through examination and monitoring of the religious course’s curriculum—though the granting of elective credits upon state approval was allowed.

All other aspects of the program were upheld as a constitutional accommodation of religious beliefs and conveniences for the school administration, students, and their
parents. The court of appeals upon further examination upheld the trial court’s decision arguing that “any accommodation is beneficial to religious interests just as failure to make some accommodation can be injurious to religious interests” (para. 29).

The *Lanner* case is considered important in released-time litigation because it is cited as the only court case to have addressed the issue of credit (Ericsson et al., 1996). It should be noted, however, that while the literature recognizes *Lanner* as the first and only court case to deal with the issue of credit for released-time it was not the first time debates over awarding academic credit for participating in released-time seminary had ensued. In fact, debates over credit were an important topic in Utah from its inception and at first affected the magnitude and acceleration of released-time growth throughout the state (Berrett, 1988).

In *Ford v. Manuel* (1985) the Federal District Court of Ohio upheld a released-time program but forbade the practice of the public school district renting out school classrooms—at the price of one dollar a year—to the program. The court also forbade the released-time program from meeting during hours which overlapped the public school day because the practice allowed the program to benefit from state compulsory education laws (*Ford v. Manuel*, 1985).

In *Doe v. Shenandoah County School Board* (1990) the Federal District Court for the western district of Virginia upheld the constitutionality of a released-time program but ordered that the program stop recruiting students in public school classrooms and enrolling students without parental consent. The court also forbade the program from parking remodeled school buses, used as classrooms, in parking lots, streets, alleys, or
highways immediately adjacent to the school property because it gave the appearance of

From these Supreme Court and lower court rulings basic guidelines can be
extracted for maintaining legal released-time programs. Ashcroft (2011) lists 12 such
guidelines as follows:

(1) Released-time programs must not be created or implemented using state funds.
(2) Released-time programs cannot be held on school grounds.... (3) Students may
only be released from the school with written permission from the student’s
parent or legal guardian. (4) Recruiting students for released-time programs must
be done by released-time personnel without assistance from the public school....
(5) The released-time programs daily attendance must be maintained by released-
time administrators and not by school officials.... (6) Records of attendance,
grades, and other data from the released-time programs may not be included in
reports from the school to parents, with the exception of reporting a student’s
repeated absences from the released-time program. (7) Elective and eligibility
credit may be granted to students who participate in a released-time program, but
not academic credit.... (8) Student class schedules for public schools may not list
released-time instruction as an option, though for the convenience of the school,
the registration forms may contain a space indicating released-time. (9) Public
schools may not encourage participation in released-time instruction or punish
students for not participating.... (10) Teachers of the released-time program are
not to be considered part of the public school faculty or be requested by the public
school to assume responsibilities at public school programs and events.... (11) The
connection of bells, telephones, intercoms, or any other device may not be
established, unless it will benefit and convenience the public school and the
released-time program bears all cost of installation and maintenance. (12)
Released-time programs may hold parent teacher conferences at the same time as
the public school conferences...but should be held separately in their respective
sites. (pp. 175-177)

As useful as these guidelines may be for establishing legal released-time programs it
must be recognized that “enumerating all of the elements that will make a program
constitutional or unconstitutional may not be possible” (Time for God, 2000, p. 12). It is
also important to recognize that decisions from lower court rulings are not binding on all
states, as are Supreme Court rulings, but are “merely an indication of how one court
viewed a particular aspect of a released time program” (Ericsson et al., 1996, p. 2).

Furthermore, it must be remembered that while an entire released-time program may not be ruled unconstitutional, certain aspects of the program could be; as was the case in Doe v. Shenandoah County School Board (1990), Ford v. Manuel (1985), Lanner v. Wimmer (1981), and Perry v. School District No. 81 (1959).

As a result of the sanction received in these Supreme Court and lower court rulings, released-time has become what Ericsson and associates (1996) called “the most effective open door” by which students may receive religious instruction during the regular public school day (p. 2). This sanction has also led to the establishment of released-time throughout the world, particularly in Utah.

**Released-time religious education in Utah.** In 1848, one year after settling in the Salt Lake Valley, the LDS church organized the first school house. For a two year period this new settlement, called Deseret, was governed by a complete theocracy until a Constitution of the State of Deseret was written, which established a civil government. Though this new civil government established laws which separated church and state, in an almost entirely homogeneous society, the LDS church continued to be the governing power until Deseret became Utah upon the granting of statehood in 1896 (Atherton, 2005). Thus, the public schools and school districts that arose in Utah during the 48-year period before statehood were entirely funded and organized by LDS wards and stakes. Consequently, though provided in the Deseret constitution, separation of religious and secular education was not practiced. After statehood, however, the LDS church directed its educational efforts to parallel those of other states. As soon as the state was able to
provide secular education funded by tax payers and not LDS wards, the church removed themselves from the public education scene (Wilkins, 1953).

Still concerned for the education of its youth, the LDS church continued to provide secular education coupled with religious education by organizing LDS Church Academies. While the Academies flourished for a time, enrollment began to decline because church members found it more economical to send their children to the public schools because, unlike in the academies, the state paid for transportation, furnished books, and paid the tuition. By 1910 most LDS youth were attending public high schools. With the decline, and eventually abandonment, of the Academies it became apparent to the LDS church that something different had to be done in order to ensure that those attending the public school received religious education along with the secular. The seminary program became the means to ensure that LDS students received religious education while attending public school (Berrett, 1988).

Starting with the first seminary in 1912, seminaries began growing throughout the state of Utah as the LDS church and its members began petitioning their local school boards to allow a released-time seminary program to be established adjacent to the local high school. However, the growth of the seminary program in Utah was not without opposition. In communities where the majority of the local school board members were not LDS members, requests for released-time were refused. In order to help the seminary program succeed, LDS church leaders encouraged members to take more interest in school board appointments and elections. This they did, and eventually seminary programs were established adjacent to nearly every high school in the state (Berrett,
1988). As a result of this growth and longevity, the practice of released-time has become so “entrenched” in Utah’s educational scene that few give conscious thought to the affect it has on the public school system. There has developed an understanding and cooperation between the two that is based on long standing customs. For example, construction of a new school coincides with construction of a new seminary adjacent and plans for a new school building usually include plans for easy access to the seminary building (Van Leer, 1993). This cooperation based on long standing customs was one aspect of the relationship that the current study sought to explore; an aspect largely missing from other studies on released-time for religious instruction.

**Other Relevant Academic Studies**

A dearth of literature regarding released-time for religious instruction indicates it is an understudied subject. While internet searches produce various citations and literature regarding released-time, the bulk consists of commentaries written on court cases involving released-time or guidelines to developing a released-time program. Only a few academic studies relevant to the current study have been published. These studies consist primarily of master’s theses and doctoral dissertations and include, in chronological order: Arnold (1978), Bishop (1958), Glade (1955), Ham (1966), Harris (1983), Hodge (2007), Mumford (1997), Poore (1983), Sellers (1965), and Stone (2006). While the focus of and purpose for these studies vary tremendously, they reveal findings that are relevant to and help shape the current study. Findings from these studies that directly relate to the current study include: (a) legal practices of the relationship, (b)
effects on the school or seminary from the relationship, and (c) administrative perspectives about the relationship.

**Legal Practices of the Relationship**

Two studies have been conducted to determine if LDS seminary-public school relationships were following court ordered practices for separation of church and state. The first of these studies, conducted by Glade (1955) took place three years after the *Zorach* decision. The study sought to find out if LDS seminaries and the public schools to which they were adjacent were following the guidelines set forth in that case.

Collection of data consisted of three sets of questionnaires; one sent to public school administrators where there was a seminary adjacent to the school, one to all seminary teachers who taught at least one class, and one to nine educators purposefully selected because of their experiences working both in the public education and church education systems. These nine educators became what the study called “the jury”—a group used to establish the desirable relationships between public school administrators and seminary teachers that could be used in assessing the legality of the relationships based on responses from the two questionnaires (Glade, 1955, p. 7). All three questionnaires included a request for respondents to list his or her recommendations for improving the relationships between the two.

Findings from the study showed that the majority of the public school-seminary relationships were following the criteria established by the jury and issued by the Church Department of Education and the Utah State Board of Education. The relationships in Utah followed more closely these criteria than any other relationship in the other states,
or Canada. Where seminary teachers were invited by public school administrators to participate in school meetings, participate in school activities, or accept school duties the majority accepted. A minority of school administrators exercised supervisory responsibilities over seminary classes where school credit was given. Recommendations gathered from the study dealt mainly with requests for greater communication and more specific guidelines of what is and is not allowed in the relationships. Other recommendations included seminary teachers having state teaching licenses wherever credit is awarded for seminary classes.

The second study dealing with legal aspects of the relationship was conducted by Poore (1983). The study was engaged in 2 years after the *Lanner* decision. The main purpose of the study was to analyze the impact the court decision had on the processes and practices of the public schools in Utah with respect to LDS seminary. Additional purposes of the study included: (a) determining and listing the events that led to the litigation; (b) analyzing the impact of the decision on the educational process and programs in the public schools of Utah; (c) determining school district response to the decision; and (d) assessing the status of compliance with the decision as measured by secondary school principal responses to questionnaire instruments and interviews.

The study followed guidelines for conducting a legal impact study by comparing the conduct of individuals and groups before and after the legal decision was made. In doing so the historical practices were analyzed along with court transcripts, interviews, and files from the *Lanner* court case. Data were collected from a questionnaire that was given to 78 out of 91 high school principals in 34 of the 40 school districts in Utah to
assess their response to the *Lanner* decision. The survey/questionnaire consisted of two parts, before and after the *Lanner* decision. Comparisons between parts one and two were made to assess impact of the court case. Of the surveys returned 63 were usable for the study. Follow-up interviews were conducted with 12 principals to confirm data provided by the questionnaire.

Findings from the study indicated that the *Lanner* decision awakened a greater sensitivity to the relationship and that the public school principals were making a more conscious effort to be sensitive to potential legal conflict than before. Findings also indicated that the public school principals were generally in compliance with the court directives, though tensions from the court decision still remained.

While findings from these two studies are encouraging in showing the legal legitimacy of the public school-LDS seminary relationships and provide good suggestions for maintaining the relationship, both are outdated. The more recent of the two, was conducted nearly 28 years ago. It can be assumed that a lot has changed with respect to the relationship since then. For example, at the time of Glade’s study (1955) the number of public schools with an LDS seminary adjacent throughout the entire United States and Canada was 122. Now there is nearly double that number in the state of Utah alone. Furthermore, since Glade’s study legal procedures for maintaining a legal relationship have changed as a result of the *Lanner* decision. In light of the dates of these two studies and evolving nature of the public school-LDS seminary relationship the need for a current study becomes evident. Furthermore, while legal aspects of the relationship are important, the researcher can assume that findings from these studies support findings
from the review of court cases on released-time which establish the legality of the practice of released-time, thus enabling the current study to focus on other aspects of the relationship in addition to the legal aspects.

**Effects on the School/Seminary from the Relationship**

Four studies have been conducted that looked at the effects the relationship has had on either the public schools or the LDS seminaries. The earliest of these, a study conducted by Bishop (1958), looked at what financial savings accrue to Utah school districts as a result of students attending parochial school and LDS seminary classes. The study was limited to the 1956-1957 school years. The study was of a quantitative design and assumed that some savings would be found, primarily in the two main areas of teacher salaries and capital outlay for buildings. The purpose of the study was to test that assumption in those two areas. Information for the study was gathered from two bulletins: the Statistic of Nonpublic Secondary Schools for the years 1947-48 and the Statistical Summary of Education for the years 1951-52.

Findings from the study showed that Utah school districts saved a large amount of money each year as a result of the LDS seminary program and parochial schools. The findings suggested that if the seminary program had been taken away during the year the study took place, Utah public schools would have had to have spent an additional $1,560,400 on adding 66 classrooms and paying 142.6 additional teacher salaries. The study did not factor in expenditures such as textbooks, classroom supplies, furniture, maintenance, or increased insurance. Using these findings, while also considering
increases in enrollment and the cost of inflation over the last 53 years to the present day, it is recognized that current savings for the Utah public schools as a result of the LDS seminary are still substantial.

In a similar study, Harris (1983) looked at the economic effect LDS seminary had on school districts in southern Idaho. Interest in the study arose out of discussion in the *Lanner v. Wimmer* (1981) case involving the amount of economic savings to the Logan City School District as a result of the LDS seminary. Two significant assumptions made by the researcher included: (a) the school districts are at least as concerned over economic issues as they are over moral ones, and (b) due to limited funding, school administrators will either try to maintain a balance in class loads by arbitrarily placing students in classes regardless of the students expressed desire or will exceed prudent student-teacher ratios rather than hire additional teachers to meet student demand. Data were collected from district superintendents and LDS seminary students through questionnaires and from high school principals or counselors through personal interviews.

Findings indicated that the high schools included in the study would not be able to accommodate back into the school 41.6% of students enrolled in seminary if the program were terminated. In every interview conducted with a high school principal or counselor the feeling was expressed that if the seminary were discontinued they would need to hire additional teachers to adequately meet the students’ needs; a difficult task due to a lack of necessary funding for teacher salaries. Of the 15 interviews conducted, six principals indicated a definite need to have immediately constructed additional classrooms if the
seminary program were discontinued. Findings also indicated the construction that would have been needed to accommodate seminary students back into the high school would have amounted to $124,000 per year for each school district. Findings further suggested that LDS seminary allowed the school to get more for their money by lessening the demand students had on more expensive areas of study, such as science and type-writing. It is important to note that the researcher recommended further research into the effects that public school practices would have on the relationship with the seminary; which is an aspect the current study seeks to explore.

Looking at a different effect of the relationship, other than economic savings a school district gains from the relationship with the seminary, Mumford (1997) sought to understand the effects of one public school’s schedule change from a six-period concurrent class schedule to a four-period block schedule on the LDS seminary adjacent. Research questions sought to discover: (a) what the opinions of seminary students were regarding the schedule change; (b) what effects parents of seminary students identified as a result of the change in the school schedule; (c) what effects local LDS Church leaders identified as a result of the change in the school schedule; (d) what effects the block schedule had on the seminary teachers; and (e) whether the seminaries adapting to the public school block schedule had served their best interests in carrying out the objectives of the LDS Church Educational System.

Data collection consisted of in-depth interviews with a sample of students, parents, and local LDS leaders, along with the seminary principal and teachers. In addition, the researcher spent three full days conducting on-sight observations and
analyzing student records. An analysis of the data suggested that there was little evidence that the block schedule had compromised the objectives of the seminary program and LDS Church and its influence on students, families, and church members.

Findings showed that while there was some concern expressed at first—particularly with not having seminary everyday—there was little evidence that the school’s block schedule had compromised the objectives of the seminary program and its influence on students, families, and priesthood leaders. Findings indicated that seminary on the block schedule was preferred to early morning seminary classes. Findings also suggested that seminary teachers and the principal showed preference to the schedule before block schedule was implemented because it facilitated more regular contact with the students and posed less of a problem for lesson preparation.

A study dealing with non-LDS released-time programs in California was conducted by Hodge (2007). The study sought to determine the effect participation in released-time programs had on student academic performance. The study sought to respond to criticism that with the passage of the *No Child Left Behind* standards students who participate in released-time programs would suffer academically compared with their peers and thus cause a greater disparity in the schools’ standardized test results. A school district similar to many metropolitan school districts across the nation with a high concentration of low-income, African American, Hispanic, and immigrant students was targeted in the study. Nine schools in the district were selected which allow for elementary grade students to leave public school for one hour, one time a week, to attend released-time instruction in churches located within two blocks of the school.
The study employed quantitative methodologies to examine the relationship between academic achievement and released-time participation. The study classified students into two groups to serve as the independent variables. The two groups were: released-time participants, and nonreleased-time participants. Casual attendees of the released-time program were eliminated and only those students who were enrolled in public education at least 80 days of the academic school year were included. The dependent variables for the study consisted of outcomes from two sets of standardized, statewide tests, and one set of local test scores. To address possible confounding factors age, gender, race, and grade level were factored in, along with classifications of gifted, handicapped or disabled, fluent in English, primary language, and attendance. Students were tested twice; once at the beginning of the school year and again at the end.

Results of the study showed no statistically significant difference in the state standardized test scores between students who participated in released-time and students who did not. Outcomes of the state achievement test showed that students who participated in released-time recorded similar levels of academic performance as students not participating in released-time. Results from the local assessment found no statistical significant difference in writing—though at the beginning of the school year there was. Conversely, the study showed a significant difference in vocabulary early in the year, but at the end showed released-time students scoring higher than the students not participating in released-time. Taken as a whole, the study suggested that participation in released-time programs did not hinder students’ academic performance and those participating would perform just as well academically as those who do not participate.
Taken together these four studies provide evidence that both partners in the public school-seminary relationship benefit from one another. These studies also suggest that each attempts to eliminate or adapt to any changes or concerns that could hurt the relationship. Such findings are supported by the theory of social exchange, and as such, strengthen the researchers’ choice of using the theory for the current study in analyzing why and how the public school-seminary relationship is maintained.

Administrative Perspectives About the Relationship

Four studies dealt specifically with administrative perspectives about the relationship. The earliest of these was conducted by Sellers (1965). The purpose of the study was to determine the relations which existed between the LDS seminaries and the LDS wards, LDS stakes, and the public high schools; as well as determining the effectiveness of these relations. Research methods consisted of multiple questionnaires to determine seminary-ward, seminary-stake, and seminary-high school relations. One questionnaire was distributed to 14 LDS seminary principals asking them to assess the support of the LDS wards and stakes to the seminary and to provide recommendations for improvement. Similarly, another questionnaire was distributed to 396 LDS church leaders (352 bishops and 44 stake presidents) asking them what ward/stake support and aid was being given to the seminaries and to access the importance and effectiveness of those efforts along with suggesting recommendations for improvement. Another questionnaire was distributed to 14 different seminary principals asking them to indicate the importance and effectiveness of various high school functions in relation to the seminaries and the
effectiveness of various seminary functions in relation to the high schools. They were also asked to indicate ways in which the seminary and high schools could improve relations between them.

The only findings considered relevant for the current study were those dealing with high school-seminary relations. In fact, the seminary-ward/stake relationship proved to be the main focus of the study taking up majority of discussion in the findings section of the thesis with very little discussion on seminary-public school relations. Regardless, findings dealing with the high school-seminary relationship indicated that the majority of the seminary principals rated the relations between the seminaries and the high schools as being very effective. Findings also indicated that half the seminary principals attempted to carry out all policies made by the high school to ensure favorable relations. Findings further indicated that the majority of the seminary principals felt that communication was an important aspect of the relationship but were critical of the schools effectiveness to communicate with them. Only ward and stake relations were discussed in the conclusion section.

In probably the most comprehensive study done on released-time, Ham (1966) sought to access what had been happening with released-time education during the 50 years since William Wirt’s first program in 1914. The study focused on non-LDS released-time programs in New York and addressed various questions ranging from who was attending the released-time classes to whether the texts used were fair to groups not of the Christian faith. The questions in the study which asked principals to provide insight about their attitudes toward the program are of particular interest to the current
Of the 57 principals interviewed, either in person or over the phone, 60% expressed general approval of the released-time program, 30% expressed strongly favorable attitudes toward it, while 10% expressed hostility toward it. Of those who strongly favored the program three commented that the released-time program had a distinctly and visibly favorable effect upon the general behavior patterns of the students that carried over into the public school. Of those who were hostile toward the program one suggested that released-time robbed the public school of instruction time while others thought the program caused trouble. In studying the responses of all the principals it was discovered that the attitude of the principal was a major factor related to the enrollment of students in the released-time program.

Incorporating LDS and non-LDS released-time programs in Oregon, Arnold (1978) sought to determine the level of awareness and interest of released-time programs along with their impact on churches and on public school interactions. The quantitative study consisted of a questionnaire distributed to three groups: citizens, public high school teachers, and church leaders in two counties. Response rate from the questionnaires was 43%. Findings from the study suggested that teachers are less favorable toward released-time than are citizens or church leaders, males are more favorable toward released-time programs than females, and released-time is more favorable among the LDS church than any other denomination or faith.

Responses received in the study dealing with reasons for and against implementing a released-time program were of particular interest for the current study
because they indicated possible areas of support and concern that could be discovered while interviewing public school and seminary principals. Reasons given for favoring the implementation of a released-time program included: (a) it provides a complete and balanced education, (b) it fills a void in secular education with respect to moral instruction, (c) it meets student needs, (d) it is a deterrent to moral decay, (e) it strengthens the home and nation, (f) it provides the opportunity for religious education, (g) it will aid in improving church-school relationships, and (h) it helps to improve social relationships for students. Reasons given for not favoring the implementation of a released-time program included: (a) it is unconstitutional; (b) it is an infringement of the schools’ vital time; (c) student interest in it is not sufficient to support it; (d) it puts burdens upon the school with scheduling, interruptions, and truancy problems; (e) religious instruction should be taught in the home, not school; (f) churches are not adequately prepared to implement it; (g) it creates prejudices and persecutions among different religious faiths; and (h) it places peer pressure on youth to attend and provides a vehicle for churches to gain converts to their faith.

Finally, a study conducted by Stone (2006) sought to understand public high school administrators’ attitudes and perceptions about LDS seminary in one western state outside of Utah. Research questions guiding the study were: (a) What were public high school administrators’ attitudes and perceptions regarding LDS released-time seminary; (b) What worked well in the arrangement from their point of view; and (c) What did not work well in the arrangement?

The study was a qualitative study using a two-phase design with a constant
comparative approach. The first phase was a pilot study conducted two years earlier with eight administrators. The second phase included interviews with seven more administrators bringing the total interviewed in both phases to 15 (13 principals and 2 assistant principals). The first phase focused on what worked well between the released-time program and the public school while the second phase explored why the arrangement worked well.

Findings from the pilot study found that factors such as public perception, issues of separation of church and state, and faculty resentment make the topic of released-time religious instruction not generally talked about in public. From this study a metaphor was drawn that described the relationship between the LDS seminaries and the public schools as a seamless woven garment worn by the community that fits legally but is kept in the closet and not talked about or shown much.

Three conclusions that emerged from phase two of the study included: (a) Separation of church and state provides for the existence and maintenance of LDS seminary; (b) LDS seminary programs work well with public schools to which they are adjacent because the seminary is close, the LDS students bear the burden, the seminary adjusts to the public school, and because the program is legitimate and legal; and (c) Public high school administrators were supportive and accommodating of students’ choices to participate in seminary.

Findings from these five studies dealing with administrative perspectives about released-time instruction provided valuable information for the current study. First, these findings led the researcher to believe that the practice of LDS seminary is valued by most
administrators. Second, these findings pointed to potential negative perceptions that could be encountered when discussing the relationship with public school and seminary principals. Third, these findings helped the researcher identify what was missing and needed to be incorporated for the current study. For example, it is significant to note that while these studies all sought to identify the perspectives of either released-time officials or public school administrators, none sought the perspectives of both simultaneously in one study as the current study has done.

