



The pragmatic archivist: An exploration of information management
in K-12 independent schools

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2024

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract / Résumé

The archival records of primary and secondary schools are valuable sources of information that could support their institutions' administrative and curricular activities, as well as the collective memory and identities of their community members, but only when they are captured, made accessible, and preserved. As archival management is perceived as extraneous to a school's core function of educating students, recordkeeping is not always prioritized. This disregard can lead to ad-hoc, decentralized, or non-existent information management strategies, which in turn leads to knowledge not being shared or captured, and records not being preserved. Both the school and its archive suffer. This research explored the nature and purpose of information and records within K-12 independent schools and established connections between different organizational variables and information management.

Research is sparse on the management of primary and secondary school archives, and even less touches on independent schools specifically. The primary objective of this research was to examine the state of information management in K-12 independent schools in Quebec, Canada from an archival perspective. It explored the different types of records that are created or acquired by K-12 school archives (as well as those that are not), the information management needs of these schools, the organizational variables that could be important regarding information management in schools, and the role of school archivists.

This was a case study of a single school, which included three different data collection methods: a document analysis to understand how the school's records were managed; interviews with administrators to learn about the records they create and information they need; and a faculty survey to see how their informational practices and requirements compared with the administrative staff. The case study was followed by interviews with archivists from similar schools to gather their perspectives as well as to see if any of the themes that had been uncovered would be present in other institutions.

The data clearly demonstrated that, in the case study school, information management was not always prioritized, and as such, administrative staff, teaching faculty, and the school's archival collection suffered. Organizational information tended to be shared most effectively between small departments and close colleagues without the benefit of strong centralized information management policies and procedures. The school archivists interviewed tended to be under-resourced, under-supported, and inundated by the magnitude and scope of their responsibilities. The management of the school's digital records was specifically an area of concern.

A functional analysis was completed that detailed many of the different records that independent K-12 schools create or acquire and should be retained by their archive. It also included an examination of some of the appraisal and accession, use and access, and management and preservation considerations that should be addressed. Ten 'moments of failure' were then identified that could lead to gaps in a school's archive. This was followed by an examination of some of the information management needs of a K-12 independent school, which led to an analysis of six organizational variables that could be important regarding information management programs in schools. Finally, it argued that, especially as business records have embraced the digital, the role and positioning of school archivist must be revisited to remain relevant and effective.

Les archives des écoles primaires et secondaires sont des sources d'information précieuses qui pourraient soutenir les activités administratives et académiques de leurs institutions, ainsi que la mémoire collective et les identités de leurs communautés, mais seulement si elles sont captées, accessibles et préservées. Comme la gestion des archives est perçue comme distincte de la fonction principale d'une école, qui est d'éduquer les élèves, la gestion documentaire n'est

pas toujours une priorité. Ce manque d'attention peut conduire à des stratégies de gestion de l'information désorganisées, décentralisées ou inexistantes, ce qui peut empêcher le partage ou la rétention des connaissances et la non-conservation des archives. L'école et ses archives en souffrent tous les deux. Cette recherche explore la nature et les fonctions de l'information et des archives dans les écoles privées du primaire et du secondaire et établit des liens entre différentes variables organisationnelles et la gestion de l'information.

Les recherches sur la gestion des archives des écoles primaires et secondaires sont peu nombreuses, encore moins sur les écoles privées en particulier. L'objectif principal de cette recherche est d'examiner l'état de la gestion de l'information dans les écoles indépendantes du primaire et du secondaire au Québec, Canada, du point de vue des archives. Cette recherche explore les différents types de documents créés ou acquis par les services d'archives scolaires du primaire et du secondaire (ainsi que ceux qui ne le sont pas), les besoins de gestion de l'information de ces écoles, les variables organisationnelles qui pourraient être importantes en ce qui concerne la gestion de l'information dans les écoles, et le rôle des archivistes scolaires.

Cette recherche est une étude de cas portant sur une seule école, qui comprend trois méthodes de collecte de données différentes : une analyse de documents pour comprendre comment les archives de l'école sont gérées ; des entretiens avec les administrateurs pour en apprendre davantage sur les documents qu'ils créent et les informations dont ils ont besoin ; et une enquête auprès des professeurs pour voir comment leurs pratiques et besoins en matière d'information se comparent à ceux du personnel administratif. L'étude de cas a été suivie par des entretiens avec des archivistes d'écoles similaires pour recueillir leurs perspectives et voir si certains des thèmes découverts étaient présents dans d'autres institutions.

Les données démontrent clairement que, dans l'école étudiée, la gestion de l'information n'est pas toujours une priorité, et par conséquent, le personnel administratif, les professeurs, et les archives de l'école en souffrent. En l'absence de politiques et de procédures de gestion de

l'information centralisées, les informations organisationnelles ont surtout tendance à être partagées de manière plus efficace entre les petits départements et les collègues les plus proches. Les archivistes scolaires interrogés ont tendance à être sous-financés, peu soutenus et dépassés par l'ampleur et la portée de leurs responsabilités. La gestion des archives numériques de l'école est spécifiquement un domaine de préoccupation.

Une analyse fonctionnelle a été réalisée afin de détailler les différents types de documents que les écoles indépendantes primaires et secondaires créent ou acquièrent et qui devraient être conservés dans leurs archives. Elle examine également certaines des considérations d'évaluation et d'acquisition, d'utilisation et d'accès, de gestion et de préservation qui doivent être abordées. Dix « moments d'insuccès » qui pourraient entraîner des lacunes dans les archives d'une école sont ensuite identifiés. Cela a été suivi d'un examen de certains besoins en gestion de l'information d'une école privée primaire et secondaire, et d'une analyse de six variables organisationnelles qui pourraient être importantes en ce qui concerne les programmes de gestion de l'information dans les écoles. Enfin, cet examen fait valoir que le rôle et le positionnement des archivistes scolaires doivent être revus afin que ces derniers demeurent pertinents et efficaces dans le contexte de la gestion numérique des documents.

Dedication

To Xander and Hazel. Thank you for making me always want to be a better person, and for teaching me more than I could ever have taught you. I am in awe of the amazing young adults you have become and will be watching your futures unfold with delight. I am honoured and privileged to be your mother.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by Mitacs through the Mitacs Accelerate program. Thank you to Mitacs for this incredible opportunity.

I would like to thank the Head of School where my case study took place. Without their enthusiasm towards my project and constant encouragement, this thesis would never have been possible. I would also like to thank all the study's participants: the administrators who readily agreed to be interviewed, the faculty who submitted thoughtful responses to my survey, and the archivists who graciously shared their stories and experiences with me. Even those staff members who were not directly involved with this research were kind, open, and welcoming — making me feel like family.

Dr. Kimiz Dalkir, Dr. Gracen Brilmyer, Dr. Max Evans, and Gordon Burr were extremely helpful with their feedback and support at various times throughout this process, thank you. The administrative team at the McGill School of Information Studies have always been extremely helpful, especially Kathryn Hubbard and Cathy Venetico. Seeing their smiling faces on campus never failed to brighten my day. Dr. Jamshid Beheshti and Dr. Catherine Guastavino were also great sources of encouragement, thank you so much. I would also like to thank my examiners, Dr. Max Evans, Dr. Grek Bak, and Dr. Natasha Zwarich.

Dr. Eun Park, thank you for believing in me and my ever-changing visions, and for supporting my application to the PhD program. You were always so encouraging, and your confidence gave me confidence. Thank you for starting me off on this adventure.

Dr. Joan Bartlett, thank you for adopting me as your supervisee when I was orphaned. You helped me bring my scattered thoughts together into a cohesive tome, and for that I will be forever grateful. Thank you for being understanding of my re-prioritizing during Covid, for keeping me on track, comforting me when I cried, kindly convincing me that my graphics didn't need to be quite so colourful, putting up with my occasional negativity, cheering me on when I

had a breakthrough, humoring my antics, your patience with me when I needed it most, and for becoming a good friend.

Speaking of friends, I would like to thank Jennifer, Jane, and Gillian for reviewing my draft, for your kind words, and for your thoughtful, insightful recommendations. Merci, François, de m'avoir aidé avec la traduction française de mon résumé. Gillian and Lucas, I would also like to thank you for listening to me go on and on about my research during our weekly suppers over the years. Your regular feedback helped me to wrangle my thoughts. I would also like to thank you for all the beer and wine, they helped too.

Thank you to my brother Max and sister Hadley for listening to my rants and for occasionally managing to convince me that I'm not completely incompetent.

I would like to thank my father Robert for raising me surrounded by thousands of delightful-smelling books, and my mother Sharon for insisting that I read some of them. And mum, thank you for reading my entire thesis draft the morning I gave it to you, and for humorously live texting your comments in the family group chat. It was a perfect first review. Thank you both for the unwavering support and encouragement that you have shown me throughout my entire life. I could not have asked for better parents.

My kids, Xander and Hazel, I would like to thank you for your understanding when I've been distracted, your tenderness when I've been discouraged, your help when I've been overwhelmed, your humour when I've been grumpy, and for always reminding me of what's most important in life.

James. My partner in crime, my rock, my sounding board, my husband, my best friend. You manage to both lift me up and keep me grounded—not an easy feat, I imagine. I could never have done this without you. Thank you for absolutely everything.

Statement of Responsibility

This thesis is an original work and a distinct contribution to the field of archives and information management. All chapters are the work of Morgannis Graham, PhD Candidate, with guidance from Dr Joan Bartlett, supervisor; Dr Eun Park, former supervisor; and Drs Gracen Brilmyer and Kimiz Dalkir, committee members. This research was funded by a Mitacs Accelerate grant.

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List of Abbreviations

APPM Archives, Personal Papers and Manuscripts
BAnQ Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (Quebec National Library and Archives)
BCS Business classification scheme
BoD Board of Directors
CAIS Canadian Accredited Independent Schools
CBPR Community-based participatory research
CEGEP Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (general and vocational college)
DACS Describing Archives: A Content Standard
DROID Digital Record Object Identification
EDMS Electronic Document Management System
GDPR The General Data Protection Regulation
GLAM Galleries, libraries, archives, and museums
HR Human resources
InterPARES International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems
IT Information technology
K-12 Kindergarten to grade 12
KM Knowledge management
MFP Multi-function printer/photocopier
MLIS Master of Library and Information Studies (or Science)
MLS Master of Library Studies (or Science)
MPLP More Product, Less Process
NCTR National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation
OCR Optical character recognition
OAIS Open Archival Information System
PIPEDA The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act
POWRR Preserving digital Objects with Restricted Resources
QAIS Quebec Association of Independent Schools
RM Records management
SAA Society of American Archivists
SARA School Archives & Records Association
SME Small-to-medium-sized enterprises

SSHRC Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

SUCHO Saving Ukrainian Cultural Heritage

TRC Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UNESCO The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Preamble

To understand how this thesis came to be, I feel that it would be helpful to share a bit about my educational and professional background, as they have had a direct impact on my research motivations and approach.

My adventure in archives began in 2001. I was living in Montreal, Canada, a recent graduate from university with a bachelor's degree in history and English. Finding my employment opportunities to be quite limited, I jumped around between terrible jobs and became increasingly despondent. Apparently, I wasn't much fun to live with because my husband encouraged me to take some time to figure out my career path. It was one of the greatest gifts he could have given me. I approached the McCord Museum of Canadian History and asked if they could use any volunteers. They trained me to work in the museum's archive, and my life changed. After a few weeks, they acquired a grant to hire me on, so I was able to make some money as a cataloguer (much to my and my husband's relief!). I spent years painstakingly describing tens of thousands of 19th-century photographs and loved every minute of it. It was during this time that I applied to the Master of Library and Information Studies program at McGill, which thankfully was located across the street from the museum, so I could continue to work while studying. Between 2003 when I began and 2007 when I graduated, I had not only continued to work, but had also given birth to two children.

Immediately following graduation, we moved to London, UK, for my husband's job. When my youngest child was about two years old, I reached out to the Imperial War Museum to see if they could use some help, and, once again, was offered a role as a volunteer—this time cataloguing newsreels from the First World War. This was an incredible opportunity, but it didn't last long, as soon after I started, I was offered a full-time position as the archivist for the Prudential Life Assurance Company.

My time at the Prudential was a whirlwind of experiences. My supervisor was an archivist but had moved into a much more senior role in the communications department and didn't have any time to hold my hand. As such, I was a lone arranger in my first real archivist role managing the historical records of an incredibly important (and old!) company. I was not tasked with any contemporary records management, but instinctively tried to acquire as many significant modern records as possible. Most of these were born-digital¹, and there was no infrastructure apart from the company's shared drive for me to store these files. I have always enjoyed computers, so it was natural for me to worry about the future of these digital records. I had not learned much at all about digital preservation during my graduate studies, so I attended workshops, subscribed to listservs, and read as much as I could. In addition to the born-digital files, I also began digitizing some of the collection's photographs and films for use in presentations. There was so much involved with this job, and I was just beginning to realize that the role of business archivist, by necessity, was a lot more multifaceted than what I had believed it to be. This was an exciting discovery, but also quite daunting.

In 2011, we made the difficult decision to move back to Montreal to be closer to family. It took me a year to find work but was eventually hired as the archivist and records manager for the City of Westmount, a small municipality on the island of Montreal. The role was posted as "technician," with a salary that matched that designation, but I saw by the job description that this was not a technician's role. I also recognized that it was very well positioned to be able to make a big impact on the information management for the entire city's administration, so I accepted the title and salary. Once in the role, I got to know as many employees as possible and made them aware of how I could support them to make their jobs easier. I also created

¹ A born-digital record is one that was created electronically, rather than being analog and then digitized. Examples include word processing documents, spreadsheets, digital photographs, and databases.

databases for the archival materials (an upgrade from the lists within Word documents that I had inherited) and updated their records retention schedule, which had last been done in the 1940s. After a year, I appealed to have the job redesignated as management, and succeeded. I had demonstrated the value that an archivist can bring to an organization.

I had gotten a handle on the city's paper records, but the digital ones were cause for concern. As I had done at the Prudential, I put together a limited infrastructure for them on the shared drive and investigated acquiring an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS), but I wasn't convinced that city employees would use one as it would have added to their workload. It also didn't address some of the issues that I had experienced and was anticipating, such as hardware and software obsolescence. The problems surrounding digital preservation were keeping me up at night, the solutions were eluding me, and I wanted the freedom to explore this further. In 2015, once again with the enthusiastic support of my husband, I left my job after being accepted to the PhD program at McGill's School of Information Studies.

That same year, I also started volunteering as the archivist at a small independent K-12² school that I had graduated from 20 years earlier. I just wanted to help a little bit while pursuing my studies, but over the years, I began to commit more and more of my time to the school, learning how they operate and befriending many of the staff.

Because I am terrible at staying in my own lane, after witnessing much exasperation and frustration amongst school staff members, I emerged from the boxes of historical paper records that had comprised the entirety of the school's archivist's mandate and began to informally consult on more general, contemporary information management issues. The silos between

² The term "K-12" represents an educational institution that is a combination elementary and high school (kindergarten to grade 12) and is the demographic focus of this dissertation. Even though in Quebec, most high schools end in grade 11, this research will still use the term "K-12" rather than "K-11" to maintain a standard, more universally understood terminology.

different departments and school functions had led to a multitude of problems, mainly rooted in ad-hoc or non-existent recordkeeping and information management practices.

I knew that archivists—as trained information professionals who can (and should) transcend departmental silos—were very well positioned to do a lot of good in a small organization, well beyond the traditional notion of archives management. I wondered what that could look like and what the situation was like for archivists in other independent schools. A dissertation was born.

Since I had already forged a connection with this school, I discussed my research idea with them, and they graciously agreed to allow me to use their institution for a case study. I would work at the school for 14 months as an information management consultant, during which time I would have unfettered access to their staff and their records. We also applied for a Mitacs Accelerate grant to fund the research, which was approved (see Appendix B).

During my time at the school, as a de facto member of staff, I was in a unique position to conduct research. I developed significant relationships with members of the administration and the faculty, listening to their concerns and celebrating their successes—and by doing so, bonds of trust naturally developed. I transcended departmental silos and acquired a holistic perspective of how information flowed throughout the entire school. I also learned what information was being captured as archives, and, critically, what was not. I witnessed firsthand the impact that information management had on the school's operations, as well as on employee morale.

Throughout the process, I thought deeply about the role of school archivists, and after speaking with a handful of them from other institutions, came to some conclusions about the nature of the role, how it is perceived, and how it needs to evolve.

This thesis presumes a passing familiarity with archival theory and practice, but also attempts to provide enough context so that non-archivists can understand the value that, under the right circumstances, information professionals can bring to their organizations.

I am telling the story of one small school, but the data collected supports claims made in the literature about many of the struggles that all archivists face, specifically those who work outside of GLAM³ organizations within small business archives. The conclusions drawn will not be applicable to all types of archives, but I believe that all archivists will recognize at least a small part of themselves within these pages, and it is my wish that this will inspire some of them to rethink their positions within their organizations and to find the confidence to push for change.

³ Galleries, libraries, archives, and museums.

Clarification

News or facts about something. (A definition of information by Sesame Street's Cookie Monster, as cited in Losee, 1997, p. 255)

What is information? Information can mean different things to different people, and will look differently to a computer engineer than a kindergarten school teacher. Dictionary definitions generally tend to agree with Cookie Monster. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, information is “[k]nowledge communicated concerning some particular fact, subject, or event; that of which one is apprised or told; intelligence, news” (“Information,” 2009). Information scientists are often hesitant to explicitly define the word information, but instead would rather interpret it through its concepts, including (but not limited to) information as a representation of knowledge, as data in the environment, as part of a communications process, and as a resource (Madden, 2000). How is information stored? Where can it be uncovered? How is it communicated and interpreted? What value can it bring to individuals, organizations, or communities? While Cookie Monster's definition of information isn't wrong, clearly there's more to it.

In a business context, information must be managed. The Association for Intelligent Information Management (AIIM) describes information management as the collection, management, and distribution of information. “Information management is a corporate responsibility that needs to be addressed and followed from the uppermost senior levels of management to the front-line worker. Organizations must be held and must hold their employees accountable to capture, manage, store, share, preserve, and deliver information appropriately and responsibly” (AIIM, n.d.).

In the context of this research, ‘Information management’ is used as an umbrella term that covers the data, the knowledge, the records, the books, the systems, and the people involved with information. “Information science is a fascinating field. It is basically about helping people

find the books, articles, pictures, music, information, etc., they need or would like to read or experience” (Hjørland, 2012, p. xxiii). The American Library Association (ALA) is an accreditation body for library schools in Canada, the United States, and Puerto Rico. Although the names of the degrees differ between each school, of the 64 ALA-accredited master’s programs, 55 contain the word ‘information,’ such as Master of Library and Information Studies, Master of Information Studies, Master of Science Information Sciences, or quite elegantly, Master of Information (American Library Association, n.d.). Librarianship, while remaining an important component of ALA-accredited programs, has made way for other related disciplines, including knowledge management, human-computer-interaction, information architecture, systems design, data management, records management, and archival studies. All together, these areas of study fall under the information management umbrella, which is how I intended the term ‘information management’ to be interpreted in this paper.

1. The Pragmatic Archivist

There are two broad types of institutions that hire archivists: The first are those where the management of archival records is a significant part of a core business function, including GLAM organizations, or businesses that rely heavily on their own information resources, such as media companies. In these types of organizations, archivists play a key role, and their work is considered vital. Staff will often make use of archival resources as part of their jobs, so the value that archivists bring to their organization is very clear to all involved.

The other types of institution that hire archivists are those where archiving is not directly tied to a core business function, and while it is often acknowledged as important, is also considered extraneous to the organization's main function(s). This includes government agencies, private companies, charities, and schools. These institutions will create records that should be retained for legal, fiscal, administrative, or historical reasons, but as their staff do not often refer to these records after some time has passed, managing them, especially over the long-term, can be seen as an inconvenience rather than adding value (Adams, 1995; Cumming & Picot, 2014; Noonan & Chute, 2014; Wilson, 1950).

"A review of the literature of the past 15 years reveals that the single greatest problem facing business archives in the present day is the justification of their existence. Unlike museums, galleries, and libraries, businesses are not collecting institutions. They are not mandated in their institutional mission to acquire and preserve objects or records. They are, however, mandated by their stakeholders to turn a profit" (King, 2018, p. 6). School archivists not only have to struggle with the same issues as GLAM archivists regarding archival management, but sometimes, they have to do so while swimming against the tide, having to justify their worth, while also fighting against the apathy of their colleagues and management to forge a position for themselves within their organizations that affords them the access, resources, and influence necessary to do their jobs and demonstrate their value.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Most K-12 schools don't hire archivists.

The archival records⁴ of primary and secondary schools are valuable sources of information that could not only support their institutions' administrative and curricular activities (Mogarro, 2006, pp. 75–77; Spencer, 2000), but also the collective memory and identities of their community members (Schwartz & Cook, 2002). This is only possible, however, when these records are captured, made accessible, and preserved (Fernekas & Rosenberg, 2008; Garnet, 2012). The responsibility of these records would logically fall to a school archivist, but not all schools have the resources or inclination to hire a professional to manage their older, or even contemporary, records.

Without archivists, any historically significant documentary materials produced by schools that are collected by well-intentioned staff members often end up scattered in random filing cabinets, unlabeled boxes in furnace rooms and attics, or magical fantasy worlds after slipping through the backs of wardrobes (for all we know). There is little to no thought given to preservation, arrangement, description, or dissemination. They grab what they can and hope that someone else will deal with it later. That's one of the better-case scenarios.

When an anniversary year approaches, management will briefly concern themselves with archives: Faded photographs will emerge from the wardrobes, a digital timeline will be commissioned, precious documents will be arranged and placed in acid-free folders, students will be temporarily hired to digitize key records, there will be a bit of a hoopla, and then the

⁴ For this research, records refer to all the records of any age—both analog and digital—that are produced or collected with the intent to retain permanently for legal, fiscal, administrative, or historical purposes. This includes not only a school's institutional records, but also private records that have been acquired to enrich the collection. This can include minute books, photographs, films, publications, staff and student records, alumni dossiers, financial records, curriculum-related records, social media posts, personal records, and oral histories. For a wider discussion on the concept of archival records, see section 2.2.3.1.

archive will fade back into obscurity for the next 24 years (with the exception of ‘Throwback Thursdays’ on social media and reunion events).

The few schools that do hire archivists generally give them limited hours and resources with which to do their work, coupled with extra bonus responsibilities that almost never have anything to do with recordkeeping, but always seem to take priority. These professionals (or, in many situations, untrained volunteers) do the best that they can with the time and resources available to them, and what they do is nothing short of miraculous, given their constraints.

Since the early 2000s, the shift from paper to digital business records has picked up in earnest. Most school staff don’t use paper records at all anymore. Certain publications may still be printed, such as yearbooks and newsletters, and those may continue to be deposited with the archive or set aside in an office, but most records are now exclusively digital. If a school doesn’t have an archivist, or if their archivist has not been tasked with the management of contemporary records, the long-term responsibility over these born-digital files is left up to the record creators, often without an explicitly stated mandate or professional guidance.

As time passes, there’s staff turnover, computer systems change, and these files become astonishingly vulnerable. Email and file servers are not backed up for the purpose of long-term preservation, especially once users move to new systems and the legacy ones are abandoned. Not all staff use shared network drives, so when they leave, their files disappear along with them. Where there are no set institutional or even departmental standards, employees file their digital records however they’d like. Finding files from even as recently as a few years prior can prove to be extremely problematic. There is no modern equivalent to the haphazard boxes of paper records in the attic, and digital records do not age well without regular, purposeful archival intervention. Much has already been lost.

Without a robust digital archival program, in the not-so-distant future, there will be no record of school activities from the digital era at all.

And most K-12 schools don't hire archivists.

1.2 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Research is sparse about the management of primary and secondary school archives (Buchanan, 2012, p. 12), and even less has touched on independent schools specifically. The purpose of this research is to learn more about information management in K-12 independent schools in Quebec, Canada from an archival perspective. It will explore the informational needs of staff within schools and will attempt to establish connections between different organizational variables and information management. Finally, it will reflect on the role of school archivists.

When initially proposed, the purpose of this study was to inductively create a detailed analysis of the relationships between the records that are created at an independent school and their uses (and re-uses). The original research questions before any data collection had begun were:

RQ 1: What types of archival records are being created or acquired by independent schools?

RQ 2: What procedures are being utilized by independent schools to ingest, manage, and preserve their historical archives, both analog and digital?

RQ 3: What relationships exist between the ingest, management, and preservation of independent K-12 schools' own archival records and their use?

The plan had been that the types of records that were created by independent schools would be identified within a functional analysis, their management would be studied, and their use and re-use would be explored. RQs 1 and 2 would be examined through several interviews and a survey, as well as a document analysis of the records that were created and kept by the case study institution by administrators, faculty, and students. The major focus was going to be on how the records were used (RQ 3). The idea was to design several action research projects that used the school's archival records to either support curricular or administrative functions, or to engage with the wider school community (including students and alumni).

However, as this research project was exploratory in nature, I followed the data. After completing a few of the administrator interviews, I became very aware of the larger information management struggles of school staff and realized that there was a lot of data there to consider. Instead of spreading myself too thin by seeking out data on the use of the school's records or the records created by students (which are both very important topics and deserving of their own platforms), I decided to eliminate those areas of research altogether. I reasoned that if contemporary institutional records are not effectively appraised and efficiently processed, there will be little left of the archive for anyone to consult. As many schools don't even have any archivist on staff, it was hoped that if a strong case could be made for the value that an archivist could bring to their organization, that it might go far to ensure that not only would schools' institutional records be protected, but that archivists would gain the trust and respect of their colleagues and leadership team, ensuring that they have the resources and mandate to design and implement a holistic information management program that in addition to supporting the records and information needs of staff, would allow them to explore ways to benefit their other community members, in particular students and alumni.

The research questions were therefore adapted as follows:

RQ 1: Which archival records are being created or acquired by K-12 independent schools? Which are not? Why not?

RQ 2: What are the information management needs of a K-12 independent school?

RQ 3: What organizational variables could be important regarding information management within a K-12 independent school?

RQ 4: What is the role of a K-12 independent school archivist?

The primary research population for this case study was school administrators, as they create the bulk of a school's institutional archival records. To supplement those purposeful

conversations, I also explored teachers' recordkeeping strategies and information needs through a survey. Lastly, I met with a handful of independent school archivists to gain some perspective from their viewpoints. As all the participant numbers were relatively small-scale, the purpose of this study was not to prove any kind of causality, but instead to gain insights that, when examined alongside the existing literature, would add to the body of knowledge on school archives and would hopefully bring about discourse, inform schools about the value of archives and archivists, and inspire school archivists to reflect on their own situations and, if necessary, push for change to better position themselves to advocate for their collections.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

As previously discussed, businesses have a responsibility to effectively manage the information produced and used by their organizations. This information would include historical archives, but also contemporary records, as well as knowledge. As will be discussed later in this paper, any distinction between the roles of archivist and records manager must be removed for effective digital information management to take place. This is well addressed by records continuum scholars, and widely accepted amongst the archival community. Helen Samuels, in bucking with tradition, with the development of both documentation strategy and institutional functional analysis, recommended that archivists actively identify the missing voices from collections and search them out to ensure that history is not only being told by those in power. This can include seeking out records from other institutions, personal records, and oral histories. I would also argue that it could include the capture of institutional knowledge that exists in heads.

This research, like most research, began because a problem was identified, and a researcher who wanted to investigate what might help with that problem. To do so, an examination of the context surrounding the problem was required, and then, after analysing that data and consulting the literature, ideas were formulated, and recommendations emerged. In this case, the problem identified was actually two problems, but it was hypothesized that they were linked, and that in addressing one, the other might be affected.

The first problem was that K-12 schools often did not prioritize archives, and archives were suffering for it. The second problem was that when there are no information management policies to guide school staff, that they find it difficult and frustrating to do their jobs.

From these two problems, a hypothesis grew: that if a school archivist could expand their role to include the design and management of a holistic information management program, that this could a) help school staff to do their jobs b) situate the archivist so that they have better

knowledge of and access to school functions, activities, and documents, which would lead to c) improved appraisal and capture of archival records.

Since school archivists work within an institutional environment, it was also important to understand the context within which they were operating, and what organizational variables could be important to consider when examining information management in schools.

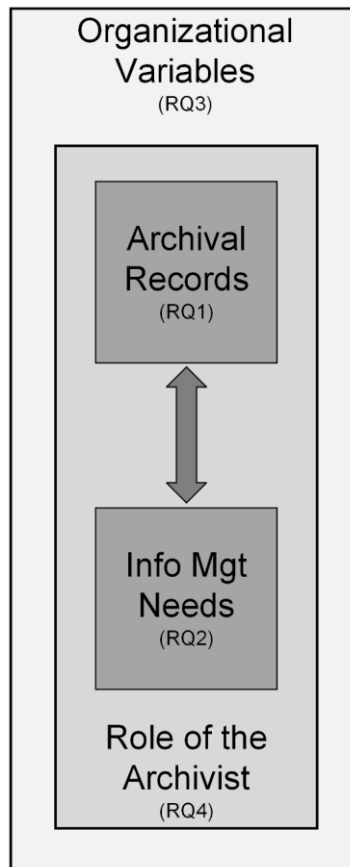
While there was not a lot of literature that spoke of K-12 independent school archives directly, what was there was explored, as well as literature regarding archives of public schools, colleges and universities, and small-to-medium-sized businesses. In addition, child abuse in schools was examined, especially the complexities of documenting it.

The second part of the literature review was an examination of archivists and archiving. Since the research was proposing an expanded role for archivists, the evolution of the role of archivists was explored, including an examination of the records continuum model. It also considered the perception of archivists and archives by those outside of the profession, such as colleagues and employers. This was because it was noted in both the literature and the archivist interviews that the perception of others influenced how the role of archivist was framed, how much respect they received, and how seriously their recommendations were taken. For archivists to successfully campaign for greater responsibility, those in charge needed to understand what it is that they did and how they could support their organization (and their organization's bottom line, as money is always a motivator).

This was followed by a brief summary of archival processes, how they have changed over time, and certain considerations that should be addressed. **Appraisal and accession** specifically looked at some of the ethical issues of managing works by or about children and gave a high-level overview of some of the records that could be found in schools. It ended with a discussion of community archives, and the important social and human rights needs that they address. **Use and access** explored some of the ways that archives could be used in schools

and by their community. It also discussed some privacy implications, and how archivists can work with them (or around them, as the case may be). The **management and preservation** section focused mainly on digital preservation issues, as most records created contemporarily are digital, their management emerged from the literature as a major concern for many archivists, and this concern was also expressed by the participants of the archivist interviews. This section also included an extensive look at *More Product, Less Process* (MPLP), a contentious, pragmatic framework for managing processing backlogs in under-resourced archives which inspired many of my recommendations.

The chapter ended with a survey of literature that discussed organizational variables that might influence the success of different types of information management programs, including archives, records management, and knowledge management. Organizational information management doesn't exist in a vacuum, and so in making recommendations on how to design one, it is important to learn lessons from those who have gone before.

Figure 1-1*Conceptual Framework*

After studying the literature and collecting data, this research posits the existence of relationships between different elements of an independent K-12 school's information management program, as visualized in Figure 1-1:

- That effectively addressed **information management needs** would capture undocumented viewpoints and situations that could be appraised as **archival records**;
- That a school's **archival records** will (or could) support a school's **information management needs**;
- That **school archivists** should be situated to play an important role in the oversight of both their school's **archival records** and **information management needs**; and
- That there are **organizational variables** that could be important to consider regarding the efficacy of the **school's archivist**, the management of its **archival records** program, and the addressing of its **information management needs**.

1.4 Thesis Roadmap

Chapter two is a survey of the core literature. As existing works on K-12 school archive programs are sparse, the chapter begins with a description of the legal context in the Canadian province of Quebec, continues with a summary of the existing works on K-12 schools and ends with an analysis of the features of K-12 independent schools. It then discusses an important issue for school archivists to consider, the documentation surrounding child abuse in schools. It then goes on to draw parallels between K-12 independent schools and other institution types: public K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and small-to-medium-sized enterprises. The second half of the literature chapter explores school archives more deeply, beginning with the role of school archivists, and the importance that the perceptions of archives and archivists generally can have on the shaping of that role. I then walk through significant archival processes—first generally, and then with school archives in mind. There is then a brief review of different variables that emerged from the literature of archives and related domains that could be important regarding institutional archival programs generally, and the chapter ends with a summary of the theoretical framework that guided this research.

Chapter three details the methods used for this research. The bulk of the data was collected as part of a 14-month long institutional case study of one specific K-12 independent school in Quebec, Canada. Inspired by Helen Samuels' *Varsity Letters* (1992), a functional analysis of the case study school was completed (see Appendix I), informed by a document analysis, interviews with the school's administrative staff, and a survey completed by the teaching faculty. Following the case study, to see if the data that emerged could also be seen at other, similar schools, archivists from other local independent schools were interviewed. The chapter ends with a reflection on how rigour and trustworthiness were ensured during the research, as well as the steps that were taken to maintain ethical standards to protect the study's participants.

Chapter four contains the results of the study's research. It begins with a detailed report of the state of the school's administrative and archival records—analog, born-digital, and digitized. It identifies the issues that emerged from the administrator and archivist interviews and compliments them with rich participant quotations. It also outlines the descriptive data that was collected during the faculty survey. This chapter highlights many of the information management struggles faced by administrative staff, faculty, and archivists.

Chapter five addresses each of the four research questions that framed this study and discusses and synthesizes the findings to form conclusions. It was determined that many of the struggles detailed in chapter four emerged from neglected, fragmented information management practices, and could be better managed if approached holistically using archival, records management, and knowledge management practices. It argues that to remain effective and relevant, the role of school archivist must evolve.

Chapter six summarizes the research, describes its theoretical and practical contributions, addresses its limitations, and makes recommendations for future study.

2. Literature Review

Literature from the archival and information management domains was surveyed for this thesis, first more generally, but then with a specific focus on educational institutions and small business archives.

Section 2.1 begins with a description of the **legal frameworks** that school archivists operate under in Quebec, and then continues with an examination of the literature that addresses **K-12 school archives**. As there is a scarcity of works that discuss the archival management of K-12 schools specifically, this section then goes on to detail the specific features of **independent K-12 schools**, and a discussion of **child abuse in schools**, and some of the documentary issues that surround that. This was followed by an examination of the literature about organizations that share some comparable elements, including **public K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and other small-to-medium-sized enterprises**.

Section 2.2 is about **school archives**. It begins with the **role of school archivists** and the **perception of archivists and archives**, and the importance that perception might have on archivists' ability to do their work. It then examines the different **archival processes** that all institutional archivists must address: **appraisal and accession, use and access**, and **management and preservation**, first generally, and then as they could be important regarding independent K-12 schools specifically. Lastly, it explores the different **institutional variables that could be important regarding business archival programs**.

2.1 K-12 Independent Schools as an Institutional Context

This section will begin by looking at the **legal framework in Quebec** for Independent school archives, followed by a survey of the existing literature on **K-12 school archives**, examining the specific **features that define independent schools**. It will then explore **child abuse in schools**, and how archivists can help protect the children in their schools' care. It then broadens the scope to include other related literature: **public K-12 school archives, college and university archives, and small-to-medium-sized enterprise archives**.

2.1.1 *Independent School Archives in Quebec: Legal Framework*

This research is designed to be applicable and relatable to school archivists from anywhere around the world, but the fact is that different jurisdictions have different legal frameworks that impact the role of archivists, so someone's situation in the United States may be very different from another's in the UK. For this reason, and because I am not a lawyer, when I speak of legal issues, I will do so generally, and encourage readers to research related laws in their own jurisdictions before making any policy and procedural decisions. That said, the case study school for this research project is located in the Canadian province of Quebec, so I will take a moment to outline the legal framework that this specific school operated under. As stated, however, I am not a lawyer, and as such I am not qualified to interpret any laws, but I will briefly identify the most relevant sections from within the overarching legislation that guides archival practice in Quebec independent schools.

The Quebec Archives Act (A-21.1) (Government of Quebec, 2024d) deals with the management of the archives of public bodies, which includes independent schools (sched. 6). The Act defines archives as "documents of all kinds, regardless of date, created or received by a person or body in meeting requirements or carrying on activities, preserved for their general

information value” (art. 2). An earlier iteration that had been proposed was met with opposition from the province’s archivists, as it only attributed the term ‘archives’ to mean inactive records that were no longer being used by their organizations, but it was rightly felt that archives should encompass documents throughout the entirety of their lifecycle, regardless of their age or current use (Baillargeon & Lejeune, 2022, pp. 10–14). This official, legal merging of contemporary records management and historical archives was revolutionary.

The Act decrees that public bodies must adopt a management policy for their active and semi-active records, and that the provincial archives, the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales (BAnQ), may advise them on the matter (art. 6). They must also have an up-to-date retention schedule (art. 7) which must be approved by the BAnQ (art. 8), and that once approved (after modifications, if required, have been made), is legally binding (art. 9).

When someone leaves the employ of the public body, they must leave behind all documents they created as part of their job (art. 12). No active or semi-active documents may be destroyed unless outlined in the retention schedule (art. 13).

Public bodies must also manage their inactive documents (art. 15). The BAnQ may authorize a public body to deposit their inactive records with them (art. 16). When a public body ceases operations, unless another public body takes custody of their records, their inactive records are transferred to the BAnQ (art. 17). Original documents that are scheduled for permanent preservation may be destroyed with the authorization of the BAnQ if they have been reproduced on another medium, if irremediably damaged, or if they no longer hold any retention value (art. 18). Documents that contain personal information may be disclosed to the public 100 years after creation, 30 years after the death of the person concerned (art. 19), or with written permission from the person concerned (art. 26). Prior to this time, documents can be disclosed for research purposes if the documents have been anonymized or if the researcher agrees to preserve the confidentiality of the personal information (art. 19).

If the BAnQ considers that an electronic document must be preserved permanently, they may require that it be reproduced for that purpose (art. 31).

Even though the Act charges public organizations with the management of all their records, many organizations don't follow through. "[Translated from the original French] The [Archives] Act's adoption and its policies and regulations aimed to ensure a certain control of the document mass. However, no measures were put in place to ensure public bodies had the means to achieve this. Consequently, the Act and its related documents are virtually unknown and have little to no impact on document management. For instance, in document management, the Act establishes the obligation to set up a retention schedule without any non-compliance sanctions" (Baillargeon & Lejeune, 2022, p. 18).

The Quebec Act to Establish a Legal Framework for Information Technology (C-1.1) (Government of Quebec, 2024c) creates a legal framework for the management and integration of electronic records, and some of its articles impact the work of archivists.

Where the law requires the use of a document, that document can be in electronic format so long as its integrity has been ensured (art. 5). This means that it has not been altered, has been maintained in its entirety, and that the medium is stable. This integrity must be maintained from the moment of its creation, through transfers, consultations, and transmissions, during retention, and through archiving (or until its destruction) (art. 6).

If multiple versions of a document exist in different media, all copies can have the same legal value if they contain the same information, and if their integrity is ensured. In such a case, one document can be used to substitute for or reconstitute another version (art. 9). If multiple versions of the same document show different information, the one that can be verified as being unaltered and whole shall be the definitive version unless there is evidence to the contrary (art. 11).

