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Abstract: [50 words]

In 2018, teachers in SDA Schools in North America were asked to rank from a list what they considered should be the top three aims for their schools. This paper reports their answers, and reflects on them in the light of the contested claims regarding the purpose of Adventist Schools.

Proposal [250-500 words]

Primary and Secondary Teachers in North American Responses to the Contested Claims
Regarding the Purpose of Adventist Schools

Data was gathered from approximately 1,760 primary and secondary teachers who work at Seventh-day Adventist Schools in North America, as part of research that projects that will eventually gather data from all thirteen divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This paper will report on the age and education demographic profile of the approximately 960 respondents who completed all the questions in the survey. It further reports on priorities that the participants place on the variety of goals for Adventist education that have been advocated by different groups within the Adventist Church.

Those explaining the purpose of Adventist Schools point out that as well as developing students mentally, physically and vocationally, they have a higher purpose, “to restore the image of God in students and to prepare them for service in this life and the next” (Beardsley-Hardy 2017; cf White 1903). The church acknowledges a responsibility to pass on its philosophy to its young people (Knight 2016). Others point to the importance of discipleship and mission outreach (Parker 2018).

Teachers were asked to choose the top three aims of Adventist Schools, as well as rate each of them in terms of 1. Should not be aim of my organization; 2. Neutral; 3. Important aim, but not one of top three aims; 4. One of top three aims; 0. Does not apply to my organization. The optional aims that they were provided included: 2a. Deliver the highest quality in the services we provide; 2b. Act in a manner which contributes to the physical, psychological, social and spiritual wellbeing of our students; 2c. Promote a healthy lifestyle; 2d. Be competitive in the sector or market place in which it operates; 2e. Meet the needs of the local community in which the organization is found; 2f. Create a Christian environment in which to work; 2g. Further the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus; 2h. Create an environment that makes it more likely that each student will accept Jesus Christ as their saviour and friend; 2i. Create a positive perception of the Adventist Church; 2j. Further the mission of the wider Adventist Church; 2k. Make money to support the activities of the Adventist Church; 2l. Be a link or interface between the Adventist Church and the community; 2m. Put into practice the teachings

of the Adventist Church; 2n. Create opportunities for students/patients/clients to hear about the Adventist Church; 2o. Lead students to join the Adventist Church and become baptized.

This paper reports on how teachers rated the various aims of Adventist schools, and reflects on the results.

References:

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