Overall, findings from all the other relevant studies conducted on the topic of released-time reviewed here have provided support for and guidance to the direction of the current study; that of studying the public school-LDS seminary relationship through the practices and perspectives of principals from both institutions in light of a theory of social exchange.

Social Exchange Theory

The seminary-public school relationship requires a social explanation “neither data nor theory alone can accomplish” (Anyon, 2009, p. 2). Therefore, the nature of the current study required a “constant conversation” between the data discovered and a theory used to explain it (p. 2). For the current study, the theory that was used to explain and analyze the data collected was social exchange theory because it provides a theoretical framework used in studying social behavior and social relationships.

Social exchange theory (SET) is a multidisciplinary theory that grew out of the intersection of economics, psychology, and sociology (Emerson, 1976). It originated with
the ideas of Homans (1958) and became a workable framework with the works of Blau (1964) and Emerson (1976). Exchange theorists today use the theory as a framework for understanding social structures created by exchange relationships and the ways in which they constrain or enable individuals or groups of such structures to exercise power and influence in their daily lives (Cook & Rice, 2003).

SET is conceptualized as a joint activity of two or more individuals or groups where each depends upon one another for valued rewards and pursues those rewards through exchange of material and non-material goods. When the same individuals or groups exchange repeatedly over time a relationship is developed. Relationships are then maintained or terminated based on the individual’s or group’s continual exchange and perceptions as to the fairness of those exchanges (Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958). Key concepts to the theory include: (a) reciprocity—where each exchange is one in a series that preserves and builds upon previous transactions while at the same time prepares the ground for future exchanges which eventually emerge as norms in the relationship (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Gouldner, 1960; Molm, Takahashi, & Peterson, 2000; Zhang & Epley, 2009); (b) equity—a balance of power in the relationship were the ratio of rewards/costs matches the exchange of actors (Cook & Emerson, 1978; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958); (c) power—where one partner or both partners become dependent upon the other in the exchanges that maintain the relationship (Blau, 1964; Cook & Emerson, 1978; Cook, Emerson, Gillmore & Yamagishi, 1983; Emerson, 1976); and (d) affect—emotions or feelings that enter and pervade social exchange processes (Lawler, 2001; Lawler & Thye, 1999; Molm et al., 2000).
Critics of SET claim that the theory is tautological in reasoning, reductionist in application, and too rational in thinking (Zafirovski, 2003, 2005). Emerson (1976) argued that the controversy about tautology, reductionism, and rationality are easily resolved by adopting a fairly long-term social relation as the basic unit of analysis, linking it to larger social structures, and using the theory to explain rather than predict exchange behavior.

Molm (1994) pointed out that studies using SET can focus on individuals, groups, organizations, or states. Studies using the theory range from organizational justice (Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002) to interethnic marriages (Lomsky-Feder & Leibovitz, 2010). Considering SET usefulness in looking at research dealing with individuals, groups, and organizations, as well as in research dealing with a variety of relationships, encouraged the researcher to use of the theory as a framework to analyze data collected for the current study. The use of the theory in analyzing data for the current study is also supported by Cook and Rice (2003) who challenged researchers to explore other social phenomena that have not been looked at through the lens of SET, and by White and Klein (2002) who suggested that the notions put forth by the exchange theory “are sufficiently abstract and content free that the researcher may fill in the content from any number of contexts” (p. 57).

In applying social exchange theory in the context of the current study various assumptions were made. For example, it was assumed that since the relationship between the public schools and the LDS seminaries has been maintained for so many years in Utah: (a) there is an exchange of material and nonmaterial goods that are both reciprocal and equitable, (b) as a result of power balances a codependency in the relationship has
developed, and (c) positive emotions from the relationship are felt by both parties. It is through the lens of these assumptions that the researcher explored and sought to better understand the relationship between the LDS seminaries and the public school through the perceptions of the principals from both institutions.

Conclusion

A review of the literature presented here has not only provided the historical and cultural context of the phenomenon, revealed findings from similar studies, and established the theoretical framework for the study, but has also presented the need and direction for the present study. This review has shown:

- Released-time for religious education helps educators strike a balance between opposing ideologies of separation of church and state and accommodation of religious beliefs.
- The public school-LDS relationships is a legal, yet under-studied phenomenon; particularly in Utah.
- The history of Utah makes the Utah public school-seminary relationship unique when compared to all other public school-religious released time program relations of any other state. This is because, while LDS seminary programs have been established in other states and countries, each has had their own historical beginnings that were embedded in varying cultural contexts and are maintained through differing state laws.
- Academic studies regarding released-time programs are limited in their
comparison to the phenomenon of the current study because legal parameters regarding released-time vary from state to state. They are also outdated with the majority being conducted prior to the *Lanner v. Wimmer* (1981) decision which changed the public school-seminary relationship in Utah. In fact, no study regarding specifically the public school-LDS seminary relationship in Utah has been done for 53 years.

- The majority of studies dealing with benefits derived from the relationship for either institution have dealt primarily with economic aspects and minimally with other aspects of the relationship for which the current study is most interested.

- No study to date has included both the LDS seminary and the public school principals’ perspectives and practices simultaneously. Because a relationship, by nature, entails two partners, there is a need for the current study to help establish a holistic understanding of the relationship or phenomenon.

- The phenomenon entails a social phenomenon. No study to date has viewed or described the phenomenon through a social theory, particularly a theory of social exchange.

Taking into account what has been revealed from this review; it was believed that the current study would be the only study of its kind with respect to the phenomenon and that it would add to and update the body of knowledge on the subject. It was not limited, as other studies have been, to one or two aspects of the relationship, but included all aspects of the relationship which participants found pertinent to their experience with the
phenomenon, as well as included perspectives from both, not just one, of the partners in the professional relationship. Finally, it used a theoretical framework through which the phenomenon had not been viewed before and accomplished it through a qualitative methodological approach.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This chapter contains a discussion on the methodological procedures that were engaged in while conducting the current study. First, the overall approach to the study, including the philosophical assumptions of the study, approach to inquiry taken in the study, the role of the researcher, and the use of a theoretical lens are discussed. Second, the research procedures that were taken in conducting the study are described, including a pilot study, rationale for selecting sites and participants, data gathering methods, and data analysis and writing procedures. Finally, strategies that were used to establish trustworthiness for the study are listed.

Overall Approach

Philosophical Assumptions

In contrast to the detached nature of the researcher’s role in quantitative inquiry, qualitative inquiry assumes the researcher realizes that “subjectivity is always a part of research” (Glesne, 2006, p. 119) and that the researcher is the “key instrument” for the study (Crewsell, 2007, p. 38). Therefore, it is essential for a qualitative researcher to monitor subjectivity through reflexivity in discussing their own interests, biases, and motives for conducting a study (Glesne, 2006). In doing so, the philosophical assumptions underlying the design of the study are made “explicit in writing” because they make up the worldviews, paradigms, or sets of beliefs that are brought by the researcher to the study (Creswell, 2007, p. 15). In fact, the choice made to engage in
qualitative research with its contextual emergent design and constant comparative nature (Bamberger et al., 2006) is indicative of the researcher’s perspective on the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology) and the theory of how the inquiry should proceed (methodology; Glesne, 2006).

These two belief systems, ontology and epistemology, with their accompanying processes and methodologies are defined by axioms of different research paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Paradigms are basic sets of beliefs that guide actions (Creswell, 2007). Basic paradigms that guide action in research include positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, constructivism, and participatory (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The paradigm guiding beliefs and actions in the current study is constructivism, more specifically, social constructivism.

Social constructivism, a belief that knowledge is constructed by individuals as a result of their interactions within a social context, is one of several different models of constructivism. Constructivism is characterized by an epistemological belief that knowledge is not universal, objective, nor fixed, but is a construction or co-construction of the learner (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2007) and an ontological belief that knowledge is relative (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Because the current study takes a constructivist view, it is assumed that multiple realities exist and the best way to gain knowledge is to understand the assumptions, perceptions, interactions, relationships, actions, and feelings of an individual or group in a given context (Glickman et al., 2007). Because a social constructivist model of constructivism is employed in the current study, often referred to as an interpretivists model (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2006), the goal of
the researcher is to rely as much as possible on a participant’s view of a situation or phenomena in its social and historical context (Creswell, 2007). More specifically, research in a social constructivism paradigm “consist[s] of meaning-making activities of groups and individuals around [a] phenomena” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 197) and “focuses on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants” along with “historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals’ lives” (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). Engaging in qualitative inquiry to construct the meaning-making activities (the perceptions and practices of the LDS seminary and public school principals) to understand a historical and cultural phenomenon (the professional relationship between the two institutions) reveals the philosophical assumptions and the social constructivist paradigm brought to the current study. It also narrows the inquiry to a specific qualitative approach or research tradition.

**Approach to Inquiry—Phenomenology**

In deciding upon an approach to qualitative inquiry, Creswell (2007) suggested using one of five “recognized” approaches (p. 45). These approaches include narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell, 2007). The approach to inquiry taken in the current study is a phenomenology. This approach was most fitting for the study because Bamberger and associates (2006) defined a phenomenological inquiry as “the study of [a] program as it is perceived and created by those who experience it” (p. 270). It was also fitting because Creswell (2007) pointed out that a phenomenological study is best suited for studies oriented in a constructivist paradigm and the best approach when the research is of such a nature that “it is important
to understand several individuals’ common or shared experiences of a phenomenon…in order to develop practices or policies, or to develop a deeper understanding about the features of the phenomenon” (p. 60).

Moustakas (1994) suggested that when conducting a phenomenological study one follows a sequence of procedures. These procedures included: (a) determining if the research question is best studied using a phenomenological approach, (b) selecting a phenomenon of interest to study, (c) recognizing the broad philosophical assumptions of phenomenology, (d) collecting data from those who have experience with the phenomenon, (e) analyzing the data by grouping responses of participants into significant statements or themes used to write a description of what the participants’ experience with the phenomenon and why, and (f) writing a composite description, or essence, of the phenomenon. The current study followed these procedural suggestions.

**Role of the Researcher**

Since qualitative research is an interpretive inquiry and the researcher is the main instrument for data gathering and analysis it is important that researcher roles are clearly defined (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2006). Glesne categorized roles of researchers into two main actions—researcher and learner. As a researcher in the study one’s role is to ask questions, observe, and interpret. As a learner in the study one’s role is to be curious, reflective, and teachable. Glesne also acknowledged that upon entering the field to collect data, the researcher functions in a variety of roles, such as: exploiter, reformer, advocate, and friend. The role a research depends “upon research purposes and procedures, their own characteristics, and personal attributes of research participants” (p. 133). Sometimes
certain roles may not be able to be avoided and may be either discomforting or attractive.

In order to clearly define what the researcher’s role was in the current study it must be stated that the researcher’s intent for the study was to understand the phenomenon for the purposes of improving it. In this way the researcher approached the study as an advocate, one who “champions a cause” (Glesne, 2006, p. 136). This, in a large measure, had to do with the researcher’s position as an employee of the LDS church and proponent of the seminary program. One role the researcher anticipated encountering and planned to avoid was that of exploiter. Because there is a legal element to the relationship under study—namely separation of church and state, which is not well understood by the general public but often drawn from perception—it was anticipated that the researcher would have to be cautious in reporting what participants shared (Field Journal, 2/1/2011). In preparation for such a dilemma the researcher decided before data were collected to follow the American Anthropological Association’s Code of Ethics (1998), which suggested that “researchers must do everything in their power to ensure that their research does not harm the safety, dignity, or privacy of the people with whom they work, conduct research, or perform other professional activities” (p. 2). However, it was anticipated that participants would be inclined to only share with the researcher that which they would feel comfortable sharing with the general public.

In addition to predetermined strategies for dealing with the varying researcher roles that would be assumed, intentionally or unintentionally, while engaged in the current study, the researcher also planned strategies for establishing rapport with participants and dealing with subjectivity.
Rapport. Rapport in a qualitative study refers to “a distant-reducing, anxiety-quieting, trust-building mechanism” (Glesne, 2006, p. 110). In order to gain rapport with participants for the current study, communication was done in “culturally appropriate ways,” including being aware of and monitoring for researcher appearance, speech, and behavior (p. 111). As mentioned earlier, because the researcher is an employee of S&I it was important to disclose this fact to the participants while at the same time helping them understand the researcher’s role as a student researcher and not as a researcher for the LDS church (Field Journal, 1/27/2011). This was done by monitoring language, opinions, and appearance. For example, often participants asked to know which other schools were being included in the study, or what other participants had said. Refraining from sharing such information was recognized as an important practice for maintaining trust and rapport with participants, as well as not interjecting personal feelings on the subject by agreeing or disagreeing with participant comments (Field Journal, 2/19/2011). Another way rapport was established was through the monitoring of researcher appearance. The researcher went to interviews dressed in a colored dress shirt, slacks, and no tie. This mode of dress, the researcher felt, was important in order to help participants recognize the role of the researcher as a university student and not as an S&I employee, whose standard of dress is a suit, white shirt, and a tie. Also, as a gesture of appreciation and gratitude the researcher gifted each participant a handcrafted bread for participating.

Subjectivity. Qualitative research recognizes subjectivity as a part of research that influences everything from the selection of the phenomenon to be studied to the interpretation of the data and writing of the findings (Creswell, 2007). Subjectivity can
contribute to the study if it is recognized and monitored. One way a researcher can recognize their subjectivity is to be attuned to their emotions (Glesne, 2006). For the current study, attunement to researcher emotions was accomplished by recording feelings and personal reflections in a field journal during the gathering, interpreting, and writing processes (an example of this can be seen in the previous discussion on researcher roles and rapport). Another way subjectivity was monitored was through a bracketing interview conducted by the researcher’s doctoral committee chairperson and placed at the end of the study (see Appendix A). In this way, the reader can ensure that the researcher was being “self-disclosing” about the potential biases and experiences they have with the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2007, p. 62). This interview also provided a way for the researcher to introduce, yet set aside, personal understandings of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

The Use of a Theoretical Lens

Anyon (2009) pointed out that the “trend in education scholarship has been to separate theory and research” (p. 1). Anyon further stated, “One does not go into the field to ‘see’—one goes to ‘look’ for various sorts of patterns and themes. Theory—acknowledged or not—dictates what kinds of patterns one finds” (p. 4). Therefore, what was found in the current study through analysis of the data was based on “pre-existing or priori codes” that exist due to the theoretical framework used (Creswell, 2007, p. 152). Since the current study seeks to explain a social phenomenon, it necessitated a “constant conversation” (p. 2) or a “cyclical” process between the data discovered and the theory used to explain it (p. 53). For the current study, the theory used to analyze the data
collected is a theory of social exchange which analyzes what is exchanged in social relationships and how those exchanges are perceived by the actors involved.

**Research Procedures**

**Pilot Study**

Glesne (2006) suggested conducting a pilot study before engaging in the actually study to learn about the processes, interview questions, observation techniques, and for “testing” the proposed research. She also suggested researchers use the pilot study as a chance to “inform [themselves]” about the topic they are studying (p. 43). Further suggestions include conducting a pilot study to help refine interview questions (Creswell, 2007) and revise the research statement and plans (Glesne, 2006). In following these suggestions, along with testing the usefulness of the theoretical framework in the context of this phenomenon, a pilot study was conducted in the spring of 2010. Dr. Sherry Marx, a qualitative methodologist, reviewed the proposal for the study, helped obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the study, and made suggestions for improvement to the methodological approach and the writing process, as well as critiquing the final product.

The research questions guiding the study were: (a) What are public school administrators’ impressions about the relationship between their schools and LDS seminaries; and (b) Why are these relationships maintained? Sites and participants for the study followed Glesne’s (2006) suggestion to use participants from the targeted population and Creswell’s (2007) suggestion to use a sample that is convenient based on
accessibility and geographic proximity. Therefore, interviews were conducted with three public high school principals in northern Utah. Data were collected from public school policy pages and registration booklets. The interview questions consisted of 10 questions (see Appendix B). Data were analyzed through the theoretical lens of social exchange theory.

Interviews conducted and documents analyzed revealed that these three public school administrators’ impressions about the relationship between their schools and the LDS seminary were positive. Looking at this pilot study through the theoretical lens of social exchange theory it was assumed that these three public school administrators seek to maintain their schools’ relationship with the seminary because they perceived the relationship to be: (a) equitable—the perceived benefits the public school receives in the relationship outweigh the concerns and problems that result from it; and (b) reciprocal—these principals honor norms of exchange in the relationship that have resulted over time from exchanges that solidified the relationship in the past and keep it going for the future.

The process of this pilot study helped the researcher to practice observation techniques, data analysis, and writing processes. It also validated the usefulness of social exchange theory in the context of public school-seminary relations. Mainly, however, the pilot study revealed a major limitation in the study that needed to be dealt with in order to conduct the current study. This major limitation dealt with sites and participants. In using social exchange theory, Zhang and Epley (2009) suggested, “A’s perception of his rewards, cost, and investments are not necessarily identical to B’s perception of A’s situation” (p. 797). Therefore, it was realized that just because the public school
principals felt the relationship was equitable did not necessarily mean that it was, or was perceived that way through the perspectives of the other party involved in the relationship—the seminary principals. As a result of this realization, it became apparent that in order to further establish the equitable nature of the relationship, the perspectives of the seminary principals would need to be considered as well and compared to those of the public school principals. Including seminary principals’ perspectives was not part of the original intent or conceived concept of the study, but as a result of findings from the pilot study, the current study has included them. Due to this change in the research participants the research questions and interview protocol for the current study have slightly changed from the pilot study to incorporate LDS seminary principal views as well. This change is supported by Glesne (2006) who recognized changes to the research question and interview protocol as a common procedure after conducting a pilot study.

Sites and Participants

**Sampling size.** Sampling sizes in phenomenological studies vary tremendously. Numbers of participants vary from one (Dukes, 1984) to 25 (Moustakas, 1994). However, Morse (1994) recommended that phenomenologies intended to discern the essence of experiences should include about six participants. The current study followed this recommendation. Therefore, six public high schools with a seminary adjacent, each in a different school district, were selected for the study and principals from both the public school and seminary were invited to participate. In case participants wished to remove themselves from the study other schools were selected as alternate sites, to ensure a greater likelihood of not including fewer than is recommended. Since in qualitative
research “events, incidents, and experiences, not people per se, are typically the objects of purposeful sampling” (Sandelowski, 1995, p. 180) and the focus of the current study deals with relationships, six relationships were studied. This included six sites with 12 participants; six principals from the public high schools and six principals from the LDS seminaries.

**Purposeful selection strategy.** Bamberger and associates (2006) posited that, along with limited time that accompanies many studies, “care must be taken” in the selection of sites for the study and subjects to be interviewed, so as to “maximize the opportunity to understand” (p. 271). This practice of carefully selecting sites and participants to maximize understanding of the phenomenon is called “purposeful sampling,” a common practice in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). Because research situations are too vast to interview everyone at every site, Glesne (2006) suggested devising a selection strategy. The selection strategy used for the current study was based on a criterion sample, a sample in which all sites and participants met some criteria (Creswell, 2007).

**Purposeful selection of sites.** The six sites purposefully selected for the current study, listed alphabetically by pseudonym, were: Harmony High School (HHS), Independence High School (IHS), Jackson High School (JHS), Liberty High School (LHS), Millport High School (MHS), and Seneca High School (SHS). The criterion used to select these high schools was based on a phenomenal variation, a variation on the target phenomenon under study (Sandelowski, 1995), which included a variation of the location and demographics of the high schools, seminary enrollment percentages,
community, and longevity of the seminary-public school relationship. For example, Harmony High School was selected because of the size of the LDS seminary and the homogeneous nature of the school population. Independence High School was selected because of its recent establishment and therefore, relatively new relationship with the seminary. Jackson High School was selected because of its small student body population and rural location. Liberty High School was selected because of its longevity, diverse student body population, and urban location. Millport High School was selected because of its rural location and because the high school principal is female. Seneca High School was selected because of its low seminary enrollment percentages and diverse study body population. The demographic information of each school is displayed in Table 1.

The decision to select high schools based on these criteria is supported by Marshall and Rossman (1989), who suggested the sample should contain the widest possible range of variation in the phenomenon, site, or participants under study. The demographic information of the public high school was taken from the Utah State

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Locale</th>
<th>Student body</th>
<th>Student majority</th>
<th>Student body as percent enrolled in seminary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>Non-White</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millport</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seneca</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Non-White</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aNumbers are rounded in order to protect anonymity of high schools.
bPercentages are rounded to the nearest decimal point.
Information regarding percentage of LDS seminary enrollment was acquired by contacting the Educational Research Committee in the S&I central offices, as well as, from seminary principals participating in the study.

**Purposeful selection of participants.** The participants selected at these sites were the principals of both the public high schools and LDS seminaries because of the responsibility placed upon them by their respective higher administrators to monitor church-state issues in the public school-seminary relationship (Berlin, 2009; McCarthy, 2009; S&I Policy Manual, 2010). The principals for the sites selected were invited to participate over the phone, followed-up with an e-mail containing a Letter of Information explaining what would be asked of them as a result of participation in the study, as well as potential risks and benefits (see Appendix C). For the seminary principals an approval letter from S&I’s Educational Research Committee was also sent in the e-mail as an assurance to them that their employer had approved of the study and their participation in it (see Appendix D).

Though the purposeful selection criterion was used primarily to select the site and not the participants, those principals who participated presented a variation of the target population as well. For example, two of the six public school principals in the study identified themselves as not being members of the LDS church. While religious affiliation was not part of the selection strategy or part of the interview questions, all participants revealed their religious affiliation voluntarily during the interview process. Furthermore, there proved to be a variation on the age of participants, time spent in
education, time spent as a principal, and level of education. Though not specifically identified, two of the six public school principals, as well as two of the six seminary principals had received their doctoral degrees. Information describing participants is displayed in Table 2. Variation lacked in gender and religious affiliation. This is not alarming because the majority of public school administrators and seminary principals in the state of Utah are male (Utah State Educational Directory, 2010; Van Leer, 1993) and the Utah population is predominately LDS (U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, 2008).

**Gaining access.** Before data gathering could begin the researcher had to first gain access. Glesne (2006) described gaining access as “a process” to acquire “consent to go

Table 2

*Information Describing Principals Interviewed*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Public school principal*</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Religious affiliation</th>
<th>Years in education</th>
<th>Years in administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Mr. Sorenson</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bro. Moser</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Mr. Kent</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bro. Austed</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Mr. Bronson</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bro. Sessions</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty</td>
<td>Mr. Maxson</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bro. Wall</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millport</td>
<td>Mrs. Oberg</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bro. Ficklin</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seneca</td>
<td>Mr. Callor</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bro. Sullivan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The honorific Mr. and Mrs. are used for the public school principals while Bro. is used for the seminary principals because the title “Brother” instead of “Mister” is used by students and associates when addressing seminary personnel.
where you want, observe what you want,” and “talk to whomever you want” (p. 44). For the current study this meant acquiring permission from public school and seminary principals to not only interview them, but to observe their respective sites and access documents pertinent to understanding the phenomenon. In gaining access to the seminary principals it was necessary to first contact the Educational Research Committee of the LDS church for permission to enter the LDS church’s organization and interview its employees. Permission was sought and approval granted (see Appendix D). In the case of the public school, gaining access simply meant receiving the principal’s approval to be interviewed and include their school in the study.