The information contained in an electronic document can be transferred to a different medium, however if the original version is to be destroyed and replaced by the new version, this transfer must be documented to show that the new version contains the same information as the source document and that its integrity is ensured (art. 17). If the original version has archival, historical or heritage value, then the original medium must be preserved even if transferred (art. 20). The government may make regulations recognizing the archival, historical or heritage value of electronic documents in their original medium (art. 69).

The Quebec Act Respecting the Protection of Personal Information in the Private Sector (P-39.1) (Government of Quebec, 2024b) outlines how businesses must protect the personal information that they hold on individuals, but does not apply to historical or genealogical material collected, held, used, or communicated for the legitimate information of the public (art. 1).

Businesses must establish and implement governance policies and practices that ensure the protection of personal information. These must provide a framework for both the keeping and the destruction of said information (art. 3.2). Personal information on a minor under 14 years of age cannot be collected without consent of a parent or guardian, unless the information is clearly for the minor's benefit (art. 4.1). Personal information can only be used for the purpose for which it was collected, unless its use is necessary for research or statistics and has been de-identified (art. 12). Once the purpose for collecting the information has been achieved, the information must be destroyed or anonymized for research or statistical purposes (art. 23).

Personal information can be deposited with an archival agency without permission if the purpose is the acquisition, preservation and distribution of documents for archival purposes. This information can also be disseminated without permission 100 years after creation or 30 years after the death of the person concerned (art. 18.2).

If personal information is being held, at the request of the person concerned, the enterprise must confirm its existence and provide a copy (art. 27).

The Quebec Act Respecting Private Education (E-9.1) (Government of Quebec, 2024a) provides a framework that independent schools must follow to be allowed to operate.

All institutions must keep a record for each student as well as an enrollment register. If the school ceases operations, these documents must be sent to the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports (art. 63). Every year, they must send the Minister their annual financial statements (art. 65). The Minister must determine which documents and information must be submitted to obtain and retain accreditation (art. 111-112).

2.1.2 *K-12 School Archives in the Literature*

There are only a handful of instances in academic and professional literature that discuss the management or use of K-12 schools' own institutional archives—and even fewer that focus specifically on independent schools. This section offers a summary of the literature on K-12 school archival management, both public and independent.

Dustin Garnet's (2012) study of the Toronto District School Board's archival collection explored some of the issues surrounding one of the largest school archives in Canada, including inaccessibility, a lack of financial resources, concerns about the collection's security, an incomplete inventory, and the absence of a champion or advocate who understood its value. "Who knew of this place? And why wasn't this amazing cultural asset being utilized to enrich the curriculum for students?" (p. 50). Garnet's paper provided a detailed history of the school board's archival collection and highlighted its importance to encourage a reallocation of resources to allow for stronger preservation and dissemination activities on the part of the archive. It emphasized the collection's historical significance and demonstrated the ways that a

school board's collections could inspire students and support their learning but did not discuss how exactly the collection could be used to directly support its member schools.

Maria Mogarro's (2006) detailed analysis of high school archives in Portugal explored how Portuguese schools managed their archives (spoiler: not as well as they could), and the different ways that their records could be used to provide evidence about a particular school as well as the greater educational memory (pp. 75-76). She listed the different types of records that made up the contents of a school archive, detailed the evidence that each type of record demonstrated, made a good case for recognizing the cultural, historical, and educational value of school archival records, and discussed the sense of community that could be fostered if a school were to use their own records in their classrooms. She emphasized the importance of gathering records and information from multiple sources to be able to verify claims and provide alternative perspectives, and encouraged sourcing records from other schools, municipal archives, newspapers, and private collections, to show "the perspectives that the educational protagonists, especially the teachers, present regarding their institution, their profession and social practices" (p. 78). Mogarro concluded that school archives were not being as effective at preserving records as they should be, but only mentioned two specific issues that plagued school archives: institutional records hiding in various nooks and crannies, and archives suffering from a lack of space. She did not discuss the struggles of electronic records management at all.

In Sarah Buchanan's report for the Society of American Archivists on school archives (2012), she discussed the development of K-12 school archives and identified uses for school archival materials. She stated that there were very few models for school archivists to lean on for guidance and support since the topic of school archival management is underrepresented in both the archival and the educational literature. She spoke enthusiastically about the benefits of a school's public-facing archival program, including raising the school's profile within the

community; helping students to develop an appreciation of archives and their place in the world; providing unique opportunities to serve their community through partnerships with other institutions; preserving the institutions' histories; and ensuring a wide access to collections through leveraging digital resources. This was despite acknowledging that school archivists often work part-time or split their time between archives and other tasks. In terms of future research, she encouraged school archivists to publish practice-based research to create a larger body of work for other school archivists to lean on.

A few articles have been written by school archivists about their experiences in the trenches. Anne Cooke (1991) wrote about the benefits of including artefacts in a school archival collection (mainly that they are invaluable for outreach activities and donor-relationship building), acknowledged the difficulties surrounding them (storage, processing, and care), and offered advice on how to effectively manage them. This was expanded on years later by two other school archivists who talked about appraisal issues for school archivists (Gleaves & O'Neill, 2003). Their paper painted a vivid picture of some of the day-to-day struggles that enthusiastic, under-resourced, and overworked solo school archivists were forced to contend with, such as defining and accepting one's responsibilities, finding the time and resources to do the required work, and carving out a respected space for oneself in an institution where one's work is adjunct to its primary focus—education. They didn't discuss much about contemporary records management, but did state that the school archivist, given their broad knowledge of the organization's history and records, should be given the authority to make appraisal decisions on behalf of their school.

Another school archivist, Australian Jan Riley (1997) recognized the fact that independent schools are business organizations, and interviewed staff and former students from four different independent schools to determine whether their school archives supported their business needs. It was a wonderful piece of work that described how school archives tended to

operate within a custodial, lifecycle framework, which she described as unsustainable given the proliferation of digital business records. She concluded that school archivists were not as involved as they should have been with the business activities of their schools, and that if they could redesign their roles to be more involved with the school's functions, then archives and recordkeeping could be viewed as an integral part of the normal business processes, rather than just tangential.

There have been a few more recent academic papers written about school recordkeeping. A study of records management in government schools in Nigeria (Allahmagani, 2014) showed that very few electronic records were being archived, 87% of schools had no records management policy, 82% had no staff member in charge of file inventory and maintenance, 69% had no staff member qualified to manage records, 69% had no records retention schedule, and many of the storage facilities used were inadequate for long-term preservation.

A case study out of Hong Kong looked at the experience of implementing a records management program in a public high school (Cheng, 2018). Through interviews and a documentary analysis, the researcher examined the relationships between knowledge management, functional analysis, and records management (RM) in schools. The study concluded that for RM initiatives to be successful, their design must include user input rather than only using a top-down approach. It was noted that while general policies and procedures were very important, staff did not like being told how to organize their records on a granular level, and if a classification scheme didn't make sense to them or added to their workload, that they just wouldn't use it.

A study of school archives in South Africa (Garaba, 2019) examined 12 schools to determine the state of each of their archival programs. The main takeaways were that only 58.3% of respondents had any electronic records in their holdings; archivists complained about backlogs and felt inundated; resources were scarce; most of the archive work was done on a

part-time basis; only three of the 12 archivists had professional archival qualifications; they felt sidelined as archiving was not a core school function; only one of the schools had a records retention schedule and only two had an acquisition policy; half had digitized some of their material; and only two schools had any kind of environmental controls for their storerooms. All the schools were enthusiastic about their history and certainly wanted to protect it, but as it was not prioritized, they struggled.

Another recent work out of South Africa (Mojapelo, 2022) that studied records management in government schools concluded that, due to the fact that there were no centralized government-sanctioned policies in place to guide schools in the management of their records, schools were forced to develop their own systems which led to haphazard recordkeeping. Other issues that emerged were that administrators that oversaw the schools' recordkeeping were not trained in records management or archives, and security was often a problem.

The literature on the management of K-12 school archives may be sparse, but it is remarkably consistent: School archives are precious treasures that could be of real value to both their institutions as well as historical researchers, but they are also chronically under-resourced and not always given the priority by school leadership that they need to flourish. School archivists often feel sidelined as their work is distinct from their institutions' primary function, which is the education of children.

2.1.3 Features of K-12 Independent Schools

Parents of K-12 students have several options when it comes to choosing a school for their children. In Canada in 2012, 92.3% of K-12 students were enrolled in public schools, 7.2% in independent schools, and 0.5% were homeschooled. In Quebec during the same time period, a

higher proportion of students were in independent schools: 12.6% versus 87.3% in public schools and 0.1% homeschooled (Bosetti et al., 2017, p. 8).

In Canada, most public schools are managed by large school boards and wholly funded by the government, so they generally charge no tuition fees. Independent schools, on the other hand, are overseen by individual governing boards that charge tuition and often have selective enrollment procedures (entrance exams and/or interviews). Each school has unique philosophies: some are religious in nature, and others address specific needs (languages, learning difficulties, gifted programs, an emphasis on sports etc.). Some independent schools are boarding schools; others are day schools. Some are quite small; others have thousands of students. Some offer only an elementary school education; others just a high school; and even others offer classes from kindergarten to grade 12 (or K-11 for most schools in Quebec) (Bosetti et al., 2017; Patti, 2017).

Many people use the terms 'independent school' and 'private school' interchangeably. Canadian independent schools, by definition, are not-for-profit organizations, and many are registered charities, allowing for the issuance of tax receipts to donors. This contrasts with private schools, which can be profit-based (CAIS Canadian Accredited Independent Schools, n.d.). As registered charities, independent schools must ensure that they use any donated money to further their own charitable activities (their educational mission), keep adequate books and records, issue donation receipts, meet spending requirements, file an information return and financial statements annually, and maintain their charity's status (Government of Canada, n.d.).

Six out of ten Canadian provinces offer government subsidies to independent schools ranging from 35-80% of tuition, while four provinces offer no subsidies at all (Bosetti et al., 2017, p. 16). In Quebec, independent schools can apply for subsidies from the government that would cover about 60% of the educational services costs of educating a child. Unlike public schools,

they do not receive any extra funding for students with special needs, and they have to provide their own buildings and facilities (Écoles privées du Québec, n.d.). If Quebec schools choose to accept government subsidies, they are bound to comply with the Charter of the French language (chapter C-11), which states that only children with a certificate of eligibility (determined mainly by whether they, one of their parents, or their sibling(s) received the majority of their elementary or secondary school education in Canada in English) may receive their education from an English school (Government of Quebec, 2024a, sec. 126). Some English independent schools in Quebec choose to forfeit the government grants in order to be able to provide an English education to any student, regardless of eligibility status. This, however, requires significantly more fundraising and/or higher tuition fees.

Parents choose independent schools for their children for different reasons. Independent schools tend to perform very well on school academic rankings: In Quebec, 7 out of the top-10-ranked high schools in 2016 were independent, and all 3 of the public schools in the top 10 required applicants to pass an entrance exam to be admitted (Fraser Institute, 2017). In addition, with an independent school, parents have more freedom to choose the character of the school that is charged with educating their children (Bosetti et al., 2017, p. 18).

Independent schools are operated autonomously and have different priorities than public schools. One main difference is that independent schools are financially dependent on tuition fees and donations, two things that public schools don't generally have to concern themselves with (Patti, 2017, p. 2). Independent schools need to cultivate their brands, sell their value to prospective parents, maintain competitively high academic standards, and offer services that set them apart from other schools (both public and independent). Many independent schools have long, proud histories that could be used to shore up their brands, as well as a strong alumni base that could be appealed to for support.

In 2022, the Society of American Archivists published the results of their 2021 survey of archivists in the United States, A*CENSUS II (Skinner & Hulbert, 2022). 38% (2,046) of those who replied stated that they worked for an academic institution, and of those, 96% (1,967) worked for a college or university, while only 1% (26) worked for an elementary or high school (pp. 19-20). Of the survey respondents, archivists working in post-secondary educational institutions outnumbered K-12 school archivists almost 79:1.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2019-2020, there were 5,999 Title IV post-secondary schools in the United States (3,982 of which were degree-granting), but there were 128,961 K-12 schools. Of those, 98,469 were public schools, and 30,492 were independent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). In the United States in 2019-2020, K-12 schools outnumbered post-secondary schools 21.5:1, and public K-12 schools outnumbered independent schools 3.2:1.

Details about K-12 school archivists themselves are difficult to come by. In the UK, there is a professional group called School Archives & Records Association (SARA) that offers training and support services for K-12 school archivists. In their 2020-2021 annual report (*SARA Annual Report 2020-2021*, 2021), they broke down the demographics of their membership list: Of the 259 UK schools that employed SARA members (school archivists or records managers), 36 were state (public) schools, and the remaining 223 were independent schools. According to the UK census, that same year (2020-2021), there were 32,163 K-12 schools (nursery through secondary) in the UK: 29,644 were maintained (state-funded schools), and 2,518 were non-maintained (independent and special schools) (Government of the United Kingdom, 2021). In the UK in 2021, state schools outnumbered independent schools almost 12:1, yet independent school SARA members outnumbered state school members by just over 6:1.

The numbers tell us that, even though there are significantly more K-12 schools than post-secondary ones, there are many more archivists employed by colleges and universities than

there are by K-12 schools. In addition, of K-12 school archivists, the vast majority are employed by independent schools, even though there are far more state schools than independent ones.

As the case study institution for this research is located in Quebec, Canada, I tried to find some related statistics for Quebec. The best I was able to find was a study of Quebec archives, where there was some statistics specific to Quebec K-11 school archives — those that are part of a school board (n=27), and those attached to individual schools (n=7) (Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2017). They do not however specify whether the schools were independent or not. When asked if they provided records management services for their organization, 25 school board archivists said yes (1 no, 1 did not answer), and 4 individual school archivists said yes (2 said no, 1 did not answer). When asked if they used a document management system, 24 school board archivists said yes (1 no, 2 did not answer) and 4 individual school archivists said no (3 didn't answer). When asked if they assumed responsibilities relating to archives without their department being identified as such, 13 school board archivists said yes (12 no, 2 didn't know), and 3 individual school archivists said yes (3 no, 1 didn't know).

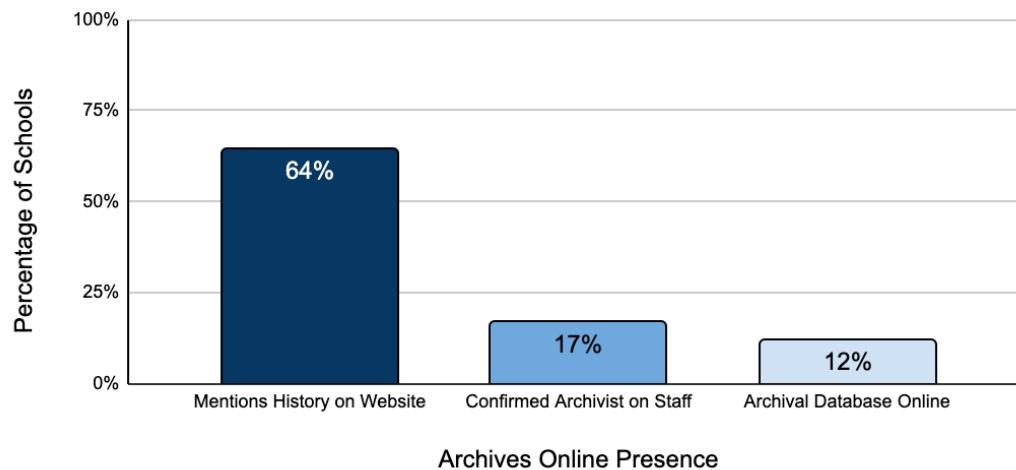
How much do Quebec K-12 schools prioritize their history? A short analysis of the websites of 42 English-language high schools in Quebec⁵ (Figure 2-1) shows that while 64% mention their history on their website (could even just be a sentence or two about the school's past), only 17% have a confirmed archivist on their staff (mention that they have an archivist on their website), and only 12% have any kind of archival database available online (this could consist of

⁵ 21 Quebec Association of Independent Schools (QAIS) high school members and the 21 highest-ranking English-language public high schools according to the 2015-2016 Fraser Institute Report (Fraser Institute, 2017). The schools studied have either just a high school or a combination elementary and high school—institutions that only provide an elementary school education were excluded because the Fraser Institute Report does not include elementary schools, and the comparison between public and independent schools should be as close as possible.

a searchable photographic database, digitized yearbooks or other publications, or any other dynamic interface dealing with some of the school's historical materials).

Figure 2-1

Website Analysis of 42 English-Language High Schools in Quebec



It was worth looking a little deeper into the data to try to see why certain schools prioritize their archives more than others. Figure 2-2 shows the same data as Figure 2-1 but organizes it by the age of the school⁶. Older schools seem to be more consistent about protecting, using, and promoting their archives. This makes sense, as it is difficult to showcase an institution's long history if it doesn't have one.

⁶ Of the 42 schools studied, 9 had been established between 1830 and 1899, 12 between 1900 and 1959, 14 between 1960 and 1999, and 7 did not state on their websites when they had been founded.

Figure 2-2

Website Analysis of 42 English-Language High Schools in Quebec by Year of Establishment

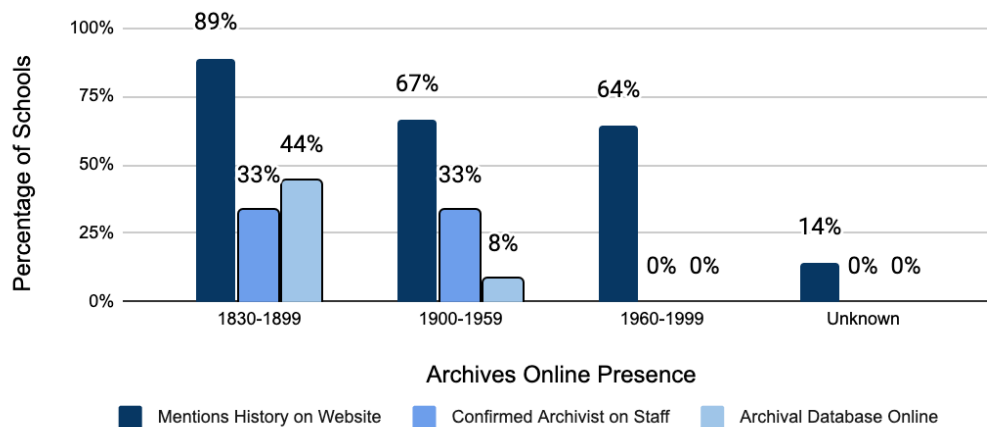
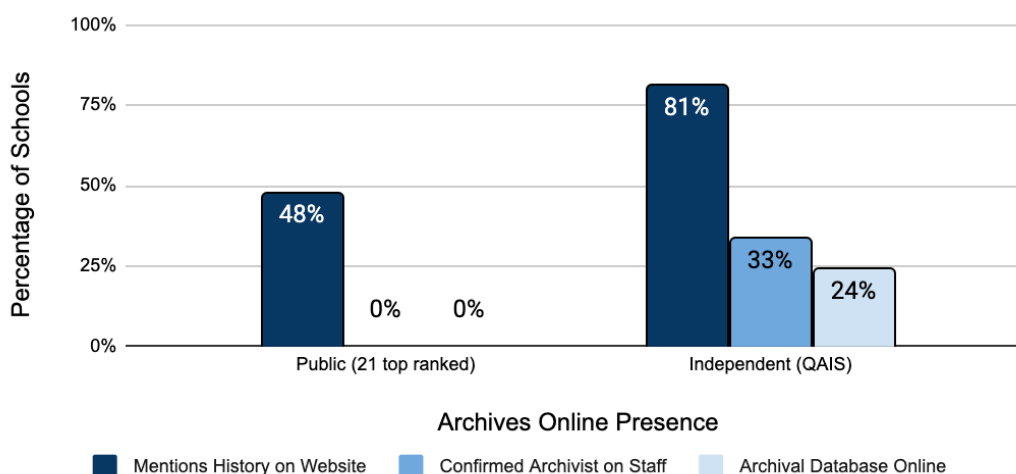


Figure 2-3 shows the same data as Figures 2-1 and 2-2, but compares the 21 highest-ranked English-language public high schools in Quebec (Fraser Institute, 2017) with the 21 independent high school members of the Quebec Association of Independent Schools (QAIS). The independent schools have put significantly more emphasis on disseminating their history than the public schools, with 81% of independent schools mentioning their history on their websites versus just 48% of public schools. Independent schools also sometimes hire archivists, although only 33% of the independent schools examined made mention of an archivist on their website and only 24% of them have any part of their archival collections available online in a searchable database.

Figure 2-3

Website Analysis of 42 English-Language High Schools in Quebec by School Type



2.1.4 *Child Abuse in K-12 Schools*

2.1.4.1 Residential Schools and the TRC

Many people have wonderful, cherished memories of their childhood schools, but this is not the case for everyone. There have been innumerable stories about abuse that has happened in schools, especially the horrifyingly systematic atrocities that took place in residential schools around the world.

Greg Bak (2021) tells a powerful story of two teachers in the 1950s arriving at their new jobs at an Anglican residential school. What they saw there horrified them, and they quickly wrote to their families and former divinity professor to describe the abuses they witnessed. The school balked at the accusations, and through significant pressure, convinced the women to recant their stories. When later investigated by the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (TRC), it was shown that the Anglican Synod did in fact maintain records of the incident, but that they were heavily biased towards the institution, downplaying the abuses as justifiable discipline. However, the letters that the women had sent to their professor were retained in his private fonds, and

their memories and those of their students remained, so the truth was ultimately exposed. “This story is depressingly unexceptional: we know that institutions seek to protect their reputations and avoid having scandal aired in the courts or the press. This is how institutions, including churches, behave.” (p. 421) Bak lauds Helen Samuels’ assertion that institutional records are incapable of telling the whole story, and that archival appraisal must include records from other sources, including private fonds, as well as archivist co-created records such as oral histories. This appraisal and acquisition strategy has been used in the creation of the *National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation* (NCTR), an independent archive where acquired colonial church and government records are counterweighted by the recorded testimony of residential school Survivors, all under the control of Indigenous people.

The final report of the TRC included 94 calls to action, some targeting archivists specifically.

It called on Library and Archives Canada to:

- “i. Fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Joinet-Orentlicher Principles, as related to Aboriginal peoples’ inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in the residential schools.
- ii. Ensure that its record holdings related to residential schools are accessible to the public.
- iii. Commit more resources to its public education materials and programming on residential schools.”(Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 8).

It also called for federal funding to the *Association of Canadian Archivists* (ACA), in collaboration with Aboriginal Peoples, to review archival policies and best practice and create a reconciliation framework for Canadian archives, which was completed in 2022 (The Steering Committee on Canada’s Archives, 2022). Of particular interest to school archivists is the section on objectives and strategies which contains valuable recommendations regarding relationships of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility; governance and management structures; professional practice; ownership, control, and possession; access; arrangement and description; and education.

2.1.4.2 Abuse in K-12 Schools

Most independent schools are very far removed from the horrors of residential schools, but there are almost certainly aspects of every school's history that they are ashamed of, including cases of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse by staff and students (Bingham et al., 2016).

While it is very difficult to collect accurate statistics or details about abuse in K-12 schools, it is understood to be a widespread problem. Instances of abuse seem to be more prevalent in independent and special schools than in public schools, and significantly higher in boarding schools than in day schools (Aviram et al., 2023, p. 2; S. Brown et al., 2020, pp. 83–84). In many cases of abuse in schools, adult survivors recount that it was so systematic, there was no way that other staff members were unaware, and sometimes, they were even complicit (Taggart, 2023, p. 106).

"The dearth of empirical studies on school employee sexual misconduct means policy makers have little access to statistics and prevalence rates that can convince them of needed changes, or track the effectiveness of current policies" (Grant & Heinecke, 2019, p. 204). The *Canadian Centre for Child Protection*, after determining that Canadian studies on child abuse in schools was quite limited, reported on instances of child sexual abuse in K-12 schools in Canada between 1997-2017 (2019). They counted all incidences of school staff found guilty of professional misconduct or charged with a criminal offense of a sexual nature, from grooming to physical assault. The researchers acknowledged that, because many cases of sexual abuse are not reported, the numbers they stated were probably significantly lower than the actual number of offenses. The data was collected from three different types of sources: Disciplinary decisions of professional misconduct compiled by provincial regulatory boards (only three of which make these details available), media coverage, and references in Canadian criminal case law. Collectively, they found 750 cases of sexual offenses against children carried out by 714 K-12 school employees.

2.1.4.3 Documentary Evidence of Abuse

Evidence is so crucial, especially when there is a significant delay between the abuse and the accusation, which is quite common. “Although rates of reporting sexual abuse at the time it was happening were relatively low at 32 percent, a high percentage of participants sexually abused in the context of schools and in other contexts told someone about the sexual abuse after it ended, at 79 percent and 80 percent respectively.” (S. Brown et al., 2020, p. 58) When children (or grown children) report abuse after it is over (rather than while it is happening), they are more likely to go straight to the police with their accusation, whereas while the abuse is still ongoing, children are more likely to make their report to school administration or their parents (S. Brown et al., 2020, pp. 55, 60).

Different types of school records can be valuable in abuse case research and investigations. An independent investigation of abuse in a school in California performed interviews and analysed documents, including “personnel files; faculty lists; prior complaints; police reports; CPS reports; [school] policies; handwritten notes; photographs; phone records; and, investigation files. We also reviewed and monitored on-going media coverage” (Van Demyden Maddux Investigations Law Firm, 2020, p. 5). An article on abuse at a Swedish school examined “reports published by the SSI [Swedish Schools Inspectorate], statements from students at the school, members of the school board, the head teacher, and members of the staff...reports, interviews with the media and the Schools Inspectorate, and letters written by students at the school and by the [School] Foundation” (Francia & Edling, 2017, pp. 62–63). In an article about abuse by peers at a Sydney boarding school, the author quotes documentary evidence including personal correspondence, memorandums to parents, and policy documents (Saltmarsh, 2008).

Sometimes a particular record may not exist, but perhaps should. For example, a mother of a student attending an Australian boarding school wrote to the school about her concerns

regarding some of the school-sanctioned punishments being imposed on the younger students by the older ones. One of her recommendations was that these punishments should be documented and closely monitored by staff so that they were fairly distributed and didn't become abusive (Saltmarsh, 2008, p. 116).

It is sometimes difficult to find instances of child abuse in older records because the standards to which teachers were held to in the past were sometimes different from today. For example, in the late 1920s in the UK, a female teacher could be stripped of her teaching certificate by becoming pregnant by or cohabitating with a man while unmarried (Bingham et al., 2016, p. 417), and in the 1950s, homosexuals were precluded from being teachers (p. 420). And even when there were actual cases of abuse, they often weren't documented or spoken of. In the first half of the 20th century in the UK, "[i]t was very apparent that independent schools dealt with allegations behind closed doors: teachers were simply dismissed without further action being taken" (p. 419).

Independent schools were often more interested in protecting their institutional reputation over the safety of individual children, so survivor testimonies would rarely end up in any official school record (Bingham et al., 2016, p. 429). It is only quite a recent development that the testimony of child survivors of abuse has been acknowledged and recognized. This can be seen clearly in documentary gaps where the voices of the survivors are glaringly absent (p. 421). As was the case with the TRC, these voices may need to be sought out retrospectively.

2.1.4.4 Informational Problems Surrounding Abuse

When an accusation has been made, especially if the abuse is ongoing, school leaders are often asked to investigate the behaviour of their close colleagues (Shakeshaft & Cohan, 1995, p. 517) despite the obvious conflict of interest as well as usually not being properly trained to do

so (Grant & Heinecke, 2019, p. 211). If we have learned anything from the TRC, this ought to necessitate the involvement of an impartial third party, not working for the school or any teachers union, who not only should be tasked with the running of a fair and transparent investigation, but also the creation and retention of all related records (Stop Educator Child Exploitation, 2022, p. 11), but this is not generally the case.

'Passing the trash' is a horrifying phenomenon wherein a school either knows or suspects that a teacher has acted inappropriately, but instead of reporting the incident(s) to the proper authorities (the agency that issues teacher certifications, child protective services, or even the police), they allow the teacher to quietly leave the school's employ, sometimes even offering glowing letters of recommendation to ensure that it isn't discussed and is no longer their problem (Grant et al., 2019). Schools are often hesitant to report accusations against staff to authorities out of fear of destroying reputations and legal retributions if the accusation turns out to be false. In the United States, it is estimated that only about 5% of employee sexual abuse and misconduct incidents that are known by school administration gets reported to law enforcement or child protective services (p. 90).

Perhaps in response to an increase in reported sexual assaults against minors (ten percent of which occurred in schools) (Tenneriello & Adam, 2023), as well as significant grassroots calls to action (Paquette, 2023), the Quebec government has started to address the problem of sexual violence in schools, and has recently tabled a bill that would force both public and private schools in Quebec to provide all relevant details about their former employees when asked for a background check (The Canadian Press, 2023). Currently, many teachers' unions have clauses in their collective agreements that remove certain disciplinary notes from employee files after a certain amount of time has passed (Stop Educator Child Exploitation, 2022, p. 9), but Quebec is seeking to end that practice. Time will tell if they are able to follow through.

2.1.4.5 Concerns About False Accusations

One's heart automatically goes out to the children who have been affected by abuse in schools. People's natural response is to want to protect the student and punish the perpetrator, as it should be. However, the literature speaks of a dramatic rise in false accusations against teachers by students, and the devastating impact it has had on their lives (de Leon, 2017), although some believe that the problem is overblown. "Despite the low number of false allegations and the large amount of unreported sexual abuse of students, educational professionals are likely to focus on the harm that might befall them when schools address the problem" (Shakeshaft & Cohan, 1995, p. 517).

A UK teachers' union reported 44 allegations made against their members in 1991 where police were contacted, and that by 2007 that number had risen to 193 (Sikes & Piper, 2011, p. 296). They also reported that when cases go to court, the conviction rate is only about 4%. While one can statistically show that the number of accusations against teachers has been going up, it is very difficult to know the full extent of false accusations, as even if someone is acquitted of a crime, it only means that there was not enough evidence to convict, not that the crime did not take place. Nobody is saying that 96% of accusations are false, but it is probably well agreed that it is often very difficult to prove sexual abuse.

One article told the story of how a false abuse accusation impacted the life of the teacher involved. "The case had eventually been dismissed when the student confessed that she had made up the tale get back at him and take revenge for the humiliation she claimed to have experienced after the teacher had verbally chastised her in public for shouting out and swearing in class...[T]he bare bones of this story are in themselves disturbing enough. But, it was in the detail of what life had been like for the man, his family, friends and colleagues both during the period of investigation and subsequently, that the full import of the Kafkaesque horror lay" (Sikes & Piper, 2011, p. 295). He had been summoned to the principal's office, escorted from

the school property, forbidden from speaking with anyone from the school, and was not told for ten days what he had been accused of. Once he was told of the charges, he immediately provided witnesses and evidence that proved that he could not have done what the accuser had claimed, yet it took a six-month long inquiry and the eventual recanting of the accusation for the charges to be dropped. In the meantime, he lost his reputation, most of his friends and almost lost his wife. Going back to teach at his original school was obviously difficult, and despite his prior perfect record, he was unable to find a posting at any other school so took early retirement.

Jon Bradley, a McGill Education professor, spoke of a teacher who had been accused of physically assaulting one of his students (2011) who happened to be in a wheelchair. The investigation into his case wrapped up quite quickly, within two weeks, when it was not only discovered that there was no substance to the charges, but that the 13-year-old student had recanted his accusation. Unfortunately, the teacher in question, not unlike the teacher in the previous story, had been kept in the dark regarding the status of his case, and the day after the police cleared his name (but failed to inform him), the teacher took his own life (Dwyer, 2004). “There is no question that the children must be protected; any adult who does indeed act in an inappropriate way must be drummed out of the school system. But here comes the conundrum: how are the rights of innocent teachers protected?” (Bradley, 2011).

In discussing the prevalence of false accusations of sexual abuse against teachers in South Africa, researchers expressed their concerns that while it is undisputed that the rights and privacy of child sexual abuse accusers must remain protected, there is much less consensus regarding the protection of the rights and privacy of the accused, and that their identities are often disclosed to the media and the community at large while investigations are still underway (Madonsela et al., 2022). In a study relating to the prevention of adult to child sexual abuse in K-12 schools (Shakeshaft et al., 2019), school administrators, attorneys, and child sexual abuse specialists were asked to respond to various items that had emerged from the literature on child

sexual abuse by school employees. While 100% of participants agreed that the identities of potential victims should be protected, only 89% said that suspected perpetrators should be afforded the same level of protection (p. 16). In the court of public opinion, child abusers are often seen as guilty until proven innocent, but “[i]t is often hard to ‘prove your innocence’ if indeed there are no other witnesses to the apparent act one is being accused of perpetrating” (Parr & Gosse, 2011, p. 388).

It is also often very hard to prove that abuse has taken place. “[F]or years, centuries in fact, children were not believed when they accused guilty adults of harming them. Now...there is a growing feeling that the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of believing children” (Sikes & Piper, 2011, p. 297). For the well-being of kids and to not discourage disclosure, it is important that when a student says that they have been abused, that they are believed, especially by their parents (S. Brown et al., 2020, p. 56). However, as anyone who has ever parented a child or a teenager knows, kids sometimes lie. This makes the decision by school administrators of what to do when presented with an abuse accusation anything but straightforward. It highlights the need for clearly documented policies and procedures, as well as consistent, regular training (J. A. Jones, 2021) so that decisions aren’t made quickly in the heat of the moment. “It is clear that this research identifies the need for the development of improved protocols that safeguard the wellbeing of all involved when accusations of abuse / misconduct arise in schools” (Parr & Gosse, 2011, p. 390).

There is, however, a lack of straightforward policies, procedures, and training when it comes to dealing with abuse reporting in schools which comes up frequently in the literature on how to protect the victims of child abuse in schools. Where there are advice and guidelines, they tend to be scattered amongst different records and different sources, so while all the information might be there, it would certainly be beneficial to have it centralized and easy to understand and follow (Shakeshaft et al., 2019, p. 108). When there is inconsistent, even contrary policies, such

as privacy legislation vs the protection of evidence as recommended by the TRC, there will absolutely be implementation problems as nobody will be entirely sure what is expected of them (Grant & Heinecke, 2019, p. 207). Better information management would go far to helping everyone: the accusers, the accused, and the school.

2.1.4.6 Concerns About Institutional Reputation

Institutional archives are preserved to provide evidence of the goings-on of an organization. Some records must be retained for legal reasons, others administrative, and others societal and cultural (and many all of the above). As businesses, it is natural for independent schools to prioritize their legal and administrative needs over their societal and cultural obligations, but I would argue that, as institutions that play a key role in the lives of the people who operate within it (students and staff), they have a responsibility to ensure that the documentary evidence that they preserve is reflective of the different viewpoints of important incidents, especially the unpleasant ones.

Nevertheless, as Bak (2021) stated, institutions will always look to protect their own reputations, so school archivists may have difficulty convincing their organizations to actively preserve records or elicit testimony from former students that speak of the damage done to them as children. This is not to say that they shouldn't try, but it could be a hard sell. Courts may not punish institutions financially for hundred-year-old crimes, but judgment from the court of public opinion could impact an institution's reputation immeasurably. If a school cares more about its reputation than the well-being of the people who are now or who have ever been under its care, then there is not much anyone can say, other than historically, that attitude has tended to do more damage to a school's (and their leaders') reputation than being open and forthright. The author of a recent Harvard Business Review article (who is an assistant professor in

negotiation and conflict management) recommends that, in the best interests of not only survivors but also their own reputation, companies ought to thoroughly investigate their past, accept responsibility for past transgressions proactively, apologize publicly, and respond meaningfully to the needs of their victims. “Should a long-established company be required to atone for the atrocities of a bygone era?...the legal and reputational risks to companies from their long-past activities are growing, as large portions of society push for what they see as an overdue reckoning. Schools are being renamed, mascots are being discarded, and statues of historical figures that only a few years ago barely drew a glance are being toppled...It is a double tragedy when accusers and accused cause one another further damage following a historical atrocity. The answer begins with companies accepting responsibility and proactively trying to make amends” (Federman, 2022, pp. 84–87). An independent investigation of past sexual abuse in a California school determined that not only were there repeated instances of historical sexual harassment and abuse directed towards children by their teachers, but that the school administration was complicit in covering up these incidents. When these allegations first came to light in 2017, the school’s official response began as defensive. When that was met with negative reactions from their community, the school decided finally after two years to go forward with an independent investigation which ultimately led to the school apologizing to the victims as the evidence of the cover-up was indisputable. By owning up to their past mistakes and taking responsibility, they were able to at least somewhat repair their reputation that had been damaged when they had denied any wrongdoing (Van Dermeyden Maddux Investigations Law Firm, 2020).

Independent schools are businesses that rely on attendance numbers and financial donations to sustain themselves, so their brand and reputation are very important assets. Schools should be proud of the role that they’ve played in the lives of the children in their care and should want to protect the evidence of those good works. However, if a school claims to

care about the well-being of its students, which I would imagine all do, by extension, it should also care about the well-being of its alumni and should strive to preserve and protect even the most shameful of their records in the name of accountability. Taking responsibility for past mistakes and allowing them to be brought to light could go far to keep these mistakes from happening again, as demonstrated by the good work of the TRC. And knowing that evidence of their current actions is being systematically preserved may make people think about how they would like to be remembered, which may impact how they choose to behave.

2.1.5 Public K-12 Schools, Colleges and Universities, and Small-to-Medium-Sized Enterprises

While the archival literature that focuses specifically on independent K-12 schools is light, these schools share some common elements with other types of institutions, including public K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and many small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)⁷—which are all better represented in the literature. Six institutional variables that I identified that could be important regarding an organization's archival management are: stakeholders, size of archive staff, institution size, archive budget, the institution's governance structure, and their primary business function. Table 2-1 summarizes these similarities and differences:

⁷ The Government of Canada defines a small enterprise as having 1-99 employees, and a medium enterprise as having 100-499 employees (Government of Canada, 2022).

Table 2-1*Comparison of Independent Schools, Public Schools, Colleges & Universities, and SMEs*

	Independent K-12 Schools	Public K-12 Schools	Colleges and Universities	SMEs
People				
Stakeholders	Students Staff Parents Alumni BoD Donors	Students Staff Parents Alumni School board	Students Staff Parents Alumni BoD Donors	Clients Staff Owner(s) BoD (sometimes)
Archives				
Size of archive staff	None to few	None to few	Many	None to few
Archive budget	Small to medium	None to small	Medium to large	Varies
Institution				
Size	Small to medium	Small to medium	Medium to large	Small to medium
Governance	BoD	School board	BoD	Varies
Function(s)	Education Promotion Fundraising	Education Promotion	Education Promotion Fundraising Research	Promotion Varies

Note. Table elements in bold are those seen in K-12 independent schools. BoD = Board of Directors.