Once approval was received, each principal was contacted by telephone to have the study explained to them and to be invited to participate in it. The researcher anticipated that this process would be time consuming and challenging, as was the case when Stone (2006) conducted a similar study outside of Utah (Field Journal, 1/20/11). In attempting to contact public school principals to ask them about LDS seminaries he found that requests for interviews were ignored, scheduling was difficult, and principals avoided participation because of the potentially controversial nature of the topic. Although prepared for a similar experience, the researcher for the current study experienced quite the opposite. Every participant who the researcher was able to get a hold of for the current study agreed to participate, with the exception of one public school principal. In declining participation he commented that he did not feel comfortable spending an hour of tax-supported salary on such a study, nor on helping the researcher acquire a doctorate degree (Field Journal, 2/4/2011). In addition, there were two schools
that the researcher had originally selected which, at the direction of a doctoral committee member, had to be dropped from the study due to inability of getting a hold of the principals in a timely manner (Field Journal, 1/27/2011). Whether failure to make contact with these two principals after numerous efforts was an indication of their unwillingness to participate, the result of busy schedules, or other factors the researcher is left to wonder (Field Journal, 2/7/2011). However, the researcher felt that the successful response rate, willingness of the participants to schedule the interview in a timely manner, and their commitment to honor interview appointments provided possible indicators of a positive relationship and gave the researcher confidence to proceed with data collection (Field Journal, 2/18/2011).

Data Gathering Methods

Data collection in a phenomenological study primarily consists of in-depth interviews with participants (Creswell, 2007). However, since the use of multiple data-collection methods helps to contribute to the trustworthiness of a study it is advised to include, along with in-depth interviews, such practices as observations, field journals, document analysis, surveys, theory, and pilot tests (Glesne, 2006). For the current study the following procedures were taken and sources of data collected and analyzed: interviews, field journal observations, and document analysis. In these ways, data collection was triangulated for trustworthiness (Bamberger et al., 2006; Glesne, 2006).

Interviewing. Interviews with participants were conducted face-to-face by the researcher and were semi structured to fit the naturalistic inquiry of qualitative research (Bamberger et al., 2006). Interviews were conducted using Creswell’s (2007) suggestion
to follow an interview protocol that is conducted within a specified time, in this case one hour (see Appendix E). In order to allow for flexibility and emergent information, additional follow-up questions were asked that were not part of the interview protocol. In this way, the interviews followed a more congenial and less rigid format (Bamberger et al., 2006). Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, to obtain the most accurate information (Creswell, 2007).

To ensure protection of human subjects, the participants in the study were informed that their identities would remain confidential, that there was minimal risk of harm or embarrassment as result of participation, and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time they desired. Coding all demographic information and data collected were techniques used to ensure participant confidentiality. Furthermore, pseudonyms in place of participant’s names, schools, and locations were used in reporting results (Glesne, 2006). In order to better protect the identities of those who were contacted and those who accepted the invitation to participate in the study, not all high schools in the state of Utah were invited to participate. In addition, participants in the study were not given any information with regards to what other principals or sites participated or what they had said (Field Journal, 2/19/2011). In following practices suggested by Crewsell (2007), interview transcripts were kept in a locked file cabinet or password sensitive computer.

Field journal observations. Glesne (2006) explained that as a researcher enters into a field they must continually analyze what they observe for meaning and for evidence of personal bias. In order to accomplish this, a field journal of observations was
kept. The field journal included descriptions of the sites and participants, notes from possible meanings of body language or feelings noticed while conducting the interviews, researcher feelings while monitoring for subjectivity, and insights gained during data analysis. The field journal was kept in a binder on lined paper and then transferred over to a Microsoft Word document on the computer.

**Document analysis.** Glesne (2006) pointed out that documents not only “corroborate” observations and interviews to make them more “trustworthy,” but they also “shape new directions for observations and interviews” and “provide...historical, demographic, and sometimes personal information that is unavailable from other sources” (p. 65). Adapted from a list of educational program documents and artifacts presented by Bamberger and associates (2006), five documents were analyzed for the current study. They included: state, school, and seminary policy regarding church-state relationships between public school and released-time programs; yearbooks; registration booklets and course schedule formats; school and seminary demographic information (i.e. size, diversity, enrollment percentages, etc.); and any miscellaneous items that seemed helpful in understanding the phenomenon or materials provided by the participants which they felt were important to their experience with the phenomenon. Studying these documents and items provided an understanding of the nature of the relationship and put in context the practices of the principals in keeping the relationship separate and accommodating.

**Data Analysis and Writing Procedures**

In phenomenology there are specific structured methods for analysis (Creswell,
Because phenomenological inquiry comes out of a sociological tradition, the process of analysis most often used is thematic analysis—“a process that involves coding and then segregating the data by codes into data clumps for further analysis” (Glesne, 2006, p. 147). In analyzing the data for the current study, a process put forth by Moustakas (1994) was followed. First, data collected from interviews and other sources were analyzed to find significant statements or quotes. Second, the significant statements or quotes were categorized into themes that were used in writing a description of what and how the participants experience the phenomenon—called a textual and structural description. This process “involves macro- and micro-examination of the data and identification of emergent patterns and themes, both broad-brush and fine-grained” (Bamberger et al., 2006, p. 296). Once the textual and structural description was written, the last step taken in the current study was to compare the themes used for describing what and how participants experience the phenomenon with the literature relevant to the phenomenon and the theoretical framework used to analyze the phenomenon to arrive at an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). According to Creswell (2007), this should be done in “a long paragraph or two” and in such a way that the reader walks away with a “feeling” that they understand the phenomenon, or at least, what it is like for the participants to experience it (p. 62).

**Trustworthiness**

In order to gain trustworthiness for a study Creswell (2007) put forth the following strategies: prolonged engagement in the field, triangulation, peer review,
negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, using rich and thick description in writing, and external audits. He further recommended that qualitative researchers engage “in at least two” of these strategies in any given study (p. 209). For the current study six of these eight strategies were engaged in with an additional strategy suggested by Dr. Francine Johnson, a member of the researcher’s doctoral committee. The six strategies that were implemented to establish trustworthiness for the current study were: member checking, triangulation, rich and thick description, bracketing interview, and peer review with an external audit. In addition, a taxonomic analytic scheme was included.

**Member Checking**

In order to ensure accurate interpretation of the ideas and perspectives of the informants interviewed, the conclusions of the study were given to each individual participant. They were asked to look over and express their opinions with regards to how the data gathered was interpreted and analyzed. In this way, those reading the study can be assured that the researcher had honestly attempted to portray the original intent of the thoughts, ideas, and perspectives of the participants (Glesne, 2006). This technique is perceived by recognized theorists Lincoln and Guba as being the most critical technique for establishing credibility from data gathered through interviews (Creswell, 2007).

**Triangulation**

Bamberger and associates (2006) defined triangulation as a deliberate attempt to confirm, elaborate, and disconfirm facts and interpretations through the use of multiple
data sources. Through the collection of data from interviews, field journal observations, and document analysis triangulation of the data was able to be accomplished (Glesne, 2006).

**Rich and Thick Description**

Creswell (2007) explained that by using rich and thick description the researcher allows the reader to make decisions of transferability from the settings of the study to other settings. He further explains that this is done by describing in detail participants and the setting. Helpful in this process for the current study was the field observation journal which contained details of participants, settings, and emotions of the study.

**Bracketing Interview**

Creswell (2007) discussed the importance of revealing up front any research bias by commenting on any biases, prejudices, and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study. Once this has been done, Moustakas (1994) suggested bracketing (setting aside) these biases, as much as possible, to be able to take a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon. In order to be upfront, yet bracket out researcher experiences and biases the researcher’s doctoral committee chairperson, Dr. Brian Warnick, conducted an interview with the researcher. In the interview the researcher was questioned about biases, prejudices, orientation, and the decision for choosing the phenomenon of the current study along with personal interests and experiences with it. This interview has been added as an appendix to the dissertation, therefore available to the reader (see Appendix A).
Peer Review and External Audit

Creswell (2007) revealed that one validation strategy in research is to have other researchers review the procedures. Approval of and feedback for the current study was passed through two panels of experts—one panel consisting of the researcher’s doctoral committee and the other consisting of members of the Educational Research Committee for S&I (see Appendix D). Approval of and feedback on the ethical issues of the study were given by the University’s Institutional Review Board.

Bamberger and colleagues (2009) also suggested that in addition to internal review by committees and evaluation teams, it is important to obtain a critical review by an external colleague. Creswell (2007) defined this process as external audits in which another is allowed to examine both the process and the product of the study to assess its accuracy. Therefore, field notes, interview transcripts, analyses, and descriptions of the current study were presented to one of the researchers’ colleagues to have them audit and ensure that ethical and honest actions were taken throughout the study. The colleague was someone who understands qualitative methodologies as well as one who has knowledge of the phenomenon being studied. However, this colleague was not a part of or a participant in the current study. He found the research procedures for the current study met validity requirements for qualitative inquiry (see Appendix F).

Taxonomic Analytic Scheme

For the current study a schematic map was included which traces for the reader the analytical processes the researcher went through in reducing data to key findings helpful in answering research questions. This is referred to as a taxonomic analytic.
scheme and was included in the study for one of the findings as a graphic illustration and placed in the appendix. In this way the reader may be apprised of and able to trace the methods and thought processes used for coding and analyzing the data collected (see Appendix G).

Conclusion

This chapter has set forth the process and procedures for conducting the current study. In it the methodological approach that was taken in the study along with its philosophical assumptions and approach to inquiry has been presented. The researcher’s role in the study has been discussed. The theoretical framework that was used in analyzing and presenting the findings of the study has also been described. Furthermore, the methodological procedures that were engaged in during the study, including findings from a pilot study and discussion on how sites and participants were selected, along with a description of how data was collected, analyzed, and written has been outlined. The chapter has ended with a discussion on how trustworthiness was established for the study.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

The purpose of the current study was to describe the relationship between public high schools and LDS seminaries in Utah as perceived and practiced by principals of both institutions within a social exchange theoretical framework. The intent of this chapter is to write a description of six public school-LDS seminary relationships by revealing what principals in the study experience with their relationship and the context in which they experience it. In following Moustakas’ (1994) suggestion, the descriptions have been taken from verbatim examples and direct quotations of participants which have been clustered into themes. The descriptions have also been supplemented by researcher observations and document analysis. Themes used in describing principals’ experiences in their relationships include the following: (a) the relationship; (b) efforts to create or maintain the relationship; (c) benefits from the relationship; (d) challenges in the relationship; (e) legal boundaries for the relationship; and (f) suggestions to improve the relationship. These six themes were selected because each encompassed multiple statements, quotes, and examples, were related to literature reviewed on the subject, and were recognizable in the theoretical framework used for the study. For an example of how the researcher analyzed the data, refer to the Taxonomic Analytic Scheme in the appendices (see Appendix G). Following is a description of each relationship as experienced by the public school and seminary principals.
Harmony High School

Walking through the halls of Harmony High School (HHS) one cannot help but notice the motivational posters hung from the ceiling intended to inspire the students to excel academically (Field Notes, 2/17/2011). Possibly these posters have their affect because Harmony is the highest performing school academically in its entire district. It is also possibly the most homogenous as well. The students who attend are majority white with minority students making up less than 10% of the student body. The students are also “predominately LDS” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011) making the LDS influence in the school “dominate and pervasive” (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011), as evidenced by LDS humor in school assemblies and LDS images displayed in the yearbook (Field Notes, 2/17/2011).

The students are described as “really good kids” who “get involved in extra-curricular activities” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011). They are also described as “really happy kids” who “have not had to face a lot of really tough things in life,” and are therefore, “pretty optimistic.” Unfortunately, “because of the affluence of the neighborhood and the community” the students have received a reputation of being “spoiled” (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011).

The seminary adjacent is situated across the street from the high school. At one time it was considered the “flag-ship” seminary for the church because of its high enrollment (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011). While it still reports high enrollment, numbers have gone down due to changes in the community caused by an influx of non-LDS families (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011).
Mr. Sorenson, the public school principal, is a seasoned principal, as noted by his thick graying hair. He is not LDS. Bro. Moser, the seminary principal, by contrast is young, having only been a principal for two years. Though not LDS, Bro. Moser described Mr. Sorenson as “a real defender of seminary” (Interview, 2/17/2011), while Mr. Sorenson described Bro. Moser as “a great guy” (Interview 2/17/2011) who “runs a tight ship” (Field Notes, 2/17/2011).

The Relationship

Mr. Sorenson views his relationship with Bro. Moser and the seminary as “a good partnership” that has “worked really well” for him and the school. Recounting his first encounter with LDS seminary as a new teacher arriving in Utah he exclaimed, “I got it.” He further explained how it was “familiar” to him because he attended a once-a-week Catholic released-time program while in elementary school. In speaking about his relationship with the seminary he commented, “I consider them part of my staff....We have a really good relationship with our seminary here and it’s something I value.” He smiled, “And the message they give is not a bad message.” He explained, “It’s sort of like divorced parents that get along...we’re separate, we both do our things, but we care about our kids” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011). Bro. Moser views his relationship with Mr. Sorenson and the public school as “a strong professional relationship.” He revealed, “I feel very comfortable and very easy to talk to Mr. Sorenson” (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011).

Though Mr. Sorenson admitted, “I don’t go down very often to the seminary and Brother Moser doesn’t come up here very often” he said, “if there’s a problem...we talk
about it right away” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011). Bro. Moser estimated that he talks with Mr. Sorenson “once a month.” He explained that while they have had “a couple sit down visits that we formally arranged” he mainly talks to him in “passing” while visiting the school office, on his way to an assembly, or at a school activity (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011). Mr. Sorenson commented that the “open communication” they have with each other is because “both understand the importance of what we’re doing” and both “want it to work” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011).

**Efforts to Create or Maintain the Relationship**

Both principals make efforts to maintain what they perceive to be a good relationship. Mr. Sorenson stated matter of factly, “If a student wants to be in seminary we help them get there. If they’ve got conflicts with schedules we work with them.” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011). Bro. Moser is cognizant of and appreciates Mr. Sorenson’s efforts to “enable” students to take seminary. He expressed, “[Mr. Sorenson’s] very supportive about getting students to seminary and wants to help us and has expressed that a lot” (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011).

In order to “express appreciation” for the schools efforts to help students be able to take seminary, the seminary invites the school’s administration, support staff, and teachers to “a pie social” at the beginning of the school year and gives the school “gifts at Christmas”—a gesture Bro. Moser said has been “reciprocated” by the school. He explained, “They give us a pass to all their home games and then they’ve also given us a region pass.” He further shared, “[T]he administration bought for all the [school teachers] a really nice shirt, Harmony shirt, and they also included us in that,” which was “a
remarkable, remarkable show of appreciation that I think we really felt” (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011). With respect to the shirts and sports passes, Mr. Sorenson commented that he does it because, “I want [the seminary teachers] when they go to a basketball game on Friday night to come watch our kids and feel welcome and wear that Harmony high shirt.” He further added with respect to maintaining relationships, “Those are things you do....A couple of years ago we did some hams. We took them down hams. Yeah, that’s what you do” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011).

Bro. Moser also said that he and his staff at the seminary have tried to “be better neighbors.” He recounted a time when he met with Mr. Sorenson and asked him how the seminary could help the school. He said, “[Mr. Sorenson] was candid. He gave us some things to work on that he said from his standpoint are challenges that the seminary could help solve.” One of the issues was tardiness—students going late to seminary and loitering in the school hallways. Therefore, Bro. Moser and his staff “have made punctuality a major push,” an effort noticed by Mr. Sorenson (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011). He further explained, with respect to enrollment caps (a limit of students per class period the seminary asks the school to consider when arranging a student’s schedule), how he and his staff have tried to strengthen the relationship:

[I]n talking with the head counselor they felt a little bit hamstrung by some of the enrollment caps that had been placed on our class period[s], and so we opened those up…and that seemed to make a big difference, I think, in their feeling like we were willing to be flexible. (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011)

In addition, he and his staff also “try to speak very highly of the school...and support the administration” (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011).

While engaged in efforts to maintain the relationship both parties also try to avoid
things that could potentially hurt the relationship. Mr. Sorenson revealed, “You just have to be careful in how you deal with your relationship with the seminary.” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011). Equally cautious, Bro. Moser said, “I think we’ve tried to avoid asserting ourselves too much into the school community.” He explained that this is in part because of “vibes through the grape vine, or other teachers, that they have not appreciated a real overt seminary presence.” He also admitted that he tries to be “real low-key” to “try and alleviate headaches instead of being one” (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011).

**Benefits from the Relationship**

From the interviews it was evident that both principals value the relationship because of the benefits they feel the other provides them. Mr. Sorenson said of his relationship with the seminary, “The benefit for me is I get smaller class size over here.” He expounded:

I get so much funding per student and so based on that funding I get to hire so many teachers.... We call it FTE here in our district, but it’s the Funding Teacher Equivalent. And so for every 27 kids signed-up at Harmony high I get a teacher, is what it equals. And so if I have 1,000 kids going down to seminary I divide that by the eight periods and I get smaller class sizes, so my class size doesn’t end up averaging 27, it averages 26 or 25. And then we have to pay for our secretaries and all that out of that and so, anyway, the bottom line is with a big seminary program...my class size is smaller and with smaller class size I think there’s better learning going on. ” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011)

He further made clear, “[T]he message in seminary is a good message for kids, and kids that follow those things down there are probably better behaved and act like better citizens” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011).

Besides the lowering of class sizes and the help seminary provides in improving student behavior, which he called, “the real benefits,” Mr. Sorenson also discussed
another “less obvious” benefit. He shared:

[The seminary teachers] help kids that will come in with a problem and [they’ll] give them some advice and they’ll let us know if someone’s got an issue. If a families going through a hard divorce or something, those are terrible things on a kid and the sooner we know about those things the sooner we can provide some support for kids to help them through it. (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011)

In sharing the benefit of having the seminary help the school by informing them of students going through difficult situations he justified, “The relationship is about helping kids...and I just think it’s important that we have this great relationship to help kids” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011).

Bro. Moser feels like the relationship gives the seminary teachers the ability to “participate in some of the extracurricular activities” of the school, which he shared, “helps us so much as teachers to let these students know that we care about them and to build a rapport.” This ability, to attend sporting events, school plays, and assemblies, he referred to as “a major benefit.” He also feels like the good relationship the seminary has with the school “makes it a happier place and easier place to work” (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011).

Mr. Sorenson questions if one could even find a bad public school-seminary relationship. He pronounced, “I would think that they would tolerate each other if they didn’t have a good relationship, personal relationship, because everybody can see the advantages. It’s something where we’re both winning on the deal” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011).

**Challenges in the Relationship**

Despite how well each principal feels the relationship works, there have been
challenges that each principal has faced. Mr. Sorenson explained, “The state has changed the requirements for graduation and we have so many more requirements now that kids have a hard time fitting everything into their schedule...and so sometimes kids have a hard time fitting seminary in with what they want to do” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011). The students’ dilemma of choosing to take seminary at the peril of other elective classes is compounded in Bro. Moser’s mind by one of the school counselors.

Referring to the problem as “sensitive” he hesitantly explained:

I would say we have a better relationship with the administration than we do with the counseling department.... [W]e don’t feel quite the support from the head counselor, for various reasons, and I think some because of his background. He’s a former member of the church and he lives in the neighborhood and so, you know, from some things I have heard, I don’t think he has great feelings for the church. He’s been very professional. I mean there’s been nothing that’s led me to be antagonistic, but...I don’t think that he has been extremely, you know, on his own initiative seeking out opportunities to help. (Bro. Moser, 2/17/2011)

He further made mention that the seminary has received reports from parents and students that this counselor has “pushed more that they should drop seminary rather than be more accommodating.” He realizes that this has not only had an effect on students’ decisions to take seminary, but also has caused the other school counselors and support staff to “tread lightly in how they support seminary as they schedule the students” (Bro. Moser, 2/17/2011).

Detracting students from enrolling in seminary is not the only challenge the seminary has faced when dealing with this particular school counselor. The counselor also posed opposition when Bro. Moser asked for his help in contacting students who are registered for seminary, but have not attended. Bro. Moser pointed out, “We do not want [students] to be on the roles unaccounted for.” He explained how after making every
effort possible to contact these students he turned to the school for help. He sighed in frustration, “[The counselor] was really reluctant to do anything, hesitant to even call them in and to initiating [contact] with the parents.” As a result, Bro. Moser set up an appointment with Mr. Sorenson. Without telling him about the counselor’s reluctance to help, he asked Mr. Sorenson what the best approach would be for contacting the students and making sure they were attending seminary as they had enrolled to do. Mr. Sorenson responded by calling in all the students the seminary was concerned about and had them either change their schedule and drop seminary or start attending it (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011).

Mr. Sorenson’s willingness to help the seminary contact students who were not attending has to do with his concern for the safety of the students. He justified, “I want the kids somewhere. If they are not in seminary I want them over here. I don’t want them running out in the community because they’re going to get in trouble, they’re going to get hurt.” He further admitted:

[I]f those seminary kids are down at the supermarket in town raising Cain, they’re not referred to as seminary students. They’re referred to as Harmony High students. And so from my perspective they are our kids together and we’re going to try to get them to do the right thing and be in the right place. (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011)

Despite the challenges shared, that of scheduling students in seminary and making sure they are attending, Mr. Sorenson commented, “We have not had conflicts.” He posited that the school and the seminary have an “understanding” and “both work on [attendance] from both ends and support each other” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011).
Legal Parameters for the Relationship

With respect to the legal aspect of keeping separation of church and state, Bro. Moser said of Mr. Sorenson, “I don’t think he is fearful at all. I think we worry more” (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011). Mr. Sorenson concurred, “I think the church is very careful.... I think there’s a fear that seminary could lose the right to take those kids out of the class during public school time.” He admitted, however, “I’m not concerned about it” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011).

Evidence that the seminary is more concerned about the legal aspects of the relationship is evident in two examples. The first example is told by Bro. Moser. He shared about a time when a seminary teacher asked if Mr. Sorenson’s efforts to help the seminary were “going too far,” for which Mr. Sorenson replied, according to this teacher, “Hey, I’m not even a member of the church so they can’t accuse me of serving my own interests. I’m fine. I have a perfect defense. I’m not a member of the church” (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011). The second example is told by Mr. Sorenson. He related that the school will often invite the seminary teachers to events at the school for which they reply, “No, we really can’t do this” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011).