2.1.5.1 Independent K-12 Schools

As was discussed previously, there are quite a few different players involved in independent K-12 schools who contribute to and require access to institutional knowledge and records. Their clients are both the students who attend school every day as well as their parents who ultimately decide which school their child attends and who pay the bills. Their staff is composed of managers, administrators, and faculty, governed by an independent board of directors. They also have alumni, whose level of engagement with the school can have a major impact on its financial sustainability.

Most K-12 independent schools do not have an archivist on staff, and those who do tend to employ them on a part-time and/or voluntary basis (School Archivists' Group, 2004). While there

is no data available about the budgets of independent school archives, from the literature one could extrapolate that while there is sometimes some money available to hire limited staff and purchase supplies, independent school archival budgets tend not to be very large.

The size of independent K-12 schools can vary considerably from a dozen to over a thousand students, but on average, they are quite small. In the United States in 2019, 29.3% of private K-12 schools had fewer than 50 students, 32.3% had between 50 and 149 students, 21.3% had between 150 and 299 students, 9.9% had between 300 and 499 students, 4.1% had between 500 and 745 students, and 3.1% had over 750 students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020a). They are governed by a Board of Directors, so all decisions happen at the school level, not by a larger school board. This allows for the school to decide for itself what its individual archival program should look like rather than a school board establishing mandates centrally for all its schools. The primary function of independent K-12 schools is the education of children. Since they receive little to no funding from the government, to sustain themselves financially, independent schools must actively recruit students, charge tuition, and fundraise. Some of those donations go to school operations, and others are used to support their community through scholarships and bursaries.

2.1.5.2 Public K-12 Schools

Like independent schools, public K-12 schools' primary function is the education of children, and they must promote themselves to sustain enrolment numbers. Public schools are on average larger than independent schools: In the United States in 2019, the average size of all public elementary and high schools was 529 students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020b). They could, however, for the sake of this study, be considered generally comparable in terms of size, since they both can fluctuate significantly from between a few dozen students to

thousands (Fraser Institute, 2020). Two major differences between independent and public schools are the fact that public schools are governed by a central school board that manages multiple schools, and that since they are publicly funded, they don't tend to rely on fundraising to sustain their institutions. As discussed earlier, public schools are not as likely to employ archivists as are independent schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021; *SARA Annual Report 2020-2021*, 2021).

2.1.5.3 Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities are similar to independent K-12 schools in that their primary function is education, and they are usually governed by an independent Board of Directors. A major difference, however, is that generally, colleges and universities are significantly larger in size than independent schools, and they are much more likely to have archivists on staff (Society of American Archivists, 2006, p. 343). In the 2021 A*CENSUS II survey of American archivists, 38% (2,046) of respondents said that they worked for an academic institution, 96% (1,967) of whom were employed by a college or a university. Of those, the vast majority (1,903) worked for a 4-year college or university rather than a 2-year or less (50) (Skinner & Hulbert, 2022, pp. 88–91). Colleges and universities, like independent schools, must promote themselves to potential students, and often depend on financial donations, so fundraising is an important part of their operations. A university's archives could be used to promote engagement with potential students and donors, current students, and historians, assuming that it is adequately funded and prioritized (Thelin, 2009, p. 14).

Various surveys of archives completed between 1949 and 2002 identified a number of common issues plaguing academic archives and research libraries in North America, including “inadequate staffing, small holdings, backlogs of unprocessed materials, limited financial

support, limited space, and lack of campus-wide records retention and management programs” (Dole & Hill, 2015, p. 266). The situation in 2015 was seemingly not much improved: A survey of 86 North American universities showed a consistent lack of institutional commitment to their own archives, and an absence of institutional records management standards (p. 267).

Most universities are research-oriented institutions, but they are also business organizations that need to sustain themselves to function. Their archives will often hold items of historical interest that they have collected (usually relating to former faculty or students, or of research areas that they are implicated with), administrative records that were produced during the course of business (Dole & Hill, 2015), and research data that emerged from their institutions (Noonan & Chute, 2014). Sometimes these records are managed by different units, and sometimes they all filter through a centralized archive. A university’s institutional records will often be managed through a contemporary records management department, separately managed from historical manuscript repositories or research data libraries. 75.2% of respondents to the 2021 A*CENSUS II survey employed by a college or university described the functional unit that they belonged to as “archives/special collections”, while 2.5% said either “administration” or “records management” (Skinner & Hulbert, 2022, p. 92).

Some of the same problems that K-12 schools experience can be seen in the literature on university and college archives. Lee Stout (1995) bemoans the fact that university archivists are practically invisible to administrative staff, as they are not considered to have anything to do with contemporary records management. This split between archives and records management has been identified as a problem for quite some time: A 1982 survey of US university and college archives found that nearly 60% of responding institutions had no records management program at all, and for those that did, 56% said that it was managed by the archivist, while the remaining said it was administered separately (Burckel & Cook, 1982, pp. 420–422). The need for solid records management strategy became even more important with the rise in digital records, as

acquisitions were being impacted by the perceived ephemerality of word processing documents and inexpensive portable media (Williams & Berilla, 2015). The authors recommended that “practicality should trump theory” (p. 88), and that institutions should develop policies and procedures that work best given their specific situations.

Even colleges and universities with records management programs struggled with barriers. A study on the relationships between organizational culture and information governance in higher education institutions’ records management programs concluded that information silos were a major problem (Daneshmandnia, 2019). The benefits of integrating records managers within university administrative units (rather than being in their own silos) was touted in another study: After a records manager was situated within a department, they demonstrated an improved motivation for learning about the organizational culture, newly-aligned goals with the department, and close and trusted relationships with their colleagues (Bowker & Villamizar, 2017).

Despite being larger and having a research culture, many of the struggles faced by university and college archivists mirrored those of K-12 schools.

2.1.5.4 Small-to-Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

Independent schools are businesses. Businesses can vary significantly in terms of community, budget, governance, and function. They can be for-profit organizations or charities. They could be owned by an individual, a small group, or shareholders governed by a Board of Directors. Businesses can range from a single employee to thousands, so to maintain an appropriate comparison to schools, this research will focus mainly on literature dealing with small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). That said, some issues transcend size, so those will be addressed first.

Most businesses do not employ archivists unless their organization is very old or if their operational mandate relies on information management, such as museums, libraries, media companies, and financial service organizations (Society of American Archivists, 2006, pp. 345-346). “It is common knowledge that corporate archives are not at the top of the priority list of goals in most American businesses” (Bakken, 1982, p. 280). Despite there being over 30 million businesses (both profit and not-for-profit) in the United States, there are only a few hundred listings in the *Society for American Archivists’* Directory of Corporate Archives, and only 80 companies with formal in-house archives in the UK (Niu, 2023, p. 2).

“While the costs of [business] archives are well-defined, the benefits are more difficult to quantify. Much depends on management's view of the archives' worth. Contrast this scenario to that of the public archives, which is not normally required to continually prove its value in economic terms to the institution of which it is a part” (Wirth, 1997, p. 1). To justify their existence, business archives must ensure that they primarily support the business objectives of their organization (Force, 2009, p. 26) rather than just those of external researchers (Shkolnik, 1990, p. 18). Like it or not, the argument that business records should be kept for future scholarly research is not as compelling to company management as the idea that these records could be used to support their current business needs (Fogerty & Adkins, 1997, p. 13). This is not to say that business archivists can't or shouldn't address the needs of both groups (they can and should), but just that if they want to ensure that future scholarly research is ever possible, they absolutely must make sure that their organization's business needs are met by keeping and making available “what the corporation needs” (Greene, 2002, p. 49). This has been done before: “[Archivists] had pursued a campaign under the auspices of [the Business Archives Council of Australia] to educate businessmen in the fundamentals of professional records management, using the argument that good recordkeeping is good for business. This was a rare and relatively successful example of archivists with overriding cultural/historical objectives

adopting and pursuing objectives associated with supporting the business needs of organizations” (Cunningham, 2005, p. 42).

“A fundamental question arising from the debate is the extent to which a corporate or government archives is an administrative arm of its sponsor, and the extent to which it is a cultural agency” (Atherton, 1985, p. 43). Even when a business sees the value of keeping an archive and hires an archivist, it is unlikely that the archivist would be given carte blanche to share records with external researchers, especially if those records have the potential to shine the organization in a poor light. “[B]usiness archives have no requirement to provide information to any members of the public and access to corporate records can be extremely guarded” (Wirth, 1997, p. 1). Despite the findings of Canada’s *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, many schools would probably rather bury shameful records than make them public. “[W]ho would donate personal or corporate records to an archival institution if its primary purpose in acquiring them were to hold the donor accountable to society at large?” (Fisher, 2009, p. 22) If an institution is encouraging the retention of archival materials, one must presume its bias towards materials that make it look good, which immediately compromises its evidential impartiality. “Can one really believe that archivists hired by and under the control of the FBI or the RCMP will preserve a neutral, disinterested archival record?” (Cook, 1984a, p. 31) No matter how honest and impartial an individual school archivist may be, at the end of the day, their job is wholly dependent on the whims of their employer, and those whims can shift quickly if the archive is perceived as more of a threat than an asset. Please do not take this as in any way condoning the burial or destruction of records, as that is the last thing that should be done. Rather, I want archivists to be aware of the reality of their situations so that they can feel empowered to act ethically and sensitively when difficult situations arise while remaining cautious and aware of the precariousness of their situation.

Even if a high-level executive is history-minded and wholeheartedly supports the funding of a corporate archive, unless they can justify the expense and perceived risk of holding onto records longer than legally mandated with a clear return on investment, a board of directors could decide to shutter the archive (G. D. Smith, 1982, pp. 287–288). And even if a board of directors aligns itself behind the archivist and supports them entirely, a few elections later the board composition could have altered completely, and the archive could be the first item on the chopping block when budget cuts become the new order of the day. Dustin Garnet (2012, p. 56) spoke of this situation in his paper on the Toronto District School Board Education Archive. After decades of progress in developing the archive, there was an amalgamation in the late 1980s that, despite a flood of material donations from the newly joined boards, led to managerial disinterest in the school board's archive, culminating in its closure in 2005. As long as a business' archive is perceived as a bonus feature rather than positioned as a vital business function, its future is vulnerable (Lasewicz, 2015, p. 67; Mooney, 1982, p. 292).

We will look now at some of the issues that small-to-medium-sized enterprises specifically must address. Similarly to independent K-12 schools, when SMEs do actively manage their archival records, the budgets and the teams can be quite small, often only a single individual (McLellan et al., 2011). These professionals are humorously referred to as *Lone Arrangers*, “underdogs who fight for truth, justice, and the archival way...operat[ing] under truly adverse conditions” (McFarland, 2007, p. 140). Due to the isolated nature of their situation, these Lone Arrangers often seek out advice and support from other similarly-positioned professionals (*Lone Arrangers Section*, 2022).

Like independent K-12 schools, the primary responsibility of an SME's archives is to collect, preserve and disseminate its organization's business records. Some issues that institutional archivists have to contend with include justifying one's worth when their role is not directly involved in the business' primary functions, roles not being adequately defined, and an

administrative staff who doesn't wholly understand or care about the purpose or value of archives (Yakel, 1989). Due to staff apathy regarding archives, formal records management policies are infrequent, and records are often lost, especially when people leave the organization (Dawson et al., 2004). This phenomenon is seen in the literature for both K-12 school and small business archives.

Small businesses, including schools, often do not have the resources to hire an archivist or records manager to manage their records, so the task will often fall to an untrained administrator in addition to their regular responsibilities (Dawson et al., 2004, p. 113). Related to this, archivists in small businesses are often expected to take on non-archival tasks to support the business operations. While this might be frustrating to under-resourced archivists, these outreach measures can actually lead to better relationships within the organization and an improved perception of the archivist and archives (McFarland, 2007).

Being under-resourced, small business archives are not always in a good position to tackle the problem of digital preservation. A lack of resources can lead to a lack of training and a lack of engagement, especially when archivists feel that they don't have the authority to implement necessary changes (Rinehart et al., 2014).

Terry Cook (2004a) was sympathetic to this plight, but also expressed a lack of patience, pragmatically suggesting that archivists from small institutions stop complaining and start re-prioritizing as there is only enough time and resources to do a finite number of tasks, and digital records are in desperate need of management so must be addressed. He went on to recommend that archivists start with focusing on the appraisal and acquisition of digital records rather than preservation techniques, because if records aren't acquired, then there will be nothing left to preserve. He did however acknowledge that for institutional archivists, this could involve a bit of a struggle as there is often poor communication between different communities (departments) who have little awareness or interest in archival issues, and that there is usually

inadequate support and allocation of resources from senior management. He suggested that institutional archivists develop partnerships within their organizations, guiding records creators in the management of their own records, and using automated processes and metadata capture where possible. These same feelings had been expressed close to twenty years earlier by Jay Atherton, who in 1985, acknowledged the struggles that resource-light institutional records managers had to contend with and determined that their number one priority had to be acquisition, because if records were not acquired, then they would not be there later to protect or disseminate. Also, to ensure greater access to and authority over the records under their control, records managers needed to ensure that they were anticipating and addressing the needs of their primary users—their business. “[W]hen the chips are down, this function [acquisition] must be served before the others. While an archives obviously is obliged to acquire the right material and ensure its preservation, that archives had better be prepared to serve its immediate clients and serve them well if it wishes to prosper” (p. 49).

While the literature on K-12 school archives is sparse, what there is tends to be not only very consistent, but also mirrors many of the issues that plague college and university and small-to-medium-sized enterprise archives: Smaller organizations tend to have smaller archival budgets and fewer members of staff, especially when recordkeeping is not part of their core mandate. Concerns surrounding the preservation of digital records was seen throughout the literature. There is often a disconnect between an institution’s historical archives and the management of their contemporary administrative records, leading to archivists feeling siloed from their rest of their organization.

2.2 School Archives

This section begins with a brief discussion of the **role of school archivists**, which is followed by the **perception of archivists and archives** and the importance that this could have regarding how the role is shaped. This is followed by a reflection of essential **archival processes**—generally at first, then focusing on school archives specifically. It will close with an exploration of the variables that **could be important regarding institutional archival programs**.

2.2.1 Role of School Archivists

“[Translated from the original French] Archivists are specialists who deal with organic and recorded information. They work in public and private organizations as well as in archives centers.” (Association des Archivistes du Québec, n.d.) The *Fédération des Milieux Documentaires*, a Québec-based organization, developed a competency profile for information professionals which details the major aspects of the profession, as well as the core and complementary competencies that they must hold (Fédération des Milieux Documentaires, n.d.). The three main aspects that they list are: the management and use of informational resources; supporting clients; and collaborating on the development of their organization. The core competencies that they find important for all information professionals to possess are: user-centered; digital literacy; oral and written communication; resource management; detail-oriented; integrity; adaptability; and continuing education. In addition, they recommend the following complimentary competencies: creativity and innovation; strategic planning; research and investigation; cooperation and working with others; problem-solving; decision-making; vision; interpersonal and intercultural intelligence; initiative; evaluation; risk-management; and training and support. A full professional archivist would be required to hold more competencies

than an archival technician, as they would be designing and implementing the programs and strategies that the technicians would be using.

Traditionally, in institutional archives, there has been a split between the role of records manager, tasked with the management of contemporary records, and institutional archivist, charged with the management of historical records. As previously mentioned, in the Province of Quebec, where the case study institution for this research is located, the Archives Act of 1983 defines archives as “the body of documents of all kinds, **regardless of date** [emphasis mine], created or received by a person or body in meeting requirements or carrying on activities, preserved for their general information value” (Government of Quebec, 2024d, art. 2). Quebec archivists fought hard to have that definition include the words ‘regardless of date,’ and its significance cannot be glossed over (Baillargeon & Lejeune, 2022). It means that people with the title archivist should be tasked with the management of both contemporary and historical records (Grange, 2024). This had not always been the case, and as we will discuss, even in Quebec, is unfortunately to this day still not always practiced that way.

The records’ *lifecycle model* (Creation→Active Use→Semi-Active Use→Disposition [Archive or Destroy]) (Bawden & Robinson, 2012, p. 257) forms the framework for most businesses’ records retention schedules and guides institutional archival programs. In an organization, staff do their jobs, and in the process of doing so, create documents. When those documents cease to be used regularly, they move from being ‘active’ to ‘semi-active’: Staff might need to refer back to them, but not very often, or they need to be kept for a certain amount of time for legal or fiscal reasons. Once enough time has passed (as dictated by the institution’s records retention schedule), an appraisal decision must be made: are they discarded, or are they archived? If it is decided that the documents should be retained, they are placed in the custody of the archivist who manages their care in perpetuity. Luciana Duranti (1996) spoke of the historical concept of archives as a place: a stronghold for trusted documents, a community gathering space, an

authority—an ‘archival threshold’, which lies between a record’s creation and its permanent safekeeping, where cataloguing and processing takes place. The untouchability of the archive bestowed a certain legitimacy to these records, as the reputability of its custodians was generally unquestioned.

As early as the 1980s and 90s, when the quantities of digital records began to get out of control, some archivists argued for a paradigm shift—a *post-custodial* theory of archives. They appealed for new tactics for archivists, prioritizing the management of records policies and procedures over individual records themselves: creating regulations, audit controls, and training records creators on best practice for the management and care of their own records (Bearman, 1991, 1995; Cunningham, 2011b; Ham, 1981). Instead of attempting to play every instrument themselves, the archivist could instead compose the score, teach the musicians, stand back, and conduct the orchestra.

Many archivists pushed back against this new paradigm, seeing it as an affront to the archival profession, and that “archives without custody would not be archives at all; they would simply disappear into the maw of bureaucratic leviathan and with them the guarantees they offer the world of an uncorrupted and intelligible world of the past” (Eastwood, 1996, p. 265). Others recognized that, given the enormous quantities and complex nature of many digital assets, that this macro-approach to digital preservation could be the only possible way forward (T. Cook, 2004b).

Inspired by these early post-custodial thinkers, the design of the Australian Commonwealth Archives Office in the 1960s (Upward, 1994), philosopher Jean-François Lyotard’s views on postmodernism (Upward, 1996), and sociologist Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory (Upward, 1997), in the mid-1990s, Frank Upward developed the *records continuum model*.

In 1961, the then Chief Archives officer with the Archives Division of the Australian Commonwealth Ian Maclean designed Australia’s newly-formed Commonwealth Office “through

a pragmatic mix of Australian experience, an understanding of European archival theory measured against that experience, and a critical analysis of overseas practice” (Upward, 1994, para. 1). In preparation, he travelled the world and spoke with archivists from many different countries to learn about a variety of experiences. One thing he discovered was that the United States was creating more and more documents at an order of magnitude that boggled his mind, and as a forward-thinking man, Maclean determined that archival processing could no longer be left entirely to archivists as it would soon become completely untenable. He decided that the act of transferring records should include basic arrangement and description activities and, where possible, be integrated into existing recordkeeping systems. “The series registration approach gave a way of linking records to record creating entities and of linking related series of records, including the listing of the component series within a recordkeeping system” (Upward, 1994, sec. The Series System). Archivists needed to have a holistic view of their organization, the characteristics and location of the records being created, as well as some control over the systems that managed them. This was an early example of a continuum way of conceptualizing archival management.

In the mid-1980s, Canadian archivist Jay Atherton wrote a compelling paper about the need for a continuum approach to archives and records management in corporate and government archives. He expressed concern that contemporary records managers and archivists both operated from a position of self-interest, and that those interests were not always compatible with each other. He expounded that the separate roles of records manager and archivist ought to be re-examined and combined into one role that managed recordkeeping holistically in a way that was not supported by the recordkeeping model of the day, the records lifecycle. “I believe the split between the records management and archival phases of the ‘life cycle’ is no longer acceptable...I believe we should replace the life cycle with a simpler, more unified model...reflecting the pattern of a continuum, rather than a cycle” (Atherton, 1985, pp. 47-48).

In 1996, Australian archivist Frank Upward published the first in a series of two groundbreaking articles where he explained the design of his new proposed model: the records continuum model (Upward, 1996). The model was born out of Upward's concern about the management of digital records, and how current recordkeeping practices were inadequate for many different reasons. The dynamic qualities of electronic records allow for multiple viewpoints, users, creators, and uses that were just not possible with paper records, and contemporary recordkeeping theories and practices were designed around static records. He expressed that time was also an important element to consider, and talked about how records needed to be identified, appraised, controlled, and made accessible for as long as they had value, which could be as short as a few moments, or as long as forever. He felt that archivists needed to be involved with all records at all stages of recordkeeping, not only those with historical significance when they were deemed to be historically valuable. Upward saw the need for change and turned to French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard's views on postmodernism for guidance. Lyotard was a proponent of counter-thinking, "based on the need to constantly think through, around, and beyond dominant ways of thinking. We need to consider different analyses, different shapes, different intuitions, and different memories. If those analyses, shapes, intuitions and memories become the dominant ones we have to begin to think against them" (Upward, 1997, p. 27).

In the second article of his two-part series, Upward (1997) spoke of sociologist Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, and how it was used as a framework for the records continuum model. Structuration theory deals with the interaction between human agency and societal structures and the dynamic relationship between them. Giddens views structures as both constraining and enabling, does not assume that people will comply with them, and draws attention to the ways that structures and actions interact to shape each other. Upward tied this to the complexities of modern recordkeeping, and the ever-increasing network of relationships

between records and the actions that take place in relation to them (p. 20). "The threading outwards in time and space occurs within the processes of recordkeeping and so does the institutionalisation of our practices...Once we understand these threading outwards processes it is easier to see how structures established in various dimensions can impact upon the act of document creation" (p. 16). With dynamic recordkeeping through time and space, documents that show evidence of actors and actions can be linked and disseminated to form and gather knowledge that in turn supports individual, organizational and collective memories.

Upward spoke of the need for a change in the way archives are perceived as only keepers of historical materials. He stated that many government structures have sidelined archival work, such as laws that set limits on when records can be viewed (1997, p. 12), and that "in order to be effective monitors of action, archival institutions will need to be recognised by others as the institutions most capable of providing guidance and control in relation to the integration of the archiving processes involved in document management, records capture, the organisation of corporate memory and the networking of archival systems" (p. 21). He discussed the opportunities afforded to archivists and the communities that they serve (anywhere in space and time) by technology in this networked age, but that a post-custodial, continuum framework would be required: "[I]n the networking of people and information the centralisation of knowledge and expertise remains a goal. The people themselves, or the stores of information, can be anywhere. Anywhere does not mean nowhere, nor does it exclude our search rooms and the welcome that can be provided there to some of our clientele. The archives as a physical building, however, cannot be the pre-dominant site for the process of archiving, by which I mean, for the moment, the storage of the sort of resources currently found inside the walls of the archives" (p. 22).

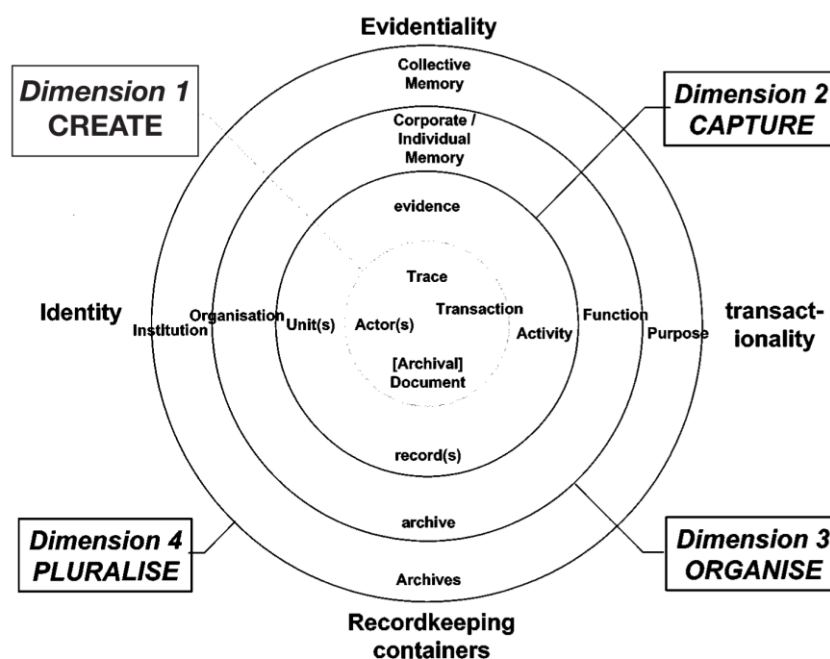
The starting point for the design of the records continuum model began very pragmatically through a fifteen-minute-long discussion between Frank Upward and colleague Sue

McKemmish where they attempted to re-express the principles of Jenkinson and Ian Maclean for a more modern society (Upward, 1996, pp. 275–277):

- A concept of ‘records’ which is inclusive of records of continuing value (=archives), which stresses their uses for transactional, evidentiary and memory purposes, and which unifies approaches to archiving/recordkeeping whether records are kept for a split second or a millennium.
- A focus on records as logical rather than physical entities, regardless of whether they are in paper or electronic form.
- Institutionalisation of the recordkeeping profession’s role requires a particular emphasis on the need to integrate recordkeeping into business and societal processes and purposes.
- [They added the following principle that they developed themselves] Archival science is the foundation for organising knowledge about recordkeeping. This should be combined with an acceptance that we need to continue to identify the knowledge and skills in other disciplines of relevance to our endeavours.

Figure 2-4

The Records Continuum Model



Note. Used with permission of Emerald Publishing Limited, from “Modelling the continuum as paradigm shift in recordkeeping and archiving processes, and beyond - a personal reflection,” by Frank Upward, in *Records Management Journal*, 10(3) (p. 123), 2000; permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.

The records continuum model (Figure 2-4) is a truly conceptual, worldview theoretical model that considers both time and space (Upward, 1996, 1997, 2000). It prioritizes the documentation and preservation of the contextual relationships between a document, other related records (the **Recordkeeping Container** axis), its creator or subject (the **Identity** axis), in what context it was created (the **Transactionality** axis), and what it tells us about itself and its place in the world (the **Evidentiality** axis). The model's genius lies in its representation of both space and time. As you move outward from the centre of the circle, your focus moves beyond a single entity (document, person, transaction, or evidential trace) to its relationships with other entities or groups of entities. An actor will **create** a document as trace evidence of an action; **capture** the metadata that describes it as well as the links between that document to related records, transactions, decisions, communications, and business or social context; **organise** those records by situating them outside the context of a single archival collection, and expand the links to include individual, group, and corporate memories, to those who are outside of the original framework (for example, online); and **pluralise** the records by contextualizing them beyond the greater community framework to become accessible, collective memory (McKemmish, 2001, p. 352; Upward, 2000, p. 122).

The records continuum theory asserts that archivists must be integral players throughout the entire duration of the continuum, which this model illustrates with clarity, as each dimension is wholly dependent on the one before. You can't pluralise what hasn't been created, captured, and organised (MacNeil, 1994; McKemmish, 2001; Upward, 1996). "[I]t became apparent that intervention was required before records creation, description or access, it was required in appraisal...To attempt to make sure records and archives were created and managed appropriately as events unfolded rather than scrambling for evidence and documentation years later" (Daniels, 2021, p. 19). Some records managers and archivists reacted negatively to the continuum model as they appreciated the distinct boundaries between their roles under the

lifecycle model (Upward, 2000, p. 120), but this new model also struck a chord with a lot of information professionals and educators. (p. 115-116).

Sue McKemmish (2001) discussed some of the elements of Upward's model and the community that supports it, including the recognition of the role of archives in society; a push for contextual metadata from the time of a record's creation throughout its evolution through time and space; linkages to other records, institutions, and communities; the emphasis on records as evidence of both organizational activity and social memory; and the inclusion of both personal and corporate archives from all sectors of society into collective archives. This idea of the strength of creating linkages between different types of records from different creators from different times and different places was brought up in another article as a way of supporting authenticity through triangulation (Upward et al., 2011, p. 224). "Pluralization is needed to provide the kind of archival neutrality that can be achieved through the coexistence of different viewpoints" (p. 227). In that article, Upward and his co-authors explored more deeply the model's fourth dimension, with studies on identity, social justice, accountability, participatory community archiving, and alternative recordkeeping realities that made innovative use of new technologies. "The records continuum is predicated on the role of quality recordkeeping (encompassing archiving) in governance frameworks as instruments for individual, group, corporate and collective accountability, identity, memory and authoritative resource management in and through time...this represents a shift from focussing on third dimension perspectives to privileging fourth dimension ones—from recordkeeping regimes that service organisational requirements to those that carry records beyond the boundaries of individual organisations in response to social, political and cultural mandates for recordkeeping" (Evans et al., 2019, pp. 181-182).

This idea of plurality was discussed by information professionals extensively in 2009, where participants at the first annual Archival Education and Research Institute came up with the

concept of the *Archival Multiverse*, which “encompasses the pluralism of evidentiary texts, memory-keeping practices and institutions, bureaucratic and personal motivations, community perspectives and needs, and cultural and legal constructs” (The Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI) & Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group (PACG), 2011, p. 73).

School archivists under the lifecycle model have a clear mandate to acquire, protect, manage, and disseminate their school’s historical records once they cease to have administrative use. Under the records continuum model, however, the role of archivist expands beyond historical records to encompass the management of contemporary records; information systems design; a familiarity with business processes and the records that are created from them; a functional understanding of their school’s activities; an awareness of the viewpoints that are represented in the documentary evidence (and those that are not); the development of strategies to harness the perspectives of underrepresented communities; the defense of social justice; and the building of linkages and relationships between information, knowledge, records, actors, policies, systems, evidence, memories, and communities. No small task under the best circumstances, but if your employer has hired you based on a traditional lifecycle understanding of the role of school archivist, that task becomes even more difficult.

2.2.2 Perception of Archivists and Archives

Why would you need a PhD in filing? (a former colleague’s reaction on telling them that I had decided to pursue my doctorate)

This research study investigated the role of independent school archivists and posits that people’s perception of what an institutional archive is and what an archivist should do may have implications on what an archivist is asked to do (and therefore usually does). Different groups of people have their own, often quite different perspectives about recordkeeping (Lemieux, 2001;

Yeo, 2007) and what exactly it entails. As archivists generally do not create their own job descriptions, their professional priorities are determined by their institution's management.

"In some quarters there is a tendency to deprecate records management as a science, to feel that effective records control requires no more than good intentions and common sense" (Barcan & Shiff, 1954). In the early 1980s, many archivists in the United States were feeling overlooked, which led to being generally underfunded and largely ignored (Jimerson, 2014, p. 35). "Unfortunately, too high a proportion of those who make decisions simply do not know or care about the importance of effective records management" (Atherton, 1985, p. 50). In 1984, the Society of American Archivists commissioned a report to examine the perceived image of archivists among resource allocators (Levy & Robles, 1984). It concluded that, largely, those who managed and funded archival programs had a patronizing view of archivists, perceiving them as noble and hard-working, but viewing their tasks as frivolous—despite acknowledging the benefits that archives brought to their organizations (Task Force on Archives and Society, 1985). As for the perception of archives, "many business managers are likely to view archives as little more than gloomy, spider-infested repositories of crumbling paper and rusty artifacts whose principal value comes but on the golden anniversary" (G. D. Smith, 1982, p. 287).

In her paper about independent school archives, Jan Riley (1997) identified a number of barriers to school archival programs achieving their full potential. The greatest barrier identified was that school management did not perceive that the role of archivist should extend to contemporary recordkeeping. She found that the heads of school generally saw their archivists as capable keepers of the school's history and traditions, but not as potential authoritative sources for managing the school administration's informational needs. Even in Québec, where the role of archivist officially includes the management of contemporary records as enshrined within the Archives Act of 1983, the perception of archivists purely as a keeper of dusty tomes persists (Baillargeon & Lévesque, 2024, p. 289). "The archivist must shed the passive image

that has long plagued him and realize that only by accepting a larger role in the corporate management of information will he create a solid administrative basis upon which an archival program can be justified" (Shkolnik, 1990, p. 23). The concept of the introverted, quiet archivist has become tied to the idea of archivists as ineffectual, passive, and weak, which is something that doesn't seem to plague other, more corporate-type information professionals such as knowledge managers in quite the same way (Pearson, 2021). Archivists have a much easier time acquiring and preserving business records when they are involved in organizational discussions regarding recordkeeping rather than passively accepting what is given to them (Tansey, 2016, para. 11).

How one is represented matters. In popular media, archivists are represented only very infrequently, and when they are, they generally play very minor, stereotyped characters (Avery, 2021; Procter, 2010). They are usually portrayed as helpful (although sometimes territorial and possessive), knowledgeable, disgruntled, and isolated. What their jobs entail is not always made clear, and they are often confused with librarians or museum staff. After they have aided (or subverted, as the case may be) the protagonist, they quickly disappear from the story, not to be seen again (Aldred et al., 2008). Archivists in media also tend to not be depicted as working with digital records: A survey of people's perceptions of archives showed that for those whose encounters with archives was mostly from popular media, archives were described as dark, mysterious, musty, old-fashioned, and quiet at rates higher than those respondents who had actually used archives for research, who were more likely to describe archives as friendly, welcoming, high-tech, and confusing (Patterson, 2016, p. 356).

If the only real exposure to archives that school administration and management has is through popular media, it should not be surprising that many school archivists are only tasked with the management of their organization's historical material, and not seen as qualified to manage contemporary electronic records. But despite their depiction in the media and the

perception of their resource holders and colleagues, the role of modern institutional archivist should encompass much more than “preciousizing over ‘old stuff’ in dead storage” (M. Greene, 2009, p. 20). “The firm's own history, after all, is nothing less than a unique corporate asset. It is time to teach the firm how to exploit it” (G. D. Smith, 1982, p. 290). Archivists must make the value of archives clear to those who control the purse strings. “An effective way to convince records creators to accept responsibility for saving their historical records is to persuade them of the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of integrated records programs—programs that include records management and archives components to preserve and manage information” (SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities, 1986, p. 12). Archivists have to actively advocate for themselves and their collections as non-archivist higher-ups often fail to recognize the value of archives (Tansey, 2016, para. 7). “[I]t should become increasingly evident to the administrators of [...] universities that a well-ordered and functioning archives is not a luxury but an obligation they owe to the past, the present, and the future” (Browne, 1953, p. 226).

2.2.3 Archival Processes

There are many organizations that support information professionals, including (but not limited to) professional archival associations (such as the Society of American Archivists, the Association of Canadian Archivists, the UK Archives and Records Association, the Australian Society of Archivists, l'Association des archivistes du Québec...), the International Council on Archives, ARMA International, AIIM, and the Digital Preservation Coalition. National and international standards and frameworks have been developed, such as ISO 15489, AS4390, DIRKS, GARP, RAD, EAD, DACS, the Curation Lifecycle Model, and OAIS. Archivists should familiarize themselves with these resources, and lean on them when designing their own programs.

There are certain processes that all school archival programs must address. Not all institutional records become archives, and archival holdings should not solely be comprised of institutional records. The decisions that archivists must make regarding what records should and should not be retained and the actual acquisition of those records are addressed through **appraisal and accession**. The following section begins with a brief history of archival appraisal and accession, followed by a discussion of different types of records that can be found in school archives. There is not much purpose in keeping archival records if they are never **used or accessed**, and records are virtually inaccessible if they are not adequately described, so the next section briefly describes the history of archival description and reflects on some of the struggles that institutional archivists must contend with regarding description. It continues by detailing the different uses for a school's own archival records by stakeholder group: administrators, teachers, students, prospective students and their parents, alumni, and the public. It finishes by addressing the issue of privacy, and the importance that privacy concerns could have on archival access. Finally, this section addresses the **management and preservation** of archives, specifically digital archives, which has been a concern for over 50 years yet remains a struggle for many institutional archivists. After acknowledging the important work that has already taken place to address digital preservation, the section ends with a discussion of *More Product, Less Process*, and how it could be used to tackle some of the management and preservation issues seen in school archives.

2.2.3.1 Appraisal and Accession of School Archival Records

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) defines records as “information created, received and maintained as *evidence* and as an asset by an organization or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the *transaction* of business” (International Organization for

Standardization, 2016, pt. 3.14). Early archival theorists and practitioners were very careful to differentiate between business records and private papers, and the latter were considered to have no place whatsoever in archival repositories (Jenkinson, 1937, p. 168; Muller et al., 1968, pp. 152–154). As will be discussed later in this section, archival practice has evolved since then, as archivists realized that the whole story of an organization cannot be told through business records alone. This change can be seen all over the archival world, such as in the Society of American Archivists' definition of archives ("records created or received by a person, family, or organization and preserved because of their continuing value...nonrecord material selected, preserved, managed, presented, and used in the same manner as archives...The end of the twentieth century tended more to demonstrate the profession's attempts to erase the lines between the field of archives and the historical manuscripts tradition—and to recognize the essential similarity between historical records regardless of their source or manner of acquisition" ("Archives," n.d.)), the Quebec archives act ("the body of documents of all kinds, regardless of date, created or received by a person or body in meeting requirements or carrying on activities, preserved for their general information value" (Government of Quebec, 2024d)), the province of Ontario ("The Archives of Ontario holdings include records created by: Ontario government offices; historical records of provincial significance created by individuals as well as organizations such as associations, clubs, businesses and unions" (Ontario Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery, n.d.)), Library and Archives Canada's evaluation and acquisition policy framework (where they detail the four different types of documentary heritage that they acquire: publications, private archives, government archives, and web resources (Library and Archives Canada, 2016)), and the Australian Archives Act ("The functions of the Archives are...to seek to obtain, and to have the care and management of, material (including Commonwealth records) not in the custody of a Commonwealth institution, that forms part of the archival resources of the Commonwealth and, in the opinion of the Director-General, ought to

be in the care of the Archives” (Australian Government, 2024, sec. 5(2)(f)). Thankfully, the greater modern archival community sees the value of both business and personal records.

The Society of American Archivists defines archival appraisal as “the process of determining whether records and other materials have permanent (archival) value. Appraisal may be done at the collection, creator, series, file, or item level. Appraisal can take place prior to donation and prior to physical transfer, at or after accessioning” (“Appraisal,” n.d.). Accession is defined as “tak[ing] intellectual and physical custody of materials, often under legal or policy authority” (“Accession,” n.d.). This section deals with the identification and acquisition of records and other materials for archival preservation. This includes any pre-accession planning such as policy creation, the establishment of workflows for staff, and systems configuration.

The Impartial Archivist

Early archival theorists such as the Dutch trio Samuel Muller, Johan Feith and Robert Fruin and the British Hilary Jenkinson had quite strong, conservative views when it came to appraisal and accession. They saw institutional archivists as impartial guardians and gatekeepers who should not be involved in any appraisal decisions, leaving them up to the records creators, who, one would hope, would destroy all of the records that were not required for future administrative use or historical research before sending the remaining few records to the archive for permanent retention (Vajcner, 1997, p. 24). The original order of records was to be maintained to preserve their context and the intention of the records creators. Upholding the integrity of these administrative records was perceived to ensure their transparency which would allow them to serve as trustworthy evidence (T. Cook, 2013, p. 100). Archival manuals, such as *The Dutch Manual* (“a tedious and meticulous book. The reader is warned” (Muller et al., 1968, p. 9)), were written as step-by-step instructions for archivists to follow to manage their collections.

Designed for workers rather than theorists, they offered little room for interpretation or debate (Ketelaar, 1996).