Despite not being worried about legalities in the relationship, Mr. Sorenson recognizes the need to “be careful in how you deal with [the] relationship out in the public.” He realizes, “There’s a crazy parent every now and then” and with so many students and twice as many parents there is bound to be a couple “goofy” ones. But he said calmly that complaints from parents have not been “an issue” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011). In fact, despite the seminary being “overly cautious” and “gun
shy” about mingling with the school (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011), Mr. Sorenson wishes it was not that way. He contemplated, “I sometimes get puzzled by the fact that we can’t have a better relationship. That we have to keep things separate....I would prefer that we didn’t....But that separation should be a partnership” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011). His perspective on separation in the relationship is based on his desire to help students. He justified:

I just go back to what is good for kids and I think we should work together. When you’re dealing with kids, even though you have two different entities, the law maybe black and white, but when you’re dealing with people you live in that grey world and you need to get used to it, and deal with it, and make it work. (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011)

**Suggestions for Improving the Relationship**

Both principals offered their suggestions for improving their relationship with each other. Based on Mr. Sorenson’s feelings about laws of separation, discussed above, it was not surprising that he suggests the relationship be closer. He stated, “I would like to see it more like a partnership than we can really have.” He also commented that he wishes the seminary “could be allowed to become more actively involved in our school during the day.” For example, he added, “You don’t see them coming over here and eating lunch” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011). Despite this suggestion, Bro. Moser actually thinks the relationship is “in a good place.” He said, “I kind of like that there are some of those boundaries.” However he adds, “But I do think where I can do better...is to establish more of a personal relationship” with better communication (Bro. Moser, Interview, 2/17/2011).
Independence High School

Independence High School (IHS) is a new school. It was constructed within the last five years out of necessity to alleviate the growth of its neighboring high schools. The school building is enormous. The lacking luster of the architectural structure gives the impression that it was possibly built for utility and nothing else. The bare walls in the hallways reflect the school’s efforts to establish tradition and develop an identity (Field Notes, 2/9/2011). It is located in the midst of a “very conservative community” which is extremely supportive of the school (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011).

Majority of the student body is Caucasian. Students are described as “outstanding” and “beyond their years.” The school principal explained, “They are involved in everything.... They want to belong. They want to participate. They want to go out of their way to do things” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011). The seminary principal added, “They’ve got good attitudes. They’ve been very cooperative” (Bro. Austed, Interview, 2/9/2011).

Mr. Kent, the school principal, is a slender and tall man in his mid 50s. He is LDS. Bro. Austed, the seminary principal, is also tall. Despite similarities in height and religious affiliation, the two have opposite personalities. Mr. Kent is witty and loud, while Bro. Austed is solemn and quiet. Though Mr. Kent has been an administrator for a number of years he still feels like he is learning. He admitted, “[E]veryday something crosses my desk that I still don’t know what it is.” Reminiscing on the school’s first year he explained that being principal then was “like trying to get a drink out of a fire hose.” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011).
The Relationship

Similar to the relationship at Harmony, the public school-seminary relationship at Independence is perceived by both parties as being good. In speaking about the seminary teachers, Mr. Kent said that they are “great guys” who “do a very good job.” He considers the seminary a “partner” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011), which the seminary has noticed. Bro. Austed shared, “[T]hey look at us as colleagues or peers,” which he feels makes the relationship “healthy.” He explained:

We are working as equals to try and provide a good educational experience for these kids and take care of their needs and one doesn’t appear to be better than the other, or more important than the other. And Mr. Kent has really been good about that in our conversations with him in his office. You can tell he has a respect for the seminary program....So, that’s just healthy. Whenever you have a relationship where you see each other as equals it provides a framework and groundwork for a healthy relationship where the right things can happen. (Bro. Austed, Interview, 2/9/2011)

Efforts to Create or Maintain the Relationship

Bro. Austed attributes the good working relationship to the way in which it began with the start of the new school. He attested, “We’ve started out on a good foot.” He recounted his first meeting with Mr. Kent before the first school year, “Our meeting was kind of brief. I could tell that he was busy, but he was cordial enough to meet with me” (Bro. Austed, Interview, 2/9/2011). Shortly thereafter, Mr. Kent related, “[The seminary] invited us over for a barbeque to get to know the administration and the secretaries” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011). At the barbeque, Bro. Austed recalled, “[The school] promised us some of the little sports cards so that we could get into all the activities for free and they made good on it, which has been good” (Bro. Austed, Interview, 2/9/2011).
Efforts to get to know each other and show appreciation have not ceased since that first year. Bro. Austed indicated that as a common practice they will “do gift drops” to the school administration and support staff regularly. He remarked, “We’ll buy doughnuts here for a class or something, or a teachers’ getting a treat, we’ve kind of let the teachers know, ‘when you do that, get a few extra and we’ll run some over to the school’” (Bro. Austed, Interview, 2/9/2011). As the recipient, Mr. Kent noted, “...in turn we try and do things like that too” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011).

Because the school is newer, both principals find themselves communicating often. Mr. Kent explained that they first met together to talk about “logistical things.” Since then, he says he speaks with Bro. Austed “a couple times a month.” He justified:

The thing we do is make sure we communicate and...make sure that they know that they’re welcome and that they are part of our school community, just like any parent, any local official, or whatever that wants to come in and talk about things, that our door is open for them and that we’re willing to work with them on any problems that they perceive are happening. (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011)

Besides meeting a couple times a month, more communication between the two happens through delegation. Bro. Austed admitted:

I’ve used my vice principal a lot. He’s a natural at it, so he goes over there as much as I do, or more.... He likes to go over there and he deals with less of the student problems than I do, so I’ve let him manage that. I’ve said, “Keep the relationship strong with the school as you go over there.” Our secretary works at it too. (Bro. Austed, Interview, 2/9/2011)

It is interesting to note that in spite of Bro. Austed’s efforts to delegate responsibility for communication with the school, Mr. Kent believes that most communication in the relationship should be done between “the two principals” and not “subordinates” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011).
In addition to communicating with the school, the seminary tries to meet any requests from the school and implement any changes or policies the school makes. These efforts have not gone unnoticed by Mr. Kent. He observed, “[The seminary teachers] have been great. They bend over backwards for us.” He further noted, “They are very supportive of our policies and they’ve gone out of their way to participate in everything they can participate in so that they can become part of the culture here.” In fact, he surmised, “I don’t think we have a sporting event where there’s not at least two of them. You know, they support the kids very well and the kids appreciate it” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011).

In order to maintain a good relationship Bro. Austed said he tries to avoid “[b]laming or jumping to conclusions.” He clarified:

> We’ve had issues with the scheduling and it’s caused some problems...and the tone that I try to use with my teachers around here when we talk about the administration is, don’t say “well, they’re asking us to do this again” and, you know, kind of paint them as the bad guy. (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011)

Consequently, he shared that it is important to “be careful with the language you are trying to use because you want them to have good feelings about the administration and the partnership that we’re trying to establish” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011).

Mr. Kent said he tries to avoid, as he says the seminary would put it, “the very appearance of evil.” He made clear, “It’s one of those things that we try and make sure that there is nothing that can be construed as inappropriate” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011).
Benefits from the Relationship

Mr. Kent explained the motive behind his efforts to create and maintain a good relationship with the seminary. He explained that every time he plans the schedule for the next school year he is “glad for seminary.” He elaborated:

> You’re glad for it because there are times when that hole in a kids schedule saves you.... A lot of times it’s the last period of the day when the coaches are all out for their coaching activities. It’s nice to have seminary going full speed on that period. (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011)

Referencing a conversation he had with the principal of a parochial Catholic school, Mr. Kent shared how he asked the principal of the Catholic school what they do with the students who are LDS attending the parochial school. He said the principal of the Catholic school told him they send the LDS students to the nearest LDS seminary. In recounting the principal’s answer Mr. Kent exclaimed, “…it didn’t surprise me when he said ‘that’s nice because what it does is we’re sending 45 kids up there, out of the high school every period and that’s one teacher that we don’t have to come up with.’” He concluded, “For [the Catholic school] to say that seminary is a help to them, you know, that says a lot” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011).

Taking this benefit into account he questioned, “What would Utah do without seminary?” Answering his own question he replied:

> We’re talking about having to hire an additional 7 to 15 teachers per school if you don’t have a seminary class. You know, we can’t pay the teachers we have now. How we gonna do that? It’s an important relationship, not just for those kids that are LDS, but for education in general in the state. It’s become such an ingrained thing that I don’t know how we would actually, you know, staff our schools without it. (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011)

In conclusion, he declared:
I think if you talk with 90 percent of the schools they will tell you that seminary is a very good thing for them for various reasons...and I think they’ll also tell you they have a pretty good relationship with the seminary program, you know, by necessity. I mean they are, in a way, almost a partner because they do have over there over a hundred of your kids every period. You know, you need to be able to work together to facilitate things so they run smooth. (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011)

With respect to benefits the school provides the seminary Bro. Austed declared, “I don’t know if they do a lot [for us].” He observed, “The school benefits more from us....” (Bro. Austed, Interview, 2/9/2011). Mr. Kent agreed. In speaking about the class load relief the seminary provides the school he admitted, “I think in that manner [the relationship] benefits us more” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011). Bro. Austed added, “I think we add to the overall social structure and stability and health of the school, and I don’t think that you can put a value on that” (Bro. Austed, Interview, 2/9/2011).

Challenges in the Relationship

Both principals feel that challenges, problems, and concerns in the relationship are minimal. For example, Mr. Kent shared about a time the seminary teachers taught using raw eggs for an object lesson. He shrugged, “Well, some of those raw eggs found their way into our building.” Laughing he pointed out the stupidity of giving students raw eggs without any thought of the ramifications, but expressed in his retelling of the event that he was not too concerned about it. He also added, “And there’s been a couple of times where there’s been some miscommunication on our part, where we haven’t let them know in certain situations what was going on” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011).

With respect to the lack of challenges or problems in the relationship, Bro Austed surmised:
It’s kind of like when you’re married...the longer two people or two parties spend time together the more points of friction, or contention, or division there are that come just as a natural result of life. So I think...maybe enough time hasn’t passed that, you know, maybe those things will happen over time because things do happen and you have to deal with them and how you deal with them ends up hurting or strengthening the future relationship. But, as of right now...there’s not a lot. (Bro. Austed, Interview, 2/9/2011)

He concluded, “I’m pretty happy” (Bro. Austed, Interview, 2/9/2011).

**Legal Parameters for the Relationship**

Compared to the other schools in the study, Independence’s school district policy is the most detailed with respect to outlining legal guidelines for the relationship. Most of the other school or district policies are either vague or contain nothing. Mr. Kent guessed the reason for other school policies being vague or mute on the subject is because, “They don’t want to be painted into a corner.” With respect to his district’s policy he elaborated:

[The school district] along the way has incurred the wrath of at least two parents that I can remember in my years that actually were involved in legal issues with the seminary. So, I’m sure by necessity they had to be very specific. (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011)

He further admitted that most principals “are overly cautious” when it comes to the legal parameters of the relationship. He explained, “[Y]ou just have to every time you include the seminary you have to go back and re-think” and make sure “that whatever you do for the seminary would be something that you would do for anybody else, and you’re not doing it as a special favor.” He assumed, “...as long as you can pass that test...” what is done with the seminary is alright to do (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011).

He told of a time when the school was “unsafe” and they had to evacuate all the students to the seminary until the school buses and parents could be notified to come and...
pick them up. He recalled, “I know that there were certain parents who were not happy about that.” He justified, “But when the safety of the kids is at stake, I believe the least of our worries is whether it’s a seminary building or not.” He added:

I don’t know how legally sound it is, but I’m not going to be the one when a parent calls, if there’s a problem at our school...to tell a parent “Well, they were in seminary. I don’t know.” I want to tell every parent, “Yeah, your son or daughter is safe. We know where they are.” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011)

He finished, “In my opinion our number one job in a situation like that is to make sure that every child is safe, not just those who are in the school at that point in time” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011).

With respect to the legal boundaries of the relationship, Bro. Austed admitted that he does not know what they are. He defended:

I’ve never butted up against it so that I had to understand it, or it’s never been called into question by the principal or an administrator over there of something that we’ve done where they’ve said, “Hey, we need to negotiate this out or talk about this because there’s a problem, or there’s going to be a problem if we don’t address this.” So, I’ve never had anything happen so that it’s created a boundary that I understand exists. (Bro. Austed, 2/9/2011)

**Suggestions for Improving the Relationship**

Both principals have limited suggestions for improving the relationship. Mr. Kent said that everything he would suggest “would be shot down.” For example, he wishes the seminary was able to take part in a weekly meeting the school holds with the head secretary, technology coordinator, custodian, and police officer to discuss the events of the week and work out any foreseeable problems. He commented, “It would be nice if we could include them in on that because they may be able to shed some light on some things that we don’t understand, don’t see.” He acknowledged, however, “that’s
something we can’t do” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011). Bro. Austed wishes there was “a little more increased communication” in the relationship, especially in regards to information needed to keep track of attendance and enrollment (Bro. Austed, Interview, 2/9/2011).

**Jackson High School**

Jackson High School (JHS) is located in a small farm community nestled between rolling hills. Its distance from the nearest city can be measured less by miles and more by lack of cellular phone reception. The main street has the feel of an old western town in the early 1920s. The public school is the largest building in town, with the LDS church being second to it (Field Notes, 1/31/2011). The community is predominately LDS. The local school board is entirely LDS. The majority of the student body enroll in seminary and “even the non-LDS kids have at least tried it” (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011).

The school is small. The structure is a simple block, built around the basketball gym. Achievement is celebrated in the school as is evident by the overflowing trophy cases and pictures of sterling scholars displayed in the halls. The seminary is located north of the high school across the street. It sits between two houses and is cut out of a horse pasture. It too is small. In it is one classroom. Mr. Bronson, the school principal, is short and stocky with a commanding presence and stereotypical military flat-top. He is LDS, and reveals that he had aspirations at one time of becoming a seminary teacher, but did not pursue it. Bro. Sessions, the seminary principal, is young and upbeat. Both are comical (Field Notes, 1/31/2011).
Describing the school Mr. Bronson admitted that it is “probably the most conservative that you are going to find in a high school.” He explained, “We have a very great culture here. We drug test all our kids in extracurricular activities.... We enforce policies, such as, a strict dress code. We have a no driving policy. Kids can’t drive off campus.” Speaking about the students he bragged, “If you took the top thirty percent in your school and put them all in one room they would be Jackson High School.” He defended, “Look at the way they dress. Look at the way they act” (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011). Bro. Sessions agreed. As to why the students are so good he assumes, “There’s a high level of accountability.” He explained, because the community is so small, if a student does anything wrong, “everybody is going to know about it” (Bro. Sessions, Interview, 1/31/2011).

The Relationship

The relationship between the school and seminary is extremely close. Mr. Bronson explained:

It’s been a great relationship since I’ve been here. Bro. Sessions is invited into this school anytime.... I treat him like a staff. He’s part of the staff of our high school.... [H]e will come in here and sit down and we’ll talk about kids and I’ll...just step into his class [and] sit in on one of his classes every once in a while and just listen. And I’ll just go over on his prep and sit down and have a chat.... There’s no we and you. I mean, it’s us.... And I think he feels that he’s a part of the staff. (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011)

He finished with a smile, “So, if he’s feeling left out it’s his fault” (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011).

Bro. Sessions perceived the relationship as “close” and “very open,” which he said is “really nice.” He communicates with Mr. Bronson “once a week,” either by phone
or by e-mail, sometimes even by “text”. He shared:

I used to go over there once a week and sit in his office and we could talk about students and we could kind of fill each other in on what’s going on at home and that would help him and that would help me. He seems to have kind of backed off of that in the last three or four years. (Bro. Sessions, Interview, 1/31/2011)

He commented that the close relationship with the school and the principal also extends to the district and superintendent as well (Bro. Sessions, Interview, 1/31/2011).

The closeness of the relationship is displayed, in symbolic form, by a photograph tacked to the wall in Bro. Sessions’s office. The photograph depicts a teenage girl cradling a baby in her arms. On both sides of her, each with one arm wrapped around her back in a half embrace, are Mr. Bronson and Bro. Sessions. All are smiling (Field Notes, 1/31/2011). Bro. Sessions related the story behind the photograph. The girl’s name is Rachelle (pseudonym). She got pregnant her senior year of high school. “She didn’t necessarily know who the father was at first...so she went through a lot of emotional issues.” In order to receive help and counsel she met with Mr. Bronson and Bro. Sessions, both individually. “At that time she was trying to decide if she should give the baby up for adoption or not.” Both Mr. Bronson’s and Bro. Sessions’s “opinions were the same,” that she should give the baby up for adoption. During the process of counseling with her, both principals talked frequently on the telephone and in each other’s offices. Both prayed together with her on one occasion. Eventually she and her mother decided to give the baby up for adoption through LDS Family Services’ adoption agency. She asked both principals to look through a binder of potential couples to adopt the baby and help her narrow the selection down to five. When it was time to give the baby to the chosen adopting couple she asked Mr. Bronson and Bro. Sessions to accompany her and her
family for support. It was at the adoption agency that the photograph was taken (Bro. Sessions, Interview, 1/31/2011).

Bro. Sessions explained that Rachelle is now married, doing well, and has another baby, this time conceived in-wedlock. Rachelle’s story provides understanding as to why Bro. Sessions feels a close relationship with the school is important. He informed, “It allows us to affect students’ lives in a positive way” (Bro. Sessions, Interview, 1/31/2011).

**Efforts to Create or Maintain the Relationship**

It is evident from the description of the relationship that both principals make efforts to maintain the relationship through frequent communication, however, they engage in other efforts as well. Mr. Bronson said, “We try hard to make sure his classes are good and well.” By this he means that the seminary’s student-to-teacher ratio is fair and the class load is weighted equally throughout the day. He also helps students take seminary by providing other options if they can’t. He recalled, “I had one student who came from another high school and was short .5 credits and he wanted to take seminary.”

He shrugged:

Now, [I] probably should have said, “No, you’ll take this credit from our high school,” because that is the responsibility that I have. But, he really wanted to take seminary. It was important for him to graduate. So he’s taking a supplemental electronic high school course on line. (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011)

He excused,

Ideally he should be in class here, but what’s best for the kid? Now, what he feels is best, and what his parents feel is best, is that he is over there for an hour. Do I agree with that? Personally, yeah! As a principal, no! (Mr. Bronson, Interview,
He admitted, “But I did allow it.” Then in mocked anger he declared, “He better pass though” (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011).

Bro. Sessions indicated, “I’m here to help [the school].” One way he believes he helps the school is by backing up the school policies “with spiritual things that help [the students] then live the rules of the high school.” He also tries to get involved in the school and get to know the faculty, particularly by going over to the school and eating lunch with the teachers. In making these efforts he said, “I try to avoid being negative. I just try to be positive in everything.” He revealed that he occasionally will send Mr. Bronson a card expressing his appreciation for the school’s effort to accommodate the seminary. He added, “I try not to send them any issues” (Bro. Sessions, Interview, 1/31/2011).

Benefits from the Relationship

Both principals, similar to the principals from the other schools, recognize the benefits each receives from the relationship. However, unlike most of the other schools, at Jackson high school the seminary is not benefiting the school by way of reducing class sizes. In fact, because the school is small to begin with, Mr. Bronson explained that keeping students from going to seminary would “make us look better on paper” and “make sure there are enough kids to go around” so that elective classes and programs wouldn’t need to be cut—a measure he has had to take with increasing budget cuts in the midst of difficult economic times. In explaining why the school would rather increase class sizes by taking away other elective courses instead of doing away with seminary, he replied:
Because of the benefit of what [the students] get over there of learning values, and morals, and responsibility, consequences of actions and choices. It’s what we would like to teach, but can’t. Not only can’t because of law, but we can’t because we don’t have time to. (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011)

He further revealed, “Obviously, we value the seminary program.” He believes when students take seminary they are “more respectful” and “better” students. He therefore concluded, if the seminary program were taken away, “[The students] would be far better educated hellions” (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011).

Bro. Sessions feels benefits he receives come by way of the school policies and the willingness of the school to make the seminary a part of the school culture. He marveled, “[The school’s] dress codes and those things are amazing, I mean, to me they’re unheard of...coming from my background.” He observed:

The standards they’re upholding really affects over here. And then I can back those standards up and talk about scriptural things without having all the distractions of somebody with crazy hair, or face piercings, or dress code, or you know, immodesty. (Bro. Sessions, Interview, 1/31/2011).

He also shared how invitations from the school to come to faculty Christmas parties and help with sound equipment for assemblies, along with allowances to get into school sporting events for free are benefits to him and the seminary. He expressed:

With that strong support and with that high expectation of the high school it makes it a lot easier here with that relationship of communication and being able to be involved in the school.... So, as far as the relationship, my relationship with the students is where the big benefit comes with the relationship with the school. I can be completely involved in their lives if I want, and be completely understanding where they’re coming from and then...be able to teach from that aspect, instead of trying to guess where the student’s at when they come over. I know where they’re coming from, because I can go over to the school and I can be there and see everything that’s going on there. (Bro. Sessions, Interview, 1/31/2011)
Challenges in the Relationship

With respect to challenges in the relationship, Bro. Sessions stated, “They’re very few and far between” (Bro. Sessions, Interview, 1/31/2011). However, what few challenges have presented themselves are mainly a result of the closeness of the relationship. Mr. Bronson confessed, “I’ve been accused of using, maybe implementing my beliefs that would align with the seminaries beliefs.” He explained that the accusations have come from “anti-LDS radicals” because the school is “so strict with dress code.” He shared, “My answer to them is we elect board members from the community—we are a very conservative community—therefore, you elect conservative board members and they make conservative policies.” He added:

Some people tend to believe that [the school policies] are LDS values or beliefs based on what the LDS religion preaches. Well, no. Those are just common...beliefs that things like [facial jewelry, crazy hair styles, and sleeveless shirts] are a distraction and not allowed in school. (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011)

He made clear however, that those accusations were directed more at the school administration, as members of the LDS church, and not so much because of the school’s relationship with the LDS seminary (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011).

The closeness of the relationship has also posed challenges and problems for Bro. Sessions. He revealed that sometimes the school is “overly supportive,” which causes some problems. He shared how if a student does not attend seminary and is loitering around the school or is off campus the school will “find him and punish him” (Bro. Sessions, Interview, 1/31/2011). Mr. Bronson defended this practice by explaining:

[Seminary students] are technically released, right? So, I think they’re there. Now if they’re somewhere else other than seminary, I still don’t know where they’re
at.... And I’m negligent for not knowing.... I’m not going to be placed in that position. (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011)

While this practice seems like it would help the seminary, Bro. Sessions observed:

So, I have to be careful in that way, of...communicating too much because I’ve had kids that have been punished that I wouldn’t have...because then they have a negative feeling about seminary. I would have liked to have dealt with it in my own way over here. (Bro. Sessions, 1/31/2011).

Despite this challenge he recognized, “There’s only been one or two instances. That’s not a pattern. It’s just a couple of occasions, so I haven’t really worried about it too much” (Bro. Sessions, 1/31/2011).

**Legal Parameters for the Relationship**

With respect to the legal parameters of the relationship Mr. Bronson admitted that he knows “very little.” He also acknowledged, “If I had a problem I would find out very quickly.” He observed, “As long as we have the current board...the current administration, I don’t think...it will be an issue.” He reinforced this point by pointing out that the district policy is “simple” and “right to the point,” which he said is because, “They’re not too worried about it.” He added, “Now, if they were worried about it the policy would probably be [huge]…with a lot of other stipulations and exactly what’s allowed” (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011).