The Paperwork Explosion

During the Second World War, documents began to be produced in exponentially larger quantities than had ever been done before, and recordkeeping became a vital, integrated component of office work. The hands-off appraisal rules propagated by Jenkinson and The Dutch Manual were no longer sustainable, and archival backlogs became more and more unwieldy. Strategies had to change from micro-appraisal and processing to more macro-level approaches (Duranti, 1991, p. 6). The American archivist Theodore R. Schellenberg began to move the profession away from the Jenkinsonian vision of the passive, impartial archivist to a more active participatory role of collaboratively helping records creators to determine what should be retained and anticipating future research needs (Henry, 1998). He felt that archivists needed to take decisive action to ensure that history was preserved as well as it could be. You couldn't keep everything, but you could do your best to identify and preserve the most important records. The line between institutional archivist and records manager had begun to blur.

Total Archives

At the same time, archivists felt pressure from historical researchers to expand their acquisition policies to include materials from beyond their institutional records including personal records, photographs, films, etc. The Canadian practice of *Total Archives* was expanding globally (T. Cook, 2013, pp. 108–109; L. Millar, 1998). By the 1970s, socially-conscious archivists were recognizing that there was a major power imbalance between the records being preserved by most archival institutions and the people they purported to represent. Large swathes of the population were markedly underrepresented in available documentary evidence,

and it was clear that archivists had to rethink their appraisal methods in order to right these wrongs (E. S. Johnson, 2008). These assertions were quickly adopted by most of the archival community, and practical recommendations on how to deal with these inequities were detailed in an SAA taskforce report (SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities, 1986) which was reflected in Helen Samuels' documentation strategy (Haas et al., 1986; Samuels, 1986) and later functional analysis (Samuels, 1992), as well as the fourth dimension of Frank Upward's records continuum model (Upward, 1996, 1997).

Today, among information professionals, it is widely accepted that archivists must take a proactive approach to appraisal—if they simply wait for records to be brought to them, their collection will quickly become fragmented with enormous gaps in their holdings (T. Cook, 1992, 2004b; Cornell, 1968; R. J. Cox & Samuels, 1988; Dole & Hill, 2015). Archivists must make a detailed plan of what institutional records are being created, by whom, under what context, in which formats, how they are (or should be) managed, and how to streamline their accession (Endelman, 1987) so that appraisal decisions can happen even before the individual records are created (Ketelaar, 2000, p. 328). A single record group could serve very different purposes to different people (Yeo, 2007). When appraising, school archivists must step back and look at the bigger picture (Hughes, 2014): Are these institutional records capturing all elements of the school's functions from all important perspectives (Fernekas & Rosenberg, 2008)? What is the school's mandate? What does their culture and community prioritize? What is important to them? Are whole groups of individuals being underrepresented (Garnet, 2012, p. 55)? If so, how can these voices be un-silenced? This reflective exercise should help with selection and appraisal strategies going forward, but what about retrospectively? What about historical gaps where the records are hidden away (Stuart, 2017, p. 6) or no longer exist (Knifton, 2015, p. 29)? This macro-appraisal approach "requires, therefore, extensive research by archivists into organisational culture and institutional functionality, into record-keeping systems, information

flows, recording media, and changes in these across space and time” (T. Cook, 2004b, p. 6). This will be discussed in greater depth within the functional analysis sections of the methods chapter.

Works Created by or About Children

The perspective of students is often dramatically underrepresented in school archives. In her master’s thesis, Kristine Lehew described the three different types of childhood records that can be found in archives: *child created*, *adult created*, and *later recollection records* (2020).

Archives tend to contain *adult created* records about children rather than by the children themselves, and as such, often misrepresent their childhoods (Lehew, 2020, p. 72). Lehew recommends the creation of *later recollection records* by *adult children* (her term for grownups reflecting back on their childhoods through the lens of adulthood), one type of which is oral histories. “As adults, no longer subject to sanction by parents, teachers, or peers, they can now tell us what happened to them at home and elsewhere and what they really felt about these events” (Sutherland, 1992, p. 244).

Child-created records are often difficult to find in institutional archives, even within those as child-centered as a school. A major reason for this is that it is complicated to acquire the works of children ethically, as kids can’t give consent to donate them (Lehew, 2020, pp. 101–105). In theory, their parents could on their behalf (such as when they authorize schools to take and keep pictures of their children), but this is still ethically questionable. The work of children is also widely considered to be ephemeral in nature, and not seen as archive-worthy (pp. 24-25).

These child-created records are however extraordinarily valuable to researchers (Alexander, 2012), so it would be worthwhile for school archivists to explore ethical ways of acquiring them. One fascinating example is the Prospect Archive of Children’s Work. The Prospect School opened in Vermont in 1965, and closed in 1991 (Alberty, 2022). This small alternative school

was created with a focus on child-directed learning, but also as a venue for teachers to observe and reciprocally learn about teaching and learning from their students. As such, extensive collaborative notes and scrapbooks of the children's works over the years were lovingly compiled and studied, showing (in the words of co-founder Pat Carini) "what can be learned from human works (especially children's works), how the learning from works happens, and how what is learned from works (and the learning of works) relates to education, schools, and the adult world. That's a big bite. What can be learned from works includes a child's (or person's) interests and ways of making sense of the world, how these persist and change across time..." (Alberty, 2022, p. 254). Looking at these files (*Prospect Archive of Children's Work*, n.d.), the descriptions of the children's works are treated with reverence and respect, as though they were catalogs of great works by famous artists rather than children's schoolwork. "From its casual beginnings, the collection of children's work grew into a substantial resource for the study of children's work. It became an entity and was named an 'Archive.' The name gave presence and dignity to the works and to the children who made them. In particular, the Prospect Archive of Children's Work asserts that children's work is valuable and worth our considered attention" (Alberty, 2022, pp. 262–263).

These works together, along with the school's administrative records, form the Prospect Archive of Children's Work which was acquired by the University of Vermont Silver Special Collections Library in 2005. The transfer was done carefully and ethically. "There were complicated issues—including permissions, return of work files and school records requested by alums or families or for children who were in the school fewer than five years...Pat herself expended a consuming amount of time on sorting through and reviewing records as well as on the policy issues involved" (Alberty, 2022, p. 256). Each child was assigned a pseudonym, so none of the records could be traced back to an individual person. As all the students represented in the files would have been adults at the time of the transfer to the University, they

were all able to agree to the donation and the access terms themselves. If they wanted their records returned to them instead of being included in the archive, that's what happened.

School archives have a responsibility to safeguard their community's collective memories. There is certainly material in an archive that is either by or about children where no explicit permission has been granted to be preserved, such as yearbooks, photographs, and student publications. Realistically, permission would be impossible to acquire for all those items, so the solution is either to destroy everything (which nobody is recommending) or proceed with caution and respect when dealing with these precious records.

Types of Material Found in School Archives

Helen Samuels' book, *Varsity Letters* (1992), identifies and describes the seven functions that constitute the full spectrum of activities performed by most post-secondary academic institutions⁸. She details the records that support the evidence of each function, and in doing so, clearly demonstrates that simply relying on an institution's official records to populate its archive paints an incomplete picture: It is important to capture different, sometimes opposing, viewpoints (Burckel, 1976; McKemmish, 2001, p. 352; Mogarro, 2006, p. 74; Upward et al., 2011, p. 227).

Students' perspectives are almost never captured in formal institutional records, yet they remain arguably their most important stakeholder (Christian, 2002; Swain, 2004). Clearly, to ensure that a school's archival holdings are representational of all viewpoints, school archivists must expand their scope of appraisal beyond their institution's business records.

⁸ A significant element of this research is the production of a functional analysis for the case study school (see Appendix I) based on Samuels' *Varsity Letters* (1992). For more about functional analyses, see Sections 3.1.6 and 3.2.5.

The literature speaks of six different types of material popularly acquired by K-12 schools: **business records, curricular records, personal records, oral histories, artefacts, and data.**

Business Records

As schools are businesses, they produce records that act as evidence of their business activities (Cornell, 1968; Maher, 2009, p. 76). Legally and fiscally, these are the most important types of records for school archivists to acquire and preserve. The Fédération des établissements d'enseignement privés (FÉEP) [Federation of Private Educational Institutions], in collaboration with the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) [Quebec National Library and Archives], published version 1.2 of the *Guide de gestion des archives à l'intention des établissements d'enseignement privés du Québec* [Archives Management Guide for Private Educational Institutions in Quebec] (Fédération des établissements d'enseignement privés & Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2016) to help guide independent school administrators with the management of their records. In addition to being a useful appraisal tool, a well-thought-out records retention schedule can be extremely valuable in order to justify accessioning historically significant records that may be impacted by privacy legislation (Richardson & Wells, 2021).

In addition to providing a detailed records classification plan and retention schedule, the guide also offers advice on the development of a formal archival policy, something which is highly recommended (Abraham, 1991, p. 45; Moro Cabero et al., 2011, p. 108). Without an acquisition policy (or if one is too vague), what is collected often turns out to be haphazard and incomplete (Bance, 2012, p. 14; Dole & Hill, 2015, pp. 266–267; Lemieux, 2001, p. 230; Spencer, 2000, p. 79).

Contemporary school records are often scattered within different departments, hidden within silos. Older paper files can be forgotten in neglected filing cabinets, created by staff long retired,

only to be discovered and hastily discarded during office renovations (Blendon, 1975; Downing et al., 2013; Maves, 1988; Mogarro, 2006; Young, 2002). Traditionally, institutional archivists had been given control over their organization's administrative records after they were no longer being used by staff. It had generally been left up to the records creators to decide if and when to transfer their documents to the archive, ideally under the guidance of their archivist as dictated by a records retention schedule. When paper records were the norm, staff were motivated to move their inactive records to the archive due to limited storage space. However, in a digital world where storage is perceived as cheap and doesn't take up any physical space in offices, the impetus for staff to proactively give their records to the archivist isn't as compelling as it once was. Files become stored on different devices under separate accounts, and with regular staff turnover, much can become lost (Hammack, 1989, p. 185; Osborne, 1986, p. 38; Stuart, 2017, p. 6).

Student files. The management of student files is a complex situation. When a child is actively a student, their file can contain a myriad of documents about them. The *Archives Management Guide for Private Educational Institutions in Quebec* lists some examples of what could be found therein: educational services contracts, signed permission forms to take and display photographs and videos of the student, birth certificates, attestation of attendance forms, English language eligibility certificates, notices of leaving, report cards from former schools, course choices, grade appeal forms (and the faculty responses), documents relating to absences and tardiness, photographs of the student, ID cards, report cards, behavioral reports, parental correspondence, intervention plans, roadmaps, requests for professional services, records from the Youth Protection office, professional reports, and documents related to discipline (Fédération des établissements d'enseignement privés & Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2016, pp. 128-130). They recommend that all contents of the student file except for report cards be destroyed either 3 or 6 years after the child has left the school, and

that report cards be destroyed when the student turns 75 (except for those born in years ending in a '1', which should be retained permanently as a sample). If they create their own retention schedule, however, an independent school in Quebec could request to change the retention periods for any of their records for historical reasons. Some might decide to keep all report cards in perpetuity. Others might request to keep lists of extracurricular activity participation, notes about the student, or parental correspondence. Some reasons for paring the files down as much as possible include storage costs and individuals' right to privacy. Some reasons for retaining a more complete set of records include historical research, support of individual and collective memory, genealogy requests, and accountability (for example, disciplinary notes or documented parental concerns could help bolster victim testimony in abuse cases (Bak, 2021)).

In terms of ethics, decisions on how to approach student files become even more complex. A recent paper on person-centered recordkeeping addressed the issue of the records of children that had been placed in out-of-home care facilities (Lomas et al., 2022). The authors argued for a more humane, dignified, and participatory approach to recordkeeping, "taking into account the needs and values of all parties...to centre those who are most affected by recordkeeping decisions" (p. 66). In the case of the extremely vulnerable population discussed in this article, these Care Leavers expressed that they had not been involved in the creation of their own records, and they found that accessing their records was mired in bureaucracy, redaction, and a lack of support which led to feelings of confusion, frustration, and trauma (p. 72). While they were the subject of their files, their voices, experiences, and feelings were very rarely contained therein, and what was there was often quite disturbing. In the words of a Care Leaver in reaction to reading her file: "What I wasn't prepared for was the language. The absolutely terrible language, the way that I was written about...any time you're writing about a child always think that child could go back and read that...words are so powerful" (p. 74).

While most independent school student files don't contain material that is as sensitive as the Care Leavers files, they could still contain painful or other sensitive documents, so appraisal decisions regarding the contents of those files must be taken with great care. In creating student files going forward, schools could consider a more participatory approach. The idea that children could be active participants in the creation of their own student files is interesting, and would go far to mitigate many of the ethical risks of fabricating and collecting records about individuals who have no input in the process. It would also ensure that their voices are represented in the records. When teachers and administrators guide the creation of student records, they show the adults' perspectives rather than those of the students. "The researcher, posed in a dominant position with a camera pointed at children, highlights the methodologies that adults have relied on in studying childhood" (Emberly, 2015, p. 173). Certainly, some of the notes within the records will be created by adults, but they should remember that they are describing human beings who might read these words someday, and that respectful language should always be used. When describing children and their works at the Prospect School, "[t]he processes always insist on according others—all others—the status of person, with all the complexity, capability, range of emotions and desires and possibilities that implies" (Himley et al., 2011, p. 7).

Human resource files. HR files contain personal details about the school's staff members, and are therefore kept confidential. They can contain sensitive information such as pay and medical issues but could also include disciplinary notes. Some teachers' unions have clauses included in their collective agreements that insist on the expunging of certain negative information from teacher records after a certain number of years (Stop Educator Child Exploitation, 2022, p. 9). In the case of abuse allegations, the removal of these notes from files is obviously of serious concern not only to archivists, but to anyone who cares about accountability and the safety of children. In these cases, a frank discussion with school

leadership about being on the right side of history might encourage a policy change, or at the very least, an open discussion about protecting children and survivors' rights.

Curricular Records

To guide their classroom teaching, teachers create lesson plans. In 2009, the New York Times published an article about teachers buying and selling their lesson plans online (Hu, 2009). It turned out to be quite controversial ("Does a Teacher Own the Lesson Plan?," 2009; B. J. Jones, 2010; Masnick, 2010; Norton, 2009; Rotherham, 2012).

Critics and supporters of the sale and purchase of lesson plans argue two distinct issues: the legal rights of teachers and their employers, and the morality of the practice.

In terms of legality, some argue that work produced during the course of one's job belongs to one's employer, so schools should own teachers' lesson plans. At first glance, this is supported by the "work for hire" doctrine of the United States' Copyright Act, which states that creators of artistic and literary works produced during their employment are not legally granted ownership of their works, and that it belongs to their employers. However, historically, *de facto* exceptions have been made for teachers in order to promote knowledge sharing through publication and to not impede faculty from taking their lesson plans with them if they move to other schools (Blanchard, 2010). Both sides have successfully been argued in court, so there is no clear standardized answer to the question of who owns the copyright to course materials. What it seems to come down to is individual agreements—either casually, traditionally, or contractually—between teachers and their schools.

In terms of morality, some see the purchase of lesson plans as lazy, while others feel that teachers shouldn't have to reinvent the wheel with every lesson they teach. Some laud the entrepreneurial spirit of selling lesson plans, others describe teachers making extra money off their work as greedy. Many people feel as though teachers are overworked and underpaid, so

anything that can be done to make their jobs easier or to help them make more money should be encouraged. It is generally agreed that sharing knowledge and experience in the form of lessons with colleagues should be facilitated, but some feel as though this should be happening for free (Wojcicki, 2010).

In the case of independent schools, there is no centralized school board, and taxpayers aren't paying teacher salaries, so the only people who should have an opinion over the ownership of course materials are the teachers and their individual schools. Some schools might have included a clause in teacher contracts, others will not have. Some might admonish teachers for selling their work, others might encourage it. It all comes down to the relationship between the teachers and their schools.

This question of ownership might affect school archives in that if teachers own the copyright over their own lesson plans, then schools can't compel them to deposit them with the archive. If, on the other hand, a school does own the rights, then in theory they could insist that teachers prepare and submit their lesson plans to be archived (or distributed as the school sees fit). What effect such a decision would have on a school's relationship with its teachers, however, would remain to be seen.

In a study of the personal information management practices of K-12 teachers, it was found that while teachers did often share course materials with other teachers who have been tasked with teaching the same course after them (referred to as information heritage), the teachers receiving these unsolicited donations were often disinterested in using them, due to differences in teaching styles, incomplete records, or just because they wanted to design their own lessons. These course materials tended, however, to be held on to for longer than desired because there wasn't ever any time to go through them, and teachers don't want to offend their predecessors by not seeming to value their work (Diekema & Olsen, 2014).

Another, lesser-considered type of curricular record is those created by students. Child-created records can be found in literary magazines, yearbooks, school newspapers, and candid camera pictures, although students would likely have censored themselves if there was a risk of their honesty getting them in trouble. I would argue that much schoolwork isn't really representative of child-created records, as they are very much guided by adults, although it does show what these children were asked to do, and how they went about doing it. Some exceptions could be 'emotion work,' (Lehew, 2020, p. 23) such as artwork, journals, creative writing, speeches, etc.

In a fascinating doctoral project, Ciaran Trace (2004) tracked the records that were created by fifth graders during the course of their education. These varied from scholarly assignments to personal gossip-laden notes and are reflective of both classroom activities and the school's "hidden curriculum"—the records that students create to meet their own needs outside of a formal classroom setting. This leads to some logistical questions, however, such as how one decides what should not make it into an archive for ethical and privacy reasons. Perhaps children themselves should be the ones to decide what is included in the archive, as they will choose things that are important to them (such as what they themselves decided to submit work into the yearbook or literary magazine). People should be able to decide to be remembered for the things they are themselves proud of (Lehew, 2020, p. 5).

There is much evidence of a school's history to be found within its business and curricular records, but it is also necessary for archivists to look beyond the school's filing cabinets and shared drives to find records to fill gaps and to provide alternate perspectives.

Personal Records

As previously mentioned, Canada is a pioneer in the practice of total archives (McKemmish, 2001, p. 352; Samuels, 1992, p. 7): the accession of archival materials from any number of

sources to form a collective memory. This demonstrates the value that our country (and others) places not on just institutional and governmental records, but also the personal records of private individuals (Rundell, 1971, p. 183; Swain, 2004; Young, 2002, p. 55).

The acquisition of personal records is very important to round out any institutional collection. If approached in a methodical manner, they could provide a systematic bottom-up perspective of individuals' shared personal experiences of everyday life, something that is often missing from institutional records (Hughes, 2014, p. 274).

Archivists can help to encourage private donations of materials by promoting their archive—the archives should be visible at school events, such as homecoming and graduation ceremonies (Konzak & Teague, 2009), and should be in regular contact with alumni and former staff members through newsletters and targeted correspondence (Burckel, 1976, pp. 4–5). Often, however, these important private records have been lost to time or possibly never existed in the first place, and gaps in the narrative remain.

Oral Histories

In situations where an archivist discovers that there are no existing (or available) documentary records to fill gaps in the collection, or that there is a dearth of different perspectives, the documentary technique of eliciting oral histories has become a generally accepted strategy to attempt to capture more of the story (Christian, 2002), despite some concerns that in doing so, archivists are “fabricating” history (Abraham, 1991, p. 46). If the statements made within personal oral histories are always presented as personal accounts and not un-refutable facts, it is up to the listener to decide their validity. The role of archivists is to make sure that these voices are heard, not necessarily to fact-check their claims—although, institutional records can be used to support the credibility of oral histories, in that they can verify (or refute) certain facts, such as dates and names (Knifton, 2015, p. 34). “The school register

will show that I attended school for the first time in September 1937, a snapshot will show how I was dressed, but only my adult recollection of it enables me to articulate the combination of excitement and fear, terror even, that the event triggered” (Sutherland, 1992, p. 244). This supports the argument that archivists should be collecting many different types of records, as the whole picture can only be seen when lit from different angles (Burckel, 1976, pp. 8–9). There is much that happens in organizations that isn’t ever officially documented, such as the reasoning behind certain decisions, insights into events that did not occur, or things of a sensitive nature (Geoffrey Jones & Comunale, 2019), and oral histories may be the only way of capturing them, as was evidenced by the work of the TRC.

Oral history projects are quite popular, with numerous examples within the literature (Christian, 2002; Fernekes & Rosenberg, 2008; Henningham et al., 2017; Knifton, 2015; Levin, 2011; Nunes, 2007; Rundell, 1971; Swain, 2004). Most oral history projects tend to happen retrospectively after some time has passed, and so in a school situation, participants tend to be alumni and former staff members. Samuels (1992) however also suggested that current students could be encouraged to keep diaries (either written or audio/visual) to record their thoughts and experiences while they are still fresh in their minds (p. 78). It could be interesting to see how stories change after the passage of time, as memories soften, and life experience alters one’s perspective.

Oral history projects are also a great way for teachers to inspire current students by tasking them to interview alumni and former staff as part of a classroom project. Not only would they learn more about the school’s history and the lives of their participants in an engaging manner, but they would learn how to do prior research to design the questions, interpersonal skills as they maneuver their way through the interviews, critical thinking as they interpret the stories that they hear, empathy as they hear the tales of their elders, and a sense of community from being part of a group that transcends generations (Sitton et al., 1983).

Artefacts

From slates and chalk through mimeograph machines to SMART boards, some of the most engaging evidence of classroom activity can be found in artefacts (Lawn & Grosvenor, 2010). Anne Cooke (1991) acknowledged that some school archivists might balk at the idea of preserving memorabilia. She argued, however, that two major motivations for keeping a school archive were public relations and preserving the history and traditions of the school, and that artefacts were very effective at both inspiring and educating—justification enough to warrant their inclusion in an archival collection. “There is an educational value to touching an old typewriter, feeling the pages of an old book or document, smelling the scent of old leather furniture, handling old fading photographs and seeing the shine in beautifully crafted trophies” (Garnet, 2012, p. 49).

Regardless of the value that artefacts might add to a school’s archival collection, an unavoidable logistical reality is that artefacts take up substantial space, and for many schools, that is a real concern. As much as a school might like to hold on to every trophy it has won, unless they have an adequately large dedicated space in which to store them, difficult decisions will need to be made (Gleaves & O’Neill, 2003, p. 58).

Data

“The impact of the use of data and information on the current educational system, through knowledge management, can enable schools to evolve from bureaucracies forged during an industrial era to educational knowledge ecologies that are prepared to compete in a networked information-driven global society” (Petrides & Guiney, 2002, p. 1703). Schools have significant information stored within databases. This can include student records, alumni records, and donation tracking. Databases are often neglected by institutional archivists as they are very complicated to preserve in their dynamic state since most databases are designed to be

ephemeral rather than archival, and once data is extracted from a system, its structure, metadata, and context can become lost, reducing a record's trustworthiness and informational value (Bearman & Sochats, 1996). This is unfortunate, as data tells stories that could not only inform administrative (Petrides & Guiney, 2002, p. 1707) and curricular decisions (Datnow & Hubbard, 2015), but could also be of great interest to historical and educational researchers (Griffith, 2004; Ohlund & Ericsson, 1994; Papenhausen, 2014; Spencer, 2000). However, unless that data is captured and normalized in an archivally-sound fashion, these stories are silenced.

Community Archives

Merriam-Webster defines **community** as a body of individuals unified by a common characteristic, such as an interest (professional, social, economic, political), location, history, policy, social state or condition, joint ownership or participation, likeness, or fellowship ("Community," n.d.). This sense of belonging to a community that transcends the passage of time is made quite clear when you think about university alumni who speak proudly of their alma mater, cheer for their teams during football games, and benefit from professional and social networking with fellow alums. That sense of community comes with a deep connection to places (the physical school), people (fellow alums and former teachers), and shared experiences (and the evidence of them, such as photographs). Contact with any of these touchpoints can serve as memory devices, reminding people of that sense of belonging that they hopefully felt as children.

The term **archives** can be interpreted traditionally from the Jenkinsonian perspective as business records that showed evidence of transactions, and that needed to be kept together, in the order in which they were created, in the custody of an archivist. Should any individual record be removed from this custody and the chain of provenance broken, then this document could no longer be considered as archives (at least without some serious qualification) (Jenkinson, 1937,

pp. 9–10). Thankfully, an expansion of this early narrow vision of archives has been embraced by modern archivists to include non-traditional materials, including private papers, oral histories, ephemera, textiles, art, published manuscripts, journals, scrapbooks, and audiovisual materials (Gilliland & Flinn, 2013, pp. 3–4). The records continuum model illustrates this very clearly, where it's fourth dimension, *pluralise*, encourages archivists to look out beyond their own organization to link to and engage with other records, users, and archives. This is so important as many truths can never really be known from just a single perspective, so one needs to bring together all kind of records from all kinds of sources in all kinds of formats to ever see the full picture. "All is archive" (Upward et al., 2011, p. 206).

Community archives is generally agreed to as the collecting, preserving, and disseminating of various forms of mainly non-traditional documentary *evidence of a community by the members of the community*, apart from a formal archival institution (Caswell et al., 2018; Gilliland & Flinn, 2013). "Without deep knowledge of its core cultural events, it might be difficult, even impossible, to truly document any community" (Bastian, 2013, p. 122). Individuals move their memories from their own private spheres and bring them together with other community members to form a community archive. "Communities, including entire nations, retain archives as a means of remembering and connecting with their pasts, their origins...communities and nations often establish archives to inform, enlighten, educate and sometimes to entertain. Related to this is the collective need to support and control storytelling about the pasts and origins of the community. Often archives are retained as a means of expressing, asserting and preserving a unifying group consensus on the nature of its identity, as forged through a shared history or alternatively to support competing articulations of group identity and plurality" (Cunningham, 2005, p. 23).

Community archives often emerge when existing institutional archives fail to meet the needs of a community. A good example of this is the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

(NCTR) that emerged from Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's inquest into the atrocities that took place in residential schools. The commission found that the official government, religious and school records were biased and incomplete, and that the viewpoints of the children were not represented. The NCTR was created as an independent archive to house documents and testimony from survivors and their families to preserve a more complete picture of the history of these organizations and the people they impacted. 70% of the staff of the NCTR are made up of community members: "intergenerational Survivors, 60s scoop Survivors, and other Indigenous Peoples" (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, n.d.), and they are supported by other professionals and the University of Manitoba.

Most people's school experiences are far more positive. A healthy school community should encourage a sense of belonging, trust in others, and safety (Osterman, 2002, p. 167). "[T]he need to belong is indeed fundamental and is associated with differences in cognitive processes, emotional patterns, behavior, health, and well-being...students' experience of belongingness in the school setting is linked to important motivational, attitudinal, and behavioral factors that are associated with school success." (p. 168). Members of a school community, due to their shared experiences, will display some significant commonalities, however individuals are all quite different, with unique experiences and cultures and backgrounds. Listening to all of these different voices with different perspectives is the only way to even begin to understand the rich complexity that is life within a school community (Shields, 2002).

School archives hold documents about the lives of the children that were in their care, but these records are, for the most part, created and managed by adults, and as was discussed earlier in this chapter, the child's perspective is often missing from the documentary evidence, so a solution would be for school archivists to solicit donations of material as well as oral history testimonies from alumni, *adult children*. If, however, a former student had a fraught relationship with their school due to unpleasant experiences or even abuse, the power imbalance between

the institution and the individual might discourage them from coming forward. Also, there would be quite the conflict of interest if the school that is being accused of failing to keep their students safe was now charged with the collection of evidence against themselves. This is a situation where a community archive could be a very good solution, allowing adult children to regain control of the historical narratives of their own past from the institution that held so much power over them when they were young (Bryant, 2016). However, community archives need space, financial resources, and expertise to function (Sheffield, 2020).

While some community members, especially those that had been marginalised or displaced, may find great importance in having their community archive inhabit a physical space (Caswell et al., 2018), if resources are limited and there is no physical space where the community archive could be housed, much can be done pragmatically in a non-custodial, digital environment (Hurley, 2016). A really great framework for a successful non-custodial digital community archive is the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) (Caswell, Cifor, et al., 2016) where records and stories had been collected and curated by and for community members. A study showed that users of this community archive had intense affective responses to using the site for the first time, including joy, thrill, amazement, awe, surprise, and excitement from seeing themselves as a part of history (p. 70). Some even decided to volunteer for the organization since its emotional impact was so moving. "By collecting materials that document the previously unknown history of a community, a community archives asserts that we were here" (p. 75).

Community archives must be managed by members of the community, but school archivists could (and should) certainly offer both their expertise as well as links and access to records within the institutional collection to build a less-biased, more comprehensive history of the school. School archivists are in a very good position to support the alumni communities that they serve. There is power in numbers, so a handful of local school alumni associations could

even get together to create a single collaborative community archive for all their schools, counseled by school archivists and (ideally) funded by a university archive or their national archive—forming an archival commons (S. R. Anderson & Allen, 2009). Schools should encourage their archivists to aid their communities in this way, as the institution would also benefit, not just through goodwill, but also because then their recorded histories would be so much richer. There is often a disconnect between a business' history and its corporate culture. Some sociologists believe that organizational culture is influenced by values and norms that can be seen at an interpersonal level, not just a macro-level examination of its history. They rely heavily on interviews and personal accounts to tell stories in addition to documentary evidence (Rowlinson & Hassard, 1993, pp. 300-301). Documents and testimony together paint a picture that would not be possible through just one viewpoint alone: "Just as a child's school reports make an interesting comparison with the school-days remembered, so an organization's recorded history should provide a revealing insight into the past remembered by its members" (p. 301).

Summary

The role of institutional archivist in appraisal and accession activities has shifted over the years, from impartial guardian completely removed from appraisal decisions to practitioners of total archives, who proactively search out records from different sources to ensure a well-rounded collection that is representative of all of their organization's functions and viewpoints, including those of children, which must be approached ethically and creatively.

School archives contain different types of records, including business records, curricular records, personal records, oral histories, artefacts, and data. *Business records* are vital but tend to not tell the whole story. The acquisition of both teacher-created and student-created *curricular* records can be complicated but certainly worthwhile to address. *Personal records* can show

different viewpoints, but they can be difficult to acquire. *Oral histories* can be very useful for getting specific details about events from the perspective of individuals who were there but should be taken with a grain of salt as memories fade and sometimes people lie. They can sometimes be fact-checked with official records, however, and are often the only way to capture certain perspectives. *Artefacts* can be a brilliant way to viscerally engage with people but tend to take up a lot of space. *Data* can tell incredible stories, but only if it is preserved and formatted in such a way that can be analysed.

Sometimes, there will be records that will not make it into the school's archive, but may instead be collected by an external *community archive*. These community archives often emerge as a way for marginalized community members to exert their power over an institution that kept them powerless as children and, in some cases, took advantage of that powerlessness in heinous ways. School archivists are positioned to be able to support these communities with their expertise. Their schools—for the sake of truth, accountability, and the empowerment of the people they purport to care about—should encourage them to do so.

2.2.3.2 Use and Access of School Archival Records

Unless school archival collections are used, there is not much purpose in keeping them. Once they have been appraised and accessioned, in order for archival records to be useful, they must be processed, contextualized, formatted and described in such a way so as to be readily found and disseminated (Fernekas & Rosenberg, 2008; Garnet, 2012). At the same time, sensitive records must be identified and protected from exposure.

Archival Description

The 1970s saw the birth of several archival descriptive standards (Hensen et al., 2011). Until then, archivists had borrowed (and sometimes adapted) library standards for describing their holdings, but as archives are quite different from libraries, these standards were far from ideal—even described as “unworkable” (M. Cook & Procter, 1989, p. 56) and showing an “appalling ignorance about the fundamental nature of almost all non-book materials—archives and manuscripts most especially” (Hensen, 1992, p. 65). In 1983, *Archives, Personal Papers and Manuscripts* (APPM) (which in 2005 became *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS)) was developed by the Library of Congress in the United States. APPM moved away from library-centric bibliographic description and legitimized traditional, more verbose, archival finding aids. This was followed by similar standards around the globe. Archival descriptive standards had finally emerged from the shadows of libraries. They were comprehensive, provided significant context, were appealing to historical researchers, but were onerous to create and maintain and were complicated for users who were less experienced with the structure of traditional finding aids. “If archivists present archival description in generally usable ways and make the implicit information in finding aids explicit and intuitive, all users will benefit” (Wiedeman, 2019, p. 404). While they may have been celebrated and widely adopted by archivists at GLAM organizations, they were not necessarily seen as a sustainable solution for overworked institutional archivists facing the tsunami of digital records that had begun to drown their organizations (M. Greene & Meissner, 2005).

This is not to say that records should not be described, just that they need to be done efficiently and intelligently. When archival records have not been processed, they are virtually inaccessible (Dole & Hill, 2015; Garnet, 2012; M. Greene, 2009). Even when archival records are collected and preserved, unless they are in a format that makes them easily accessible to specific community members, they will still not be used. Administrators and teaching staff

generally do not have the time nor the inclination to dig around in archival finding aids—they want information at their fingertips, structured in such a way so as to be easily discovered (W. E. Brown & Yakel, 1996, p. 279). “We build these systems, but all the research shows that people are getting to our stuff via Google, so it becomes much more important that we understand how to push our stuff up to that layer as opposed to trying to focus on having these beautiful, fine-tuned catalogs that nobody’s using” (Hensen et al., 2011, p. 706:35). Records Continuum scholars rightly speak of the importance of robust metadata and contextual information for accountability: an understanding of records, who created them, and why (Wood et al., 2014). “[A]rchives need to expose the evidential as well as the informational value of these materials in ways that will support both foreseen and unforeseen uses and users into an infinite future” (p. 401). This important information must be documented, but this could be done through system design and purposeful procedures for record creators. Archivists could think creatively, determine what elements need to be captured in archival description (including activity, creator, indexing, evidence of authenticity, and digital file format identification), and find ways to capture and share that information in such a way so that users, both internal and external, can effectively interact with the collection. As a simple example, where there is no digital asset management system in place, in addition to the automated metadata (creator, date, file format, GPS location, email recipient etc) that is created when a file is born, there could be an acquisition log (guided by a detailed acquisition policy), an organization chart (for information on the role(s) held by record creators), a wiki (to describe the collection, series, and semantically-linked access points) which could point to file lists that refer to both physical files as well as digital assets, along with a file registry of hash codes and formats to support migration and other digital preservation activities. Institutional information that provides context could be found within the archive itself in records such as strategic plans, archived copies of older websites, policy and procedural documents, etc. (T. Cook, 2004a) “Perhaps a world without finding aids will

include more data-centric thinking, a renewed focus on content standards, and a higher value on the labor necessary to create and structure description. Perhaps archivists could experiment in new forms to present description, discuss the broader barriers to access, and ask whether new levels of access are possible” (Wiedeman, 2019, p. 410).

Use of School Archival Material

“Though archives are often imagined to serve administrative needs, for instance by documenting past decisions, financial transactions, and legally required information, it is a mistake to see these functions as completely divorced from archives’ social and cultural purposes. Richard Cox took on this debate over archives’ function—whether they should be approached as institutions of evidence (for administrative needs) or memory (for social and cultural purposes)—and attempted to settle the dichotomy by arguing that the former function is constitutive of the latter” (Hughes, 2014, p. 271). In addition to supporting one’s institutional operations, archives have a far greater uses including accountability, historical research, genealogy, and supporting community memories. This study, however, has noted that schools often do not hire archivists at all, so is examining the ways where archivists could bring obvious operational value to their school. Once hired, and their benefit to the school is made clear, school archivists can and should then focus on their archives’ social and cultural purposes, but unless they can prove immediate operational value, there will be no archive at all.

As previously noted, independent K-12 schools have different needs from public K-12 schools, as they are not administered by a central board (they are independently managed), they must actively recruit students as they are dependent on tuition fees, and they must fundraise. They are in direct competition with each other as well as with the public schools. The literature shows that the use of independent schools’ archives could directly benefit the school through engagement with different community groups, including:

- **Administrators**, to give them the resources and support to best do their jobs;
- **Teachers**, to help them to enrich their students' education and emotional well-being;
- **Students**, to provide them with the best education and emotional support possible;
- **Prospective students and their parents**, to convince them that their school is the best choice;
- **Alumni**, to support community memory which might encourage engagement with the school both financially and through participatory engagement (reunions, participation in school activities, volunteering); and
- **The general public**, to support research about the history of a specific school, its community, and its place in the world.

Administrators

"Archives must be established as a recognized business activity serving the needs of modern corporations" (Shkolnik, 1990, p. 23). If an institution's archive brings no operational value to its institution, then there is little motivation for them to fund it. There has not been much written about the use of school archives to support administrative functions beyond the retention of vital records for legal or fiscal purposes. Business archivists are very aware of both the greater societal value as well as the potential administrative value of records, but neither may be clear to business management. The theory of path-dependence, which is taught in many MBA programs, claims that it is more valuable to look forward rather than backwards when making strategic business decisions, and that relying on what a company has already done rather than considering new alternatives can actually put organizations at a disadvantage (Lasewicz, 2015, p. 65).

Thankfully, not everyone feels that way, but school archivists still need to ensure that their management recognizes the operational value that an archive can bring to their organization. Ineffective recordkeeping practices can have a very negative impact on the productivity of any organization (Lemieux, 2001), as it makes vital information difficult for decision-makers to access. "Firms would also do well to understand the bases and contexts for the decisions of the past that have given rise to current policies" (G. D. Smith, 1982, p. 289). Archival records can

also provide evidence of decisions made by school leaders (and perhaps even the justifications for those decisions) which could be worth their weight in gold during any litigation (Gray, 2002; Vagts, 1978). “While it can be argued that it is risky to save company documents for fear that their existence may in the future be used in a lawsuit, studies have shown that the legal department of a large company will profit many times over from an orderly set of records which they can utilize in any litigation” (Shkolnik, 1990, p. 19). Some of the other benefits that having an archive can bring to an organization include supporting brand knowledge and marketing; developing a corporate identity; aiding in employee recruitment, engagement, and retention; and ensuring corporate responsibility (Logan, 2017). The Harvard Business Review spoke of the four principles of enduring success in business, and #3 was to remember your mistakes. “Successful companies, naturally, have good stories to tell, and they tell them constantly. This practice helps motivate people and inspires them to act in ways that produced success in the past and are likely to continue to in the future...But what really separates the great from the good is that the great companies also remember their mistakes” (Stadler, 2007, p. 70).

School administrators want to have all the information that they need from various systems and sources at their fingertips when they need it in a format that they can use (Fogerty & Adkins, 1997, p. 13,20; M. A. Greene, 2002, p. 49; Rolan, 2017, p. 197; Wirth, 1997, p. 2). Different departments will often have the same informational needs, and could be encouraged to work together rather than duplicating their efforts (Rissmeyer, 2010, p. 20). Archivists could help staff to break down these silos if they embraced a holistic, continuum approach to information management. “Archivists should look at themselves less as the historical voice in an institution and more as a part of the administrative team” (Yakel & Bost, 1994, p. 596).

Teachers and Current Students

Not many undergraduate-level courses teach their students how to conduct research in an archive (Carini, 2009; M. Greene, 1989). In Quebec, elementary and high school teachers do not need to hold a master's degree, and many don't. As such, K-12 teachers usually have very little (if any) personal experience in using archival materials, either in their own research or in their classrooms (S. A. Cook, 1997, p. 108; Grace Jones & Watson, 1970, p. 189).

Unfortunately, within most Library and Information Studies (LIS) master's programs, archivists receive very little education on how to teach (Anderberg et al., 2018), so neither group on their own are in a good position to successfully develop course plans that inject archival material into a classroom setting. "The pressures of teaching are considerable and teachers do not always have the opportunity to search for and thoroughly familiarize themselves with archives...they may welcome some help in using a less familiar and fairly sophisticated method of teaching the subject" (Grace Jones & Watson, 1970, p. 191). Teachers and archivists must work together. A good example of this kind of collaboration is the *Teaching with Primary Sources 'Unconference'*, an event that the Society of American Archivists runs alongside its annual meetings. There, archivists and educators gather together to explore different ways to integrate archival resources into classrooms (Hoyer & Schwier, 2019).

There are numerous examples in the literature that promote the use of primary-source documents in a K-12 classroom (Anderberg et al., 2018; Burckel, 1976, p. 15; Chepesiuk, 1983, p. 55; S. A. Cook, 1997, p. 108; Garcia, 2017; Gilliland-Swetland et al., 1999, p. 93; Palmer, 1979, p. 148), as it can encourage inquiry-based learning, the analysis of primary-source documents, critical thinking, and feelings of community belonging. It can also make children aware of the existence of archives and how they function, which may give them the skills and the confidence to pursue more robust historical research in the future (Hendry, 2007). The literature gives different examples of integrating archives into a curriculum: supplementing

information on a particular subject, exposing students to different types of resources (not everything needs to be learned from a textbook), teaching proper techniques for using primary archival resources in research projects (Carini, 2009, p. 42), involving students in the archival curation process (Addonizio & Case, 2015; Fernekes & Rosenberg, 2008), and having students create online exhibitions using primary source materials during the global pandemic (Bohlmann & Hosselkus, 2021). A very impressive project at Concordia University demonstrated the benefits to both the students and the community of teaching undergraduate students how to process and describe archival materials from the Negro Community Centre in Montreal, and then use them to engage with community members (Mills et al., 2020). This model could be used as a framework for older high school students to work with their school's own archival records to engage with alumni, but would be even more special as they would all belong to the same community of people who attended that particular school.

Certainly, each technique would need to be approached differently depending on the age of the students, but even young elementary school children can benefit from the introduction of primary source material in the classroom (Gilliland-Swetland et al., 1999; Kafai & Gilliland-Swetland, 2001). It has been shown (both empirically and anecdotally) that elementary and high school students benefit from being exposed kinaesthetically (hands-on touching) to primary source materials in their classrooms as it helps to create an emotional connection to the course material which in turn makes it more engaging and relevant (Carini, 2009; Chepesiuk, 1983; Dowling et al., 2018).

School archivist Jan Riley (1997) listed several barriers to using a school's own archives as a curricular resource. These included a lack of interest by faculty, archivists' perception that teaching is outside of their mandate, archivists' particular abilities, a lack of space and time, the confidential nature of archives, and the effort involved by both faculty and archivists to develop such a program. She did say, however, that the effort to do so was certainly worthwhile, as it

would help to make the archive more relevant to the business' primary function of educating students.

Other than Jan Riley's article, there has been no academic research on the use of an elementary or high school's *own archival collection* to support its curriculum, but the stories are certainly there. For example, CBC News reported that in 2015, a Quebec-based public high school social sciences teacher began a project with her grade 10 students to research the lives of the school's former students who died during the Second World War using a combination of the school's own archival collection (such as yearbooks) and other archival sources including Canadian military records (S. Smith, 2016).

Exposure outside of a classroom setting could be valuable as well. If a school has a long and proud history, archival records could be leveraged to make students feel as though they are a part of a large, established group (Rissmeyer, 2010, p. 22), and that sense of belonging could extend past graduation to produce engaged alumni, who, school management should be reminded (for the sake of the archive's fiscal sustainability), are more likely to support their alma mater both financially and with volunteer time than alumni who feel little to no affinity to their old schools (Gallo, 2012; Rissmeyer, 2010). Where there are holes in the school's archival records, older students could even help to fill those gaps by approaching and interviewing alumni for oral history projects. This has three benefits: the students learn how to responsibly produce an oral history project (addressing such issues as interviewing techniques, privacy, preservation, and metadata); they learn intimately about the history of their school and community; and the archive's collection is enriched (Levin, 2011).

Contact with their school's archival collection could also encourage students to deposit their own records both during their time at the school and in the future as alumni. Photographs, student club and committee minutes, posters, projects, oral histories, and artwork are just a few examples of donations that could complement a school's institutional records to create a more

complete, comprehensive collection to preserve for future generations (Christian, 2002; Giemza, 2017; Swain, 2004). A school's archive should overflow with resplendent examples of student life and experiences throughout the length of its history (Young, 2002, p. 55), as long as it is approached ethically (see the section earlier on Works Created by Children).

As for their own records, teachers spend significant time and energy designing their classes, and they often create records that document this process (such as lesson plans, assignments, project instructions, etc.). These curricular tools do not seem to be widely archived by schools, but there could be benefits for present and future teachers as well as educational researchers in doing so (Saito, 2017).

Prospective Students (and Their Parents)

"Internally, as keepers of a firm's cultural heritage, archives can serve to validate perceptions and narratives and thus promote corporate culture, brand, and positive community involvement. Externally, archives can provide the basis for a firm's dialogue with society" (van Lent & Smith, 2019, p. 100). Independent schools need to sell themselves (Bosetti et al., 2017). Different schools have different priorities, and therefore offer different experiences for their students. A school's brand should reflect its values (Patti, 2017), and while there is nothing significant in the literature that discusses the use of a school's archive to support its brand, its archive has the potential to provide and showcase evidence of those values. It's one thing to say that your institution values public service, but it's another thing entirely to be able to show photographs and tell stories of your school's longstanding volunteer program. If a school's alumni include accomplished individuals, its archive could illustrate their growth from young child to successful adult and the role that the school played in that growth. An archive can draw from different sources to paint a complete picture of the history of a school (Mogarro, 2006, p.

73), which, in addition to eliciting pride amongst the existing school community, could also help to sell it to prospective students and their parents, making them want to join the community.

While not a school, a lovely example of a company engaging with customers through its values and history is the Canadian coffee chain, Tim Hortons. This beloved national institution worked to tie its history and values to the idea of being Canadian through associations with hockey, the country's national sport, and its military, a strong symbol of nationalist pride. "Successful brands often draw on or 'borrow' the legitimacy of adjacent social institutions by linking the history of the firm to broader collective memories...Managers identify events that are significant to the organization and its stakeholders and construct a story that links the organization to broader social phenomena or historical events" (W. M. Foster et al., 2011, p. 105). Tim Hortons identified its important cultural values (being Canadian) and linked the institution's own history to those values through strategic marketing techniques. Independent schools can and should draw parallels between their values and their history to build and reinforce their brand.

Alumni

In addition to the previously discussed ways that alumni can benefit from their school's archive (such as evidence and fostering a sense of belonging through community memories), engaging with alumni can benefit both the school's archive and its bottom line.

Alumni have institutional knowledge that, if captured, could help to enrich the archive itself. Crowdsourced descriptions are becoming quite popular in the archival world (Benoit III, 2014; Duff & Harris, 2002; Duff & Haskell, 2015), as not only are most archives under-resourced and could use the help, but also specific communities have unique knowledge and insight about their own history (Aoki, 2012; Konzak & Teague, 2009; Rolan, 2017). This knowledge could also

be harnessed through oral history projects or archival donations to fill in gaps or supplement the more formal school institutional records.

In addition to bringing value to the archive, being called on to help support the archive (or other school activities, such as judging science fairs or giving a presentation in a class) could help to foster affinity and engagement with the school, which in turn could lead to increased support in terms of money and time (Gallo, 2012).

Even just fleeting exposure to school archival materials could help to build relationships with alumni. Jan Riley interviewed school principals who believed that there was a link between former students' representation within archival displays and their likelihood to be philanthropic towards the school (1997, p. 52).

Archivists can engage with alumni in different ways: through school events, alumni newsletters, marketing campaigns (postcards, bookmarks, etc) (Konzak & Teague, 2009, p. 219), on social media, and through direct solicitations (perhaps made more relevant through the use of personal information stored within an alumni database).

The Public

A school is an institution that is a part of a greater community. Beyond being able to use a school's archives to support its own functions, archivists could make appropriate portions of their archive available to external researchers as a part of a history that extends beyond one's institutional walls (Blendon, 1975; Mogarro, 2006). "Records communicate rules, structure daily activities, and serve as intermediaries in human relationships. More implicitly, they can reify beliefs, influence social norms, and maintain structures of power. Besides being reflections of human activities, records actively impart social and cultural assumptions to people associated with the records and connected by them" (Dong, 2015, p. 388). If properly described and contextualized, and privacy taken into consideration, the Internet offers a way to pluralise an

institution's historical records by linking them to other related internal and external resources and make them readily available to researchers all over the world (Eichhorn, 2014, p. 228).

Some school executives could argue that this type of outreach doesn't specifically benefit the school and should not be prioritized, but "serving the research community brings a certain measure of intellectual prestige to the archives and the corporation" (Gardner, 1982, p. 295).

Privacy

Archivists are mandated to facilitate access to their collection, but at the same time have a responsibility to protect the privacy of the subjects of their records. Legislation surrounding privacy for archives can sometimes be complicated to interpret and varies by jurisdiction. Independent schools are—as are all small businesses—obviously concerned about the risks involved with inadvertently disclosing personal information, and as such will normally err on the side of caution when it comes to accession and access, sometimes to the detriment of the archives. It can sometimes be unclear as to the best course of action, especially, as already discussed, when dealing with possible evidence of abuse, and the ethics of retaining records created by or about children without their input and for longer than the law prescribes.

In 2018, the European Union's new privacy law came into effect. *The General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR) enforces strict guidelines on how personal data is to be collected, managed, and used. In a nutshell, information about individuals can only be collected for very specific, declared purposes, and after that purpose is complete, the data must be destroyed. This is at odds with archives whose mandate is to identify and collect records for permanent retention. Thankfully, there are exemptions for historical and research purposes, but it requires a distinct separation between business operations and historical archives dictated by documented policy and a records retention schedule—a crossing over of the archival threshold (Richardson & Wells, 2021). Once institutional records have ceased to be used for operations

and become archives, they legally can no longer be used to support business functions.

Educational institutions have found ways around this rule by explicitly stating on their websites how they are using the personal data that they hold on individuals to support their operations, such as alumni information for fundraising (University of Cambridge, n.d.). How exactly GDPR should be implemented by business archives is not entirely clear, even to legal professionals (European Archives Group, 2018, p. 13).

In Canada, the regulations surrounding privacy aren't yet as onerous as GDPR, but still have implications on archival collections. Some provinces including Quebec have their own privacy legislation, but the federal government also has several related laws, including the *Privacy Act*, the *Access to Information Act*, and The *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA). They all have exceptions for preserving and disseminating records that are held for archival purposes, while still rightly insisting that organizations ensure the protection of individuals' privacy. These laws, not having been written by archivists, skim over the logistical implications of the contradiction between the right to privacy and the right to inquiry that archivists constantly have to juggle (Krucker & D'angela, 2021). "[P]rivacy concerns are often used as excuses not to give access to archival materials. Is it ethical to withhold access on the ground that materials may be confidential? Or is it more ethical to give access to data that may be sensitive but not contractually proscribed?" (Jaillant, 2022, p. 550). Archivists are generally left to apply these laws as best they can, and hope that they are able to capture the spirit of both opposing rights without breaching either. "[I]ndividuals are often left to their own devices in terms of figuring out how to navigate privacy and access." (Krucker & D'angela, 2021, p. 11) This can lead to confusion, and similar situations being handled differently depending on the risk tolerance of those making the decisions.

Summary

Institutional records are very difficult to use if they can't be found, and they are very difficult to find if they have not been described. Archival description traditionally tends to be bespoke and verbose—fantastic for GLAM organizations, but not ideal for under-resourced institutional archives. Creative, collaborative ways to document contextual information and making use of automated metadata should be considered.

Different stakeholder groups could use or access school archival material for different reasons: administrators to best do their jobs, teachers to enrich their students' education and emotional well-being, students to support their education and emotional well-being, prospective students and parents to learn more about the school, alumni to foster a sense of community and, hopefully, encourage them to support their school (because without any return on investment, school archives are vulnerable to being shuttered), and the public to support research about a school and its place in society.

Privacy is also very important to consider when allowing access to archival materials. Every jurisdiction has its own privacy legislation, and archivists must interpret these laws as best they can to both protect the vulnerable as well as advocate for accountability.

2.2.3.3 Management and Preservation of School Archival Records

Most contemporary records that are being created now in schools are born digital, and the management and preservation of digital records requires a different approach from analog ones.

Foundations of Digital Preservation

Once personal computers entered the scene in the 1970s, more and more records that had once been created through analog means were now being born digital. Forward-thinking

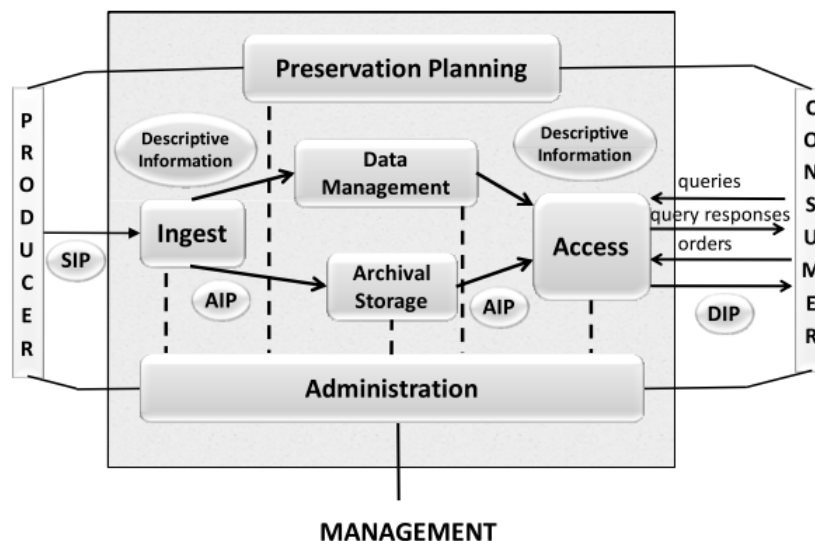
archivists recognized both the threat and opportunities that the encroaching technology promised, and the profession realized the need to adapt practices—while still remaining true to core archival tenets (Hedstrom, 1984, p. 7). Contemporary records managers were also facing this crisis as they tried desperately to pivot from paper to digital (Lappin, 2010, pp. 253–254). Archivists and records managers needed to develop theory and practical techniques to remain relevant in this digital era.

In the early 1990s, a research team from the University of Pittsburgh concluded that to realistically be able to manage electronic records, one needed to apply a holistic approach, considering the people involved, the infrastructure to be designed, and the characteristics of records themselves. *The Pittsburgh Project* researchers also discovered the very significant importance of *literary warrant*, or the idea that people are more likely to follow protocols if they are backed by a trusted, authoritative source (R. J. Cox & Duff, 1997; Duff, 1996). They saw the futility of attempting to maintain a purely custodial, lifecycle model of archiving in modern institutional archives, so proposed a pragmatic, post-custodial, facilitator role for managers of electronic records (Bearman, 1989, 1991; Ham, 1981), and felt that the role of archivist should shift its emphasis from the individual record itself to capturing the record-making process, “strategically from rowing to steering activities, and from performing custodial and curatorial work to understanding and influencing the organizational behaviour of record creators” (T. Cook, 1997, p. 27). There was a real suspicion on the part of many archivists regarding these proposed post-custodial, hands-off facilitation strategies: How could records creators be trusted with the long-term custody of their records when they could hardly be trusted with their short-term management? (T. Cook, 1997a; Eastwood, 1996).

In 1998, the University of British Columbia in Canada acquired a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant to study the problem of continuing authenticity of electronic records over the long term. Since its inception over 20 years ago, the *International*

Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES) teams have developed policy frameworks, guidelines for records creators and for records custodians, authenticity requirement benchmarks, file format guidelines, lifecycle and continuum models, and reports on dozens of different topics (Duranti & Rogers, 2019).

In 2003, the *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO) published a charter on the preservation of digital heritage, declaring it to be both vital and fragile: Access to significant digital materials should be widespread, and needs to be safeguarded through the development of strategies, policies, partnerships and cooperation (UNESCO, 2003). Christopher Lee (2010) noted that as technology became more ubiquitous, two important and related things happened: Archivists realized that increasingly more of the records that they were responsible for were being created digitally, and Information Technology (IT) professionals were recognizing that many of the electronic records that they were charged with managing had long-term value and should be preserved. Looking for sustainable guidelines on how to preserve their valuable scientific research, the Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems developed the *Open Archival Information System* (OAIS) reference model (Figure 2-5) (ISO 14721). Achieving ISO certification in 2003, OAIS has been adopted by many disciplines, and is at the core of most modern digital preservation research, systems, and policies (C. A. Lee, 2010, p. 4020).

Figure 2-5*OAIS Functional Entities*

Note. Used with permission of the British Standards Institution, from “OAIS reference model,” by the Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems (p. 4-1), 2012; permission conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.

The OAIS model contains six functional entities, each with their own different role (Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems, 2012, pp. 4-1 - 4-2): **ingest, archival storage, data management, administration, preservation planning, and access**. At a high level, the OAIS model could be used to guide not only the preservation of digital records, but also analog ones (presuming that they will still need to be accessioned, stored, described, managed, preserved, and accessed).

Since its creation, OAIS has been used time and time again in the design of systems and workflows, any well-read archivist will be aware at least of its general structure, and it covers most of the required concepts for archival programs (C. A. Lee & Tibbo, 2011, p. 136). The OAIS model does miss some vital functions, such as post-custodial archival practices, pre-ingest activities (such as software design, soliciting donors), advocacy and outreach, and

fostering a collaborative relationship with records users. It does however provide a good framework for the development of archival management and preservation programs.

Archivists' Relationship with Technology

Having a conceptual understanding of how to design and manage a digital preservation program is not enough, however: To effectively preserve digital records, one must understand and be comfortable with technology. Feeling overwhelmed by the rapid increase of information in this digital world is quite common amongst everyone, and archivists are no exception (Bawden & Robinson, 2012, p. 243). David Mick and Susan Fournier studied the inherent paradoxes of technology—how it can bring about simultaneous feelings of control and chaos, freedom and enslavement, competence and incompetence, assimilation and isolation (1998). Technology provides opportunities for archivists in many forms, including digitization, dissemination through websites, and semantically linked descriptive access points. It also, however, bestows potentially daunting responsibilities, as archivists are the ones tasked with the permanent preservation of these valuable, but also incredibly fragile, records. This could bring about feelings of anxiety and a lack of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989), which in turn can cause some archivists to hide their heads in the sand. As a respondent in a survey on digital preservation wrote, “[i]n our small archive, myself being largely untrained, digital records management is something I know I need to address but I try really really hard to avoid even thinking about because it gives me nightmares” (Mayer, 2015, p. 30).

Technology has been a concern for archivists for quite some time. In 2000, Barbara Craig published the results of her survey of Canadian archivists which showed that, by a large margin, respondents were more interested in learning about electronic records management than any other topic (Craig, 2000, p. 51). A 2010 InterPARES 3 survey of small-to-medium-sized Canadian archives asked respondents (n=91) how important the issue of digital records was to

archives in general, and 87% reported that they found this issue to be either important or very important (McLellan et al., 2011, p. 9). As part of the 2021 A*CENSUS II survey, practicing archivists in the United States were asked to identify which topics they would like to learn most about as part of their professional development. The top five answers were digital preservation (56%), digital asset management systems (43%), digitization (39%), electronic records (38%), and metadata (37%) (Skinner & Hulbert, 2022, pp. 169–170). Archivists seemed to agree that electronic records were vital, worth studying, and concerning.

Despite these growing concerns, archivists were still often hesitant to discuss digital preservation (Burda & Teuteberg, 2013). Many also failed to act on it. The InterPARES 3 team asked their participants if their institutions had policies for the acquisition and preservation of digital records: 82% had no acquisition policy, and 85% had no preservation policy (McLellan et al., 2011). A 2014 survey of the archives of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) members showed that while 100% of respondents (n=51) collected paper materials, only 66.7% collected born-digital materials (Dole & Hill, 2015, p. 267).

Studies have shown that peoples' attitudes and beliefs towards a particular technology is a good indicator as to whether or not they will choose to adopt it (Parasuraman, 2000, p. 309). The Technology Readiness Index (TRI) was a scale developed in 2000 (and updated in 2015—TRI 2.0) that clustered items into four dimensions, two of which were drivers of technology readiness (optimism and innovativeness), while two were inhibitors of technology readiness (discomfort and insecurity) (Parasuraman, 2000; Parasuraman & Colby, 2015). A person's attitudes towards technology will affect their readiness to adopt technology. "People tend to avoid activities and situations they believe exceed their coping capabilities, but they readily undertake challenging activities and select social environments they judge themselves capable of handling" (Bandura, 1989). Social cognitive theory claims that humans make casual contributions to their own motivation interactively with external environmental stimuli. These

factors together determine an individual's self-efficacy: their belief in their capability to do something (Bandura, 1986, 1989). This is about believing that they have the skills, positive past experiences, and external support (both emotional and resource-based) to succeed. A person's perception of their own self-efficacy can be either self-aiding, or self-hindering. Those who believe that they can do something will imagine, and therefore model, good solutions for themselves, whereas those who visualize themselves failing will often head down that path (Bandura, 1989). It's the idea behind the self-fulfilling prophecy.

It has been noted that different generations approach technology differently: Someone born in the 1950s who received their archival training in the 1970s, unless they are very enthusiastic about technology and have kept up with their professional development, will usually be at a technological disadvantage compared to a newly-minted Millennial or Gen Z archivist who grew up with the Internet (Bawden & Robinson, 2012, pp. 244–245). 34% of respondents to the 2021 A*CENSUS II survey of practicing archivists were aged 50 and over (Skinner & Hulbert, 2022, p. 63).

In the early 2000s, there was some limited digital preservation education established in most Library and Information Studies (LIS) master's programs, but they were new, and professional standards changed very quickly regarding the management of electronic records, so it was difficult for the schools to keep up (R. J. Cox et al., 2001, pp. 156–157). As education in digital archiving was only just in its infancy, was coming from different sources, and finding individuals with a background in both archives and computers was rare (Stout, 1995, p. 130), archival digital preservation strategies at the time tended to be a bit ad-hoc (Liu, 2013, p. 214). 60% (3,417) of respondents to the A*CENSUS II survey said that they held a master's degree in Information Studies (MLS or MLIS)—the earliest was awarded in 1963, and the median year awarded was 2011 (Skinner & Hulbert, 2022, p. 121).

Digital Preservation Projects

Based on models such as OAIS and inspired by the continuing work of research groups like InterPARES, quite a few digital preservation projects have been developed over the past few decades. Systems, tools, and resources have been created by National Archives such as *PRONOM* and *Digital Record Object Identification* (DROID) (The National Archives, n.d.), non-profits like the *Internet Archive* (Internet Archive, n.d.), research groups including *BitCurator* (Gengenbach et al., 2012) and *Preserving digital Objects With Restricted Resources* (POWRR) (Miner et al., 2014), and commercial companies like Artefactual Systems (Sprout & Jordan, 2015). Passionate, tech-savvy, civic-minded archivists have made incredible use of these and other tools to preserve vulnerable digital assets from extinction. *Archive Team*'s volunteers have saved thousands of websites and other online digital content from being lost when their commercial providers decided that hosting them was no longer profitable (Ogden, 2021; Scott, 2011). "Yahoo blows. It's a fucking clown car. I wouldn't trust it with a backup of, like, my nutsack" (Scott, 2011, 32:38). *Documenting the Now* developed tools, ethically-minded frameworks, and educational programs around archiving X (formerly known as Twitter) feeds and other social media posts during the aftermath of the murder of Michael Brown, an unarmed black man shot by police in 2014 (Jules et al., 2018; Summers, 2016). Hundreds of archivists and other information professionals came together to form *Saving Ukrainian Cultural Heritage* (SUCHO) in order to back up as many Ukrainian cultural websites as possible during the Russian invasion of 2022 (E. Jones et al., 2022; Verma, 2022). These talented rogue archivists channeled their rage and determination to adapt and improve on existing tools and frameworks to help save important digital heritage from being lost forever. That same energy can often be seen in institutional archives, but in many cases, their archivists are so overworked that they cannot seem to address the problem of digital records effectively.

More Product, Less Process

In 2005, Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner published their ground-breaking article, *More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing* (MPLP). After working as professional archivists for years, they were frustrated with the time and effort that the archival community was putting into processing collections to an extremely high archival standard while, at the same time, leaving large quantities of documents completely unprocessed (M. Greene & Meissner, 2005). They pragmatically recommended that their time could be better spent being a little less perfect, and a little more productive—“to distinguish what we really need to do from what we only believe we need to do” (M. Greene & Meissner, 2005, p. 209). They recommended a few principles for change: do as little as needs to be done (the *Golden Minimum*); maintain original physical order of files and focus on high-level intellectual (rather than physical) arrangement; keep descriptions high-level and brief (avoid lengthy narratives); and manage most preservation activities by maintaining good environmental controls over storerooms—file and item-level preservation techniques such as re-folding and paperclip removal should be the exception rather than the rule. They argued that archivists should prioritize giving as much access to as many users as possible rather than spending inordinate amounts of time creating the perfect finding aid. There is historical precedent in applying pragmatic approaches to archival problems: For example, during the paperwork explosion of the mid 20th century, Schellenberg introduced strategies such as sampling and microfilming as a way of dealing with overflowing filing cabinets and storerooms (Niekrasz, n.d.), and David Bearman had been questioning the profession’s strict adherence to comprehensive contextual description since the 1980s (Anchor, 2013, p. 158).

MPLP was very well accepted by many practicing archivists by either giving them permission to, under certain circumstances, let some archival tasks slide, or by validating the pragmatic principles that they had already been practicing (McFarland, 2007; Meissner &

Greene, 2011; Van Ness, 2010). It has even been tacitly endorsed by major archival organizations through the creation of instructional workshops (Crowe & Spilman, 2010, p. 111). It also, however, had its critics who took to conferences, listservs, and journals in droves to denounce it. "It can be safely argued today that MPLP can be added to the list of most popular topics of discussion and debate within the archival profession" (Frusciano, 2011, p. 170).

Carl Van Ness (2010) wrote a very thorough critical article on MPLP where he details many of the concerns that he and others have had about Greene and Meissner's study and subsequent conclusions. These include:

The study did not represent institutional archives (mainly manuscript, college, and university archives), nor did it address digital archives. Fortunately, however, there have been many examples of different types of institutional projects applying MPLP approaches that have been written about in the 19 years since its inception. Many were examples of traditional analog collections, but others used MPLP for different types of collections or strategies. For example, North Carolina researchers developed an MPLP-inspired "minimal" data curation pipeline that, while deemed to be successful, left some unanswered questions as to which processes could be sacrificed in order to remain sustainable while also ensuring that all the requirements for trustworthy reuse were met (Lafferty-Hess & Christian, 2017). In his master's thesis, Johnson discusses the applicability of MPLP to electronic records, and concludes that as digital collections present unique challenges, it makes sense to prioritize processing preservation activities over descriptive ones (G. P. Johnson, 2007). Susanne Belovari (2018) developed an MPLP approach to digital appraisal and processing at a German state archive, leaning on automated processes and encouraging record creators to play an active role in identifying their own records. One last example is Edward Benoit III's use of eschewing professionally-produced item level metadata for user-generated social tags, as MPLP discourages item-level cataloguing (2018). This allowed archivists to catalog items such as

photographs at the file level (such as '2004-09-10 Kindergarten Apple Picking'), while at the same time encouraging users to identify subjects in individual photographs (such as people's names), removing some cataloguing responsibility from overworked archivists. The research found that user-created tags did differ from professionally created metadata, so expectations needed to be tempered, but that it was certainly better than nothing. Multimedia is an important element of any school's archival collection, and "[p]hotograph collections do test the concepts of minimum standards processing, but the flexibility inherent in the MPLP technique is well suited to the arrangement and preservation needs of such special-format materials. Tailoring processing levels to individual collections, rather than adhering strictly to a frequently unattainable ideal has been beneficial to the collections as well as the processor" (A. L. Foster, 2006, p. 117).

The survey's methodology, analysis and reporting are all flawed. A few critical articles question the validity of the survey used by Meissner and Greene in their original MPLP article (Phillips, 2015; Prom, 2010; Van Ness, 2010). Concerns include a biased population selection leading to a lack of institutional diversity, a length that deterred completion, imprecise answer options without clear definitions, and the picking and choosing of data for discussion. "In short, the survey was poorly conceived and poorly executed, and the authors' data analysis leaves much to be desired" (Van Ness, 2010, p. 137).

There is far more to the backlog problem than poor processing practices. After performing an analysis on Greene and Meissner's original survey data, a research study concluded that their hypothesis that the use of intensive processing (removal of paperclips, re-folding, etc) or detailed descriptive practices leads to slower processing speeds cannot be supported statistically, as there is only a very weak relationship between the two variables (Prom, 2010, pp. 157–160). He makes recommendations that he feels would be more impactful in reducing archival backlogs: Undertaking arrangement and description audits tailored to your

institution; budgeting set time and resources to process and describe collections (using MPLP methods where appropriate); developing arrangement and processing strategies that can be implemented more easily by lone arrangers and; investing more time and resources as an archival community to developing descriptive workflows and tools tailored to the need for efficient processing and description (Prom, 2010, pp. 166–168).

Their proposed standardized metric is inappropriate considering collection and staff variations. When collections arrive at an archive to be processed, they can be in a great many different states, from organized administrative records to the unsorted contents of a desk drawer. Greene and Meissner described a handful of different proposed metrics that had been published in the past, and concluded that “a competent processing archivist ought to be able to arrange and describe large twentieth-century archival materials at an average rate of 4 hours per cubic foot” (M. Greene & Meissner, 2005, p. 253). Critics questioned how the authors arrived at that number, given that the other metrics cited in their paper varied wildly.

Archivists have always done this, so it’s nothing new. There were articles written decades prior to MPLP that encouraged archivists to approach collections management pragmatically if resources required it. As early as 1939, Schellenberg was writing about how classical European practices were inappropriate for modern American archives given the vast quantities of records that were being created (Tschan, 2002, p. 179).

It could lead to records being lost, stolen, or undiscovered. If files are delivered to researchers without there being a record of the individual items therein, there is a risk that pages could be taken, or misfiled. Some archivists try to mitigate some of this risk by only giving one box or folder at a time to researchers so that pages don’t accidentally get put back in the wrong location (Hauck, 2008, p. 7). Some critics are concerned that minimal processing might create hidden areas in collections that could lead to undiscovered records—but others argue that the risk of this is higher in backlogged collections that have not been processed at all

(Anchor, 2013, p. 167). “With minimal processing, we are creating a whole new generation of hidden history” (R. S. Cox, 2010, p. 141).

It would make more work for reference archivists. If collections are only described at the series or file level, to make material available to researchers, reference archivists must look through unprocessed material to ensure that it is safe to share, or to find individual items if the researcher is not available to do the search themselves in person. A study on the impact of MPLP on photographic metadata (Therrell, 2019) concluded, unsurprisingly, that item-level description led to greater findability than images catalogued at the collection level. The author recommends that “Adopting a hybrid approach of balancing boutique and large-scale practices could be the answer. Another solution could be outsourcing descriptive work, creating instruction and outreach programs that teach those who want to learn” (p. 13). Sometimes, it really is best to catalogue at the item level for greater accessibility (Sabre & Hamburger, 2008). If the demand is there, the value is high, and the resources are available, then this level of processing is encouraged. In the case of school collections, it is incredibly valuable to have records indexed by subject to make it easier for teaching staff to pull out to use in the classroom, as they certainly wouldn’t have the time to do this type of research themselves. And it is very difficult to find photographs of individuals unless they are described at the item level.

It could lead to a greater threat of accidental access to sensitive materials. As reference archivists would be forced to triage documents on the fly when requested by researchers, it is certainly possible that sensitive content could accidentally be divulged. “While MPLP is effective, it involves a somewhat insouciant approach to dealing with sensitive information...Greene and Meissner refer to the act of restricting ‘embarrassing material’ as ‘absurd over-cautiousness’ and that item-level security is a waste of archivists’ time. In this sense, they are specifically referring to materials such as private letters or correspondence that reveal gossipy secrets. There is an argument to be made that researchers have a right to see

these kinds of materials, but MPLP does not appear to offer much of a solution when it comes to PII [personally identifiable information] or legally confidential records” (Stein, 2021, p. 89).

Adopting a risk-management framework should be a necessity for all archival repositories, but especially for those who have implemented MPLP (Anchor, 2013, p. 164). Strategies that are sometimes used include technological solutions such as forensic software that can scan files for data of concern, as well as nondisclosure agreements researchers are made to sign should they stumble across something that they should not have (Miller, 2013, p. 533).

The relationship between archivists and researchers would be negatively impacted.

One concern about MPLP is that poor quality mass digitization projects could lead to suspicion amongst archive users. “Following the release of digitized documents in 2017, poor scan quality and lack of adequate searchability fueled conspiracy theories against anyone who may have tampered with the archive: the FBI, the CIA, NARA, the government in general.” (Jaillant, 2022, p. 541) It is also a concern that it would make archivists lose the very precious personal connections between their collections and their users (R. S. Cox, 2010, p. 138).

It sacrifices preservation for access. A very strong critical article on this point was written by Jessica Phillips. Her article claims that MPLP trivializes preservation activities in the name of access (Phillips, 2015), balking at the inflammatory language that the authors used to make their points. She questions their conclusions about the minimal risks that acidic folders and metal fasteners pose to archival materials, and feels that if preservation is done poorly, the collections will ultimately suffer for it. She also has concerns about Greene and Meissner’s assertion that all processing of a collection should happen at the same level—item, folder, or box—and that even looking at individual items in a folder is not always necessary. Phillips feels as though many important preservation needs will be missed if archivists aren’t inspecting their collections at the item level. Another article that is critical of MPLPs stance on preservation was written by Laura McCann (McCann, 2014). Her literature review concludes that the original

MPLP article is sorely lacking in its exploration of preservation activities, and that its influence could be negatively impacting collections everywhere. She mentions that although the authors do encourage passive preservation techniques such as climate control, they neglect to discuss other very important aspects such as pest control and emergency response. McCann recommends preventative conservation to support the longevity of archival collections, and that “[w]hen viewed through the lens of sustainability it becomes clear that preservation and MPLP do not need to be in conflict, as fundamentally both aim to sustain collection access through thoughtful and efficient resource management” (McCann, 2014, p. 37), and that while preservation and access have a symbiotic relationship, she does express concern that MPLP’s “elevation of use over preservation is problematic” (p. 37).

Where archivists are the local history expert (such as in businesses and schools), they should have significant exposure to their collections, which would be curtailed with minimal processing. The year after MPLP was published, a letter to the editor in *The American Archivist* (Mangravite et al., 2006) brought up a concern that had been plaguing many of the archivists who read the original article: That archivists are naturally curious people, and that processing collections is a core function of their role, which would naturally be diminished in an MPLP-practicing institution. There is a professional value in being a local expert in one’s collection, but that can only be acquired through significant exposure to the collection. Leaving discovery up to researchers would then reduce their worth. In a response that was published alongside Mr. Mangravite’s letter, Greene and Meissner contended that an archivist’s worth comes from how they best serve their users, and that leaving collections unprocessed so that we can take the time to catalogue each one in great detail might not be the best way to improve access. It could be possible, however, that since processing is arguably the most interesting part of archival work, that minimizing it could turn off new professionals to the field (Bryant, 2016, p. 63).

When duplicates and extraneous materials are not removed, much more physical space will be used. This is true, but in some organizations, space is not a critical issue. Each institution must prioritize their own needs based on their own individual circumstances. If space is a problem, then perhaps weeding should be a non-negotiable priority. Or maybe weeding can happen after an initial high-level cataloguing has taken place.

Much of what is contained in backlogs may have been poorly appraised and should not have been included in the archive at all. This is also true and is a good argument for having comprehensive appraisal guidelines and processes in place.

MPLP also has its critics in environmentalists who worry about **the impact that the energy-dependent technological infrastructure required to sustain digitized assets over the long term might have on the planet.** (Jaillant, 2022, p. 541) Although, it seems likely that any effect that digitized archives could have on the environment would be dramatically eclipsed by the vast quantity of born-digital materials being created every day.

Just before beginning my MLIS degree in the early 2000s, I read a book that had an enormous impact on me and how I work and think as an archivist. *Double Fold* by Nicholson Baker (2001) tells the story of how libraries began microfilming their historical newspaper collections in order to save dwindling shelf space, protect against the fragility of newsprint, and increase accessibility. After microfilming, some institutions would take the original newspapers and store them safely offsite, but others went on to destroy them. This latter decision proved to be devastating, as in many cases, these were the only original versions in existence, and the microfilmed copies were very low quality and often accidentally incomplete. It was a tool that was used without considering the value of the originals or the impact of losing them. **No approach should be taken without underpinning every decision with sound archival theory and practice.** This is where I feel that many critics of MPLP miss the point of Greene and Meissner's pragmatic philosophy. The authors stated repeatedly that **MPLP was not**

designed to be applied to all collections equally, and there are some circumstances where minimal processing is completely inappropriate (M. Greene & Meissner, 2005; Meissner & Greene, 2011). It was not to be viewed as a strict instruction manual on how to manage archives, but as a practical framework to help inspire the design of appropriate processes tailored for each individual repository, record group, or item (A. L. Foster, 2006; Griffin, 2010; Harling, 2014; Knowlton & Mankowski, 2015; McLeod, 2014; Moore, 2018; Weideman, 2006). “The biggest point of confusion has been a reductionist error that mistakes some pointed, but rather situational, advice for the main message...MPLP, fundamentally, is not about specific processing actions. It is about resource management, whether on a program or an enterprise level” (Meissner & Greene, 2011, p. 175).

Many archivists understood the main message, and recognized MPLP as a “decision-making framework (not a set of processing techniques) [with the] potential value...to a wide range of archival scenarios...[the authors] were suggesting that archivists accept a wider range of processing levels to make the daunting math of backlog management start to approach feasibility” (Harling, 2014, pp. 489-490). In a good example of adapting the levels of processing depending on the material being processed, Sutton (2012) discusses differing digitization concerns and techniques used to make an important archival collection more accessible to the public. Some documents, such as photographs, journals and drawings were scanned using a full-colour high-resolution scanner, but some of the correspondence was digitized from 20-year-old greyscale microfilm as the quality difference between that and the original paper letters was perceived to be negligible, and the cost savings was significant. This is also how the University of Montreal’s archive service operates (Champagne, 2017): When records are acquired, they are all given preliminary processing which includes high-level indexing and an entry into their document management system. The records that have been identified as most likely to be

requested are then processed to higher standards immediately so that they can be more easily discovered, but also so that they are better protected.