Bro. Sessions also admitted he is not familiar with laws of separation as pertaining to public schools and released-time programs, but he does worry more than the school about overstepping any legal boundaries. He commented, “I know I’ve mentioned to the superintendent and said, you know, ‘Hey, I hope this is okay.’” He revealed, “[The school and school district] are not worried about something, you know, inappropriate or
Noticing Bro. Sessions’s reticence in the relationship, due to legal parameters unseen and not understood Mr. Bronson protested:

When he can’t [help the school] it’s because, you know, his bosses think it’s because he needs to be separate from the school and state. And I would suggest to his bosses, back off and give him some space.... [I]f he can impact kids and be a part of kids then he can loosen his tie a little and be a part of it. (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011)

Suggestions for Improving the Relationship

Neither principal had much to offer by way of suggestions for improving the relationship. Mr. Bronson said he does not have any suggestions because “we have the ideal situation here” (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011). Bro. Sessions, after searching his brain for anything finally offered, “If they undervalue what seminary does that will jeopardize the relationship, or vice a versa.” He therefore suggested that each maintain a “mutual respect” for each other (Bro. Sessions, Interview, 1/31/2011).

Liberty High School

Liberty High School (LHS) is a big urban school with over 150 teachers and 2,000 students. It is an older school with a legacy of tradition celebrated in its hallways (Field Notes, 2/10/2011). It is a minority majority school with over half of the student body on free and reduced lunch (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011). The seminary teacher acknowledged, “It’s the most diverse student body I have ever seen.” He explained that on one end of the spectrum there is “the richest of the rich” and “parents that are PhDs” and on the other end there is “the poorest of the poor” and parents that are
“illegal immigrants...have no education whatsoever, and are barely making ends meet” (Bro. Wall, Interview, 2/10/2011). There are over 50 languages spoken in the school (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011). The school prides themselves on involvement and offers many clubs for students to get involved. The seminary sits alone on a hill overlooking the school surrounded by recreational fields used by the school. To go to and from it students have to cross a very busy street with only the aid of a painted crosswalk (Field Notes, 2/10/2011).

The school principal, Mr. Maxson, is an older solemn gentleman with white hair and tanned skin. He is LDS. The seminary principal, Bro. Wall, is young and energetic. Mr. Maxson estimated that the LDS population of the school is around 60%. In reality it is only about 27%. Bro. Wall chuckled at Mr. Maxson’s gross miscalculation assuming it is because Mr. Maxson, as principal, mainly associates with the student body officers, sterling scholars, and captains of the athletic teams who are all majority LDS (Field Notes, 2/10/2011).

The Relationship

Mr. Maxson said his school’s relationship with the seminary is “good” and a “win-win” for both (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011). Bro. Wall said, “It’s always been quite amicable.” He also believes the relationship is “pretty strong” (Bro. Wall, Interview, 2/10/2011).

Communication between the two principals does not happen very often and is often delegated to assistant principals or secretaries. Mr. Maxson explained he only visits the seminary about two times a year, once at the beginning of the school year and again at
the end (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011). While Bro. Wall acknowledged that the two could communicate “a little bit better,” he said, “I don’t know if we need to because I think that our relationship is pretty good” (Bro. Wall, Interview, 2/10/2011). Mr. Maxson feels the same. He pointed out, “It usually just hums, you know, so that you don’t have a lot of experiences where you’re saying, ‘Okay, well let’s talk’...or whatever.” He added, “It’s just one of those norms” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011).

Efforts to Create or Maintain the Relationship

While both feel that they do not need to communicate frequently to maintain the relationship, they do make other efforts. Mr. Maxson related, “[W]hen [the seminary] communicate[s] what they need we work real hard to make sure they get it...or when we communicate to them what we need they work real hard to get it, so it seems to work well.” He expounded, “I’ve never asked for anything that I have not received, and they have never asked for anything from me that I have not given” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011).

Two examples were given that show the efforts of both to accommodate the wishes of the other. The first dealt with a change to the schedule the school had made. Bro. Wall recalled going over to the school after he heard they were planning on changing the schedule. There he found out what the school was planning and offered to make the needed adjustment at the seminary to coincide with the changed schedule, to which the school replied, “Hey, we figured you’d do it because the seminary does what we ask them to all the time” (Bro. Wall, Interview, 2/10/2011). Referring to the same conversation, Mr. Maxson commented, “[The seminary teachers] were very...gracious
about working with us and doing whatever it took to make it work” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011).

The second example had to do with an adjustment the school made for the seminary. Bro. Wall told of a time when the power lines between the seminary and school were being worked on, and to prevent any injury to the students, the school provided the gymnasium for the seminary teachers to come to the school and teach seminary for a couple of days until the power lines were fixed. Referencing that experience, Bro. Wall acknowledged, “That was pretty cool of them to offer public school ground to do seminary. So, they are pretty accommodating that way” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011).

Besides accommodating for the seminary, Mr. Maxson said he does not “impede” students from taking seminary. He admitted, “If anything we encourage kids participating.” He also revealed, “I just try to be as supportive as I can.” He explained, “I treat it like anything else that makes Liberty great. You know, I want the best football team...so you want the best seminary program, so I try to promote it and try to be real positive about it.” This he said he does through “more intangible things...probably nothing that they would notice” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011).

Bro. Wall shared, “I do just about everything I can to make them happy.” He realized, “If the school says no, then we’re done, we’re out.” Therefore he explained, “More or less we do whatever we can within policy to accommodate them and to be a big enough benefit” so “we’re doing everything we can to give them as much as we can so we can help them as much as we can” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011).
Benefits from the Relationship

Mr. Maxson, like other principals, stated, “The huge benefit...the obvious benefit is that it just reduces class size.” Referring to a rival school with higher seminary enrollment he marveled, “Image the benefit that they get...they are lowering their class size huge just by all the students who take seminary.” However, he also mentioned a unique benefit, not mentioned by others. He shared:

I just love the fact that [the seminary] embrace[s] our special needs students...they just really extend as far as to our students that seem to have the greatest needs. So they do the peer tutoring, they do dances...they walk them to and from seminary so they can take seminary. So, I think this is a huge benefit to the school because they have these peers that are role model peers, these [special needs] students do in these classes....You just think, well that student wouldn’t really have that benefit if [the seminary] weren’t offering it. (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011)

He also admitted, “I sometimes use [seminary] as leverage when a kid is making a value judgment on themselves or something...that’s not really a benefit really, but it sort of is” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011).

Bro. Wall stated frankly, “They let their kids come. I mean, that’s the real benefit.” He pondered, “Other than that I don’t think the school necessarily benefits us a lot” (Bro. Wall, Interview, 2/10/2011).

In discussing who benefits most from the relationship, the school or the seminary, Mr. Maxson reflected:

It depends on how you define benefit. Because saving souls, you know, you might say they benefit the most. But it is certainly a benefit over here for class size reduction. So, um, I don’t know. I think it’s probably equal. (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011)

Bro. Wall views it differently. He explained:

I would almost break it into three and say the students benefit the most, but if it’s
just the seminary and the school I think the school probably benefits more....I think the seminary actually helps the school more than the school helps the seminary, if that makes sense. (Bro. Wall, Interview, 2/10/2011)

Challenges in the Relationship

Besides students occasionally being late to seminary, or not attending seminary neither principal felt there are many challenges in the relationship. Bro. Wall shrugged, “I haven’t seen any problems.... I don’t even know if I have a concern” (Bro. Wall, Interview, 2/10/2011). Similarly, Mr. Maxson stated, “We don’t have any issues.” He acknowledged how “uncommon” that is because with “practically any other faction of a comprehensive high school...you’re always dealing with issues.” He further explained:

From my experience [the] seminary principals, the seminary teachers, are all generally speaking really good at what they do. I think that I don’t have problems with coaches usually when they’re really good coaches. I don’t have problems with teachers if they’re really good teachers. (Mr. Maxson, 2/10/2011)

He reasoned, “We never have any complaints about their teachers. We never have complaints from the kids. We never have complaints from parents” (Mr. Maxson, 2/10/2011). Although he laughingly admitted he has received some complaints from the public claiming the students going to and coming from seminary are slowing up traffic by “taking their sweet time in crossing the street” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011). Bro. Wall also revealed that the seminary has received similar complaints from the public. He defended, “We actually have in our opening assembly every year a tutorial on how to cross the street so that they are not bugging the people going up and down the street” (Bro. Wall, Interview, 2/10/2011).
Legal Parameters for the Relationship

Though neither principal had much to say about legal parameters for the relationship, both feel knowledgeable with respect to laws of separation of church and state. Mr. Maxson put forth, “I think that I understand it a lot. I’ve been in enough trainings on it” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011). With respect to separation of church and state, Bro. Wall commented, “We’re pretty separate” (Bro. Wall, Interview, 2/10/2011). Mr. Maxson stated, “The seminary side of it understands separation because they’ve never crossed any line or from my experience I have never seen them try to cross a line...so they’ve obviously been well educated” (Mr. Maxson, 2/10/2011).

Suggestions for Improving the Relationship

Both principals suggest better communication would improve the relationship. Mr. Maxson shared, “One suggestion is maybe just have scheduled meetings, you know, like maybe a monthly meeting...to answer some of these questions to where we would be better informed.” He excused himself, “I just think they are at [the seminary] across the street, the credits don’t count toward graduation, they’re not causing us problems...there’s enough to do so you just don’t do enough” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011). Bro. Wall added, “I would say that the most important thing is that the principal of the seminary and the principal of the school are on the same page of where the relationship is” (Bro. Wall, Interview, 2/10/2011).

Mr. Maxson further suggested that seminary teachers should support more activities of the school. Speaking of his past relationship with a seminary principal when he was the principal at another school, he said, “We talked a lot more just because he was
always at all of our activities.” He recalled how the seminary teachers at Liberty used to come to school activities more than the present ones do. Speaking about the former seminary principal he commented, “He would come over with his kids and watch wrestling matches and I remember he was much more active.” He added, “I think that a seminary teacher or principal...would probably feel like they would connect better if they knew the kid in another setting other than a religious setting” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011).

**Millport High School**

Millport High School (MHS) is located in a rural community. Cut out of a hill, its green brick facade stands in stark contrast to the surrounding red-rock landscape typical of southern Utah (Field Notes, 2/11/2011). The community has a “deep LDS heritage” but is now “predominately not LDS” (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011). The students who attend are majority Caucasian and middle-class (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011). The school is described as being “progressive” and “the hub” of the community. The staff of the school is described as being “stubborn” (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

The seminary is located across the street from the school. Besides the LDS seminary there are two other released-time programs; one is a Catholic seminary and the other is a Bible study group. Both of these other religious released-time programs have fewer than 10 students participating (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011). The Catholic seminary meets off-campus and the students who attend are picked up by a parent in a van which parks in front of the LDS seminary. The Bible study group is more like a club
that, until recently, met in the school. Currently they are working with Bro. Ficklin to be able to hold their bible study classes in the LDS seminary building (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Mrs. Oberg, the school principal, is an older woman with gray hair and a cheerful, yet aggressive disposition. Her entire career has been spent at Millport, first as a science teacher and recently as the principal. She is not a native of Utah and is not LDS. Bro. Ficklin, the seminary principal, is a tough, yet kind-hearted cowboy type. As a boy, he grew up in Millport, but only recently has returned to it.

The Relationship

The relationship between the public school and the seminary, particularly between Mrs. Oberg and Bro. Ficklin, is not close. Bro. Ficklin feels like the relationship has been “rocky.” He admitted, however, that while it is “not close” it is “not antagonistic” either. He explained:

I think we both know each other exists but have really just kept our worlds separate and we do our thing and they do theirs. They’re not necessarily trying to resist us, but not reaching out to be together on a lot of things it feels like. (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011)

He admitted, “It’s made me feel like sometimes they don’t like us” (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

With respect to the relationship Mrs. Oberg pondered, “I don’t know if it’s good or bad.” She boldly defended:

[T]his is going to sound bad, but I’ll say we don’t really associate much. I would honestly have to say its non-existent. To call it a relationship would be false, for me to say we have a relationship. I think we get along well...there’s no bad feelings, but as far as saying, yeah we meet once a month and we get together and
have a working relationship, I can’t say that honestly happens. (Mrs. Oberg, 2/11/2011)

It is obvious in hearing from both principals that there is a lack of communication in the relationship. For example, Mrs. Oberg admitted she has never met Bro. Ficklin and has never gone over to the seminary. While Bro. Ficklin acknowledged that an administrator from the school has never visited the seminary, he pointed out that he has met Mrs. Oberg on a number of occasions. He explained, “My first summer here I was probably over at the high school four or five times with the intent of meeting Mrs. Oberg and she was never there.” He further explained that the first time he actually met her was at a “ball game” where he introduced himself and expressed his desire to work with her and help her and the school in any way possible. He went on to tell how he has seen and greeted her on several other occasions since, but added, “I’ve wondered if she even remembers who I was” (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Any communication that happens between the school and seminary happens through other people. Bro. Ficklin made clear, “My number one communication link is my secretary.” He informed that she has been the secretary for many years. As a result, he shared, “She knows a ton of people, the teachers, and I think as a whole has pretty good rapport with them.” He laughed, “I bet she’s over [at the school] 45 minutes a day talking with somebody. I’m not sure always what she’s doing, but she’s always over there.” Consequently, he admits that because of the secretary’s frequent contact with the school, it is easy for him not to feel guilty for not communicating personally with the school more (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Besides communicating with the school via the secretary of the seminary, Bro.
Ficklin shared:

We communicate quite a bit with the counselors...more than I would with the high school administrators. The counselors are good for our enrollment. They’re very willing to work with. They’ll give us a list of what they have pre-enrolled at certain hours.... We’ll cap a class at a certain number and they’re pretty faithful to honor that cap. (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011)

In addition he communicates with the vice principal twice a year to be informed about emergency drills and situations.

Mrs. Oberg also uses the secretary of the seminary, as well as other teachers, as a link to Bro. Ficklin. For example, girls involved in cheerleading ran into a problem of earning enough academic credit to graduate from high school if still enrolled in seminary during the school day. As a result, in order to take seminary they needed to do it before school, an accommodation the seminary did not want to make due to past experiences of students not attending the early class. In trying to resolve the conflict, Mrs. Oberg talked with the cheer advisor and then, instead of asking Bro. Ficklin’s opinion on the matter, sought the opinion of one of the history teachers at the school who, before teaching public education, had taught seminary. Despite counsel from the history teacher and complaints from the girls and their parents, Mrs. Oberg did not make any other accommodations. Therefore, the girls had to enroll in early morning seminary (Field Notes, 2/11/2011). Bro. Ficklin stated in frustration that only 2 of the 15 girls have attended early morning class enough to receive credit for seminary (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

As a result of the lack of communication between the two principals, each is left to form perceptions about the other from what they have heard other people say. Mrs.
Oberg revealed that someone told her that [Bro. Ficklin] was “intimidated or shy,” and therefore, not the kind of person who would go out of their way to initiate contact (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011). Bro. Ficklin informed, “I had reported to me that Mrs. Oberg was relatively anti-LDS.” He concluded, “If she’s anti-LDS then that would cater to why she hasn’t reached out much maybe to me and made an effort. And if I think she’s anti-LDS it’s made me hesitant to want to get close” (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Bro. Ficklin shared how the relationship in the past, before he got there, was closer than it now is. He shared, “In the past the high school asked the seminary teachers quite often to participate in assemblies and to be involved over in activities there, which they don’t do any of that anymore.” In wondering what happened he pondered, “I’m not sure why the relationship severed with how they used to call us all the time to be part of assemblies and activities over there and now there’s just nothing at all” (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Efforts to Create or Maintain the Relationship

Despite how the relationship is viewed, both principals recognize the existence of the other and make efforts to make the arrangement work. Mrs. Oberg feels the best effort she makes is to simply support the seminary. She feels the best way to support the seminary is to “stay out of the way.” She explained, “I don’t ever want to appear to be not supportive because I’m not a member [of the LDS church].” Therefore, she shared that in dealing with the seminary she will “pass it on to one of the vice principals because they are both LDS.” She especially does this when the school does not agree with the seminary on an issue because, as she made clear, “I don’t want it to appear that I am
bashing or not agreeing with the seminary because I’m not LDS” (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011). She explained her caution in this area was because she “made a mistake one time.” She related a conversation she had with a basketball player who was late to seminary every day. She finally said to him, “You know what Kyle (pseudonym)...if it’s not important enough for you to go, then I don’t know why you’re in there?” She recounted his response as being, “It’s just seminary.” To which she replied, “I don’t care about seminary, you get your butt over there.” She explained, “And he heard ‘I don’t care about seminary’ and then he was mad...so we had to have a little conversation about that.” She concluded, “So, I learned then that I need to be careful about making sure to...not come across ever as appearing that I don’t support [seminary]” (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Besides showing support to the seminary by staying aloof from it, she has made an accommodation for it by way of safety for the students attending. She explained how in the morning when students are crossing the street from seminary to the school from their early morning class it presents “a potential hazard” because they are difficult to see in the dark. Therefore, she requested that a spot light be placed on the school so that it could shine down on the crosswalk and make the students crossing from seminary to the school more visible to the teachers and students arriving at school in their vehicles (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011).

In order to create a working relationship Bro. Ficklin does a number of things to show the school his and the seminary’s support. He stated, “I try to attend anything that I can at the school that involves the kids.” In doing so he disappointedly admitted, “I
would love [the school] to see me doing that, which they apparently don’t.” He also makes efforts to maintain the standards and policies that the school expects. He pointed out, “We’ve tried to have those same rules here.” He further declared:

   We don’t harbor fugitives here. If [students are] supposed to be in class over there and they come over here we send them over and if they won’t go we at least call [the school] and let them know that they are here so they’re accounted for. (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011)

He also said, “We invite [the school administration] to graduation proceedings at the end of the year so they can attend those and support the kids that are graduating from seminary” (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

**Benefits from the Relationship**

Regardless of Mrs. Oberg’s view of the “non-relationship” she recognizes the value of the seminary for herself and the school. She divulged, “Fortunately for me, I love that we have [seminary]. I love that we have it every period of the day...I love the flexibility of having seminary because it helps us move and work with kids schedules.” She continued, “It alleviates some of our class size issues” (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011).

While she recognizes the benefit seminary is to her and the school she acknowledged, “I think it benefits the students the most.” She expounded:

I’m sure part of what is taught [in the seminary] is tolerance and just being a good citizen.... You may be as smart as you want in science and in math and social studies and write a good essay, but if you don’t have the ability to work well with other people, you might as well throw the rest of that out the window because you’ve got to have those social skills and those people skills, and I, I know that those are things that the Mormon church embraces. I know that because I have really, really good friends that are LDS and that moral aspect of [the LDS] religion is...so strong and you can just see it with the way kids are raised and I
think that, I think that’s a huge part of what we’re trying to teach kids in school. (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011).

She further explained, “I’d bet that the percentage of our scholars, our sterling scholars, our AP advanced kids, the percentage of those kids that attend seminary are higher than...eighty percent.” Therefore she expressed, “[Seminary] is not hurting them academically. They are excelling academically” (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Bro. Ficklin does not recognize many benefits from the school. In speaking about whether the relationship is beneficial to him and the seminary he declared, “Potentially...but in practice I don’t see it right now.” However, he is appreciative of the school’s willingness to accommodate the seminary by allowing students to enroll and working with the seminary in equaling out the class sizes. He stated, “That’s probably been about as good as we’ve been able to work together; that willingness to adjust for scheduling purposes” (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

**Challenges in the Relationship**

Both principals have concerns that pose challenges for them in the relationship. However, Bro. Ficklin expressed more concern than Mrs. Oberg. One concern he has is a feeling that the school has been critical of the seminary. He expounded:

If administrators are ever critical or undermining what we’re do over here, that gets out, the word gets out to the kids, it gets to the teachers, it gets to the public and so that kind of chops our feet sometimes. If for some reason they feel like seminary doesn’t take care of their attendance problems...I’d rather them talk to us about issues of that sort and let’s work together as a team to help kids succeed and build our programs instead of chop us down. (Mr. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011)

In saying so, he acknowledged his need to not be critical of the school either, even though
he admitted, “There are some quirky issues that I shake my head at sometimes” (Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

He is also concerned about the lack of communication between him and Mrs. Oberg. He reasoned:

I don’t think we are as effective as we can be if we’re not communicating better. So, I feel bad that she doesn’t know who I am because I can pick her out of a crowd quite easily.... I think it just makes it so that we are going to have less effectiveness with kids overall. And so that’s the loss—that maybe we don’t help kids as well as we could working together. (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011)

He therefore wishes there was “more open dialogue” and that each was more “willing to help” (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Another one of his concerns is the school’s lack of response to kids who purposefully do not attend seminary. He divulged, “Quite often we’ll find out later that a kid that should have been in seminary was just hanging over at the high school.” He explained how the school sometimes will not encourage the student to go to seminary but will “cater” to them not going by allowing them to go and do homework in the library, a practice he calls “harboring fugitives.” He wishes the school would “kick that kid out” and call the seminary to let them know that there is a student who is not attending class (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Ultimately though, Bro. Ficklin’s main concern is his own secretary and her personal relationships with staff at the school. He explained:

My secretary has been a concern for me.... [S]he spends a lot of time over there, and like I mentioned, I don’t know what she’s always doing and I’ve wondered how does the high school, with the new administration really feel about her always being over there. Is she a nuisance? Is she a problem? And I don’t know because they never talk to me.... And she’s a little older so she knows everybody. She knows their kids. She knows their parents. She knows their grandparents and
the history of anything that’s ever happened here, and she’s good friends with a
number of the faculty who have been here for a long time, and so she comes back
sometimes with a little dirt and a little gossip, and sometimes some criticisms and
knowing a lot that that is just her personality I’ve just learned to take it with a
grain of salt and realize that’s her spin on almost anything in life, not just the high
school. But I hope she hasn’t hurt us. That’s been a concern. I hope she’s not
saying things over there or presenting an image that they’re interpreting
represents seminary....If she’s over there and talks like that, and acts like
that...that would reflect negatively on us, which might make them inclined to
think less of us and being more stand-offish. (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011)

While Bro. Ficklin expressed many concerns, Mrs. Oberg expressed that her
“only concern” was seminary attendance. She recognized that it is “such a minor”
concern “when you think about all the huge things that are happening in the world and
just even in our schools.” She recalled the only time she ever initiated contact with the
seminary was to ask the seminary to penalize students for being late to seminary so they
would feel a greater urgency to leave the school hallways and get to seminary class
without the school administration saying to them, “Get your tush to class.” In
contemplating why there are no other issues or concerns, besides attendance, she guessed,
“It could be because there’s no accountability.... I don’t think the kids feel pressure....
There’s no grade attached to it” (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Legal Parameters for the Relationship

With respect to separation of church and state Mrs. Oberg said, “I think it’s a fine
line.” She pointed out:

This idea of released-time, going to seminary, to me does not fall under that
umbrella at all because these kids have parent’s permission to be gone for an hour
a day.... If I walk down the hallway and hear one of my teachers teaching their
views, their beliefs, that’s where I’m going to have a problem with [separation of
church and state]. (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011)
Not only does she not consider released-time a concern related to the separation of church and state, she thinks students should get academic credit for it.