Other archivists, however, saw MPLP as an all-or-nothing strategy, and as such, struggled with its implementation. “MPLP raised legitimate concerns about the impact minimal processing methods could have on reference, preservation, and protecting confidential information, but a common misconception began to circulate as well: the belief that Greene and Meissner prescribed MPLP for every collection. In their survey of 156 respondents, Stephanie Crowe and Karen Spilman discovered that although MPLP was widely accepted, many archivists fundamentally believed that everything had to be processed at a minimal level” (Herzinger, 2020, p. 5).

An example of this misconception can be seen at the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, where an analysis of the efficacy of MPLP strategies concluded that its implementation caused more problems than it solved, including diminished control over collections, inadequate preservation, barriers to patron access, concerns about collection security, and difficulty in transferring records between offices. In addition, it found that the backlog of unprocessed records actually increased (Mohr, 2016). The archive, however, had implemented MPLPs suggestions in a very strict fashion without adapting to their institutional reality and requirements, so it could be argued that they had not actually implemented MPLP at all. In fact, in the end, the author recommends that the archive modify their existing MPLP program to better meet their needs—which is exactly what MPLP is all about.

Some archivists took offense to Greene and Meissner’s harsh tone (Harling, 2014, p. 491) and calls to (in)action. “Today’s archivists have been given an ‘easy out’ to the backlog problem with noted experts advocating a choice to do relatively little or nothing. The time elapsed will be the same, but the choice should always be to do something. Otherwise, the archivist has made a conscious and willful decision to allow destruction through neglect.” (Kay, 2007, p. 137) This

same author spent nearly *nine months* processing the two-cubic-foot-sized collection that she discusses in her master's thesis, "because I was learning new tasks related to a particular collection and performing other, unrelated tasks...[but] the initial processing and conservation could have been completed much more quickly with many hands..." (p. 132) All archivists have other, unrelated tasks to complete, most school archivists have access to only their own two (part-time) hands, and very few have the luxury to spend nine months processing two feet of records.

Robert Cox (2010) wrote a fascinating piece on MPLP that, I would say, on the whole agreed with its premise the way that its authors had intended (p.136), but perhaps expressed it in a way that is more palatable: He recognized the pragmatic necessity to impose resource management in one's archival practice, but instead of doing the minimal work required, he recommended that one should do the *maximal* work that one can "within the real and practical limits of the resources at their disposal" (p. 143). He said that processing is a continuous task, and that one should revisit minimally processed collections to improve their situation when resources allow. "In maximal processing, making a collection publicly available is only the first stage in the process of processing, not the end—it is a step, not a goal." (p. 144) Other authors also recognized this interpretation of MPLP, that it is "as much an appraisal decision used for collections that do not warrant fuller treatment as it is a decision to temporarily forego more extensive processing" (Van Ness, 2010, p. 142).

"Despite the critics of the MPLP method, most writing on and presentations about minimal processing have been positive and encouraging" (Gorzalski, 2009, p. 187). Inspired by its underpinning philosophy, many archivists have implemented creative, pragmatic solutions at their institutions. Instead of creating detailed finding aids, some focused on shorter, contextual descriptions that facilitated access and understanding to their user groups (A. L. Foster, 2006; Griffin, 2010). Larisa Miller (2013) encouraged an MPLP-mindset in exploring the idea of using

scanning and OCR technology rather than detailed item-level archival description to make collections more searchable. “Users would be able to perform full-text searches by keyword, much as they do with Google. This is what they are accustomed to and expect” (p. 524). With born-digital records, this full-text searchability is already possible, and in a school where the most common research requests are for individual people or events, full-text searching is infinitely more valuable than a high-level finding aid. Couple this with access points for browsability, and you have a very strong infrastructure for users. If document access is appropriately restricted, privacy issues are also mitigated, at least somewhat. “[A]rchivists are also inherently practical—aggregate description at its core is an approach to archival description based on the realities of large collections and limited resources. It is difficult to imagine collections without finding aids, but we should remain aware of and open to the entire world in which we operate. It is worth remembering the situation that drives this model” (p. 537).

Karen Attar (2022) discussed using MPLP-inspired techniques to complete “quick and dirty” imports of rare books at the Senate House Library at the University of London that would otherwise have been undiscoverable by users. Despite some drawbacks, their experiment was considered a success that the author hoped would assist “other institutions looking to maximise their output, perhaps under stringent financial conditions” (p. 539).

Susanne Belovari (2018) spoke of the struggles that archivists face when appraising and processing unstructured digital collections, and how an MPLP-inspired approach to processing through workflows and automated technological tools could make the task less daunting. She does recommend that archivists share their experiences with different software solutions, as they differ significantly in their efficacy, and some could even have a detrimental effect on collections.

McCrea (2006) details her foray into minimal processing at the University of Montana where she created a plan and acquired a grant to hire a student to help her work through her backlogs.

More items were left in their original housings, description was done at a higher level than had been done previously, and fewer documents were being rearranged. "Occasionally I worry that we may miss some significant preservation issue such as an incidence of mold or the presence of nitrate film, but these same preservation issues exist when the collection remains unprocessed" (p. 287). In the end, she was incredibly positive about the experience. "No stigma should be associated with minimal processing when applied intelligently to appropriate collections" (p. 290).

"Be pragmatic. You may have significant objectives that you wish to achieve...[h]owever, given business considerations and financial constraints, it may not be possible to achieve all that you have identified, or actually implement the strategies you've proposed" (*Strategies for Documenting Government Business: The DIRKS Manual*, 2018, p. 154). As previously discussed, business archivists often struggle for resources. Organizations tend to spend their money on programs and projects that directly impact their primary functions (Downing et al., 2013, p. 117). In the case of schools, this would be their students' education: better facilities, more teachers, modern classrooms, technology, library books, etc. Few independent school archives have a secure space to house and process their holdings, or even a dedicated line in the institutional budget (Fernekas & Rosenberg, 2008, p. 152). "To survive and accomplish the archives' mission, university archivist Marcus Robyns had to learn how to do things 'well enough' by implementing modified versions of archival concepts and methods" (Robyns & Woolman, 2011, p. 242).

In 1982, the Society of American Archivists approved a series of guidelines for business archives. It made various recommendations on corporate archival programs, policies, procedures, administrative relationships, budget, facilities, and staff. In regards to staff, they recommended that there be at least one full-time staff member who is professionally qualified, that there be adequate support staff, and that all staff are paid fairly according to professional

norms and other salaries within the parent company (Edgerly, 1982). In a survey of Quebec archivists, K-11 school archivists (both working for school boards and individual schools) were asked what the minimum required or desired level of education would be for archive managers, professionals, technicians, and clerks (Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2017). Not one respondent stated any level above an undergraduate degree, and the majority said a CEGEP (post-secondary, pre-university college unique to Quebec) degree.

Many school archives don't even have a single archivist on staff, but for those who do, staffing is still an issue. In the minutes of the *Annual Meeting of the School Archivists' Group of 2004* (School Archivists' Group, 2004), they provided the results of a job questionnaire that was distributed to the archive staff of 71 UK schools, 40 of which submitted a reply. Only seven paid archive staff members were 'qualified archivists' (one full time and six part-time), and 28 were 'unqualified' (three full-time and 25 part-time). Four current teachers were working part-time in the archives (two paid, two unpaid), four employed retired staff (three paid, one unpaid), five staff members received honorariums (but no salary), and there were another 10 unpaid volunteers. I am having a difficult time coming up with another profession that relies so heavily on untrained volunteers and part-time staff.

As schools generally and school archives specifically struggle for resources, applying creative, pragmatic, MPLP-inspired approaches to archival management and preservation could help to mitigate future loss of records and free up time to focus on engaging with record creators and making information accessible to users (McFarland, 2007). "[R]evisit the preferred solution when its circumstances have changed" (*Strategies for Documenting Government Business: The DIRKS Manual*, 2018, p. 155). As artificial intelligence and other technological innovations become increasingly accessible, archival processing could become more streamlined (Corrado, 2021; Jaillant, 2022), but none of that will be possible unless electronic records are captured **now** (T. Cook, 2004a). "Perfection is rarely necessary, let alone achievable, in the digital

context and striving for it may prevent us from accepting a good enough, fit-for-purpose outcome. 'A good battle plan that you act on today can be better than a perfect one tomorrow' and action today is vital." (McLeod, 2014, p. 195)

"Maybe there is no perfect answer and the reality is just doing the best that you can, given limits on money, time, and personnel." (Knowlton & Mankowski, 2015, p. 123) MPLP will always have its critics with valid concerns, but school archivists can only ever do the best that they can. If they approach their situations pragmatically and creatively, it has been shown that they can do amazing things.

Summary

Most contemporary records created now in schools are born digital, and their management and preservation require a different approach from analog ones. Archivists have been working on digital preservation solutions for over 50 years, and there are many examples of groundbreaking research projects and practical initiatives spearheaded by determined practitioners.

Archivists recognize the importance of digital preservation, and there is a lot of wonderful work going on in that domain, but many lack the training and confidence to effectively manage their digital collections. Add to that the fact that they are already overburdened with the management their analog records, and that their institutions often haven't established digital acquisition or preservation policies, and you understand why in many organizations, digital preservation has been neglected.

In 2005, *More Product, Less Process* (MPLP) was introduced to the archival world, and reaction to it was generally positive, but it certainly had its critics. It recommended that archivists focus their processing efforts on strategies that have the most wide-reaching impact, and perhaps eschew some of the more detail-oriented work. While it did not explicitly address digital

preservation at the time, many digital archivists have adopted its philosophy in their practices, with generally good results.

2.2.4 What Could be Important to Institutional Archival Programs?

There are different types of information management programs in organizations, including archives management, records management, and knowledge management. While archives and records management deal with transactional and personal information that has been captured (either through analog or digital means) in such a way that it can easily be disseminated, knowledge management deals mainly with the subjective, tacit knowledge that resides in people's heads (Bawden & Robinson, 2012, p. 261). These programs' specific goals may differ from each other, but at their core they are similar: They are looking to manage business information. When examining the elements that are required for successful program implementation, the literature shows significant commonality between these domains. The following examples are just a selection, and not intended to be comprehensive. Nor do I purport to be an expert in KM. I did find it very interesting, however, how similar the variables identified were between these different domains. It certainly supports the assertion that there is, or should be, considerable overlap between them.

In 1981, Wilma R. Slaight wrote a guidebook for the National Association of Independent Schools about school archives. She identified three key components to a successful school archival program: "**staff, space, and ability to collect**" (Buchanan, 2012, p. 4). Jan Riley (1997) lists some of the barriers to a successful archives management program in schools. They include a **lack of understanding by key staff** as to what an archival program does and could entail; a **lack of concern** for organizational accountability; a lack of **emphasis** on

recordkeeping leading to a lack of recordkeeping **policies** and a lack of recordkeeping **systems**; and a predominantly **custodial model** of recordkeeping.

In a powerful piece about the future direction of archival practice, Laura Millar makes recommendations for guaranteeing the sustainability of archiving: ensuring that **recordkeeping is a core job responsibility** for record creators, not an option; **collaboration between knowledge institutions**; a transformation of the physical archival repository to take **digital preservation** into account; **flexible archival description** that emphasizes context; valuing **third-party input and collaboration** such as crowdsourcing and partnerships; and **engaging the public** with the archival mission. (2014, p. 123) J. Gordon Daines III recommends that in order to improve the efficiency of archival content management systems, that archivists should design and implement solid **business process management** strategies (Daines III, 2011).

Cal Lee and Helen Tibbo, in discussing the requirements for digital curators, said that “[i]n order for digital collections to be sustainable over time, the actors responsible for the archives must continuously have **appropriate expertise, resources, and a political/institutional mandate to carry out the work** required” (2011, p. 127). A case study of digital recordkeeping practices at the New York Art Museum concluded that while **technical issues** certainly play a large part, **social** and **cultural** variables had a greater effect on digital recordkeeping practices within the organization. These included a lack of **motivation** to transfer digital records to the archive, a lack of attention or **awareness** of what should be archived, and a lack of **action** due to not knowing what to do and it not being perceived as a **high priority** (Cocciolo, 2014).

Researchers in Ghana identified four categories of contextual factors that influenced digital preservation management in their country: **attitude**-related factors, **resource**-related factors, **policy**-related factors, and **management**-related factors (Boamah et al., 2015). In a 2011 survey of Association of Research Library members, respondents were asked what barriers to digital preservation they encountered in their institutions. The top ones were **staffing**,

expertise, funding, resources, and a lack of institutional policies and strategies. (McMillan et al., n.d., p. 12)

An evaluation of information systems and records management practices in Turkish state universities identified a handful of issues including a **lack of technical support**; national **regulations not being adapted to organizations**; a need for **training**; and a need for a nation-wide **regulatory committee on electronic records** management (Külcü, 2014). Some other common themes that were identified as impacting effective records management practices were “the importance of **collaborative relationships, trust, sharing and training and communication**” (Bowker & Villamizar, 2017, p. 61). Some recommended ways of dealing with information silos in universities were encouraging **relationships between faculty, staff and students** through the creation of **committees**; improving **interoperability** within organizational systems; and promoting an organizational culture of **collaboration, trust and inclusion** (Daneshmandnia, 2019). A study of municipal document management in Sweden concluded that the following challenges would need to be addressed in order to effectively consider the entirety of the records continuum: “[A] **lack of long-term preservation policies**; an IT information infrastructure with **disparate systems** that are not integrated; **uncoordinated electronic information systems procurement processes**; **lack of collaboration**—will have to involve archivists and IT personnel in the procurement process; and **establishing e-archives**” (Svård, 2013, p. 172). In a 2016 study, the elements for successful EDMS and BCS (business classification scheme) implementation were identified as **user involvement** in plan development and design; **user training**; **support from senior management**; **organizational change management**; and ensuring that the file plan **meets the organizational needs** (Ifould & Joseph, 2016, p. 26). A literature review from the 1970s identified 22 variables that could be important to the success and failure of Management Information Systems. These included the availability of **resources**; the **maturity of the organization**; realistic yet **optimistic**

expectations; positive attitudes; positive psychological climate of the organization; the **rank of the executive responsible for the program**; the executive responsible **not being tied to any specific department; high-level executive buy-in**; and the appointment of a **high-level steering committee**. (Ein-Dor & Segev, 1978)

A book on information management in business organizations identified six different components of the information environment of organizations: **information strategy** (emphasizing the importance of developing an institutional strategy for information use); **information politics** (including infighting and jealousy over division of resources); **information behavior and culture** (looking at how people use information and what they want); **information staff** (examining the different responsibilities of information providers); **information management processes** (why companies need to address how information work is done day-to-day); and **information architecture** (and why technology isn't always the answer) (T. H. Davenport & Prusak, 1997).

A knowledge management literature review (Valmohammadi & Ahmadi, 2015, pp. 133–136) identified seven different critical success factors for knowledge management implementation: **leadership** role; **organizational culture**; **KM strategy**; **processes** and activities; **training** and education; **information technology**; and rewards and **motivation**. Some variables listed in the literature that affected KM in schools specifically included **limited budgets**; **organizational cultures**; **incentives** (C.-L. Lee et al., 2010); a **lack of support by people**; **culture**; **IT**; and **management** (Chu et al., 2011); **time-consuming information storage and retrieval systems**; and **hierarchical communication structures** that **discouraged feedback** by teachers to school management (Cheng et al., 2017). A paper in an education journal identified three factors that affected knowledge management in Malaysian schools: **management** to provide a supportive framework, **technology** to provide a mechanism, and **culture** to guide and encourage professional and social interactions (Awang et al., 2011, p. 279).

Arguably, the most significant factor that impacts knowledge sharing amongst staff in schools is **trust**: teachers and administrative staff have to trust each other, they have to trust their leaders, and their leaders have to trust them (Carroll et al., 2003; Choong et al., 2020; Kars & Inandi, 2018; Mawhinney, 2010; Moye et al., 2005; Talebizadeh et al., 2021; Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

2.3 Conclusion

The literature on K-12 school archives paints a picture of the struggles that many school archivists are faced with, including limited resources, massive backlogs, isolation, not being prioritized by management, not being understood by colleagues, and the complications (as well as opportunities) brought on by technology. In large GLAM organizations, archives are prioritized by management. They staff teams of archivists who work together, each person having a role that ideally plays to their strengths and interests: Some will manage the preservation of ancient documents, some will work on the arrangement and description of entire fonds, some will design outreach activities, some will work with donors to acquire new materials, some will deal with specific media such as photographs and videos, and others will focus on digital preservation. In the case of a small organization, however, where there is usually only one archivist on staff (often untrained and only given part-time hours to work on archival issues), that individual must be comfortable doing all elements of archival work for all the different record types that are created and collected by their institution. In addition, their mandate is often determined by people who have a very narrow, ill-informed view of the value that an archivist could bring to their organization.

Very few school archivists are tasked with the management of their institution's contemporary business records. Yet, without a formal system to organize institutional records, retrieval of information by staff becomes difficult (Lemieux, 2001; Mojapelo, 2022), and gaps in the institutional archival collection are inevitable. This research aims to determine the information needs of independent schools and explore how the establishment of a holistic school information management program could help to support the information needs of its staff as well as the school's archive. It will also look at what schools and their archivists can do to establish an organizational culture that encourages healthy, positive information flow.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this research is to explore the phenomenon of independent school archives. I had witnessed the struggles of school staff in trying to manage their information, and had a hypothesis that school archivists could perhaps be in a position to not only help them out, but in doing so, leverage their position to improve the situation for their archive. This is heavily influenced by the **records continuum theory**, which forms the theoretical framework for this research. Continuum scholars have been arguing for a more inclusive, integrated role for archivists for decades now, and its teachings have inspired an evolution of the role of archivist, including in the province of Quebec, as evidenced by the broadened definition of archives in the 1983 Archives Act. However, this continuum approach to archival management, due to a misunderstanding of the role of archivist among resource-holders, has been largely ignored in schools, leading to volunteer untrained archivists working part-time hours with a limited scope of influence and neglected contemporary electronic records. This research is an argument in support of continuum practices in archives, exploring pragmatic solutions to the information management struggles of independent schools.

3. Methods

Over 14 months (November 2018 to December 2019), I immersed myself within a single K-12 independent school in Montreal, Quebec. During that time, I had access to most of the school's records, worked as one of the team, and interviewed 13 administrators and support staff about their work, the records that they create, and the information that they share. I also surveyed the teaching staff about the records they create, how they save and share their records, how they find information, and their feelings of empowerment at work.

When the 14 months had come to an end, I wanted to see if some of the conclusions that I had drawn could also be seen at other Quebec independent schools, so I interviewed five archivists from similar institutions about their roles, their presence within their schools, their access to resources, their struggles, and their successes.

This chapter begins with a description of each of the **research design** elements used in this study, details each method for **data collection and analysis**, examines how **rigor and trustworthiness** were addressed, and discusses **ethical considerations**.

3.1 Research Design

This research was a general inquiry into the management and use of archives and the role of archivists within independent schools in Quebec. While there already was extensive empirical and prescriptive literature about archival management and the role of archivists generally, there was very little within an educational context, and even less regarding K-12 schools. Given this gap in empirical research, it was decided to pursue a pragmatic, exploratory case study to discover what the data would reveal.

3.1.1 *Pragmatism*

“A philosophical approach that assesses the truth of meaning of theories or beliefs in terms of **the success of their practical application.**” (“Pragmatism,” n.d.-a)

“The quality of dealing with a problem in a sensible way that **suits the conditions that really exist, rather than following fixed theories, ideas, or rules**...An approach to problems and situations that is based on practical solutions.” (“Pragmatism,” n.d.-b)

“Advocating behaviour that is **dictated more by practical consequences than by theory or dogma.**” (“Pragmatic,” n.d.)

“Practical; dealing with practice; matter-of-fact...**concerned with practical consequences or values.**” (“Pragmatic,” 1989)

Philosophy scholar Richard Shusterman (2010) identified what he felt were the ten major principles of pragmatism, which very effectively details how it is a unique and fascinating paradigm that applies itself remarkably well to this specific research project as well as archival practice in general:

The changing, open, and contingent nature of reality. The world is ever-changing, there are multiple realities depending on circumstance, and truths are created through human activity. As such, a case-study methodology is very appropriate for observing a particular reality, and while many of the observations and conclusions will almost certainly be found elsewhere, generalizability and replicability are not research goals. Archival practice is the application of the

theory learned in schools, skilfully adapted by the practitioner to the specific circumstance of their particular organization. No two schools are the same, and even the same school might be quite different after the passage of time or under new management, so school archivists must always be adaptable and creative.

The primacy of human action and purpose in even our most rational and cognitive pursuit and concepts. Pragmatists seek knowledge not in the pursuit of great truths, but to guide actions to realize our life's purposes. Theory is used to inform practice, so both are very important elements of pragmatic research, but an optimized practice is the goal with theory as a means to that end, not an end in itself.

A non-reductive, embodied naturalism. Humans' minds and feelings are impacted by embodied, natural experiences which in turn can then impact others through social interactions. Both the natural and the social environments guide human thought and action, creating habit that can be studied and ideally focused productively.

Anti-Cartesianism. Pragmatists reject the notion that we can ever really have absolute certainty about anything, especially given the ever-changing nature of the world, and as such, feel that we should be comfortable in accepting strongly held beliefs as truth unless they are shown to be false. Discourse and collaborative inquiry should be encouraged to come to agreements on the validity of these truths.

Community. The way to arrive at truth is to explore different perspectives and viewpoints through collaboration and community. Focusing multiple lights on an object illuminates it more clearly than just one, and bouncing ideas off different people can correct false beliefs and democratize situations.

Empirical, experience-oriented stance. Our perceptions and interpretations of what we observe are predetermined by our existing and socially generated desires, beliefs, values, and

concepts. Our past experiences are a source of knowledge and valuation and are important to acknowledge when conducting research.

Future-looking. Views are highly valued by pragmatists if they have a positive influence on future events. Experience is a form of experimentation, which is why we do look to our past when determining how to act, but we must also look ahead to anticipate change and creatively adapt our actions accordingly.

Meliorism. Interpreting the world is not enough: We must actively work to try to make it better. Action is essential, the world is partly determined by that action, so it makes sense to try to orient that action in a positive direction.

Holism. Rather than Cartesian dualisms where something is one or the other (good/bad, body/mind, theory/practice, records management/archives), pragmatists believe in a holistic continuum. “Post-custodial approaches to archives and records cannot be understood if they are treated as a dualism. They are not the opposite of custody. They are a response to opportunities for asserting the role of an archives—and not just its authentication role—in many re-invigorating ways” (Upward, 1996, pp. 282–283). Our beliefs do not exist in isolation, and derive their meanings through links with other beliefs, sensations, experiences, relationships, and purposes. In the same way, institutional archives are influenced by (and influence) many different organizational facets, all of which need to be considered by archivists.

Pluralism. As there are many different truths out there, pragmatists respect diversity and democracy. We have all had a multitude of experiences, and those experiences colour our current perspectives and realities, so we must account for those simultaneous truths when determining how to act. Paying attention to these differing perspectives can make our own perspectives wiser, more effective, and more inclusionary.

To understand how pragmatism functions as a research paradigm, one must examine its **ontology** (what is the nature of reality?), **epistemology** (what is the relationship between the knower and the known?), **methodology** (how can we come to know it?), and **purpose** (why?).

Ontology. Pragmatists believe that reality can be found in the actions of humans in a world that is constantly changing and becoming (Goldkuhl, 2011, p. 139). The meanings of those realities emerge from the understanding and interpretation of the statements of others through speaking and responding rather than static ideas living apart from society (Bowen et al., 2021, pp. 3-4).

Epistemology. Pragmatic researchers recognize that the researcher has enormous influence over their research. Researchers are always active participants, so the relationship between them (the knower) and what they are researching (the known) can never be completely objective (Cronen, 2001, p. 17). This world view shapes the way in which research questions are raised and framed, methods selected, data collected and analyzed, and results reported (Austin & Sutton, 2014). Knowledge comes from reflecting on our experiences as they are happening, and its truths are revealed by its real-world effects (Bowen et al., 2021, p. 3).

Methodology. A pragmatic study is designed around 'what works' and 'what makes sense'. Pragmatists are more concerned with the problems to be solved rather than the methods used to solve those problems and feel encouraged to apply whatever methods work best to get to the bottom of things (Creswell, 2003, pp. 11–12). "The researcher who acts in the pragmatic paradigm enjoys the freedom to choose the methods used to reach his objectives...The convenience and the opportunity of research situations are thus more important than the epistemological place that the researcher assumes in his relationship with the subjects or objects investigated" (Revez & Borges, 2018, p. 585).

Data collection methods are chosen that not only are best for answering specific research questions, but also those that are most appropriate given the actual circumstances. Pragmatists

use multiple data collection methods to paint as complete a picture as possible of the situation at hand (Goldkuhl, 2011, p. 141). They are not concerned with the philosophical nature of each specific method: If different tools are the best and most appropriate ones for answering a question, then they become the tools of choice, regardless of the different (and sometimes seemingly opposing) philosophies supporting them (Morgan, 2007).

In a study that discusses using pragmatism to examine organizational processes, the researchers identified three methodological principles that underlie a pragmatic approach to inquiry: “(1) an emphasis on actionable knowledge, (2) recognition of the interconnectedness between experience, knowing and acting and (3) inquiry as an experiential process” (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020, p. 1). “This methodological principle enables researchers to engage with multiple experiences of the same phenomena and orient the inquiry towards problem solving through the reconstruction of habits and the continuation of vital and social experience” (p. 3).

Pragmatism acknowledges that knowledge produced through research is relative rather than absolute, and that even stable patterns are vulnerable to shifts and changes. This means that pragmatic researchers must be committed to uncertainty, flexibility, and openness to unexpected data. Pragmatists enjoy the messiness and complexity of life (Feilzer, 2009, p. 14).

Pragmatic data analysis happens abductively rather than deductively or inductively: The researcher refers to their past experiences, their knowledge of the literature, and multiple sources of data (including informal observations (Earl Rinehart, 2021)) to draw conclusions that make the most sense given the circumstances. They look for the most likely answers, and do not shy away from referring to their own past experiences to support their conclusions—while openly acknowledging their own biases (Morgan, 2007, p. 70). “Abductive analysis involves questioning one’s own knowledge and a close scrutiny of evidence. From a sound, expert knowledge of the research evidence under question—deliberated over, reflected on, and talked about—come opportunities for new ideas” (Earl Rinehart, 2021, p. 305).

Purpose. In contrast with interpretivism where the purpose of research is to identify and understand the subjective meanings of people to use as building-blocks for theory development (Goldkuhl, 2011, p. 137), the goal of pragmatism is to construct knowledge that can be useful in action, intertwining cognitive and practical interests (p. 139). “[I]t is not the abstract pursuit of knowledge through ‘inquiry’ that is central to a pragmatic approach, but rather the attempt to gain knowledge in the pursuit of desired ends” (Morgan, 2007, p. 69). This highlights the moral dimensions of organizations in the need for research to have practical value (Wicks & Freeman, 1998, p. 123). This means that pragmatists are not simply interested in learning about the world as it is, but also on what it could be. “Action is the way to change existence. To perform changes in desired ways, action must be guided by purpose and knowledge. The world is thus changed through reason and action and there is an inseparable link between human knowing and human action. Pragmatism can be understood as a philosophy that fully acknowledges this mutual permeation of knowledge and action” (Goldkuhl, 2004, p. 13).

What is very interesting is that pragmatism as a philosophy has played a large role in the evolution of archival practice. There has been extensive debate in the archive world as to the nature of archival research and practice between the theorists and the pragmatists. This is very well described by Boles and Greene in their discussion of Luciana Duranti’s dismissal of Schellenberg’s ‘self-evident truths’ about archives as flawed because he came to them through practical experience rather than through classical archival theory. Duranti’s archival principles, methods and practice emerged from her study of ancient Roman ideas, whereas Schellenberg’s were based on he and his colleagues’ observed realities. The authors describe Duranti’s arguments as deductive in character, and Schellenberg’s as inductive. “Duranti is correct in saying that Schellenberg never took his pragmatic, methodological observations and applied them to classical archival theory. Duranti is correct in labeling Schellenberg a methodologist. But Duranti is wrong if she believes that in writing these words, in documenting that

Schellenberg was 'pragmatic,' that she has somehow undermined his work. For if Duranti can, from her perspective, characterize Schellenberg as a mere methodologist who failed to deal with the higher-order problems within archival theory, Schellenberg, from his perspective, could dismiss Duranti as an abstract theoretician whose quaint, classical notions regarding first principles have no grounding in the real world of contemporary archival practice" (Boles & Greene, 1996, p. 308). This philosophical split can be seen in the different approaches to digital preservation research employed by Duranti's Interpares project at UBC (top-down approach informed by archival tradition and theory) and the Pittsburgh Project (bottom-up pragmatic approach) (Bearman, 2006, p. 18).

Society's need for records as memory, evidence, and for accountability (L. A. Millar, 1996, p. 228) as well as the logistics of having to manage ever-growing amounts of digital records have led to archivists having to pragmatically design and use collaborative and technical innovations in the course of their jobs (Trace, 2020, p. 359). A recent example can be seen with the Saving Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Online (SUCHO) project, where volunteers pragmatically developed an agnostic cataloguing standard and vocabulary so that their records would integrate well with the systems that they needed to, and to make the job easier for their volunteers (E. Jones et al., 2022, pp. 15–17). And of course, More Product, Less Process (MPLP) is the embodiment of pragmatic archival practice.

Institutional archivists should strive to understand the needs of their businesses and, guided by their professional knowledge and experience, design systems and programs that will improve both their archive and their organization. They should anticipate change by communicating regularly with record creators and record users, and ensure that they are active, participatory members of staff, integrating themselves as key players within their organization. If new strategies aren't working, or older strategies start to become less effective, archivists should change and adapt to their current reality. They should be aware of all the facets of their

organization, attempt to discover what realities might be significant to their work and, through adaptive iterative practice, leverage them as best they can. Pragmatically.

3.1.2 Case Study

A case study is an in-depth exploration of a specific situation, organization, event, subject, or process, from which it is presumed that one can derive knowledge about a greater phenomenon (Gilliland & McKemmish, 2004, p. 183; Gorman & Clayton, 1997, p. 50).

The site chosen for the case study portion of the research was a small independent school on the island of Montreal in Quebec, Canada. It has fewer than 500 students, under 100 staff members, and was founded over 100 years ago. It was chosen out of convenience, as I had a relationship with the school as an alumni, a parent, and a volunteer. In addition, the school had recently gone through significant staff turnover, so it was a very good example of an institution dealing with recent business and information continuity issues. It is true that not all schools will have experienced the upheaval that this particular school had, but due to its recent struggles, it was a very interesting and informative example to use for this case study. To protect the identities of the study's participants, I will not name the school, nor will I provide any further identifying information.

3.1.3 Document Analysis

Much can be learned about an organization by the paper (or digital) trails that it creates (Marsden, 1997, p. 162). A document analysis was used to supplement the data acquired from other sources as a form of triangulation (Pickard, 2013, p. 252; Wildemuth, 2009, p. 161). People's memories can be unreliable, so it was important to be able to support (or refute) the claims made in the interviews and the survey by looking at the records held by the case study

school and examining how they were managed. Documents can also tell stories of their own, and using abductive reasoning, some conclusions can be drawn from their analysis.

3.1.4 *Semi-Structured Interviews*

Research interviews have been referred to as conversations with a purpose. They are used to obtain subjective information from participants about their here-and-now constructions, reconstructions of the past, or projections of the future. They can be structured (with the same questions in the same order given to all participants for clarity of comparison), unstructured (completely exploratory), or semi-structured (some prepared topics, but the interviewer has the flexibility to adapt them as the interview progresses) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 268-269; Wildemuth, 2009, pp. 232-233). Semi-structured interviews were used in this research project to elicit rich descriptive data from school administrators about their work, the records they create and use, and their thoughts on their school. Semi-structured interviews were also used to ask archivists from other schools about their role, their struggles, their triumphs, and their thoughts about their schools and work.

3.1.5 *Online Questionnaire*

An online questionnaire is a type of data collection technique under the survey research method. There are two different types of surveys: descriptive, to describe a situation, and explanatory, to examine relationships between variables (Pickard, 2013, pp. 112–113). The vast majority of surveys in archival literature are descriptive, and as such, not normally subjected to any rigorous statistical analysis to show validity or reliability (Wildemuth, 2009, p. 259). A descriptive survey was used in this research to gather data from the case study's school's teaching faculty. The original plan had been to interview the teachers, but ultimately the survey

instrument was chosen for three main reasons: first, logistically, as the faculty's teaching schedule did not offer them much free time during the day to be interviewed, it was difficult to find participants for that type of intensive data collection. Second, it was important to reach many participants, which is far less time-consuming as a survey than interviews. And third, it was valuable for triangulation purposes to see if some of the same themes that emerged from the administrator interviews would be seen with a different population and data collection method.

3.1.6 *Functional Analysis*

No single record source can tell the whole story of an institution. It takes an archivist to ensure that many relevant records from different creators are being appraised, selected, preserved, and linked to guarantee a coherence that only occurs when seemingly disparate records are brought together rather than only being seen in isolation (Mogarro, 2006, p. 77). It is important to understand how organizations work, and how records fit into the different contexts of these organizations and their record creators (Ketelaar, 2000).

Almost 50 years ago, Gerald Ham (1975) spoke of the problems surrounding archival acquisition. "Why must we do it so badly?" (p. 5). Rather than trying to collect archives for the sake of future historians by interpreting the content of records, he felt that that it was more important to interpret the context of records to avoid documenting narrow research interests over the broad spectrum of human experience. He was concerned that manuscript curators tended to prioritize the records of specific geographic areas and the elite, leaving whole populations unrepresented. Historian Howard Zinn challenged archivists to address this disparity: "I have only two proposals for archivists: One, that they engage in a campaign to open all government documents to the public....And two, that they take the trouble to compile a whole

new world of documentary material, about the lives, desires, needs, of ordinary people...To refuse to be instruments of social control in an essentially un-democratic society, to begin to play some small part in the creation of a real democracy: these are worthy jobs for historians, for archivists, for us all" (Zinn, 1977, p. 25). Archivists took up the call and activist archiving was born, led by a strategy that bestows on archivists a far more active appraisal mandate, grounded in archival theory, to purposefully acquire and create records that are more representative of marginalized communities (Abraham, 1991; L. J. Henry, 1980). "Believing that archives should reflect more globally the society that creates them, these differing 'societal approaches' explore new conceptions of archival theory and methodology. This perspective represents a fundamental change in the archival discourse from one based on the state to one reflecting the broader society that the state serves. Now, it may be said that archives are of the people, for the people, often even by the people" (T. Cook, 1997b, p. 30).

A collection analysis is a common strategy for appraising an institution's archival collection. Arguably, the core function of institutional archivists is the preservation of their institution's vital administrative records. Traditionally, at the end of a record's lifecycle (once it ceases to be administratively useful), after consultation with the institution's retention schedule, a decision is made: Will this record be destroyed, or deposited within the archive? Records earmarked for preservation would then cross over the 'archival threshold' and be cared for by an impartial archivist.

A survey of existing records can tell us what a collection contains, but it does not say whether it adequately tells an institution's story. The next step in collection analysis would be to take the data that the inventory provided and dig more deeply to see where the gaps lie by sorting the available records into categories. One would be able to see quite quickly which categories are supported by substantial documentary evidence, and which are not. An archivist could then make recommendations to fill those gaps and adapt the retention schedule

accordingly (Endelman, 1987, pp. 341–342). If those holes cannot be filled from within the institution's administrative records, then the archivist could modify their acquisition policy to formally strategize how to acquire relevant external records to round out the collection.

Helen Samuels, along with other activist archivists of the 1970s and 80s, felt that current appraisal techniques were lacking. It was clear to her that institutions impacted people, but that those people's perspectives (especially those of marginalized communities) were not generally represented in the archival record, and that it was the archivist's responsibility to ensure that all viewpoints were captured, not just the ones of those in power. Institutional functional analysis was her practical answer to this problem. It is similar to content analysis in that it systematically appraises an institution's collection, but it takes a somewhat different approach: Instead of first inventorying the records that have been produced and then grouping them into categories, it first determines the functions and activities of an organization, and then looks to see which records best document them in order to ensure that they are capturing the whole story—moving the emphasis from what does exist, to what should exist (Samuels, 1986, p. 120). This was a bold perspective, quite removed from the traditional idea of the impartial archivist (E. S. Johnson, 2008, p. 195). “An important argument made by proponents of functional analysis is that archives create value in society and culture and archivists act knowledgably in the molding of cultural heritage” (Robyns, 2014, p. 28).

Institutional functional analysis was born out of Helen Samuels' earlier documentation strategy, which was an appraisal technique developed in the 1980s to foster cooperation amongst institutions. It was lauded by the archival world, despite the fact that it ended up being too onerous for most archivists to be able to actually implement (Malkmus, 2008). Two issues with documentation strategy were that it was “rooted in interarchives cooperation—something that archivists continually advocated but rarely did...[and] the level of involvement necessary to implement a documentation strategy assumed ‘archival prosperity,’ which did not match up with

the reality of ‘chronically underfunded’ institutions” (E. S. Johnson, 2008, p. 198). Functional analysis borrows the holistic spirit of documentation strategy but narrows its scope to the appraisal of a single institution’s holdings, making it much more practically feasible. Elements of it has been used to inform and inspire appraisal standards and guidelines around the world, including the Canadian practice of macro-appraisal (T. Cook, 2004b), Australia’s *Designing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems (DIRKS) (Strategies for Documenting Government Business: The DIRKS Manual*, 2018), and the Dutch PIVOT Project (Robyns, 2014, p. 58).

Samuels begins her book on functional analysis, *Varsity Letters*, with a chapter describing the rationale for a functional approach to appraisal. She states that “planning must precede collecting...archivists must start their selection activities not with a consideration of specific sets of records, but with an understanding of the context in which records are created” (1992, p. 1). This contextual knowledge allows for the later creation of documentary goals and collecting plans, the next logical steps in the development of a comprehensive archives program. She recognizes that traditional appraisal methods are inadequate for ensuring an unbiased, impartial archival record, and that different appraisal techniques need to be applied to effectively manage the massive quantity of records that are being produced (p. 2). She recommends that, when beginning a selection process for institutional records, instead of approaching it through a study of its history, organization charts and existing records, one should first look at its functions: what does it do? This helps to provide important contextual information, and the linking of records to functions rather than individuals or departments is a more accurate way of approaching provenance (p. 3). “The renewed understanding of the authoritative and informational nature of records of activity is leading to a new approach to provenance which is as much functional as structural, emphasizing the functionality of records at the time of their creation and aspiring to link that functionality to the functions of an archival institution and the retention of a social and

organisational account of events through the transmission of the archief" (Upward, 1994, sec. The Re-Emergence of Recordkeeping Theory).

Samuels stresses that although the care of administrative records will remain the primary focus of institutional archivists, those records should absolutely "not be considered a full and adequate record of the institution. By looking along rather than across administrative lines, archivists are impeded from achieving a holistic understanding of their institutions" (1992, p. 6). She mentions the Canadian practice of total archives and says that the acquisition of both official and non-official records are necessary to achieve an adequate documentation of an institution because they complement each other and must be examined in an integrated approach (p. 7).

Despite her views on the importance of archives for societal and historical needs, Samuels explains that during appraisal, archivists should not be considering specific research needs: "Archivists have been directed to plan for the future uses of records when making appraisal judgments...Although we come to our work with varied training, few archivists are skilled soothsayers... Since archivists cannot predict future research, the best they can do is to document institutions as adequately as possible. A representative record of the full breadth of an institution is the best insurance that future researchers will be able to answer the questions they choose to ask. Functional analysis makes it possible to select such a record" (Samuels, 1992, pp. 7–8). To ensure this representative record of an institution, Samuels states that institutional archivists must contend with two opposing problems: that of an abundance of records, and that of a scarcity (p. 9). Also, sometimes even when there is an abundance of records, they may still not be wholly representational, so archivists need to look beyond linear metres to determine whether any particular function is adequately documented (p. 10). In *Varsity Letters*, Samuels first describes each function and clarifies the activities that should be documented, but then goes on to a documentary analysis to "assess the ability of the available

evidence to provide adequate information” (p. 11). She finishes this opening chapter with a reassertion that the role of archivist must encompass more than just the management of existing records, to “play a role in assuring the adequate documentation of an institution” (p. 12). She acknowledges that some traditional archivists may have hesitations about assuming a more interventionist role, but between the need to intervene at the time of creation to ensure the preservation of electronic records to the recognition that certain phenomena and viewpoints will not be captured without purposeful effort, she feels that the paradigm had to change (pp. 12-13).

While a functional analysis is more approachable than attempting to do a multi-institutional documentation strategy, it is still a lot for a single practitioner to undertake. As such, borrowing from functional analysis as a methodological framework, I have taken an MPLP-inspired process to come up with a relatively comprehensive list of the records that should be found within a school’s archive, along with noting possible documentary problems and recommending pragmatic solutions to manage them. “Although designed for large and complex institutions, the lone arranger can adapt institutional functional analysis and macroappraisal to his or her unique circumstances. Using a little imagination and a solid understanding of how the institution works, the lone arranger borrows elements from these methodologies to craft the framework of a workable process of information gathering and analysis” (Robyns, 2014, p. 86). If I were producing this analysis for a specific school, it would be more tailored and detailed to address their specific situation, but as the purpose of this document is to inspire other practitioners, those types of details and advice were kept purposefully more general.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Figure 3-1 shows the timeline for the data collection for this study:

Figure 3-1

Data Collection Timeline

	2018		2019												2020		
	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
Document analysis																	
Administrator interviews																	
Faculty survey																	
Archivist interviews																	

I was working in the case study school for 14 months from November 2018 to the end of December 2019. During that time, I was a member of staff, supporting the work of many different departments. I was also given access to most of the school's records. As such, I was able to develop a thorough understanding of the school's information management processes, its strengths, and its weaknesses. I began the archivist interviews in January 2020 and had completed five of them before Covid shut the world down in March.

The document analysis, administrator interviews and faculty survey taught me about the information needs of a school's staff. They also gave me a glimpse into what each of their jobs entailed, what records they created and shared, and offered a holistic view of the workings of the entire organization. Speaking with archivists from other similar institutions allowed me to see if some of the observations that were noted at the case study school could also be seen at other schools, and from the perspective of those who manage records and information.

3.2.1 Document Analysis

As this research study explored the appraisal, accession, use, access, management, and preservation of a school's documents, it was vital that the documents themselves were studied.

Population

The school leadership gave me unrestricted access to all the school's records that I requested.

In terms of digital records, I was given access to the administrative records of the Advancement, Communications, and Admissions departments, a large repository of digital photographs, as well as the records from the Assistant to the Head of School, some of which dated back to 1996. I was also made an administrator for the Advancement database, the website, and the School Management System. I set up and managed both the archive database and the online uniform shop. If there was ever anything else that I needed access to, permission was always granted.

In terms of paper records, I was given access to the entirety of the school's historical archive (112 catalogued and 63 uncatalogued boxes) and dozens of boxes of uncatalogued semi-active and inactive administrative records from Finance, Facilities, Advancement, Admissions, Communications, Human Resources, the Head of School, the Board of Directors, and the Foundation.

Data Collection

The purpose of the data collection was exploratory in nature—I was looking for insights on the types of records that were being created or acquired, how these records were being managed, and how they were being used. I kept a detailed log of my observations throughout the 14 months and coded them in NVivo as I wrote them.

There were some obviously valuable records relating to this research, the most important being records retention schedules, the working files found on the former archivist's laptop, and the advancement database. What was more interesting than the content of the records themselves, however, was the state of their organization and accessibility.

Data Analysis

I kept a log of my observations and coded them in NVivo as I wrote them. These notes to myself were not only maintained as a record of what I observed, but also, through an iterative process of coding and reflecting, to inform the functional analysis, and to determine the focus of the interview and survey questions that followed. Some of the themes and questions that emerged from my analysis of the school's documents and the reflection that followed included:

Policy and procedures. How did staff manage their records given the lack of documented policy and procedures? Did it differ between individuals and/or departments? What happened to an individual's records once they left the employ of the school? What about their email account?

Physical records management. How did school staff deal with the lack of physical storage space? Did it impact what they retained? What happened to the physical records in offices when the building was being renovated? Were people told what to do? If so, by whom?

Digital records management. How had digital record management changed (if at all) since the school adopted the Google for Education platform? Did staff ever wish that they could access older records from the legacy servers, including older emails?

Record sharing. How did staff share records with each other? How did they collaborate on files?

Teacher-created records. Would teachers consider depositing records into the archive? If so, which types? Was there any kind of centralized policy or even advice given for the management of teachers' records? Did department heads oversee that?

Archives management / archivists. How were archives in other local schools being managed? What were their physical facilities like? Did those archivists work with contemporary records or just the historical ones? Did they have record management policies in place? How were those archivists situated within their organization, and what kind of authority did they have? Did they have close relationships with other staff members? Did they have as much unfettered access to their school's contemporary records as I had been given to do this research, or were they siloed with just the historical records?

3.2.2 Administrator Interviews

To study the way that school staff managed and used their records, it was important to speak with its administrators.

Population

Soon after I began working at the school, I sent an email to all teaching faculty and administrative staff, inviting them to participate in an interview about the records they create and share (see Appendices C and D). There was a very positive response among the administrative team, and I was able to interview 13 administrative staff members between January and December 2019. The response from the teaching faculty was much more muted (only one volunteered to be interviewed), so pragmatically, I decided to use a survey to engage with them rather than interviews (see Section 3.2.3). The interviews took place at the school, but management was not informed of who did and did not participate.

Some examples of administrative staff that were approached are directors, admissions, advancement, communications, finance, operations, information technology, human resources, information management, counsellors, librarians, and administrative assistants. Some

administrative staff could work directly with students and have curricular responsibilities, such as learning specialists and language support, but are not traditional classroom teachers.

Information about each participant's demographics will not be detailed as there were only 24 administrative staff who worked at the school at the time, and I do not want their identities to be inadvertently disclosed. I will say however that the participants' roles in the school varied greatly, and all but one department was represented by at least one individual. Some participants had only joined the school within the past year, and others had been working there for well over a decade. Some individuals were in more entry-level roles, some were mid-career, and others were directors.

Data Collection

The purpose of the data collection was to learn more about the types of records that were being created or acquired, how these records were being managed, and how they were being used. The interviews were semi-structured with just a short guide to ensure that no important points were forgotten (see Appendix E), but the ultimate direction of each interview was determined by what information was revealed during each conversation. The following are the initial questions that framed the interviews, and the justifications for asking them:

The following questions were to collect demographic information, and to gain some insight on what each participant did for the school.

- Name, title
- How long have you worked at the school? In current role?
- Describe your job

The following questions were included to encourage participants to talk about the records that they create and use. This both informed the record lists within the functional analysis as

well as provided insight into the many ways that these records were managed, both in the short-term and in the long-term as archives, and what, if anything, guided their choices.

- What records do you create? How? What software do you use? Where do you save your files? Walk me through the process.
- Do you know how long to keep records for? If so, how?

When the interviews first began, I asked the following questions only about physical records, not information generally. However, after a few interviews and informal observations, I realized that information and knowledge sharing and harnessing was a missing piece, so expanded the questions to include information as well as records.

- What records/information do you share with other stakeholders? How? In what format?
- What records/information do you take from other people? How? In what format?
- What information do you wish that you could access more easily? Why? Can you think of ways to make it easier?

The questions below were asked to encourage participants to speak more generally about their roles and place within the school, not necessarily framed around records management. As the participants were aware of the purpose of these interviews and we had already been discussing records and information management extensively, even though many of their answers began with issues not related to records and information, while they were speaking, they would often note links between their struggles, strengths, and desires to records and information management—and it sometimes seemed to be revelatory for them. A lot of interesting insights emerged.

- What job-related struggles do you have?
- Is there anything work-related that you are particularly proud of? Innovations, strategies?
- What do you wish that you could be doing for the school that you are not (perhaps outside of your job description)?

The following questions were asked to elicit insight about what makes independent schools unique, and specifically this school, as well as to determine the school's most important features

and values. This was to help inform the creation of functions and activities for the functional analysis, and for a greater understanding of independent schools.

- What makes independent schools different from public schools?
- What are [this school's] most important values?
- What makes [this school] different from other independent schools?
- Describe the ideal graduate from [this school]—how has the school helped to shape them?

The duration of the 13 interviews ranged from 18 to 86 minutes, lasting an average of 47 minutes each. Many different perspectives were able to be captured during these interviews, but the themes that emerged were remarkably consistent among them all. After the interviews were transcribed, a recording and a copy of the transcription were sent to each participant's personal email address to ensure that they were not misrepresented and to give them an opportunity to clarify or expand on any statements that they had made.

Data Analysis

The transcripts were added to NVivo and subjected to open emergent coding (identifying discrete concepts from within the data itself) (Pickard, 2013, pp. 270–271; Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pp. 101–121). As this was an exploratory study, the codes were data-driven, emerging from my journals and the administrator interviews as they were performed. The initial coding that took place during the data collection was quite messy, with over 75 different, often disparate concepts identified. This was valuable, however, as it provided a clear list of the concepts that had emerged alongside their frequencies, making it simple to identify areas of importance.

By the end of the interviews, the significant themes that were most relevant to the direction the research had taken were more easily identified, so some codes were merged, some were removed, and those remaining were placed in categories to create a more cohesive, pertinent

code list unique to the administrator interviews (See appendix F for the codebook). Once all the codes had been finalized, I went through each of the interview transcripts one final time to ensure that each of the codes were appropriately applied and that nothing had been missed. The structure of section 4.2, where the data from the administrator interviews is reported on, is closely based on these codes and categories. Within that reporting, many of the more detailed concepts that were later discussed in chapter 5 were introduced, with relevant examples from the transcripts.

JOB

Job-Changes
Job-Description
Job-Desires
Job-Pride
Job-Struggles
Job-Support
Job-Training
Job-Workflows

SCHOOL

School-Values
School-Students

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge-Sharing
Knowledge-Struggles

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships-Administrators
Relationships-Alumni
Relationships-External
Relationships-Faculty
Relationships-Management
Relationships-Other schools
Relationships-Parents
Relationships-Students

RECORDS

Records-Access
Records-Archival
Records-Management
Records-Sharing
Records-Struggles

TECHNOLOGY

Technology-Systems
Technology-Google

In reading, re-reading, coding, and re-coding, some of the questions that emerged from the document analysis were addressed from the perspective of school administrators. Many of the interview participants struggled with the management of both their physical and digital records, as they had been given very little if any guidelines on how to do so. Staff did what worked best for them in the moment, and this led to inconsistent record management and sharing. Gaps in contemporary records were certainly noticed and influenced their ability to do their jobs. These

gaps were caused by different reasons, most of which seemed to come back to lack of policy and procedures.

Some new themes emerged that led the course of this research down a somewhat different, yet quite exciting, path:

Information and knowledge sharing. This was something that I wasn't thinking about when I began this research, but it came up as an important issue by the interview participants. This got me to thinking—if important institutional information isn't being captured in a way that employees can use, how can it ever be archived? It occurred to me that this was potentially a wonderful opportunity for school archivists to make themselves valuable to their organizations while simultaneously facilitating the creation of records that could be archived.

Training. Staff often struggled in the use of some of the systems that they needed to do their jobs. There was a lack of documentation which exacerbated the problem, but also a lack of time or motivation to participate in training sessions. A lot of information about these systems was simply informally passed on from one employee to the next, often on a need-to-know piecemeal fashion rather than holistically, leading to knowledge gaps and systems being used inconsistently.

Relationships and trust. Departments tended to be quite siloed within the school, and administrators on the whole did not have a lot of day-to-day interactions with the teaching faculty. Many of the people I spoke with talked about how they shared information more readily with people they knew and trusted. This got me thinking about how the nurturing of relationships amongst staff members, while not intuitively a function of a school archivist, might actually help in a few different ways. If having a close professional relationship with each other might encourage information sharing, perhaps having a close professional relationship with the archivist might facilitate conversations about archival matters, which could lead to a better understanding of and compliance with the school's records management program. And if the

archivist were to have a close professional relationship with many staff members, they may also be more in the loop with what's happening at the school which would help immensely with appraisal decisions. It was becoming clear that there was a lot to think about here.

3.2.3 Faculty Survey

After observing the day-to-day happenings at the school and interviewing many of the administrative staff, I felt that it was important to see if some of the themes that had emerged could also be seen amongst the teaching faculty.

Population

As previously mentioned, initially the plan had been to involve the teachers in the interview process alongside the administrative staff. It quickly became clear however that teachers did not have much flexibility in their daily schedules, so the interview format was not a feasible solution. It worked out for the best, because since the administrator interviews began prior to the creation of the survey instrument, those interviews were able to inform the direction of the survey in ways that had not been anticipated at the start of the study.

An email was sent out to all the school's classroom teachers (not classroom support staff), which was comprised of 45 people, in mid-October 2019 (see Appendix G), inviting them to participate in the survey. A reminder was sent by email at the end of October. By the end of November, 20 responses had been received, representing a 44% response rate.

Data Collection

The purpose of the data collection was to see if the themes that had emerged from other data collection sources (document analysis, and the administrator interviews) would be seen

with the teaching faculty. No inferences were intended to be drawn from this survey, as the numbers of participants would not be adequate to do so. The data gathered was to paint a picture of how this particular school's teaching faculty used, managed, and shared records and information. The survey was separated into nine sections:

Demographics asked questions about what area of the school they taught in (junior, middle, or senior), what fields of study they taught, how long they had been teaching, and how long they had been teaching at this particular school. The reason for this was to be able to aggregate some of the responses by these demographic categories, but as I only received 20 responses, and some of the departments were very small, it ended up not really being useful in most instances to analyse the data in that way.

Technology and records management asked questions about the types of software that the teachers used, where and how they stored their work records, and how easily they felt that they could retrieve older files that they had created themselves. Different software creates records in different formats, which impacts how easily they can be archived. Administrators saved their records in a myriad of different places, and departments weren't consistent about how their files were shared which led to difficulties retrieving older files, so I wanted to see if the situation was similar with the teaching staff.

Record sharing asked about if participants took pictures or videos of their students, and if so, whether they shared them with the children's parents, the communications team, or the archive. As I had been volunteering as the school's archivist for some time, I was aware that there were very few examples of student work in the archive, so I already knew that those were generally not being acquired. As a parent, I knew that teachers did often send pictures of their students to the parents (especially in the younger grades), but that they were usually shared through specialized third-party software which did not facilitate archiving. I also knew that the communications department maintained social media accounts that would often post pictures of

school activities that were sometimes taken by teachers. These social media accounts are more easily archived as the archivist would have access to them.

Onboarding and information sharing asked about how supported teachers felt when they first began working at the school by human resources, finance, their individual departments, and socially. It also asked about what materials they were given to prepare for teaching a class for the first time, and what types of materials, information, or experiences they might want to share with their colleagues. Finally, it asked participants to rate on a 5-point Likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree) their feelings about 16 different statements about their experience as a teacher at this school. These statements related to *influence* (did they feel like they had any power to influence things at the school?), *appreciation* (did they feel that the work that they did was appreciated?), and *information* (did they have ready access to the information that they needed?). Some of the statements were very similar in nature, but phrased in reverse. This was an internal reliability test to see if participants were paying attention as they should have been at least somewhat consistent with their answers. Participants in the administrator interviews had spoken about how they felt that they were left to fend for themselves when they first started their jobs, that departments were often isolated from each other, and that they had very little contact with most teachers day-to-day, so I wanted to see what that looked like from the teachers' perspective.

Meetings and professional development asked questions about how teachers would go about finding documents from the past that they themselves had not created (staff and departmental meeting minutes). It also asked about training (in-school professional development activities, those attended outside of school, and informational resources found online), and whether they share this type of learned knowledge with their colleagues. Administrator interview participants often stated that they had difficulty retrieving records that had been shared with them in the past but that they had not created themselves. Some

mentioned that they had some documents with information that helped them with their role that they kept for themselves, but didn't have an established way to share with their colleagues despite the fact that it would have been useful for them to do so. One mentioned the idea of creating an informational resource library, and another wished that they could have regular training sessions with their colleagues to be able to share this information, but neither of those strategies were ever put into place. It seemed to me that teachers would certainly benefit from sharing their professional knowledge with each other, but wasn't sure if that was happening, and if so, to what extent.

Historical archives asked questions about how familiar the teacher was with the school's history and traditions, if they had ever deposited anything with the school's archive, whether they had ever used any primary-source records in their classrooms, and if they were interested in perhaps using any of the school's archival materials in their own classrooms. The literature spoke about how promoting an institution's history and traditions could help to make staff feel more included in that institution's community, and that archives could help with that. I also wanted to see how experienced faculty were with using archives at all in their classrooms, and to know how frequently donations were made (although, as previously discussed, I already knew that not much had been donated).

The school asked questions about what they felt were the strengths of this particular school and what made it special. These were asked to inform the design of the functional analysis and to better understand independent schools in general.

Finally, the **conclusion** asked if the respondent had any thoughts or comments to add.

The survey instrument (see Appendix H) combined both closed-ended questions as well as open-ended ones. It was designed to be thorough, but not too long. Pictures from the school's archive were placed at the beginning of each section to make the survey more engaging (these pictures have not been included in this thesis so as to not expose the identity of the school).

Many of the answers were multiple-choice, but also included opportunities to add comments. After its initial design, it was pre-tested by a former member of the school's faculty for clarity and a few changes were made based on their feedback. The pre-test survey answers were not included in the results.

Google Forms was used to run the survey. LimeSurvey had been considered but was found to be unnecessarily cumbersome. As the survey was descriptive as opposed to explanatory, analysis was done in Excel and so the Google Forms' output to a spreadsheet was ideal.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the faculty survey was descriptive rather than explanatory as there were too few datapoints to draw any generalizable conclusions. It produced some interesting insights that are detailed in the results section, which could encourage further interest and research in the area.

Most of the results from the survey were reported on numerically. Where appropriate, some of the free-text answers were subjected to summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1283) to effectively summarize and compare the frequency of certain answers and themes.

In terms of the internal reliability test from the 'onboarding and information sharing section', there were two sets of question 'couples' that were used to see if respondents were paying attention. Participants were asked to identify their sentiment regarding a statement from a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree). The statement "I am in the loop with what's going on at school" should have elicited the opposite answer from the same participant as "I often feel like I'm one of the last people to find out about school news." It was the same situation with "I feel appreciated" and "my efforts are taken for granted."

In the first instance (I am in the loop / one of the last people to find out news), of the 20 participants, 12 chose the answer that implied the exact same feeling for both questions (so if they answered “strongly agree” with one, they answered “strongly disagree” with the other), six chose an answer that was one step removed where one answer was neutral (so they chose either “agree” or “disagree” for one question, and “neither agree nor disagree” for the other), and only two chose completely opposite sentiments (so both answers were the same despite the fact that the questions were worded in the reverse).

For the second couple (I feel appreciated / efforts taken for granted), seven participants chose the answer that implied the exact same feeling, 10 were one step removed (six of which were the same sentiment either positive or negative but one was “strongly” and one was not, and the other four had one answer that was neutral), 3 were two steps removed (all with one neutral and one “strongly” answer), and none chose the complete opposite sentiment.

As the vast majority of participants were quite consistent regarding their answers, I would say that it supported the internal reliability of the survey.

Some of the more interesting themes that emerged from the faculty survey were:

Google school. Despite that it had only been adopted by the school three years earlier, every survey participant was using at least one element of the Google for Education suite, and only two participants didn’t use the school’s Google Drive to save any of their work records. Google had integrated itself into the school very quickly and easily, perhaps because management encouraged its use, that it was perceived as easy to use, or because everyone else was using it. This made me think of the different elements of the Planned Behavior Model (Ajzen, 2012; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, 2005; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010) which helps to explain people’s attitudes towards different things, and whether the lessons learned from its adoption could be used to encourage people to enthusiastically participate in information management procedures.

Policy and procedures. There was no set policy or procedures for managing or sharing work records for faculty at this school. Any related advice the participants received seemed to come from a great many different sources, so there was little consistency. There was also reportedly no written documentation or formal training for department heads in how to approach their role. This was very similar to what had been expressed by the administrative staff during their interviews and what had been spoken of in the literature. I wondered about information management policies and procedures at other schools, and if they existed, whether they were followed.

Record retrieval. Survey participants seemed very comfortable with the idea of retrieving their own records, but showed some concern about being able to retrieve those created by others that had been shared with them that were more than a few years old.

Relationships. Some survey participants expressed negative feelings towards school leadership and administrative staff. While some issues of trust did come up regarding other teachers, there was still far more positive comments about their close teacher colleagues than negative ones. This echoed many of the sentiments expressed in the administrator interviews.

Archives. Participants showed some enthusiasm about the idea of using materials from the school's archive in their classroom, although only one participant had ever done so. Only very few had ever given any materials to be included into the school's archive. This made me think that if the archive was more visible and its use was normalized, that teachers would engage more with the collection.

3.2.4 *Archivist Interviews*

After spending 14 months immersed within a single institution, it was important for me to see if the themes that had been uncovered were present in other similar organizations as well. I also wanted to speak with school archivists specifically to understand their roles and their perspectives on archives, records management, and information flow within their specific organizations. The purpose of these interviews was not to conduct an in-depth analysis on the nature and meaning of school archives and archivists, as the sample size was too small to be able to make any generalizations, but was instead more of an information gathering exercise to uncover some details about the situations of a handful of school archivists to first see if the issues that were mentioned in the literature would be seen, but also in order to get some ideas of how school archivists could both support their school's contemporary information management issues while at the same time addressing some of the struggles that were identified. It was not intended to be a representational study of all school archivists.

Population

The sampling procedure that I used was a mix of snowball and convenience sampling. I reached out to an archivist at an independent school in Quebec, and they agreed to be interviewed. They in turn connected me with another Quebec independent school archivist, so I contacted them, and they also agreed to meet with me. I then went on to various Quebec independent schools' websites and sent emails (see Appendices J and K) to the archivists who were mentioned online. Including the first two interviews, in all, I contacted seven people in charge of their schools' archives, and all of them agreed to meet with me. I began these interviews in January 2020 and completed the fifth interview on March 10, 2020. The final two interviews had been scheduled for the following week, but on March 11, everything shut down due to the Covid pandemic. These last two interviews never took place. I had considered trying

to reschedule them months later via online teleconference, but in the end decided against it. First, I worried that the pandemic introduced an enormous new variable and that any interview that followed it would have a completely different focus than the ones that came before. Everyone's priorities had shifted quite dramatically, so the interviews would not be comparable. Second, I had managed to gather quite a bit of information from the first five interviews, and I felt as though I had already reached data saturation as no new codes were emerging from the data.

Two of the participants worked at schools that taught students from kindergarten to grade 11, one from kindergarten to grade 12⁹, and two from grade 7 to grade 12. Not a single participant worked full-time at their institutions on archival or records-management-related tasks. Two worked on a part-time basis, and the other three worked full-time but split between archival tasks and other work, including advancement, communications, general administration, and teaching. All the participants had been working for their respective schools for many years, most of them for well over a decade (some more than two decades!). Only two of the three participants had formal university-level professional archival training (one at the undergraduate level, the other at the master's level). This accurately reflects the reality that most school archivists are not professionally trained, as discussed in the literature review. All of the participants had, however, educated themselves in archival best practice and participated in professional development activities, and while that is not the same thing as a professional degree, it demonstrates the dedication and professionalism that they use to approach their work.

⁹ Although high school in Quebec normally ends after grade 11, some schools offer grade 12 as an alternative to CEGEP, after which students usually go to university outside of Quebec.

The participants were all remarkably enthusiastic about their work and seemed to thoroughly enjoy sharing their stories with me. Their passion and honesty were a joy to behold.

Data Collection

The interviews themselves were semi-structured, following a question guide (see Appendix L) that was informed by the literature and the themes that had emerged at the case study school. I met the participants in person at their schools, and most of the interviews included a tour of their facilities. The duration of the 5 interviews ranged from 48 to 145 minutes (not including the facility tours, where the conversations continued informally), lasting an average of 97 minutes each.

The following are the initial questions that framed the interviews, and the justifications for asking them:

The following demographic and general descriptive questions were asked to get an idea of their background and current situation at work. It also prompted them to describe how they envision their role, and got them to start talking, which led to many follow-up questions that related to what they wanted to discuss. The reason for asking about their budget was to get an idea of what financial resources they had and how much power they had over their own money.

- Name, title
- How long worked at this school?
- Have always had this role?
- Describe what you do
- What is your archival education?
- How many hours a week do you work for the school? Doing archival work?
- Do you have any help?
- How does your budget work?

The next few questions were about their institution. This gave me some idea of the history and organization of their school, and helped to inform the design of the functional analysis by identifying how was these schools were different from / similar to the case-study school.

- When was the school founded?
- Approximately how many teachers?
- Approximately how many admin?
- Tell me about your school
- What makes your school special?
- How would you describe one of your students on graduation?

As I had been volunteering for a few years with the case study school's archive, I was quite familiar with their archival collection, and how it was managed. The following questions were to see the scope of these schools' collections, how these archivists managed their archive, and whether they had any input on the management of the school's contemporary records. The literature spoke of the fact that many school archivists' mandates don't cover the management of contemporary records, or if so, only to a limited degree, so I wanted to know if that was something that would be seen at these institutions. These questions tended to lead to discussions about the nature of their relationships with their administrative colleagues, as well as their access to contemporary computer systems and operational documents. We also spoke about the appraisal and management of digital records, as those related struggles and concerns are experienced by many different types of archivists today and are very well documented in the literature.

- Do you have a records retention schedule? How old is it? Do people follow it?
- What types of records do you collect?
- How do you go about acquiring records? Internally? Externally?
- How do you manage your physical collection - physical storage?
 - Off-site repository? What do you store? Extent?
- Tell me about your digitization projects
- How do you deal with born-digital/digitized records?
- How do you keep track of your holdings?

The case study school had adopted the Google for Education solution for their email, file storage, office productivity software, and curriculum management. This certainly influenced how their staff managed their digital records and shared information. The following questions were to see if Google was being used by other schools, and if so, to what extent, and what had happened to their legacy systems (or were they still being used alongside). Regardless of how

their administration maintained their digital contemporary records, I was very interested in knowing how these school archivists appraised and managed these records for the archive, and how their own administrative records were maintained.

- How do you manage your digital business files? Server? On a local machine?
- Does your school use Google for Education?

These next questions related to how their archival holdings were disseminated to both the school community and beyond. The case study school didn't employ an archivist (the volunteering that I do is extremely limited in scope), so there wasn't a lot of archival outreach that took place. The literature spoke of the enormous value that archives could bring to their communities, so I wanted to see what was being done at these schools who did have the resources to employ archivists, even if only part-time. This was done to be able to highlight just some of the benefits that school archives can bring, and what would be lost if they did not exist. I also asked about what kind of community support they had, if any, to help manage their archives. This again was inspired by the literature, as it did infer that engaging with archival volunteers and donors could help to promote more general engagement with the school. I also wanted to explore different types of resources as institutional archives are notoriously underfunded.

- Does your archive have an online presence?
- What is done to disseminate the archives to the school community?
- What is done to disseminate the archives outside the school community?
- Do you ever get research requests from external researchers?
- Have you reached out to your community for help to manage the collection - volunteers, crowdsourcing, etc. ?

The final question was an opportunity for the participants to explore the idea of what their archive could look like if financial and logistical restraints were removed. Sometimes people's imaginations get bogged down with reality, and creative possibilities will become overlooked or dismissed as impossible. I also knew that a large part of my research would be using these

findings to make recommendations to schools, so I wanted to find inspiration from what archivists from other institutions envisioned for their own schools.

- If resources were limitless, what would be your top recommendations to improve your school's archives program?

After the interviews were transcribed, a recording and a copy of the transcription were sent to each participant's personal email address to ensure that they were not misrepresented and to give them an opportunity to clarify or expand on any statements that they had made.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed in the same way as the administrator interviews (see Section 3.2.2), although the initial coding went more smoothly as my experience with the administrator interviews had taught me many lessons, and I was more familiar with the archival perspective than I was of the school administrator. The first codes to emerge were not that different from what ended up being the final code list, but the categories that they were organized into were only finalized after they had each been coded twice (See Appendix M for the codebook):

ROLE

Role-Archival tasks
 Role-Keeper of knowledge
 Role-Non-archival tasks

SITUATION

Situation-Education/training
 Situation-Enjoying work
 Situation-Enthusiasm
 Situation-Help
 Situation-Other archivists
 Situation-Overwhelmed
 Situation-Physical working conditions
 Situation-Salary/schedule/benefits

ORGANIZATION

Organization-School activities
 Organization-Not understood/respected
 Organization-Organizational structure
 Organization-Positive recognition
 Organization-Apathy
 Organization-Budget
 Organization-Policies/procedures
 Organization-Records management
 Organization-Storage facilities

SCHOOL

School-Description/values

ARCHIVAL MANAGEMENT

Archival management-Acquisition
 Archival management-Arrangement/description
 Archival management-Digital records
 Archival management-Digitization
 Archival management-Loss
 Archival management-Oral histories
 Archival management-State of archives
 Archival management-Technology
 Archival management-Wishlist

USE OF ARCHIVES

Use of archives-Engagement
 Use of archives-Privacy
 Use of archives-Sensitive records
 Use of archives-Dissemination

When reflecting on the data collected during the archivist interviews, I was not surprised to find that many of the themes that emerged confirmed what had been discussed in the literature, and what I had seen at the case study school. These included:

Joy. The most striking takeaway from these interviews was that the participants loved their collections and their schools. They all had immense passion for the work that they did, felt its importance deeply, and worked incredibly hard to do the best that they could for their archives, given their individual constraints. They took great pride in the work that they did, as they should have.

Frustration. That said, there were certainly aspects of their jobs that many found incredibly frustrating, including sub-par storage facilities, too few hours that they could dedicate to their jobs, management who didn't always understand or appreciate what they did for the school, a lack of access to contemporary records and systems as well as a feeling of disconnect from the

rest of the administrative team. Most of the participants (but not all) also worked alone on their archive tasks, so had very little opportunity for feedback from other professionals. They seemed to really enjoy talking to me about the work that they did because, as one participant put it, nobody else seemed to care. These archivists would certainly benefit from being part of a formal, local network of other school archivists so that they would not feel so alone. It was significant to note that the one participant who was at the director level expressed far fewer feelings of frustration and isolation than the others.

Technology. All participants spoke of contemporary digital records, but they weren't exactly sure of how best to deal with them. Some took to printing certain digital records, others left them in the custody of the creating departments, and nobody had created or implemented any formal appraisal or preservation guidelines to deal with them. This was not for lack of trying, but they often lacked access, mandate, and authority. The literature also spoke of this phenomenon, so despite the small sample size for these interviews, and the fact that there are certainly school archivists out there who have managed to acquire authority over their school's contemporary records, these archivists are far from being outliers.

3.2.5 Functional Analysis

To answer my first research question (**Which archival records are being created or acquired by K-12 independent schools? Which are not? Why not?**), a functional analysis-type approach as inspired and guided by Helen Samuels' book *Varsity Letters* (1992) was undertaken. In the literature, there was only one example of an article that explicitly listed the records that are seen in school archives (Mogarro, 2006, pp. 75-76). The author listed 14 different document types and describes the possible research directions that could be supported by each one. She says that her list is not uniform or exclusive, and was created "to highlight the

importance and wealth of the archive documents for studies into the educational institution, school culture, the curriculum, presenting the potentiality of each type of document” (p. 76). She did not state how she came up with her list.

For my research, I was interested in discovering not only the records that are normally found in archives, but also those that are not (and possibly should be). I wanted to explore some of the reasons why certain records are problematic, and discuss solutions for how school archivists could deal with these problems. I decided that a functional approach would be a good framework for addressing these issues.

As described by the Archives of Manitoba, “Functional analysis for records involves the identification of the business functions and activities of an organization. It provides an understanding of what the organization does and how it carries out its work and links it to the records that are created. Functional analysis is a useful way to begin many records management projects, particularly when developing records schedules. It is foundational work that will enable other records management activities to happen” (Government Record Office Archives of Manitoba, n.d., p. 1).

My work was certainly not as comprehensive as Samuels’ *Varsity Letters*, given that very few K-12 school archivists would have the resources available to perform such a monumental task. Reviewers of *Varsity Letters* spoke of how the book offered valuable advice, but that actually implementing it in its entirety would be near impossible. “If taken literally, the cumulative effect of the volume could inspire some archivists to move off in 360 directions to reshape the archival problems presented by modern information systems. Such a move would ensure zero productivity...Major academic research collections are usually built by ‘lone conceptualizers.’ For their work, *Varsity Letters*, a good manual on archival practice, and a set of realistic priorities will be useful tools” (Brichford, 1993, pp. 540–541). “*Varsity Letters*...should be read by every archivist and records manager at any academic institution. It may not be possible for

every one of them to implement everything Samuels advocates...but she has certainly provided considerable 'food for thought'...and a goal for which we all can and should strive" (Schultz, 1994, p. 345). "The lone arranger must select and use sparingly only the most important elements of Helen Samuels's Institutional Functional Analysis...[they] can also gather less detailed information and streamline the scope of the appraisal reports in order to ease the burden of analysis and writing" (Robyns, 2014, p. 11).

There are many guidelines but no strict set of rules on how to perform a functional analysis. At its core is the identification of the high-level functions of an institution (what do they do?), the activities that support that function (how do they do it?), and the records that document those activities. This is done through a detailed study of the organization, which could include a document analysis (legislation, mandates, strategic plans, policies, job descriptions etc), staff surveys, and staff interviews.

What then follows is an analysis of the data collected, and a professionally-guided determination of whether the documentary evidence available adequately represents the activities and functions of the institution. This is not simply a quantitative analysis, as many records may seem extensive, but still fail to represent significant activities or viewpoints. In those cases, the archivist performing the analysis must consider why those gaps exist, and what can be done about them. These solutions might include working with record creators to establish proactive interventions at the time of document creation, reaching out to community members to acquire personal papers or oral testimony, or even collaborating with other organizations to create links between records from different organizations.

In a professional context, this analysis would then go on to inform an institutional documentation plan, which would include goals, policies, procedures, and systems to frame and guide that institution's information management program. For this study, however, the analysis will end with a list of a K-12 independent school functions, activities, and their related records,

along with related appraisal and accession, use and access, and management and preservation insights and advice pragmatically based on the literature, the data collected during this research, my observations, and my professional experience. It was designed around the case study school but was presented as generally as possible so that readers could use it as inspiration for the foundations of their own archival programs.

Population

I used the case study school as a model for determining the records that should be found in the archives of an independent K-12 school. Data about the functions of the school, the records that are created, and how they are saved was gathered through the document analysis, administrative interviews, and the faculty survey. More insights as to the functions and records of independent schools was gleaned through the archivist interviews.

Data Collection

The first step in a functional analysis is the identification of the organization's functions, or what it does (Samuels, 1992, p. 2). To help identify those functions, it is vital to communicate with records creators. During their interviews, the administrative staff were asked about what they do, who they do it with, and what records they produce in doing so. Teachers were also polled about the different types of records they create while fulfilling their mandate of educating children. Both groups were also asked to describe their school and highlight what made it special to help determine the school's values. Some of the documentation that was consulted were school newsletters, calendars, job descriptions, websites, strategic plans, and a records retention schedule. These identified many of the events that go on in the school as well as some less obvious areas of importance, such as lunch programs and school buses. In interviewing archivists from other schools, it was interesting to note how many of the documentary problems

that were observed at the case study school were also seen in their institutions, but also how they dealt with them. There are often many different ways to tackle problems, and their circumstances and solutions were inspirational.

Data Analysis

After all this information was collected, I adapted Helen Samuels' list of functions that she created for a university to better reflect the functions of a K-12 school. Activities were added to the high-level functions, and brief descriptions were added to each. From there, using the information gathered from the document analysis, interviews, survey, the school's outdated retention schedule, and the *Archives Management Guide for Private Educational Institutions in Quebec* (Fédération des établissements d'enseignement privés & Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2016), items were added to the "selected records list." Any insights into their appraisal and accession, use and access, or management and preservation were added to help contextualize the records' place within the larger organization, and consider some of their vulnerabilities. Some of these issues, such as record gaps, were made apparent during the document analysis and administrator interviews. When all this was done, each function and activity was examined closely, and if important viewpoints were noted to not be represented in the administrative documentary evidence, recommendations were made to find ways to unsilence those voices. "If archivists perceive their responsibility as documenting an institution, then the intervention to create or ensure the creation of records must be an integrated part of their documentary mission" (Samuels, 1992, p. 13).

The functions and activities of the case study school were identified as follows:

1. Confer Credentials

- a. Recruiting, selecting, and admitting students
- b. Financial aid
- c. Graduation

2. Convey Knowledge

- a. Curriculum
- b. Teaching
- c. Learning
- d. Evaluation

3. Student Experience

- a. School regulations and policies
- b. Co-curriculars
- c. Assemblies, events, and trips
- d. Library
- e. Well-being and counselling
- f. Food services

4. Sustain the Institution

- a. Governance
- b. Finances
- c. Operations
- d. Infrastructure
- e. Personnel
- f. Fundraising
- g. Foundation

5. Community Relations

- a. Student relations
- b. Parent & guardian relations
- c. Alumni relations
- d. Volunteerism and activism

In the book *Varsity Letters* (1992), Helen Samuels identified seven functions of colleges and universities: confer credentials; convey knowledge; foster socialization; conduct research; sustain the institution; provide public service; and promote culture. Some of these functions were also found in K-12 independent schools, but there were some adaptations. Research, public service, and the promotion of culture were removed as high-level functions, although some of those elements were represented as activities, specifically assemblies, events, and trips; library; and volunteerism and activism. Student experience seemed more representational of what goes on in a K-12 independent school than Samuels' foster socialization function, and three separate activities were created to encompass the quite different financial activities that were observed: finances (standard operational finances), fundraising (strategies and results surrounding raising extra funds), and Foundation (the investment and dispersal of the fundraised money). As community was identified as one of the most important school elements during the administrator interviews, teacher survey, and archivist interviews, it earned its own high-level function.