While Mrs. Oberg alluded to the fact that she does not consider seminary a legal concern, Bro. Ficklin’s comments beg to differ. He expressed, “[The school is] pretty carefully guarded and I think they have to be. The issue of separation of church and state, they really walk pretty carefully on that one, and in my opinion, too sensitively to it.” Referring again to how close the relationship was long before he arrived, he assumed, “I don’t know if there’s been an incident where somebody’s brought this up and then made a big deal out of it, or what. But, I think it’s just to guard against the legalities of the world we’re in.” He recognized, “The public school system has to be more concerned than I do. I don’t feel like the separation of church and state applies as much to me as it does for them” (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Suggestions for Improving the Relationship

It is significant to note that both principals feel that better communication is needed to have a better relationship. Mrs. Oberg recognized, “I do think that probably a better communication should take place.” Hence, she suggested the two should meet “at the very least” at the beginning of the school year to “talk about any issues that anybody has” and to come up with “things we think we can do to make an improvement in these kids’ lives” (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/.2011). She mused:

I think probably one of our biggest issues is an attendance issue, and why not get those guys on board with us when we are having an attendance issue with kids? And I don’t know, maybe they don’t have enough time and are busy enough as it is, but I think the more adults a kid can have in their life, the more positive role models they can have and if we’ve got a kid that’s enrolled in seminary and they
are having some attendance and truancy issues, why not have somebody else other than the principal, or the vice principal nagging them and harassing them, for lack of a better word, you know, get the seminary teachers to help us. You know, that might not be a bad idea to utilize that avenue and get them involved with some of those social issues that we face. (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011)

In pondering this she wonders whether or not they should have “some different kind of a relationship—more of a partnership” (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Based on Bro. Ficklin’s comments, he would welcome Mrs. Oberg’s suggestion. He admitted:

I don’t want to feel awkward when I’m over there. I don’t want to feel like I’m not known or appreciated when I’m over there and uh, and so I just think that it would be helpful if we knew each other better and felt more open with each other. (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011)

He put forth, “I think there have been some communication barriers that need to break down.” In saying so he recognizes his own need to take initiative in breaking down those barriers. He contemplated, “I probably ought to go above and beyond and...get out of my comfort zone...and reach out.... I’d probably find that she’s a wonderful woman...and we’ll move on” (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011).

**Seneca High School**

Seneca High School (SHS) is a school in a cultural transition. What started out as a homogenous school with upper-middle class socioeconomic status has become a minority majority school in the lower socioeconomic status group. The school principal, Mr. Callor, a short and soft spoken man, pointed out, “We’re referred to as a ghetto school all the time.” Though conditions in the school have improved tremendously, the principal explained there was a time when “the principal had no power and the teachers
ran the show” and “the kids ran the halls.” During this time he recalled that there was “lots of graffiti every day...weapons issues” and “a tremendous amount of negativity from the students, from the staff, [and] from the community” (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011). Security cameras visibly mounted on every corner of the school and security scanners at the door add credence to his account (Field Notes, 2/16/2011). He said everybody is “working hard toward changing that culture.” As a result he reported, “We’ve seen steady improvement, academic improvement.” He admitted, however, “We’re a long way from where we need to be, but we’re definitely making some great progress” (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Mr. Callor said the students are “very diverse,” which he considers to be one of the school’s “significant strengths” (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011). The diversity of the student body is celebrated, as evident in the two pages of the school yearbook dedicated to students’ tattoos and body piercings labeled with the caption “Express Yourself” (Field Notes, 2/16/2011). In describing the school and the student body, the seminary principal, Bro. Sullivan, a large and tall man, put forth:

“IT’s unique...the dynamics and the functionality, and I guess the disfunctionality of a lot of the families is more prevalent here than any place else.... There’s a lot of single families, there’s a lot of same-sex parents, there’s a huge number of kids that one of their parents is in prison.... I have a pile of kids every year that transfer out. Their parents want them to go to one of the other high schools around and if those kids were to come here it would make a huge difference. But the kids that are here...are humble. (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011)

As a result he admitted, “I wasn’t that excited to come here,” but included, “I’ve just loved it” (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011).

The seminary, located on the opposite corner of the same block as the school, has
also gone through a cultural change. Due to the changing demographics of the school, seminary enrollment has decreased. Where at one time there were multiple seminary teachers teaching in multiple classrooms, there are now only Bro. Sullivan and a student teacher teaching and the majority of classrooms in the seminary sit vacant (Field Notes, 2/16/2011).

The Relationship

Regardless of the low percentage of students enrolled in seminary at Seneca high, Mr. Callor indicated, “We have a good relationship with the seminary.” Referring to his time in seminary as a youth member of the LDS church and to his children’s time currently in the seminary at Seneca he declared, “I know the value that it has with kids and so I’m going to support [seminary] and be a pretty strong proponent of [it].” He also stated, “I think it’s an important thing in the lives of our youth if they’ll take advantage of it. I think it can bless their lives and I think it’s important that we can work together to provide that opportunity” (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Bro. Sullivan said, “The relationship is so good.” Speaking of Mr. Callor he related, “The principal is a member [of the LDS church] and wonderful to work with. He’s just been super” (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011). When first contacted by phone and invited to participate in the study he told the researcher, “Well I don’t want to skew the data because our relationship is really good” (Field Notes, 2/1/2011). He said that everything in the seminary’s relationship with the school has worked well. He divulged, “Everything we have asked for they have given us.” He further commented, “They’ve bent over backwards.... We get all the announcements. We’re on their e-mail
lists.” He recalled the reaction his superior had to the relationship while accompanying him over to the school. He related, “He was just amazed at how wonderful everything was and just how easy it was to just talk to Mr. Callor and the things that were happening” (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011). He further described the relationship as being “very missionary minded to try and get recruitment and enrollment up” (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011).

As to why the relationship works so well, Bro. Sullivan surmised, “I think that it’s a winning of hearts. I think we’ve won their hearts and they’ve won our hearts and there’s just a good feeling” (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011).

**Efforts to Create or Maintain the Relationship**

The concept of “winning hearts” that Bro. Sullivan refers to comes from a story in the *Book of Mormon* of a missionary named Ammon who goes into the land of his enemies with the intent of converting them to his beliefs. After being captured and brought before the king of the land he makes known his desire to serve the king until the day he dies. After defending the king’s flocks from a group intent on scattering them he wins the heart of the king and is then able to teach him about Jesus Christ. In relation to this story Bro. Sullivan pointed out, “So there’s certain things sometimes that you have to do to win somebody’s heart” (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011). In using Bro. Sullivan’s scriptural based analogy, it could be said that each principal makes efforts to win each other’s hearts, and has succeeded in doing so.

For example, both make efforts to talk to the other. Bro. Sullivan indicated, “I go over [to the school]...two or three times a week to pick up the mail and to visit” (Bro.
Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011). Though not as much, Mr. Callor will also go over to the seminary “on occasion” to “visit a little bit here and there and just touch base with how things are going” (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Both also make efforts to show their appreciation for each other. Bro. Sullivan will take gifts over to the public school principal and support staff. He recalls a time when the seminary made wristbands that had written on them the seminary theme for that year and took them to the school and gave one to the principal, secretaries, and counselors. He commented with delight, “They’re all wearing them and even the registrar who is a non-member wears it.” He informs that he has done the same thing with sweatshirts. He also revealed that he has taken over pies as a gift one Christmas and cinnamon rolls the next. Referencing the time he took pies to the school he detailed, “We went over to the faculty room and took the pies and...people that had ignored me when I was over there, we’re friends now.” He shares how the school has reciprocated the Christmas gift. He shared, “At Christmas they even give us a turkey, or ham, with all the other faculty,” and added, “that doesn’t happen very often with other schools” (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011).

An effort recognized by Bro. Sullivan as being “very cool” that Mr. Callor has made is to provide help for the seminary by way of increasing enrollment. Bro. Sullivan explained, “They’ve just been very accommodating in trying to work that out and calling the kids in and calling parents and everything to get them into seminary” (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011). Though Mr. Callor has not recruited for the seminary, he has made efforts to clear up a prevailing misconception that the school schedule does not allow
students to take seminary. He explained:

We had a lot of parents that were saying that it’s not possible for them to be involved in seminary and that kind of thing, so I just started finding out what [the seminary’s] numbers were and what the options were and I, you know, basically have said if there’s a kid who wants to do seminary, there’s a way to make it work. But if they’ve failed classes and other things they’ll have to make some choices, but if they want to have seminary in their schedule, there’s a way to make it work, whether it’s early morning or during released-time. (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011)

He not only met with the seminary to learn of their enrollment numbers but he also attends occasionally the seminary’s board of education meeting, where Bro. Sullivan meets with local church leaders to discuss seminary matters. His purpose in going to the meetings is to inform the seminary and local church leaders that the students and their parents “can’t use the schedule as an excuse for not taking seminary” and to “let them know that we’re a partner and we have to be able to work together to accommodate the needs of our students.” In those meetings he also said, “I have volunteered my time to come and speak at any of their stake functions, or whatever, if that is a concern that the school is not supporting seminary” (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Not only has Mr. Callor tried to clear up student and parental misconceptions about the schools accommodation for a student’s choice to take seminary, but he has also defended the schools relationship with the seminary in the face of criticism from two of his staff members. More on this subject is discussed in the section on challenges in the relationship.

**Benefits from the Relationship**

Efforts made by each principal are a result of the benefits they realize the
relationship provides them. Mr. Callor said the seminary is a “real blessing” to the school because it “takes part of the load off during the day,” but lamented, “We don’t have enough of our kids involved.” He explained, “As students leave our building and go to seminary during the day that frees up FTE inside here, in the building at that point in time.... [I]t’s a tremendous benefit.” He compared his school’s low seminary enrollment to a neighboring school’s high seminary enrollment in pointing out the greater the enrollment at the seminary the lighter the class sizes are for the teachers at the school (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Lighter class loads is not the only benefit he recognizes the relationship provides the school. He noted, “I wish every one of our kids was over there because as they go and have that experience they’re going to come back in our building and be a better influence in our building.” He therefore justified:

So I’m going to encourage every kid, as much as I can, that they should go and have a spiritual experience, a religious experience. If there was a Catholic seminary across, you know, that kind of thing, you know, anything that they could go and do and have a religious experience and talk to God and remember about prayer and think about their relationship with deity, um, they’re going to come back and be better kids in our building. (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011)

He further pointed out the biggest indicator that students who take seminary are better behaved in the school is an award the school gives all students at the end of the year who have maintained a high grade point average. Of those students who receive that award each year he observed, “Better than ninety percent of those kids are always seminary kids.” He concluded, “So, you know, you just know that [seminary] has a direct correlation into them taking care of business here in school” (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011).
In addition he feels like the seminary helps him in his goals for the school and its students. He affirmed, “It’s just another part of the community raising the child where we all work to have a positive experience for these kids and their growth pattern.” He expounded:

We’re in the process of helping our young people be prepared for life and that’s an important issue. So many of our young kids are lost, and that’s both LDS kids and non-LDS kids.... So [the seminary is] one piece of the puzzle that helps us. We can’t do it alone. None of us can do it alone. (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011)

Understanding his perspective in this matter makes it not surprising then to hear him say, “I’m a very strong proponent of [students] going [to seminary] and having that kind of experience” (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Bro. Sullivan feels the biggest benefit he receives from the school is the opportunity to reach out to students and invite them to take seminary. He remarked, “It gives us a chance to do a little bit more missionary work.... It gives us the opportunity to let everybody know that we’re normal” (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011).

While both recognize benefits received, they also both feel that they receive the most benefit. Mr. Callor commented:

I don’t know how the seminary benefits from us necessarily, other than providing kids, but I think we definitely benefit from the seminary because those kids have that experience and then they come back and are bringing that influence into our halls and into our classrooms. (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011)

On the reverse side, Brother Sullivan stated:

I think we [benefit more] because [the school] benefits huge from all the temporal stuff and with the feeling when the kids go back, but we benefit because we have such a good relationship.... I think they get a tremendous thing and I think the few, the wise know it, but I think ours is more important because we get a chance to have somebody that’s never felt the spirit for the first time in their life coming
from a home that’s so dysfunctional and...realize...there’s a possibility [they] can someday have a family that is normal and [they] can be married and have children that are normal and...[they] can be forgiven of [their] sins.... To be able to gain that knowledge because we are able to get them, and take them, and go through the process of getting them over here I definitely think we benefit because those kids benefit. (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011).

**Challenges in the Relationship**

Despite how positive the relationship is, both identified challenges. One of the challenges is enrollment in seminary. Mr. Callor explained, “Your good kids are involved in everything and sometimes there is not enough periods to go around to do everything they want to do.... And so they have to make choices, and sometimes those choices are hard to make and it comes down to priorities” (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011).

While enrollment in seminary has been a challenge for the school, particularly as a result of misconceptions about the school schedule mentioned earlier, the problem is compounded by another challenge. Mr. Callor revealed, “I have an assistant principal that is very anti-seminary and a counselor that there has been some feel for that.” He explains, “They didn’t want anything to do with [seminary], or have our kids have anything to do with it” (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Bro. Sullivan noted, “The [counselor] has really hurt the seminary through the years in telling kids they can’t take [seminary] and talking them out of it.” He related:

I had a little non-member girl last year that wanted to take, mainly because of her boyfriend, and the one counselor wouldn’t let her in. She had to go get her dad who’s a non-member to say, “If she wants seminary, give her seminary.” I mean, that’s how hard it was. (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011)

He added, “Sometimes it’s really frustrating when she gets to somebody before we can and gets them to transfer out or says they can’t.” He concluded, “But she’s slowly
mellowing. She even said ‘hi’ to me the other day when I was over there” (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Part of the reason she may be mellowing could be due to “multiple” conversations Mr. Callor has had with her and the assistant principal. In speaking with the counselor he informed:

I just say, ‘The seminary is an important part of the culture of this community and it’s been something that’s been expected and something that we need to honor and figure out a way to make it work and whether you agree with it or not, I’m not interested in whether or not you agree with it. You’re expected to work with kids and parents that request their children to have seminary. (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011)

In speaking with the assistant principal he related:

We’ve had just some conversations that, you know, that’s not her call and that’s not um, we’re not going to go there, and we do have a good relationship with the seminary, we’re going to maintain a good relationship with the seminary. (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011)

With respect to his approach to these conversations he said, “I try to keep it nonthreatening” (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Another problem that was resolved, but posed a challenge at first, dealt with a change in the school’s schedule which altered the seminary’s schedule and graduation requirements. Mr. Callor explained when the school changed from a two semester schedule to a three trimester schedule it made it difficult for students to take seminary all year long like they had done on the semester system and still be able to get enough school credits for graduation. Therefore, the school asked the seminary if the students could take two out of the three trimesters of seminary and still be able to graduate from seminary. At first the seminary did not want to oblige, but eventually catered to the school’s wishes.
Mr. Callor remembered:

We had district meetings. We had area representatives [from the LDS church] and people that came and we had a couple of heated discussions.... [The seminary representatives] were pretty adamant that they wanted them all year, then they ended up lightening that up and saying two out of three. (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Legal Parameters for the Relationship

Mr. Callor pointed out that the complaints of the assistant principal and the counselor dealt with issues of separation of church and state. He commented, “They don’t see that the seminary has any place in the public high school because it’s a violation of separation of church and state.” He responded, “It doesn’t have anything to do with church and state. It’s a released-time that’s not necessarily associated with our delivery of our curriculum and that kind of thing. It’s a separate thing.” He stated, “There is nothing there that is of concern...a parent has to release them and if they’re willing to do that then I think they have tremendous benefits.” He made clear, “We can give the opportunity for all to do it...if the Baptists, or the Catholics, or anybody else had a church across the street that they wanted to do released-time with, we would honor that just as well” (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Bro. Sullivan makes known, “We have to watch the church and state thing. We really try to watch that.” He admitted that in his efforts to increase enrollment he has to be “careful” and “know when to be aggressive and when not to.” He commented, “I don’t ever want to do anything where they can come back and hammer the seminary because we overstepped our bounds.” With respect to legal boundaries he put forth, “I think the line’s different depending on how people view the church and seminary.” He expounded,
“I think there’s a definite legal line, but I think the line is different depending on how people perceive and what the relationship is. So, I think it could go right or left a little bit than what it actually is” (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Suggestions for Improving the Relationship

By way of offering suggestions for improving the relationship, both principals spoke in generalities instead of in specifics about their relationship with each other. Mr. Callor suggested:

[I]f there is not an LDS principal, or you know, your school leadership is not LDS having them, uh, making sure that they have an understanding of what the seminary program has to offer, making sure that there’s open communication...and if there are questions or concerns that they get addressed quickly so that there’s not a fear or level of reservation. (Mr. Callor, Interview, 2/16/2011)

Bro. Sullivan counseled:

I think you have to take the time to go over and I think you have to be noticed and I think you have to be able to win hearts. I think you’ve got to win each other’s hearts. You got to give and take and win some hearts. Let’em know the advantage...to helping the seminary program and then I think they appreciate the support.... So I think just spending time. (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011)

He concluded, “I don’t think the seminary realizes...to really have a relationship that really is a bond can be such a huge blessing to the seminary, and in the process of helping the seminary it’s going to help the school” (Bro. Sullivan, Interview, 2/16/2011).

Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the purpose of the current study was to describe the relationship between public high schools and LDS seminaries in Utah as perceived and practiced by principals of both institutions. As noted from the outset, the
intent of this chapter was to provide a description of what public school and seminary principals experience with respect to the phenomenon and the context in which they experience it. In doing so, six relationships have been described individually using significant statements and quotes from participants along with field observations and document analysis that have been organized around six themes. The next chapter will discuss key findings from these descriptions and implications for further research and administrative practice as well as providing an overall description of the phenomenon.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The current study posed a single overarching research question with three sub-questions. The overarching question was: How is the professional relationship between the LDS seminary and public schools in Utah perceived and practiced by principals of both institutions? The three subquestions were: (1) What are principals’ perceptions of the relationship? (2) How is the relationship maintained? (3) Why is the relationship maintained? In answering these questions data were collected from public school and LDS seminary principals representing six public school-seminary relationships. Data were then organized into inductively produced themes used to describe for each relationship what principals experienced with respect to the phenomenon and the context in which they experienced it. These descriptions were further analyzed as a whole and in view of the existing literature on the topic and through the theoretical lens of social exchange theory in order to arrive at certain key findings.

This chapter will discuss these key findings and place them within the existing literature on the phenomenon and the theoretical framework used to analyze it. In doing so, the key findings will be organized around the three sub-questions asked for the current study. To see how the researcher reduced the data to key findings used to answer research questions refer to the Taxonomic Analytic Scheme in Appendix G. After key findings are discussed, implications for research and administrative practice are provided. The chapter concludes by answering the overarching research question by using the key findings to write a description of the essence of the public school-LDS seminary
relationship in Utah. For a graphic illustration of the essence of the phenomenon according to the key findings of the study see Figure 1.

**Key Findings**

**Principals’ Perceptions of the Relationship**

Most principals perceived the relationship to be a positive relationship in which both the public school and seminary worked well with each other. In five of the six relationships studied, principals from both the public schools and the seminaries

![Diagram of the Public School-LDS Seminary Relationship in Utah]

*Figure 1.* Illustration of the essence of the phenomenon according to key findings.
perceived to have a positive working relationship with each other. In one relationship, the public school principal did not believe her school’s coordinating efforts with the seminary could be called a relationship and the seminary principal indicated the relationship was “rocky” (Bro. Ficklin, Interview, 2/11/2011). Despite these comments, both principals still recognized the value of the arrangement and this school proved to be the exception. Such positive perceptions about the relationship coming from the majority of both the public school and seminary principals corresponds to social exchange theory’s assumption that relationships with longevity are relationships in which both partners have positive feelings about the relationship and each other (Burns, 1973; Lawler, 2001; Lawler & Thye, 1999).

The public school principals interviewed saw the relationship as a “good partnership” and a “great relationship.” In fact, two of the public school principals said they consider the seminary teachers part of the faculty of their respective high schools. Such positive perspectives from the public school principals supports Ham’s (1966) findings, which indicated that the majority of public school principals approve of, or are strongly in favor of, religious released-time education. Similarly, the principals’ positive perspectives about LDS seminary extend findings by Stone (2006), which indicated that public school principals believe the LDS seminary program works well with the public schools. The seminary principals interviewed saw the relationship as being collegial and amicable, and one in which there was a mutual respect and good feelings toward one another. These seminary principals’ positive perspectives are supported by Sellers (1965), who found that the majority of seminary principals rated their coordinating efforts with
Both principals perceived the relationship to be valuable and mutually beneficial. Both public school and seminary principals interviewed made comments that showed they valued the relationship and each other. Even the public school principal at Millport High School, who called the relationship a “non-relationship,” still saw the value of the seminary for the public school and allowed the arrangement to work because she “love[d]” the benefits it provided the school (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011).

Referring to relationships similar to Millport, in which the relationship was perceived as not being very good, yet still maintained, Mr. Sorenson stated:

I would think that they would tolerate each other if they didn’t have a good relationship, personal relationship, because everybody can see the advantages. It’s something where we’re both winning on the deal. (Mr. Sorenson, 2/17/2011)

Comments such as this, along with others referring to the value of the relationship showed that principals perceived both parties to be benefitting from the relationship. These comments support Homans’ (1958) assumption that in enduring relationships both partners would perceive the relationship to be advantageous to them and will seek to maintain the relationship to maximize their reward from it.

Both principals perceived the relationship to be equitable. Comments from principals interviewed indicated that while the majority of principals tended to make efforts to maintain a good relationship, the seminary tended to initiate those efforts more than the school did, and made greater efforts to accommodate or make adjustments for the school than the school did for the seminary. Regardless of this recognized imbalance of effort in the relationship, both partners felt that the relationship was fair and, in the
words of Mr. Maxson, “a win-win for both” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011).
Perceptions of fairness in the relationship despite imbalances in efforts is supported by Emerson’s (1976) notion of equity—an exchange rule that must be in place to build trusting relationships. Equity, as described by Emerson, is a balance of power or dependency in the relationship, but does not require equality or “measure for measure balanced reciprocity” (p. 354). Therefore, social exchange theorists realize that as long as each partner in the relationship feels benefited from the exchanges, or efforts, of each other to maintain it, the relationship is considered just and fair, even though one partner may be giving more to the relationship than the other. In fact, Homans (1958) pointed out that when one partner is dependent upon the other, the dependent partner will tend to give more than the other in order to keep their place in the relationship. Therefore, in light of social exchange theory’s notions of equity, it can be understood how greater effort on the part of the seminary to maintain the relationship could still be classified by both parties as being fair as both parties understood the seminary’s greater dependency on the school’s cooperation in the relationship for their existence. This perception is a finding also recognized in Stone’s (2006) study in which public school principals claimed their relationship with the LDS seminary worked well because the seminary bore most of the burden in carrying out the relationship.

How the Relationship is Maintained

The relationships were maintained through reciprocated efforts to communicate, accommodate, support, and show appreciation for each other.

Findings for the current study revealed that the majority of the public school and
The seminary principals interviewed made efforts to maintain their relationships and develop good working relationships. Efforts on the part of the principals to maintain a good working relationship are supported by Homans’ (1958) foundational notion to social exchange theory in which he posits that relationships are maintained through an exchange of material and non-material goods. Interpreting the efforts principals made to maintain the relationship as exchanges for the relationship is supported by Befu’s (1977) definition of exchanges in which he states that exchanges in a social relationship consist of “just about anything under the sun from a smile and expression of respect to giving of advice and material rewards” (p. 271). Narrowing this broad perspective, Foa and Foa (1980) limit resources that are commonly exchanged in social relationships to six types: love, status, services, goods, information, and money—all of which were recognizable in the findings for the current study. For example, *information*, by way of communication, was recognized as one of the most common and important resources exchanged between the school and seminary principals. The majority of principals made efforts/exchanges to communicate with each other in varying ways and with varying frequency. The relationships with a high level of communication seemed to have better feelings toward one another than those with a low level of communication. Similarly, financial savings accrued as a result of the relationship, as seen in the current study via school principals’ comments about reduced class sizes and as reported in studies conducted by Bishop (1958) and Harris (1983), point to *money* as a tangible resource of exchange in the relationship. In addition, expressions of appreciation through gift exchanges in the form of t-shirts, wristbands, donuts, hams, activity cards, and invitations to pie socials or...
barbeques merit evidence of goods and services as resources of exchange in the relationships. Findings of less tangible and more symbolic resources of love, status, and service were also recognized in the relationships. As discussed previously, principals had positive perceptions about the relationship and, for the most part, referred to each other with high regards and expressions of appreciation. The majority of the public school principals rendered services for the seminary by allowing students to take seminary and making accommodations for those who found it difficult to arrange their schedules to do so. Equally, as was seen in the majority of cases, the seminary provided a service to the school by way of reducing class sizes, providing flexibility to administrators in designing class schedules, teaching morals and ethics the school did not have time to teach, helping students with personal problems, and supporting school policies and activities. The public school and seminary principals also provided service to the other by avoiding things that could hurt the relationship, such as gossiping or bringing undue attention to the arrangement.

Findings further revealed that efforts/exchanges made by both principals to maintain the relationships were not solely one-sided and often were reciprocal. Similar to equity, Emerson (1976) identified reciprocity as an exchange rule required to keep a relationship going, or at least enjoyed. Cropazano and Mitchell (2005) defined reciprocity as “repayment in kind” (p. 875). Gouldner (1960) defined it as “a mutually gratifying pattern of exchanging goods and services” (p. 165). An example of reciprocity from the descriptions of the relationships includes Mr. Kent’s gifting sports passes to the seminary as a token of gratitude for Bro. Austed’s invitation for the school administration and
support staff to attend a barbeque at the seminary. Similarly, reciprocity in the relationships were recognized in comments such as: “we’ve given them gifts at Christmas and they’ve also reciprocated” (Bro. Austed, Interview, 2/17/2011); “in turn we try and do things like that too” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011); and “I have never asked for anything that I have not received and they have never asked for anything from me that I have not given” (Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011). An example of lack of reciprocity from the descriptions of the relationships includes Bro. Ficklin’s unsuccessful efforts to meet with Mrs. Oberg and be acknowledged after several introductions and greetings. In this relationship, it was recognized that lack of reciprocated efforts/exchanges caused both principals to either be indifferent toward or frustrated with the other.

The relationships were maintained by following what had been done in the past. Comments from the interviews with principals revealed that efforts to maintain the relationships were not consciously thought through or planned out by the principals, but were more reactions to what had been done in the past. This finding supports a notion put forth by Emerson (1976), who stated that relationships are maintained through exchanges between two partners that have become “so common that they are not regulated or thought about” but are “one in a series...that preserve the solidarity built by previous [exchanges] and prepare the ground for future [exchanges]” (p. 354). Principal comments that indicated they unconsciously followed historically established norms in maintaining the relationship included the following: “it’s been going on for so long now that it just happens” (Mr. Sorenson, Interview, 2/17/2011); “it’s been that way for a hundred and somethin’ years” (Mr. Bronson, Interview, 1/31/2011); “it’s just one of those norms”
(Mr. Maxson, Interview, 2/10/2011); “it’s just such a tradition, things just keep going on as they have been” (Mrs. Oberg, Interview, 2/11/2011); and “it just has been common practice, I mean, I learned it from the guy who trained me, who probably learned it from the guy who trained him” (Mr. Kent, Interview, 2/9/2011).

Furthermore, a majority of the school and seminary principals commented somewhere in the interviews that they had never given much thought to the questions the researcher was asking them. Many of them even thanked the researcher afterwards for helping bring to their attention just how beneficial the relationship was for them and for helping them discover areas in which they could personally improve to help strengthen it. Such realizations, as a result of the interview questions, strengthens the notion that the principals’ efforts to maintain the relationships followed historically established patterns that required little additional planning on their part.

Moreover, comparing an older relationship, like Liberty, to a newer relationship, like Independence, helped extend understanding of this finding. Interviews indicated that the public school and seminary principals at Liberty high school only communicated twice a year, while the principals at Independence high school communicated at least twice a month. Despite differences in frequency of communication, principals from both schools claimed to have a good working relationship. Therefore, in light of Emerson’s (1976) notion of normative exchanges, it can be assumed that the two principals at Liberty did not have to communicate as often as the two principals at Independence because the school and seminary were part of a long established relationship with embedded traditions and rules for the relationship. In contrast, the relationship at
Independence required a greater effort on the part of both principals to communicate in order to negotiate the parameters and rules for the newly created relationship since traditions and norms had not fully been established yet.

The relationships were maintained by being sensitive to the legal parameters established for the relationship. Findings in the current study coincide with research conducted by Glade (1955) and Poore (1983), which indicated that principals are sensitive to the laws of separation and therefore make efforts to stay within the legal boundaries prescribed for the relationship. In the interviews conducted for the current study the public school principals expressed their caution in giving the relationship too much public attention, while the seminary principals expressed their caution in overstepping legal boundaries for fear of losing the relationship through litigation. These findings validate the intense legal concerns principals expressed in Stone’s (2006) study, which caused them to not want to talk about their relationship with the seminary in public forum. It is interesting to note, however, that the researcher for the current study did not encounter the heated resistance that Stone encountered when inviting public school principals to be research participants. While this difference in experience could be due to a number of relevant factors, it is recognized that Stone’s study involved public school principals outside of Utah, the majority of which were not LDS; whereas the current study was conducted in Utah, the majority of the principals being LDS. Such willing cooperation on the part of the Utah public school principals could therefore be considered a result of their religious affiliation or of Utah’s culture. Regardless, such a thought seems to lend credence to the uniqueness of the Utah public school-LDS seminary
relationship as described by Atherton (2005), Berrett (1988), and Wilkins (1953) in chapter two, and the embedded tradition seminary has become in the state of Utah.

While public school and seminary principals in the current study did not reveal as heightened concern for issues of separation of church and state as principals in Stone’s (2006) study did, they did express some concern. In fact, findings from the current study suggested that seminary principals and higher administration in S&I are more sensitive and concerned about the legal aspects of the relationship than are the public school principals and the school districts they represent. Though expressed in the interviews, this finding was also validated in the school and seminary policy manuals. Policy documents revealed that in the majority of cases, the school districts policies said very little, if anything, with respect to guidelines for maintaining separation between the school and the seminary; while the seminary policy manual was extensive on the subject. A greater sensitivity on the part of the seminaries to the legal parameters of the relationship was recognized by various principals as a result of the dependent nature of the seminary in the relationship, in the fact that the seminary has more to lose if the relationship is taken away. The seminary’s greater sensitivity to the legal parameters of the relationship, as a result of greater dependence on the relationship, is supported by Emerson’s (1976) and Homans’ (1958) notions of dependency in social exchange relationships as described previously.

Furthermore, interviews revealed that the majority of the public school and seminary principals knew little about the legal parameters for the relationship. This conclusion validates research conducted by Campbell (2002), which suggested that
teachers’ knowledge of church/state legal parameters are based more on rules of thumb than on actual understanding of the law. The rule of thumb most commonly identified by public school principals in the current study when working with the seminary was the notion that if they would do it for anyone else, then it must be okay to do for the seminary.

This lack of legal understanding on the part of most principals was further acknowledged in comparing the principal’s practices to maintain separation with case law, particularly decisions resulting from *Lanner v. Wimmer* (1981). For example, it was recognized that multiple public school principals claimed it was illegal for the school’s intercom system to be connected to the seminary so the seminary could hear the school’s class bells and announcements; when in reality, case and state law have afforded the public school that right, as a convenience to the school and students, as long as the seminary bears the burden of payment for the system installation and maintenance (*Lanner v. Wimmer*, 1981; Utah Administrative Code, 2010). Examples such as this led the researcher to believe the principals have more legal room than they thought they had, and more legal privileges afforded them than they take advantage of. Regardless, the principals’ misunderstandings, or lack of understandings, of the legal parameters for the relationship seemed to give reason for their “overly cautious” attitudes toward the legal parameters of the relationship and somewhat fearful expressions of the public’s opinion.

In conclusion to legal sensitivities, it is interesting to note that multiple public school principals found the legal parameters restricting and limiting. For example, Mr. Sorenson, who is not a member of the LDS church, lamented that the public school and
the seminary could not have a closer relationship due to laws of separation of church and state. He indicated that he wished the seminary could take a more active part in the school during the school day. Similarly, Mrs. Oberg, also not a member of the LDS church, questioned why students could not get academic credit for taking seminary, reasoning that if a student gets credit for classes like auto mechanics, then they should for seminary as well. Other public school principals made similar comments. In fact, some suggested that legal guidelines inhibit them from doing what was best for the students. In these cases they justified that, if faced with a choice of maintaining separation or protecting students, they would choose the latter at the peril of the former as was exemplified in Mr. Kent’s account of evacuating students from the school to the seminary building in an emergency situation. This restrictiveness felt by some of the principals, caused by laws of separation, is also supported by Burns’ (1973) and Emerson’s (1976) explanations that suggest some exchanges in social relationships may be prescribed or institutionally required by others, thus not leaving actors in the relationship free to make all the efforts/exchanges they would if left to themselves.

Why the Relationship is Maintained

The relationships were maintained because each party has become dependent upon the other. Comments from interviews with public school and seminary principals supported social exchange theory’s premise that partners involved in exchange over a period of time will naturally become dependent upon one another (Befu, 1977; Homans, 1958). Findings indicated that every public and seminary principal recognized the seminary’s dependency in the relationship because the school provided them access to
students. If the school decided not to allow students to attend seminary during the school day, then released-time seminary would cease, and would have to be held before or after school hours. Therefore, the seminary program’s existence was noticed as being contingent upon cooperation from the school. Findings also indicated that the public school and seminary principals recognized the public school’s dependency in the relationship as well. Comments from principals showed that they recognized that the school was dependent upon the relationship because the seminary provided them economic savings and scheduling flexibility. As supported by Bishop (1958) and Harris (1983), the public school principals readily admitted in the interviews the economic predicament they would be in if the seminary program were taken away as it would raise their class sizes making it necessary to hire more teachers and, in most cases, construct more classrooms—an impossible task, as pointed out by most principals in consideration of continuing budget cuts. This notion led Mr. Kent to ask, “What would Utah do without seminary?... It’s become such an ingrained thing that I don’t know how we would actually staff our schools without it” (Mr. Kent, 2/9/2011). Clearly then, the findings suggested one reason why the public school and seminary principals made efforts to maintain the relationships were a result of this co-dependency—a suggestion defended by Befu’s (1977) research on power and dependency in social exchange relationships.

The relationships were maintained because they are beneficial to both parties. As previously mentioned, comments from interviews revealed that the public school and seminary principals perceived their relationships to be mutually beneficial. These comments support Homans’ (1958) assumption that relationships are formed and
maintained as a result of valued goods each partner receives from the other.

With respect to benefits, the public school principals interviewed admitted that one of the benefits they received as a result of the relationship with the seminary was reduced class sizes, which enabled them to lower educational costs, stretch budgets, and maintain lower student-to-teacher ratios in classrooms for better instruction. With the exception of the public school principal at Jackson High School, all other public school principals considered this to be the “greatest” benefit received. Why it was not recognized as such to Mr. Bronson was explained as being a result of the small size of his school. When Jackson High School was compared to larger schools it became apparent that the larger the seminary program the greater the benefit of reduced class size for the high school. Conversely, the smaller the seminary program the less benefit reduced class size became for the school, and therefore, the less economic saving accrued. This realization is believed by the researcher to possibly explain why a principal of a public school with a low enrolling seminary adjacent would be encouraged to help the seminary increase their enrollment, as was the case with Mr. Callor at Seneca High School; and why the majority of the principals in the current study aided, as much as legally possible, the seminary in enrolling students, particularly in times of economic difficulty and major budget cuts. This realization, in light of S&I’s Annual Report (2010) showing seminary programs’ tendency to be larger in Utah, Idaho, and Arizona than any other western state, also helps the researcher understand why Stone’s (2006) study, conducted on public school principals’ perceptions of LDS seminary in another western state, did not find this benefit mentioned while studies conducted in Utah by Bishop (1958) and in Idaho by
Harris (1983) did.

Another benefit the public school principals believed the relationship offered them came through the moral education that the seminary provides students through religious education. The teaching of morals to the seminary students was viewed by the public school principals as reinforcement for good behavior that carried over into the school. The teaching of morals by the seminary was also recognized as a support to the school’s goals of helping students become better students and good citizens. Some public school principals even claimed seminary helped students do better academically, a notion supported by Hodge (2007). It was also recognized as being a means for providing character development education which had increasingly been pushed out of public school curriculum by standardized testing requirements. While this benefit was most readily talked about by public school principals who were members of the LDS church, it was also recognized, but talked about with less emphasis, in the comments of those not of the LDS faith. Moral education as a benefit to the public school is also evident in studies conducted by Arnold (1978), Ham (1966), and Stone (2006). Other benefits received from the relationship, as mentioned by the public school principals in the current study, included helping students to work through their problems, which is complimented by findings of Arnold (1978), and providing flexibility for school administration and support staff in arranging students’ schedules.

Comments from the interviews also revealed the seminary principals recognized that the greatest benefits they received from their relationship with the school was access to students and opportunities to be involved in their lives. While the benefit of having
access to students for enrollment purposes was noticeably mentioned, the benefit of being able to attend sporting events, as a result of activity passes gifted to them by the public school, was the most talked about benefit by the majority of seminary principals. These principals believed the opportunities the school afforded them to be involved in the students’ lives by being at their school sponsored activities, helped them to gain rapport with their students and; therefore, be more effective in their teaching. In addition, good relationships with the school principal and support staff were mentioned as benefits that helped seminary principals monitor enrollment. These benefits, received by the seminary, were not discussed in any other previous study. Findings from a study conducted by Ham (1966) indicating that principal support benefited released-time programs by increasing enrollment was not necessarily recognized in the current study. While the current study found that seminary principals indicated the school’s support helped make enrollment efforts easier, findings suggested that community demographics and diversity of the student body population played a more influential role in affecting seminary enrollment percentages than did support from the public school principal and support staff. However, experiences in a couple of relationships showed that lack of support from school counselors had some effect on seminary enrollment.

Lastly, it is interesting to note, as explained earlier, that the majority of public school principals, as well as some seminary principals, felt like the public school received the most benefit from the relationship. However, this realization did not bother the seminary principals because they still felt duly benefited. These feelings coincide with ideas of power in social exchange theory, which states that the more dependent partner in
a relationship will tend to also give more to the relationship while still feeling benefited thereby (Cook et al., 1983; Cook & Rice, 2003).

**The relationships were maintained because benefits received from the relationship outweighed any challenges that occur from it.** Findings with respect to benefits further revealed that both the public school and seminary principals in the study maintained the relationship because the benefits they received outweighed any problems, challenges, or concerns that resulted from it. In fact, comments from interviews showed that principals from both institutions viewed challenges in the relationship to be minimal. While some public school principals viewed helping students take seminary who were deficient in academic credits as a challenge, most discussed attendance as the main challenge in the relationship. Some even expressed frustration in their continued efforts to motivate the students attending seminary to get there on time. Nevertheless, they tended to look at attendance and tardy issues as minor concerns in lieu of greater challenges in administrating a comprehensive high school.

Surprisingly, comments from interviews demonstrated that only one principal acknowledged vocally that keeping separation of church and state was a challenge in the relationship. Though the other principals recognized legal issues as a sensitive subject, they did not label them as a challenge or problem in the relationship. However, two seminary principals discussed their challenge in dealing with public school personnel who opposed the concept of seminary because of legal perceptions and personal biases. Nevertheless, in these two cases, the good relationship the seminary principals had with the school principals lessened the negative impact the opposition could have and the
challenges they could pose. One seminary principal expressed concern over the lack of communication and support from the school. Another seminary principal expressed just the opposite.

Regardless of these challenges and concerns, both the public school and seminary principals made clear that no concern or challenge was big enough, when compared with the benefits received, to stop maintaining the relationship. This finding coincides with Befu’s (1977) argument that enduring social exchange relationships are ones in which there is a perceived balance of benefits and profit values. In this sense, profit is determined through a ratio where rewards outweigh costs (White & Klein, 2002).

 Rewards are defined by way of benefits received and cost by way of aversive-stimuli or rewards foregone. Thus, the concept of profit in a social relationship implies that relationships will remain intact as long as both parties perceive that rewards from the relationship outweigh the costs of maintaining it (Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958;). This seemed to be the case in the relationships described for the current study.

The relationships were maintained because they are an expectation and an ingrained part of the culture and education of the state. The public school principals interviewed made comments that suggested that the relationships were maintained because they are part of the cultural expectations of the community, historical tradition of the school, and an ingrained part of the educational system in Utah. This finding coincides with social exchange theory’s notions of social approval and social norms in a relationship. Homans (1958) argued that relationships are reinforced when participation in the relationship is rewarded with social approval. Similarly, Burns (1973) argued:
In highly institutionalized forms of exchange the actors are socially constrained to orient to one another and to transact in a particular manner. Thus, although an “exchange” may appear to be instigated by the actors themselves, it often derives from the performance of social norms. (p. 189)

Therefore, in light of the notions of social approval and norms, it was realized that the public school principals’ efforts to maintain the relationships were, in part, a result of approval from the community. This came by way of state and local school board sanction of the relationship, as well as parental wishes that the school provide for their children a release for religious education during the school day. In addition, it was realized that both principals worked together in the relationship, not necessarily out of their own desire, but partly out of cultural and social norms and expectations that are placed upon them as “role-playing agents” for their individual institutions (Emerson, 1976, p. 356).

The relationships were maintained because positive emotions from the relationship are generally felt by both parties. Interviews revealed that the majority of the principals felt positive emotions from the relationship. This finding supports research conducted by Ham (1966), Sellers (1965), and Stone (2006), who found similar positive emotions from public school administrators and released-time officials. This conclusion also supports findings by Lawler (2001), which explain how perceptions of the fairness of exchanges in a relationship determine the emotions felt from the relationship. As such, emotions of excitement, pleasure, and gratitude result from the relationship whenever exchanges are perceived as being positive. Conversely, emotions of sadness and anger result whenever exchanges are perceived as being negative or lacking. For example, Bro. Ficklin felt frustration in his relationship with Mrs. Oberg because he perceived exchanges of communication and support from the school lacking in the relationship;
while the other seminary principals felt gratitude from the noticeable efforts the public school principals made to support and accommodate the seminary. This indicates that most principals expressed appreciation and praise for the efforts the other gave in maintaining the relationship; and therefore, felt positive emotions from it—which according to Lawler and Thye (1999) promotes greater “cooperation and compliance” with each other to sustain a relationship (p. 238).

**The relationships were maintained for the students.** A common justification for maintaining the relationship that was mentioned by the majority of the principals was because, in the words of Mr. Sorenson, “the relationship is about helping kids” (Interview, 2/17/2011). For example, Mr. Callor felt his relationship with the seminary was part of “the community raising the child,” in which both work together “to have a positive experience for [the] kids and their growth patterns” (Interview, 2/16/2011). Similarly, Bro. Austed explained, “We are working as equals to try and provide a good educational experience for these kids and take care of their needs” (Interview, 2/9/2011). The usefulness of using the relationship as a means to help students is realized in the experience of Mr. Bronson and Bro. Sessions with their joint efforts to support a girl struggling with a teenage pregnancy. In fact, in five of the six relationships studied, references were made to students being as much benefactors from the relationship as the public school and seminary were. This finding was not surprising considering that the justification of maintaining relationships between public schools and released-time programs for the needs of the students has always been the determining factor for the courts in upholding, as a legal practice, released-time religious programs that have come
under legal scrutiny (Zorach v. Clauson, 1952; Smith v. Smith, 1975; Lanner v. Wimmer, 1981). In fact, even the majority of the high level coordinating practices of the close relationship between Logan High School and the LDS seminary adjacent were upheld as constitutional accommodations for the spiritual needs of the students and for conveniences to the school (Lanner v. Wimmer, 1981).

The principals’ practices of maintaining the relationships for the students are further supported by social exchange theory’s concept of role, or normative obligations in exchange relations. Explained by Burns (1973), certain positions, such as doctors, teachers, and parents are expected to have concern for and seek the best interest of those to whom they have responsibility over. Therefore, in light of this theoretical assumption, it was recognized that the principals made efforts to maintain the public school-seminary relationships because they are expected, through their profession, to serve the best interests of the students and see to their wellbeing.

Implications for Research

As a result of the current study and its key findings, several implications for future research dealing with public school-LDS seminary relations emerge. Whereas the current study is the first study to analyze the public school-seminary relationship through the lens and language of social exchange theory, it is suggested that similar studies be conducted to validate the researcher’s use of the theoretical lens in this context and to verify and/or extend the current study’s findings. Similarly, because these findings were obtained through qualitative methods, it is suggested that a similar study be conducted
using quantitative methods in order to reduce researcher subjectivity and potentially allow the findings to be generalized to a wider population. Furthermore, because the current study dealt with the public school-LDS seminary relationship in Utah, it is suggested that a similar study be conducted on the public school-LDS relationship in another state or on the public school-released-time relationships of other faiths to see if findings for the current study are consistent and applicable in other contexts.

In addition, while the current study focused only on perceptions and practices of principals from both institutions, findings in the study revealed that the relationship involved more than just the two principals. For example, the principals’ communication efforts in each relationship under investigation also included communication with assistant principals, secretaries, and high school counselors. Since these other people were not included in the definition of the relationship or scope for the current study, it invites the possibility of describing the relationship from a number of different perspectives. For example, since the current study focused solely on the dyad, public and seminary principals as role-playing agents in the relationship, it is suggested that further research be done using social exchange theory to study relations between other role-playing agents. It is also suggested that researchers interested in extending findings to the current study look at Cook and Emerson’s (1978) work on networks as units of social exchange to incorporate three or more people in the relationship instead of just two. For example, in considering comments from principals interviewed in the current study that pointed to students as benefactors of and reasons for the relationship, a study could be conducted in which the relationship is described as a triangle between the school, the
seminary, and the students. Moreover, in considering Anyon’s (2009) notion that theory dictates what one finds in a study, it is suggested that the relationship be analyzed through an entirely different theoretical lens to allow for new findings to emerge that were out of the peripheries of the theoretical lens used for the current study.

Because key findings in the current study suggested that the relationship is maintained because it is an expectation and an ingrained part of the culture of the state, and that principals’ efforts in the relationship are sometimes restricted or dictated by institutionalized standards and social obligations, it is recognized that principal participation in the relationship does not necessarily determine whether there is a relationship or not. However, findings did suggest that principal efforts in the relationship were a factor in determining how functional the relationship was and what feelings resulted. Therefore, it is suggested that more research be conducted to determine the institutional factors dictating the relationship and the social and cultural norms in which the relationship is situated and in which principals operate. Along these lines, it is suggested that research be conducted to understand how a high school and seminary relationship is created to begin with, or to determine what happens to a relationship when there is a change in administration at the public school or seminary.

Ultimately, the broad nature of the current study implies that each key finding could be studied on its own and in greater depth. For example, since the current study was the only one, when compared with other relevant studies on the topic, to have specifically discussed benefits received by the seminary from the public school, it is suggested that further research be conducted to analyze the benefits the seminary
receives. Similarly, because comments from the study participants suggested that principal support of the seminary was less of a factor on enrollment than community factors, it is suggested that a study be conducted looking at factors which play into the growth or diminishment of seminary enrollment. Moreover, whereas the current study verified findings from previous studies which indicated financial savings accrued by the school as a result of the relationship, more recent investigations indicating how much savings are accrued are suggested. Also, whereas the current study found that the moral instruction offered by the seminary was seen by most principals as a benefit for the public school, it is suggested that further research be done to analyze the effect of religious instruction on the behavior and academic achievement of the students who attend. Lastly, whereas the current study found that principals perceived the relationship to be working well, it is suggested that future research seek to find out specific components that contribute to maintaining a good relationship in order to provide a guide from which both public and seminary principals may obtain information from and be instructed on.

**Implications for Administrative Practice**

Findings from the current study also have implications for administrative practice. For a graphic illustration of the implications for administrative practice discussed in this section refer to Figure 2.

Findings supported past research indicating that the seminary and public school principals’ actions in the relationship were based more on culturally accepted norms, or rules of thumb, rather than an actual understanding of case law. Findings further revealed
that lack of understanding the legal parameters of the relationship led principals to be overly cautious of overstepping legal boundaries, thus limiting their ability to take advantage of resources and opportunities afforded them by state and court law. Therefore, this finding implies that principals should become more knowledgeable about legal rulings regarding separation of church and state; particularly with respect to released-time for religious education. Such understanding would enable them to stay within the legal boundaries established for the relationship and take advantage of legal rights afforded them.

Hence, it is suggested that school districts provide information and inservice
instruction to public school principals with respect to laws of separation of church and
state. It is also suggested that, because released-time is an imbedded tradition in the Utah
educational system, state and university organizations responsible for educating future
public school administrators include instruction with respect to the public school-
religious released-time program relationship and the legal parameters surrounding it as a
more prevalent part of the administrative certification process. It is further suggested that
S&I administration and local area administrators provide better instruction to seminary
principals with respect to legal parameters of the relationship. Doing so would help
seminary principals, who according to Johnson (2008), felt that they lacked training
dealing with their managerial responsibilities. Similarly, whereas findings in the study
showed that principals’ understanding of what to do in the relationship fell back on
tradition, it is suggested, along with improved instruction with respect to the legal
parameters of the relationship, that principals also be instructed on current appropriate
and effective methods of interacting with each other.

In addition, it is suggested that public school and seminary principals meet as
often as needed to continually define and make clear for each other the parameters of the
relationship, as well as to discuss their own personal perceptions of what is and is not
appropriate in the relationship. Findings implied that continually redefining the
relationship, as well as gaining knowledge about the legal parameters and affective
interaction, would give principals confidence in the appropriateness of their efforts to
maintain the relationship and therefore, make them less worried about public opinion and
less likely to encounter problems from having too close or too distant of a relationship
with the each other—as was the case in the Jackson and Millport relationships. Furthermore, efforts to meet and define the relationship would help each principal overcome possible misconceptions or false impressions that could result from lack of communication—as was evident in the Millport relationship.

Findings also revealed that communication, along with other non-material and material exchanges, between the public school and seminary principals was recognized as an important part to establishing a good working relationship. Therefore, it is suggested that principals make as many efforts as possible in maintaining the relationship so that positive perceptions and feelings result from the arrangement. For example, whereas attendance and tardiness were expressed by most public school principals as the greatest problem in the relationship, seminary principals should make every effort possible to establish a legitimate program where there are high expectations for seminary attendance and punctuality. Furthermore, it is suggested that both principals work to maintain as good a relationship as possible in order to help students, particularly those students who are struggling in their personal lives. In addition, working to maintain a good relationship could help in overcoming obstacles imposed by those not supportive of the association—as was witnessed in the Harmony and Seneca relationships.

Furthermore, findings implied that for principals to maintain or develop positive working relationships with each other they each needed to put forth efforts to communicate with, make accommodations for, and support each other. In particular, these findings imply that communication works best when principals get to know each other and are the ones regularly communicating instead of delegating that responsibility.
to assistant principals or secretaries. In like fashion, findings from the current study revealed that public school principals noticed how and in what ways the seminary principal and instructors supported the students and recognized and appreciated their efforts in going to school sponsored assemblies, activities, and sporting events. In fact, a couple of public school principals commented that they believed such efforts from the seminary principals indicated the level of care they had for the students and increased the public school principals’ trust in them as educational leaders. Hence, these comments imply that one way for a seminary principal to earn the trust and respect of the public school is to be more actively involved in supporting the students in their extra-curricular activities.

In addition, as suggested by Mr. Callor, it is important for public school principals to be aware of the benefits that the seminary provides the school. Conversely, the same could be said of seminary principals understanding the benefits that the school provides the seminary, since a couple of seminary principals, at first, found it difficult to identify ways in which the school benefited them. Therefore, findings in the current study imply that both public school and seminary principals should take time to consider the effect the relationship has on their institution and be willing to express gratitude to the other for benefits and positive emotions that result from it. For example, Bro. Moser, upon recognizing the benefits the seminary received from the school, brought to his attention as a result of the interview process, commented several times during the interview that he was going to personally thank Mr. Sorenson for his efforts to support and accommodate the seminary. When the researcher called Bro. Moser weeks after the interview to clarify
a statement from the interview, he informed the researcher that since the time of the interview he and Mr. Sorenson had met and both expressed appreciation to the other for the relationship that had developed between them and their institutions. Similarly, Bro. Sessions admitted that he often sends cards, notes, or e-mails to Mr. Bronson expressing his gratitude for the support the school offers him and the seminary. These comments and examples imply that principals seeking to maintain a good relationship could engage in similar efforts.

**Conclusion to the Study**

As stated at the beginning of the current study, the symbiotic relationship that has formed over the years between the public schools and LDS seminary in Utah has never been explored by looking at the perceptions and practices of principals from both sides of the relationship either simultaneously or through a theory of social exchange as a theoretical lens. This study has provided descriptions of six different public school-seminary relationships by analyzing the principals’ experiences through findings in the literature and a theoretical framework in order to arrive at key findings that have helped provide an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation—particularly what public and seminary principals perceive as a result of the relations, how the relationship is maintained, and why it is maintained. Furthermore, findings to the study have provided relevant implications for future research and administrative practices. Hence, the study concludes with a description of the essence of the phenomenon taken from the key findings discussed in this chapter (Figure 1).
The professional relationship between the public schools and LDS seminary program in Utah is a long standing tradition imbedded into the culture of the state. Public school and seminary principals, as role-playing agents for their individual institutions, for the most part, perceive the relationship to be positive, working well, valuable, mutually beneficial, and one from which positive emotions are generally felt. The benefits the public school principals recognize receiving from the relationship are reduced class sizes, economic savings, and support in enabling students to become better students and good citizens. The benefits the seminary principals recognize receiving from the relationship are access to students, opportunities to build rapport with students, and help in monitoring enrollment. These benefits are perceived as outweighing any challenges that have or could result from the relationship.

As a result of the longevity of the relationship and the benefits each receives from the other, both institutions have become dependent upon the other. In consequence of this co-dependency, principals practice maintaining a good relationship through varying efforts, or exchanges, of communication, accommodation, support, and expressions of appreciation; such as the giving of gifts. These efforts/exchanges are viewed by both principals as being reciprocal and equitable, even though they are not necessarily equal; with the seminary bearing most of the burden in maintaining the relationship. They are also viewed as being necessary for maintaining the relationship in behalf of the needs of the students. In addition, these efforts/exchanges to maintain the relationship are not necessarily thought out or negotiated between the principals, but are a result of cultural norms that have developed over time and out of social obligations principals have in
making sure they are meeting the needs of the students and the desires of the parents and community. Also, without complete understanding of state and court laws regarding separation of church and state, both public school and seminary principals also attempt to maintain the relationship by being sensitive to the legal parameters established for the relationship. In this regard, the seminary principals are the more cautious ones.

This essence, or description of the public school-LDS seminary relationship in Utah, could be described differently by others when interviewing different people and viewing the relationship through a different theoretical lens. However, the relationship between the public school and LDS seminary program in Utah described in this study is believed to be the most adequate and comprehensive description, according to the key findings taken from six public school-LDS seminary relationships, and viewed in light of other relevant research and through social exchange theory as a theoretical lens. It is also believed to be the most current research-based description available on public school and LDS seminary relations in Utah, until more research on the phenomenon is conducted.
REFERENCES


Lanner v. Wimmer, 662 F. 2d 1349 (10th Cir. 1981).


Reynolds v. United States, 98 U.S. 145 (1878).


Smith v. Smith, 523 F.2d 121, 125 (4th Cir. 1975).


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Bracketing Interview
BRACKETING INTERVIEW

The following interview was conducted May 5, 2011. The interview consisted of four questions asked of the researcher. The interview was transcribed by the researcher.

Dr. Warnick:

Casey, why did you pick this phenomenon to study?

Casey Ashcroft:

The reason why I picked it, to begin with was I was interested in the relationship between the public school and the seminaries, particularly where I am working right now as a seminary teacher. I went to the high school, to Logan High School, and now I’m teaching seminary there and I had a lot of good relationships with teachers at the high school and then I noticed there was a little bit of a change when I became a seminary teacher. Whenever I was in my suit I felt like they treated me a little bit different than they did when I was not in my suit, or the way they treated me before. So, I started to wonder why that was, and recognizing that Lanner v. Wimmer, a significant court case happened there, I decided to go look at the court case and see if, well, I started recognizing that people were making comments like, “We can’t do that because of the court case.” So I went and looked, and I wanted to see, and found just the opposite, that the court case gave a lot more liberty in the relationship than was perceived. So that got me looking at issues of separation of church and state, um, but I realized that that was only one piece of the relationship and so I expanded it more to look at the entire phenomenon, than just issues of separation of church and state between the two.

Dr. Warnick:

What has been your experience with the phenomenon?

Casey Ashcroft:

Oh, well like I said, um, my experience—I haven’t been a public school, or I haven’t been a seminary principal, so I haven’t had experience as far as the relationship I’m looking at, principal relationship with principal. But being a teacher, like I said before, I realized that there was um, it was kind of a relationship that was unspoken. That the teachers knew that we were there and we knew that they were there but we didn’t interact much, at least not at Logan High, and I got curious if that was the case with everywhere. And uh, so my experience has been—if I were to define the relationship at Logan High is that it’s very aloof. It’s there, but not really discussed or talked about much.
Dr. Warnick:

What biases did you bring with you to the study as the researcher?

Casey Ashcroft:

Clearly, as a religious educator and an employee of the seminary programs, I came in with, you know, not wanting to hurt the relationship at all. Um, wanting the study to be something that would help the relationship, and so one of the biases I came in with is that I see everything from the seminary side and don’t see as much on the side of the public school and so that might skew my perception of the data collection. Um, particularly and possible with the implications because I can see more clearly how implications affect the seminary side of the relationship than I do the public school because I haven’t experienced as much of the public school side. And, you know, I want to protect them and so that’s a bias that I explained in the study, that I needed to watch for and took the American Anthropological Code of Ethics as my guide in that, um, stating that protection of participants supersedes, in some cases, data collection.

Dr. Warnick:

What did you think you would find before collecting the data?

Casey Ashcroft:

I actually thought that I would kind of find a little bit more of what I’ve experienced at Logan High; that it’s not talked about, but it’s there. But I found quite the opposite. I found that Logan High, and maybe because of the court case that happened there, is more private about the relationship than the schools that I studied. So, I thought that I would find more of an allusive type relationship. I figured I would find a positive relationship though, because if it’s been around that long, there’s got to be some positive elements of it. I expected to find a lot of challenges, a lot of fear over issues of separation of church and state. Um, I expected to find that.
Appendix B

Pilot Study Interview Protocol
PILOT STUDY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. How long have you been a principal/assistant principal? How many students, faculty
do you work with? How long have you been in administration? Where have you taught?

2. Tell me what you know about the history of your school’s association with the LDS
seminary.

3. Tell me about your school’s current arrangement with the LDS seminary.

4. What works well in having the LDS seminary adjacent to your school?
   (Probe for concrete examples)

5. What concerns or problems result by having the LDS seminary adjacent to your
   school?
   (Probe for concrete examples)

6. Do you perceive the relationship as being beneficial to both parties (public school and
   LDS seminary)—why or why not? (If so) How?

7. How do you view your role with respect to balancing and maintaining a relationship
   that is accommodating, yet separate?

8. Are there any other released time programs that students from your school attend? (If
   yes) What is your school’s relationship with them? How are they similar/different from
   LDS released time?

9. Would you like to comment further on anything that I have asked, or anything you
   have said?

10. Is there any other issue(s) you would like to share regarding our discussion about
    your school’s association with the LDS seminary?

** Assure them of confidentiality and thank them for their time and insights.
Appendix C

Letter of Information
LETTER OF INFORMATION

Utah Public Schools and LDS Released-time Program Relations:
Perspectives and Practices of Principals from Both Institutions

Introduction/Purpose: Dr. Brian Warnick and graduate student Casey Ashcroft in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University are conducting a research study to find out more about the professional relationships between Utah public high schools and the LDS seminary programs adjacent. You have been asked to take part because you are the principal at one of the high schools/seminaries selected for this study and you may provide valuable perspective on the relationship. There will be approximately 16 total participants in this research, eight public school principals and eight LDS seminary principals.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this research study, you will be asked to:
1. participate in a one-hour, face-to-face interview with the student researcher. The interview will be audio-recorded.
2. review the written conclusions of the study to ensure that the researcher has portrayed honestly and accurately your perspectives and statements from the interview.
3. help the researcher obtain school/seminary policy documents and other materials related to student release from the public school for participation in LDS seminary classes. Total time involvement should not exceed three hours.

Risks: Participation in this research study involves minimal risk. You may experience some discomfort in talking about your association with the LDS seminary/public school. There is a small risk of loss of confidentiality but steps will be taken to prevent that as described below under "Confidentiality."

Benefits: There may or may not be any direct benefit to you from these procedures. The researcher, however, believes that the information gathered may be of great benefit in better understanding the relationships between LDS seminary programs and public schools now and in the future, ultimately ensuring better relationships between the two.

Explanation & offer to answer questions: Casey Ashcroft has explained this research study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Brian Warnick at (435) 797-0578 or brian.warnick@usu.edu

Voluntary nature of participation and right to withdraw without consequence
Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence or loss of benefits.

Confidentiality: Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and state regulations. Data collected will be coded using pseudonyms assigned for names and locations to ensure confidentiality and protect the privacy of participants. Only Casey Ashcroft and Dr. Brian Warnick will have access to the data which will be kept in a locked file cabinet or on a password-protected computer in a locked room to maintain confidentiality. Audio recordings of interviews will be erased one year from the completion of the study. All data collected will be cross-analyzed and no identifiable information for the schools, seminary or principals will be provided.

¥7 2/10/2020
LETTER OF INFORMATION

Utah Public School and LDS Released-time Program Relations: Perspectives and Practices of Principals from Both Institutions

IRB Approval Statement: The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human participants at Utah State University has approved this research study. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or a possible research-related injury, you may contact the IRB Administrator at (435) 797-0567. If you have a concern or complaint about the research and you would like to contact someone other than the research team, you may contact the IRB Administrator at email irb@usu.edu to obtain information or to offer input.

Investigator Statement: "I certify that the research study has been explained to the individual, by me or my research staff, and that the individual understands the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with taking part in this research study. Any questions that have been raised have been answered."

Brian Warnick
Principal Investigator
(435-797-0378)
(brian.warnick@usu.edu)

Casey Ashcroft
Student Researcher
(435-760-2638)
(caseyashcroft@yahoo.com)
Appendix D

S&I Educational Research Committee Approval Letter
01 December 2010

Casey W. Ashcroft  
US Utah North Area  
110 West 100 South  
Logan, UT 84321

Dear Brother Ashcroft:

The S&I Education Research Committee has approved your research project under the following conditions:

1. The collection of data will be limited to those efforts outlined in your proposal.
2. Any changes to your instrumentation or procedures will be submitted to the committee for approval.
3. You will contact your research subjects and their supervisors well in advance to permit maximum flexibility in managing their schedules.
4. You will obtain S&I approval to publish or present any of your research findings.
5. You will provide S&I with an electronic copy of your research report upon completion of your degree. The copy should be in pdf format and include the signatures on the signature page. Please submit document to: edu-research@ldchurc.org.

We look forward to learning from your research and using it to improve S&I programs.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Randall Hall  
Associate Administrator

Ninth Floor • 50 East North Temple Street • Salt Lake City, Utah 84130-2700
Appendix E

Interview Protocol
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me a little about your career and your feelings for your current assignment as principal of this high school/LDS seminary.

2. Tell me what you know about the history of your school’s/seminary’s association with the LDS seminary/high school.

3. Tell me about your school’s/seminary’s current arrangement with the LDS seminary/public school.

4. What works well in having the LDS seminary/public school adjacent to you? (Probe for concrete examples)

5. What concerns or problems result by having the LDS seminary/public school adjacent to you? (Probe for concrete examples)

6. Do you perceive the relationship as being beneficial to both parties (public school and LDS seminary)—why or why not? (If so) How?

7. What do you try to do to maintain the relationship?

8. What do you try to avoid in maintaining the relationship?

9. What suggestions would you offer for improving the relationship?

10. What is your understanding of the legal parameters that exist between the LDS released-time program and the adjacent public school—state, local, etc.?

11. Are there any other released time programs that students from your school attend? (If yes) What is your school’s relationship with them? How are they similar/different from LDS released time?

12. Would you like to comment further on anything that I have asked, or anything you have said?
   - Is there any other issue(s) you would like to share regarding our discussion about your school’s association with the LDS seminary?

** Assure them of confidentiality and thank them for their time and insights.
Appendix F

External Audit
EXTERNAL AUDIT

I hereby attest that this study meets the validity requirements for qualitative inquiry. I have performed an external audit examining the audit trail which consists of raw data, analyzed data, records of study processes, and theoretical framework. In my opinion the researcher has followed proscribed and recognized qualitative methodology for establishing trustworthiness.

Dustin Robert West
LDS Seminary Instructor
Ph.D. Candidate
Appendix G

Taxonomic Analytic Scheme—A Sample of Data Reduction
Selected Principal Comments

Mr. Sorenson: ...like I said, the message in seminary is a good message for kids, and kids that follow those things down there are probably going to be better behaved and act like better citizens, be nicer. And so I think those are the real benefits.

Bro. H. Mixer: We are doing the school a valuable service by providing class for ... 150 students every hour, but also hopefully the type of things that we emphasize are the type of things that make them better school citizens.

Mr. Kent: You would hope that a kid who is coming from someplace where they are learning about their religion would come back into the school a little bit more. In addition, we need to get away from the language of a little bit more religion.

Bro. A. U. Caudle: I think most administrators in schools recognize that seminary provides an opportunity for kids to go over and be taught good things where they're encouraged and invited to become good citizens, good students, good people.

Mr. Bronson: The benefits are the behavior of the student. They're more respectful students. They're better students. [Without seminary, the students] would be far better educated hellions.

Bro. Sessions: Mr. Blake, the superintendent ... mentioned the attitude of students being able to come and have a spiritual experience, then going back to the school in a little more calm, a little more disciplined.

Mr. Maxson: I think that the fact that they are taking seminary, if nothing else, I think that they have to be performing at a higher standard and so I think that that generalizes.

Bro. Watt: I think by kids coming here and going back, I think you add to the atmosphere and the spirit of the school ... if that's gone, conceivably you'd have more problems.

Mrs. Oberg: I'd almost bet that the percentage of our scholars, our seniors, our AP advanced kids, the percentage of those kids that attend seminary are higher than eighty percent. So seminary's not hurting them academically. They are excelling academically.

Bro. Fielding: I believe they know we put a lot of emphasis on values and living at a standard that would be pro society and helpful to their cause.

Mr. Callow: I wish everyone of our kids was here because as they go and have that experience they're going to come back in our building and be a better influence in our building.

Bro. Sullivan: ... there's the monetary, but there's also the spiritual side that just calms everything down I think ... that those in the school who are wise understand.
CURRICULUM VITAE

CASEY W. ASHCROFT

1. Academic Degrees

Ph.D. Utah State University, Curriculum and Instruction—Instructional Leadership, 2011

M.S. Utah State University, Agricultural Systems Technology and Education—Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Extension, 2007

B.A. Utah State University, History Teaching—English and Secondary Language Teaching, 2003

2. Professional Experience

2004-present Instructor, Logan LDS Seminary

2005-2007 Special Needs Instructor, Logan LDS Seminary

2005 Instructor, Logan LDS Institute of Religion

2004 Instructor, Hyrum LDS Seminary

3. Related Experience

2011 Presenter, S&I Central Office Research Forum, Salt Lake City, UT. Utah Public School and LDS Released-time Program Relations: Perspectives and Practices of Principals from Both Institutions

2009-present Advisor, LDS Seminary Youth Council

2004-2007 Advisor, LDS Seminary Youth Council

2006 Presenter, S&I Utah North Area In-Service, Logan, UT. Understanding Doctrinal Principles of the Manifesto of 1890
2004  Presenter, S&I Utah North Area In-service, Logan, UT. *Helping Students Understand, Identify, and Apply Principles*

4. **Awards**

2004  Utah State University, *Drake Outstanding Student Teacher Award*, Department of Secondary Education

5. **Publications**