In addition to creating a relatively comprehensive list of the different archival records that are created or collected by an independent school, it was thought that the functional analysis for this research project could also act as a concise reference guide to help school archivists. As such, for each activity that was identified, three different elements of practical archival management were specifically addressed: **appraisal and accession**; **use and access**; and **management and preservation**. As schools have different resources and priorities, this analysis purposefully did not detail how to design each specific archival process, but instead offered general, high-level recommendations that could be used to inform individual institutions' workflows. As was the case with *More Product, Less Process* (M. Greene & Meissner, 2005), this analysis was intended to inspire, not act as a definitive instruction manual: Adopt what is situationally appropriate, adapt or disregard what is not.

3.3 Rigour and Trustworthiness in Research

This research followed a pragmatic approach which encourages researchers to use the most appropriate data collection methods to answer the research questions given the reality of their situation (Creswell, 2003, pp. 11–12; Goldkuhl, 2011, p. 141; Morgan, 2007, p. 73; Revez & Borges, 2018, p. 585). Most of the data collected was qualitative in nature, and the limited quantitative data did not have a large enough sample size to be able to be generalized. It was included to add extra elements to the qualitative findings and should only be interpreted as descriptive rather than explanatory.

Truth Value

Qualitative researchers are aware that absolute subjectivity when the data collection instrument involves human beings is impossible. This certainly does not mean that this type of research is invalid, but that researchers must be aware of their own subjectivity and set up safeguards to protect the research against it (Gorman & Clayton, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Pickard, 2013, p. 21). Pragmatism uses abductive reasoning, which creates new insights based on a hypothesis offering an explanation for observation—so reflecting on what one has observed and interpreting those insights through the lens of one's prior learnings and experiences to determine what makes sense (Morgan, 2020, p. 67).

To support the credibility of this research, the case study, which made up the bulk of the data collection, employed prolonged engagement as it took place over 14 months. I was at the school full-time, and integrated myself completely within the organization, supporting the work of every single department. Triangulation was used: Data was collected through different methods (interviews, document analysis, and a survey), targeting different populations (administrative staff, teaching faculty, and archivists from other organizations).

Member checks were another way that was used to ensure credibility. Transcripts and recordings of all interviews were sent to participants to ensure that they were not misunderstood and to offer them a chance to expand upon their previous statements.

A few strategies were used to ensure that the survey followed proper procedures. Prior to distributing the online survey to the teaching staff, it was shared with a former faculty member who had moved on to administration. They offered valuable feedback, and the survey instrument was adapted to reflect their input. The survey was quite long at 59 questions, but many of them were multiple-choice, and all were optional. Each section began with an amusing archival photograph, which was included to encourage participants to keep moving forward.

To ensure that survey participants were paying attention, a small internal reliability test was performed, the details of which is described in section 3.2.3.

To encourage honesty and forthcomingness among the participants, their anonymity was assured. They did not attach their names or email addresses to the survey, and in the demographics section, when they were asked what subjects they taught, those departments with very few teachers were aggregated so that I would be unaware of their identities.

Applicability

To gauge applicability in quantitative research, one looks to see if the data can be generalized to a broader context (Pickard, 2013, p. 22). While the teacher survey is a quantitative data collection method in that its results were numerical, its purpose was to gather descriptive information on a population that was not able to be interviewed for logistical purposes. It was never intended to be used for explanatory analysis, and the sample size (20 people) was much too small to be generalizable.

Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, encourage the idea of transferability, that the individual hoping to apply the results of a study to a different group of people would assess that

specific situation to see if the comparison is appropriate at that given time. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316; Pickard, 2013, p. 21). As pragmatists believe in the ever-changing, multi-perspective nature of truth, they focus specifically on the applicability of the research to other contexts and settings on a case-by-case basis, encouraging readers to engage with the data in a way that makes sense given their own circumstances (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020).

This research has been thoroughly documented and reported on within the pages of this thesis: The populations were clearly defined, recruiting methods detailed, data collection procedures outlined in detail, methods of analysis explained, and results reported on with as much detail as possible while still protecting the participants' privacy. As the case study school is relatively small, there are only very few people working in each department, sometimes only one. Because of that, sometimes when attributing quotes or opinions to an individual, some potentially identifying details were omitted. For the faculty survey, some of the departments that did not have many teachers were aggregated prior to the survey being distributed, such as 'Languages' (English, French and Spanish), 'Math or Sciences', 'Social Sciences', and 'Art, Music or Physical Education'. Despite these omissions and aggregations, some of the data could still be compared to that from a different population, such as a different school or a small business.

Consistency

This research project used a pragmatic qualitative triangulated approach to help develop and validate the themes that emerged from the data. In qualitative research, consistency is judged through dependability, which "is concerned with the manner in which the study is conducted" (Pickard, 2013, p. 21).

The document analysis informed the design of the administrator interviews, both of which informed the design of the faculty survey, all of which informed the design of the archivist

interviews. This research project used different populations (administrative staff vs. teaching faculty vs. archivists) and different methods (document analysis vs. interviews vs. survey) over an extended period (17 months).

As a case study, the population sample of the administrator interviews and faculty survey were quite small (13 interviewees and 20 survey participants), but they did represent a relatively significant portion of the whole population (58% of administrators and 44% of teaching faculty), so the sampling size was appropriately representational of the population in question.

As for the archivist interviews, I was only able to do five of them before the global pandemic hit, which was fewer than I had hoped to do. Malterud et al. (2016) spoke of the idea of *information power* as being more indicative of an adequate sample size than *data saturation*, as the latter is very difficult to identify and is often inconsistently applied. The idea behind information power is that, depending on how your study is designed in relation to five different variables, you may have adequate information power with a small sample size, so a larger one would not be necessary. The five variables are **aim** (is your purpose narrow or broad?), **specificity** (are the participants' experiences densely specific to the study aim or sparse?), **theory** (is the study starting from scratch or building on existing theories?), **dialogue** (was the quality of the dialogue of the interviews strong or weak?), and **analysis** (case or cross-case?). For this particular set of interviews, the aim was to explore the situation of school archivists, the participant profile was quite specific (all professionals charged with their independent school archives, despite their differing titles and overall mandates), I was building from both the literature as well as all of the data collected from other methods, the quality of the dialog was very high and the discussions fruitful, and the analysis was used to compliment the data from the case study. As such, I feel that the information power of the archivist interviews was quite high.

It is also important to look at the purpose of the interviews. I was looking to generate data that gave insight into the participants' perceptions and feelings towards their individual realities and experiences within their social context rather than trying to determine the objective facts of the general social conditions that surrounded them (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006, p. 485). "It is in the nature of exploratory studies to indicate rather than conclude. More strictly put, such studies formulate propositions rather than set out to verify them—or, at least, convincingly demonstrate them" (p. 492). Pragmatic research subscribes heavily to this notion of the contingent nature of reality, where every single case (institution, person) is unique and worthy of study (Shusterman, 2010).

All research must be able to be subjected to scrutiny by one's peers. In qualitative research, the specifics of the research methods themselves must be made available for verification. This is referred to as an audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 316–318; Pickard, 2013, p. 21).

The design of this research project was clearly and thoroughly described within the pages of this document. A journal was maintained throughout the research project, and while those entries, interview quotations and free-text survey responses have been reported on in detail, they cannot be shared in their entirety for privacy reasons.

Neutrality

Neutrality is difficult to defend in qualitative research, as researcher independence from their research is impossible, but attempts to prove that any bias is limited is exhibited through external verification—once again, the audit (Pickard, 2013, pp. 7, 22; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 318–319). Pragmatists find strength in drawing on not only their own experiences to support their research but, but also those of others through not only data collection, but also discussion, debate, and collaborative reflection (Earl Rinehart, 2021; Morgan, 2007; Shusterman, 2010). I had frequent discussions with colleagues, friends, and family about my research and my ideas

about the data I collected as I was analysing them. Their comments and questions led to my thinking about things differently than I had been, and helped to open my mind to different perspectives.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

An ethics application was submitted to McGill's Research Ethics Board (REB II) in August 2018 for the document analysis, interviews, and survey. It was approved and was active from October 25, 2018 to October 24, 2021 (including two renewals) (see Appendix A).

Each study participant was assigned a code in lieu of their real names, the key to which was placed in a password-protected document. All qualitative data was added to a password protected NVivo account. All quantitative data was stored and analyzed in password protected spreadsheets.

Individual survey participants were grouped into demographic aggregates so that they could not be identified through their answers. I was also enormously careful never to expose anything that would put any participant in a potentially awkward situation.

For all interview quotes or qualitative survey responses, potentially identifying information about the participants or the people they discussed were omitted. All references to people were made gender neutral, for example, replacing "her" or "his" with "their", and "girls" or "boys" with "students" or "children". If a participant mentioned a specific department or type of record that is only used by a small segment of the population, that information was redacted by replacing the text with something along the lines of [department name] or [specific record type]. In addition, no identifiers were attributed to the interview and survey quotes used in this study. This was because, if multiple quotes attributed to a single participant were examined together, it might be possible for the individual to be identified by their school's management.

4. Results

As this research used a pragmatic, exploratory approach, the data came from several different sources. Each series of results informed the design of the next data collection method and supported each other's findings.

This chapter is organized into four main sections by the data collection methods that were used: **document analysis**, **administrator interviews**, **faculty survey**, and **archivist interviews**. Many excerpts from the interviews have been included in this chapter, perhaps more than required. This was done for four reasons:

1. I feel strongly that they add significant humanity and colour to what could otherwise be quite a dry discussion of business records, and are a real joy to read;
2. I felt that showing multiple quotes from different participants saying similar things really brought the point home that the issues that emerged were experienced by many different people;
3. They are easy to identify through their formatting (indented and single spaced) so would be simple to skip by or just skim if one would like; and
4. I hope that readers will read my participants' words and perhaps, due to their own experiences and insights, draw different or even opposing conclusions to my own that they can think about and share with others.

Please note that as these sections are quite long and detailed, a summary has been included at the end of each.

4.1 Document Analysis

Much can be learned about an organization by the documents that it holds, and equally telling, does not hold. Looking at how this school managed its administrative records offered insight into how both the institution and its staff valued the records they created. Some record types were very highly valued and cared for, such as student and Human Resources (HR) files, but others were sometimes neglected. The shift from paper records towards digital ones was well underway, and while some staff had started to digitize their older paper records, there was still a significant—sometimes stifling—paper presence in the school. As there were very few policies in place as to how to manage records, some had been lost, mostly due to staff turnover or physical renovations of administrative offices.

An important document for guiding a school's records management practices is a records retention schedule. It is a list of all record types created by an organization with instructions on how long to keep each one. In Quebec, all independent schools are supposed to create one, have it approved by their Board of Directors, and then submit it to the Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) [Quebec National Library and Archives] for final approval. Having spoken with staff from other independent schools, I know that the situation at this one was not at all unique, but the last time that it had a retention schedule approved by the BAnQ was in 1990, so it was no longer particularly useful. In 2015, the school hired a company to make a new retention schedule, and it was created, but it was never approved by the board or submitted to the BAnQ so it was not legally binding. It was also very generic and did not take the school's character or values into account, and very few staff members knew about it, so it was not always being followed.

Prior to 2004, the school had a collection of archival material, but no professional archivist, just a few enthusiastic volunteers available only sporadically. In 2003, the school hired a

consultant to review and make a report on the school's archives. The consultant's recommendations were as follows:

- Define clearly for the Archives:
 - An effective and practical reporting structure
 - A long-term plan
- Find appropriate storage space for the Archives and work space for the archivist
- Hire a part-time contract archivist with professional qualifications who will:
 - Establish appropriate policy and procedures
 - Ensure consistency and best practice for the long term
 - Process and make available the current holdings
 - Advise and assist in the preparation of promotional materials on the history of the school as appropriate for:
 - Hard copy materials such as brochures and publications
 - Exhibitions and displays for special events such as Homecoming, Open House, and special fundraising activities
 - Online materials for the school website
 - Ensure that current documentation of school activities is deposited into the Archives. This should include textual documents on paper and in electronic formats, graphic materials such as photographs, audio and video materials, school publications, and artifacts
 - Actively involve the alumni and other groups within the school community to solicit and effectively make use of school historical materials
 - Use school historical materials to carry out the mission and objectives of the school

Soon after, the school did hire a part-time professional archivist, and much work has since been done to arrange and describe the collection, but there is still much more work to do. They have yet to find appropriate storage space for the archives and archivist, and the appraisal of current business records to be deposited in the archive is ad-hoc and limited.

In terms of documented policies and procedures regarding archives and records management, the document analysis turned up a few items. On the former archivist's laptop computer, there were several draft policy documents that included guidelines on appraisal, acquisition, arrangement and description, and access. The section of the policy relating to the school's institutional records reads: "Institutional records will be transferred by arrangement with staff and teachers when they are no longer in use. Only records judged to have an administrative, legal, financial or informational value will be transferred for permanent retention."

These draft documents were created in 2009, but there is no evidence that they were ever approved by the school or shared with staff. In the 2016 school's formal Policy and Procedures manual (the most recent version that I found), there was no significant mention of records management or archives.

In 2010, the Advancement and Communications committee made it one of their formal goals to "rationalize information flow at the school" and itemized four strategies to address that goal: map data flow and recommend improvements; gather, review, ensure compliance with government guidelines; ensure recent records (print & electronic) are preserved, organized, retrievable; and ensure historical records (print & electronic) are preserved and retrievable. In 2011, the Student Records and Archives Coordinator (the part-time archives role had been combined with the role of registrar to make a full-time position. By 2015, all archive-related responsibilities had been stripped from the role completely) compiled a fascinating report that detailed the information flow at the school that included recommendations for staff (which included to maintain lots of backups, aim for consistency between databases, establish a function-based structure on the school's server for files to be saved within rather than on local computers, and create a working group to continue the discussion). In 2014, a strategic plan report recommended the creation of a new position at the school, Information Flow Officer. I found no further references to this position beyond that report, nor any evidence that the information flow report led to any changes at the school.

The only other relevant policy or procedural documents found related specifically to the management of student files. A document from 2005 stated that the permanent record for graduates should include the final government transcript, grade 11 (graduating year) school transcript sheet and activity sheet, English language eligibility certificate, birth certificate, application form, and educational services contract for their final year. All other report cards were to be removed from the file and kept for 5 years "until Head of School has finished writing

recommendation letters.” Then the document reads, “leave all other stuff in file until a decision is made as to what else we need to keep.” The latest policy record that related to student files I could find was from 2016. The items earmarked for permanent retention were: documents related to eligibility, birth certificate, citizenship/residency documents, permanent code, final term report cards for grades 6-11, activities and awards reports for grades 6-11, government transcripts, school final transcripts for grades 9-11, last two education contracts, application form, and the letter of acceptance. No documents of a subjective nature such as letters of recommendation, letters of disciplinary action, correspondence relating to personal issues, or psychological/educational needs testing were to be retained.

Details about the other types of records that the school creates can be found in the functional analysis (see Appendix I), so they will not be repeated here. This section does, however, report on what was observed about three different record formats: **born analog**, **born digital**, and **digitized**, and the records management issues surrounding each of them.

4.1.1 *Born Analog Records*

Paper records were found in just about every department. Some departments, such as finance, admissions, and HR were still using them extensively. Others only held on to older paper files and didn’t generally create new ones as they had made the move to digital. Those older records were kept in filing cabinets or boxes in their offices almost out of habit, never really referred to. In fact, during the global pandemic, many offices had to be moved around to allow for more classroom space and working areas for teaching staff, at which point many of the legacy paper records were either moved, destroyed (after consultation to determine what should be archived), or lost. Storage space was a concern at this school at the best of times, but during renovations or upheaval it quickly became unmanageable.

All the school's vital records (for example, student records, HR dossiers and payroll files) were maintained in paper format, sometimes in combination with digital surrogates for ease of access and for backup purposes. Some other financial records, such as accounts payable, were also in paper format, but the school was exploring their options about possibly moving those over to digital.

The school also held a collection of approximately 175 boxes of archival documents. This included administrative records, examples of student schoolwork, correspondence, ledgers, meeting minutes, yearbooks, publications, photographs, videos, uniforms, and artefacts. The collection was extensive but had gaps. The school attempted to fill in some of these gaps by appealing to alumni for donations, trawling through filing cabinets in administrative offices, and through oral history projects. The most obvious gap was in the photograph collection. The school's archive had thousands of physical photographs going back to the early 20th century until about the year 2000, after which digital cameras began to be used and very few pictures were printed or, unfortunately, preserved at all. These records were stored in locked cabinets in the board room, which was not controlled for temperature or humidity. At the best of times, access was limited as the room was often used by support staff who worked one-on-one with students who have special needs, so the archivist had to schedule time to access the records, or sneak in quickly between appointments to retrieve a box. This situation became worse after the 2020 pandemic when the board room was turned temporarily into an overflow locker room and access to the archive cabinets was completely blocked by lockers. Access became only possible during the summer vacation or, in the case of emergency, at night after the custodial staff moved the lockers. Obviously, no archival processing is possible under these conditions.

There were some spaces in the school where paper records were stored, but they were few and far between. Office space was extremely limited, as the administration team has grown extensively while the school building remained the same size. In 1990, according to the school's

yearbook, there were under ten non-classroom and non-custodial staff at the school, but by 2020, that number had risen to close to 25. The finance department had a locked closet where they kept their semi-active records (1-2 years old) that afterwards were then sent to an off-site storage facility to live out the rest of their lifecycle. HR, payroll, and contract documents were all maintained securely on site for ease of reference. Files for current students were kept on site in locked cabinets, and once a child left or graduated, their files were pared down to only include important documents, such as final report cards, evidence of participation in extracurricular activities, details about leadership roles and awards, and complimentary notes, (extraneous ones, such as medical information and permission forms, were securely disposed of) and were then sent offsite for permanent storage. There was a large storage area off the gymnasium that was originally intended for sports equipment, but that had become a kind of records graveyard: Dozens of boxes had been placed there over the years when people weren't quite sure what to do with them or had delayed processing due to lack of time. Some boxes should have been destroyed ages ago, some needed to be held onto for a few more years, and others were absolute archival treasures. There was no documentation for them however, so nobody was completely aware of what was there.

Missing paper records was an issue that frequently occurred. Paper records were sometimes removed from their proper locations and not returned. Occasionally, administrative records just went missing inexplicably, and as time passed, the chances of them turning up became less and less likely.

4.1.2 *Born Digital Records*

A main takeaway from the document analysis was the difficulty of accessing older digital records. While there had been computers in the school as early as the 1980s, it really began its

digital era in the late 1990s with the hiring of a Director of Information Technology and a Network Administrator. Together, they established a framework for using technology both in the classrooms and for administrative purposes. The school had been saving digital records on local servers until their switch to the Google for Education platform in 2016. At the time of the document analysis, the older servers were still in the school, and while they were a bit unstable and their contents were difficult to access, it was not impossible to do so with IT support. At one point, I had asked for a copy of all the digital files saved by a former Assistant to the Head of School from the server, and IT was thankfully able to download them all onto a hard drive for me, which I then copied onto a secure Google drive for ease of searching and access. These records dated from the mid-1990s to 2016 and covered just about every single school function as everything of importance crosses the Head of School's desk, and their assistants had been very thorough recordkeepers. These were incredibly valuable and informative records: During my time at the school, I regularly received requests from management for information that was found within those files. They also contained some very sensitive information, however, so I was the only person who could access them, but I was able to trawl the records and make copies of documents to be included in a more formal digital archive, some of which could ultimately be disseminated more widely. Some of the older files were a bit complicated to open due to software obsolescence, but I was able to figure out means to do so for most of them.¹⁰

In addition to the legacy file servers was an old email server. Up until 2016, the school used the FirstClass client-server for their emails. During the summer of 2016, the school made the switch to Gmail, and FirstClass was shut down. It was decided for financial and logistical reasons that they would not import the old FirstClass emails into Gmail. For a while, users could

¹⁰ LibreOffice is a free, open-source software that can open many older-format word processing documents and spreadsheets. It's a good place to start.

log into the old system to refer to past emails, but a few years later there arose a technical problem that made it so that users couldn't access FirstClass anymore without speaking with IT—but users mostly didn't even notice, because very few people were referring to their older emails anymore. At the time of the document analysis, the FirstClass server still sat there, waiting for someone to determine how best to archive its contents before it becomes irrevocably obsolete.

The school had an extensive collection of digital photographs, but they only began to be systematically collected around 2015. They had a small selection from around 2000-2015, but only what had been found on scattered CDs, DVDs, on staff members' hard drives, and on old server spaces. The quality of the earlier digital pictures was appallingly low, but in many cases, it was all that they had. After 2015, whenever any new pictures were taken by the communications department, or older digital files were discovered, they were placed in an appropriate folder on the "Media Drive" that had been set up on the school's Google platform. The communications team had recognized the benefit of having a centralized repository for these digital photographs, so nobody has had to chase after them to add the school's photographs and videos to the drive. Occasionally, a call-out had been made to teachers to add their media to the drive as well, but the response to that was mixed at best.

As for the more modern digital records, the school had been using Google for Education for file storage since 2016. Where Team or Shared drives were used systematically and collaboratively, digital files were simple enough to find. Problems started to arise when staff members saved their files on their personal drives and only shared them with colleagues instead of moving them to a shared area. When the colleague who the file was shared with leaves the school's employ, their successor doesn't automatically have access to the previously shared file and isn't always aware of its existence. Another potential pitfall that schools who use Google for Education should be aware of is that if a staff member leaves, the school cannot

simply delete their account or all the files that they had created will disappear from the Google drive.

The school used several different databases, some of which had been around for decades. The advancement database, for example, contained donor data dating back to 1986. It is incredibly valuable to have donor information going back so far, but as the database had been managed by many different individuals over the years without a clear policy on how to structure it, it is very difficult to comparatively analyse the data over time. The database also had space to input supplemental information about donors, but that had not been leveraged as much as it could have been. The advancement team was fully aware of these issues and was working to remedy them by standardizing the data and inputting supplemental information about their donors, especially their alumni.

4.1.3 *Digitized Records*

Several different departments at the school had begun the process of digitizing some of their older records, and those staff were very convinced of the benefits. Usually, the only scanner that a staff member had access to, however, was part of a large multi-function printer/photocopier (MFP). Those could be a bit slow and cumbersome, plus, they were often being used during the day by teaching staff and students, so could not be monopolized for large-scale scanning projects. At my recommendation, the school purchased a small desktop high-speed sheet-feeder scanner for the archives. I was able to scan thousands of pages of historical administrative files at my desk in a fraction of the time that it would have taken to use the MFP. That type of scanner will not work for bound volumes or large paper sizes, but for standard legal and letter-sized documents, they can be very effective.

The school had made great strides in digitizing and indexing large segments of the analog archival collection, including all the yearbooks, alumni newsletters, student publications, over 8,000 photographs, and dozens of video recordings. Prior to this, the archival collection was mainly only used for homecoming events, whereas afterwards, once staff had been informed of the existence of these digitized records, they began to be used to answer informational questions (when did we start the robotics club?), for engaging with alumni and their families (someone passed away, do we have any photographs to send to their family?), for fundraising activities, and to teach the student body about their shared history (this is what the school was like 60 years ago—What was different? What was the same?).

4.1.4 Summary

Schools are mandated by law to retain certain records, such as student files, human resource files, and certain financial and operational records. The risks involved with not keeping those specific records are high, so at the case study school, retention compliance was generally quite good for those. There are, however, many more records created in the running of school, many of which should be retained for informational, financial, legal, or historical reasons. Directives on how to manage all these different record types should be detailed in a records retention schedule, but in the case of this school, it had been last approved by the government close to 30 years earlier, so was no longer relevant.

There had been numerous attempts over the previous 15 years to improve records management at the school, including the hiring of a consultant, then a part-time archivist, and the creation of numerous policy documents and even a new retention schedule (although it was never approved). While there seemed to be interest by the school to improve their records management and archives, none of these policies were ever shared with staff or implemented.

Unsurprisingly, the appraisal, retention, and management of historically significant records at this school had therefore been ad-hoc at best.

Some departments retained some paper files, but most staff had moved on almost entirely to digital records. A very compelling reason for staff to eschew paper records, aside from convenience, is that the school had extremely limited storage space in offices. As most staff had been given very little to no direction on how to manage their work records, and they had very little space in their crowded offices, documents that were considered to be important by individuals were irregularly stashed in random storage spaces around the school, their locations undocumented. This problem was compounded during times of renovations or staff turnover, as decisions had to be made hurriedly and without direction. Despite all of this, the school had a substantial collection of records as part of its historical archive, but they were not stored under ideal conditions, they were difficult (sometimes impossible) to access physically, and holdings began to decrease significantly around the early 2000s, once the school moved to working with more digital records than paper ones. This was especially obvious for photographs, as the first generation of digital pictures were either extremely low quality or had not been retained at all.

Older digital records were not created or maintained in a way that encouraged retention, and as such were very difficult to access. Fortunately, the IT department had the forethought to hold onto several disused servers, so some important records were able to be extracted. Once it was discovered that I had access to them, many requests were made by management for information from these records. Due to the sensitive nature of the files, they couldn't be openly shared with anyone, but I was able to fulfil requests for individual files on demand.

In 2016 the school started a relationship with Google and switched their email and file storage over to their cloud service. The school did not systematically migrate any of the files or emails from the old servers to Google, and it is interesting to note that after a few months with

the new service, staff stopped referring to their old email accounts to see previous correspondence almost entirely.

How staff used the Google drive storage really depended on the individual person or department. Some departments had shared drives that got used consistently by all department members, and others preferred to individually share files with colleagues from their own personal drives. The school did not mandate how people should save their files, so it was a bit of a wild west. Thankfully, the communications department had established a centralized location for saving digital photographs, and having that dedicated, established infrastructure (even if it's as simple as a folder on a shared drive) made all the difference in how well these photographs were being retained. Between 2000 and 2015, there was a huge dearth of photographs in the archive, but from 2016 onward, the number of photographs retained by the school exploded.

There were a few databases used throughout the school, mainly by finance, communications, admissions, the registrar, and advancement. The school paid exorbitant amounts of money for these systems, and they were very powerful, but they were not used nearly as effectively as they could have been. They were not configured efficiently and most of the staff that worked with them had a very limited knowledge of what they could do and how to use them.

Since the move to digital, some staff had begun digitizing some of their paper records to free up office space and/or to improve access. A deterrent to doing so, however, was that the only scanners available to staff were large multi-function printers/photocopiers that were located around the school. These machines created good quality scans, but they were slow, not close to the offices, and were often being used by teachers.

The archive had begun digitizing its holdings, mostly photographs and publications. They were often requested by school staff for information, engagement, and marketing.

4.2 Administrator Interviews

So, looking at, you know, areas of knowledge, looking at levels of privacy, looking at levels of access, looking at standardization of knowledge classification of knowledge, institutional memory, procedural...like there's so many areas that kind of individually need attention such that collectively it needs to be looked at. **So that's going to be a really juicy PhD.** [laughs]¹¹

Thirteen administrators agreed to be interviewed. The purpose of the administrator interviews was to discover more information about the work that they do, their records management and sharing practices, and their thoughts about their school to inform the creation of the functional analysis (see Appendix I).

The interviews were semi-structured, and were organized around three major themes:

1. **Records and information**
2. **Administrators' role**
3. **The school**

4.2.1 *Records and Information*

Not all information that travels around a school becomes a record. And those records that do get created are often managed in such a way so that they are not easily shared or preserved. The two main themes that emerged from this portion of the interviews were:

- **Records and information management**
- **Records and information sharing**

4.2.1.1 **Records and Information Management**

Each participant created different types of records during their work, and they were described to me in detail. Most of them have been included in the functional analysis (see

¹¹ No identifiers were attributed to the participants' quotes used in this study. This was because if multiple quotes attributed to a single participant were examined together, it might be possible for the individual to be identified by their school's management.

Appendix I), so they will not be listed here. The participants also however discussed some of the issues that they face surrounding the management of their records.

Participants differentiated between physical paper records and digital files. There were complaints about there being too many paper files, and the difficulties that they had in storing them due to a lack of physical space.

[Those files are stored] in [colleague's] office. Not because they need to be in [colleague's] office, but **because there is nowhere else to house them.**

Older records. I cannot get them off of the computer. **We'd have to go physically to the files.**

Some participants inherited paper files from their predecessors, and none of them were terribly enthusiastic about them.

I think that my predecessor kept a lot of stuff, like, that I don't think I need...I went through a lot of their files and, like, there was drawers of printouts of emails. From, like, five years ago. [laughs] Okay now. Ugh, so, **I've definitely downsized.** Uhm, without getting rid of anything critical, obviously.

And then **I've started to go more towards paperless.** So like before, they used to print out—basically every report was in a binder.

If paper records aren't actively managed and retention schedules followed, it was noted that things could get out of control. One participant offered a particularly apt description of how opening the storeroom door that holds the paper records made them feel:

Because that was like, let's compare that to someone who hoards. You open the door of the closet and go, **ugh, not today.**

Making the move from analog to digital recordkeeping came up in several interviews. Some participants expressed that they were far more comfortable with paper than digital, but most of them recognized the benefits of digital and were, at least conceptually, open to change.

So that was a change that I made coming in, because **before that was all only managed on paper.**

I'm a pen-and-paper person, so I have—I keep like a notebook of you know notes on that. Some things that require more time and follow-up ... I have a like a folder in—I'm **learning to use Google Drive** and then I have a folder in there.

Some people were sometimes concerned about what they could and could not be digitizing, or what they should and should not be printing for preservation purposes. They mentioned certain benefits of digitizing, including improved access and reducing physical storage needs.

I just wish we could digitize more of the things we do that's not on the computer.

If it was digitized it would be easy to look up...**I think that would be easier to find.**

The other thing they're doing which is helping is **they're actually scanning all their documents**...Everything's kept either now it's being kept scanned or it's being kept in their paper files so we have access to their paper files. As we go we'll pull it out, make a copy or scan, we can now just print out of the database and send things off.

Every single file should be scanned and uploaded so that it doesn't just exist in paper, which right now is the case. We haven't been able to back index...A great job for a summer archiving student would be to go and make sure that all the scans...that would be a great summer archiving job.

I want to free up this [points to filing cabinets] as much as I can, so **I try to scan, scan, scan as much as I can.**

In 2016, the school collaborated with Google and now uses the Google for Education suite extensively for email, digital file storage (Google Drive), and Google applications (Docs, Sheets, Slides, Classroom, etc). Interview participants discussed where they stored their digital files. Some mentioned saving them on their local computers or external storage devices, some on their individual Google Drives within the school's infrastructure, some on Team Google Drives, and some just left them within their emails.

I'd like to have both copies so I would have a Google spreadsheet that if I need to share it or something with somebody, but I would also have a [Excel file]...I would save it at the end of each year to have just...**in case something was to happen to Google.**

I have still all those emails, they're not in a proper Word doc, uhm, or a Google. **They're not anywhere.** They're in those emails, but in one email chain that I have, and then I just forward them to [colleague] as I receive them so that they can then get the info.

Before we moved to Google **it was a folder on my laptop** kind of thing with documents and videos and whatever. Since we've moved to Google...I have, though, like year by year.

[After being asked if their work files are saved on their computer's hard drive] Yeah, yeah...Well, I have a USB key too. Yeah, and I have a laptop, I have this. And **they're in three different places.**

One participant mentioned that, since the move to Google, that they don't worry about the quantity of files that they save anymore. There is no motivation for them to erase files.

I don't like deleting stuff, especially, like, I don't have storage limits [on Google Drive]. So why bother deleting, right? It's there if I if I ever need it, and it's happened occasionally, some random thing, I've gone in the past and looked for it.

Participants had different methods of organizing and finding their digital files. Some people created highly structured file folders to stay organized, and others just kept them loose within the cloud, using Google Drive's search function to find them when required. All participants were enthusiastic about keyword searching, but some risks that are inherent in depending on that type of file management also came up.

Inside my Google Drive, I have a few folders, otherwise it's just kind of there. **But I always find it**—you do a search for it and you find it.

That's **scattered on the Google Drive**, at least the past two years. But once again, it's disorganised. So I don't know when the Team Drive was created. I think that was [former colleague], who created that last year...clearly they went and found some from previous years and put them in there but some also are like they're just random folders of [files] and my default actually, as **I just search in the Google Drive search bar** because there are many more sort of repositories of these things than I'm aware of and **funny things will be in funny places.**

Some people chose not to save files at all, and if they needed to retrieve something that they had received via email in the past, they would find it within their Gmail—again, using the search function.

[About searching for older files within email] Yeah, because you can look up the email address that it was sent from in the current year and go from there...or a keyword. **I find that it's difficult to search for keywords on the [old] server.** It wasn't easy.

I have a very similar system with my mail, where as you can see, **I have a gazillion different labels.** So I label things and then like, I have a folder...Because before what I used to do is I used to like, save the PDF, add it, but **that takes too much time and it's, whatever, redundant...** You come here, you put in the [keyword], you get all the emails that go with that.

I usually search for those documents on my Google email, **because it's keyword based.** But I tend to, I'm, I'm kind of a neat freak. So I have everything in folders [on my local computer] and what particular year here and title so I need to sort everything out.

Finding digital files that had been created by predecessors was sometimes problematic for the interview participants.

[Discussing orphaned Google Drive files of former staff members] That does create a kind of a web of documents where **there is no one place where you can stand to point to all the documents,** like they all could be hidden around corners, and you don't really have any one place to stand and say I know where all the documents are. They're...they're all over the place. So any search from any one area **may not lead you to everything...**We are ending up with critical documents **stuck in people's accounts.**

One participant told a story about an embarrassing measure that they had to resort to in order to find some digital information from a predecessor that was only one year old: As they were not able to find a particular record that their department had created, they were forced to contact one of their vendors to see if they had retained the copy that they had been sent the previous year.

There was very little from [predecessor]. **Their files are nowhere.** When I came on board, I got access to the Google Drive that [different predecessor] had created...they saved a lot of the [department files]. But I also didn't get their personal files. So this year was a lot of creating, recreating the wheel. Thankfully, [colleague] was here last year, so

they had some of the old files... But even then we had to go back to [external contact] and say, **can you send us what we sent you last year so we can see what we did?** And let us know what we've done with you in the past? I was also given boxes of paper archives from [predecessor]. But those were not very useful...there was very little.

An important issue that came up was security, and the need to protect confidential information.

There's information that needs to stay within [department] that should not be accessible outside of [department]. Right. And I can't put that on comments on [database] **because anyone who uses [database] could see it.**

Now I'm getting them to save it on the shared drive...**Because if it goes to paper, it can go anywhere after that,** it can get lost, and someone can pick it up and see [confidential information].

What I found at [other school] when I first started is **a lot of people had their side drawer full of stuff** and that's really unfair because if they don't lock their desk...So that that's what worries me a little bit and that's why like I come back and I triple check...I always make sure that's locked because **that would really to me be devastating**...you lose your credibility.

This need for privacy was weighed against the idea of needing to ensure that records are complete and un-redacted so that they can be effective and accurate representations of what they are documenting.

Like, it was a big debate for a while...when we're discussing student concerns that we write them down in the [meeting] notes. And I'm like, yeah, some people are absent. Some people have poor memory, some people need to refer back. You could put like, abbreviations instead of putting the full name... but **you have to leave traces of what was discussed to do follow up, to have accountability** and all that...I'm just like, it doesn't make sense to me to not write anything. And then like, one of the arguments was like, oh, well, the teachers might find it. Well fuck that, **fucking learn to put a password on your laptop.** And don't leave your laptop laying around. Like because some people might forget. We're gonna not have that and then like, fuck up our whole system?

One participant described the struggle that they had with one particularly sensitive series of files, and the solution that they ultimately settled on.

First I [wasn't allowed to] see a file and then, okay, you can see it if you stay in here. And then it was okay, you can take it out. And then it's okay, you can make a photocopy...but **it took time because they're very protective** and what's in it is confidential, and I don't blame them. So, it got to the point that I decided what I would do is I would create my own files.

A significant amount of valuable information is not stored in any record, belonging only in people's heads. This might work for a while, so long as the keeper of the knowledge is available and still working for the organization. Far too often, however, this situation is only addressed once the person is gone, and by then it is too late. Some interview participants had experienced this issue when they had started working for the school and realized that there were important gaps in the institutional memory. They began trying to remedy the situation going forward but realized that it is not always easy to do so.

It's just there's a lot of institutional memory that's not tracked. And so **when that individual leaves, that information leaves with them**. I think that's a big one—lack of procedural information, procedural documentation. I'm trying to make a dent in that by producing at least some [department]-related procedural documentation... So, me **trying to pull all that information off [colleague's] brain was painful**, and I've tried where possible, like nuggets.

A more experienced employee mentioned how they were trying to mitigate the risk involved in having institutional information only in their heads:

So what I'm trying to do is not have everything in here [tapping head]...if I get blown up or the computer dies or explodes or whatever, that's what [colleague] is doing, and they're very quick, like the youngins there. They're very good with the spreadsheets and whatever...So right now, if you wanted an updated list, they would have it as quickly as I would have it, so it's quite good.

4.2.1.2 Records and Information Sharing

There are very few school functions that are managed solely from within a single department. Staff work together, and as such, are expected to share records and information

with each other. Yet they operate mostly independently, well-ensconced within their respective silos, occasionally emerging to quickly collaborate. The records and information that are shared tend to be ad-hoc, discrete and situational. This causes problems with interoperability and reliability—especially when there is staff turnover.

So yeah, so, like, domains of knowledge. I think it's probably a theme you're seeing here in terms of who has access to what knowledge, and what is transparent and what is not, and what is shared and what is not. **And I don't know that anyone's ever looked at that strategically.**

I'd want to have an infrastructure, like **a consistent infrastructure...to support the whole school** would be something that I would want to do long term.

The use of databases throughout the school to harness information is very much appreciated by the staff. Prior to these databases, a lot of information was maintained in spreadsheets, and that brought in issues of versioning control and data integrity.

Well having [database] come in and now it's easy—easily pull that info. It's fabulous! **So that has saved so many hours of work.**

Sometimes these databases, however, don't offer all the functionality that is required—or at least they have not been configured to do so. This can lead to hybrid recordkeeping and duplicate sources of information. There was one database mentioned specifically that was used by all departments, but some participants felt as though it was not being leveraged to its fullest extent. This was attributed to a lack of training, a lack of understanding of what the software had to offer, and a lack of time and motivation to configure it more thoroughly. Everyone has their hands full, and nobody has claimed ownership of the database. They just use it to do their jobs as they were told to do, but don't have the time or the mandate to do more with it. IT staff has dozens of systems to manage, both software and hardware, and have no time to determine the informational requirements of each department to properly configure their databases.

We keep a variety of informal records to compensate for some of the features that [database] doesn't have...we tend to track that more manually because it's not easy to get reports out of [database] that really show the picture properly.

I feel like we're not using [software] as much as we could, because there's a lot of modules that the school is paying for that is not being utilized...there's just nobody to really man them, which is unfortunate, like, **nobody is just finding the time to put that in.**

[Software] isn't set up for a school, it's really set up for a small business...So you kinda have to do it yourself on an Excel spreadsheet...**It's just easier through Excel,** it's more dynamic.

The school uses several different databases, and many participants bemoaned the fact that they are not consistently used or adequately linked, so when information is changed in one place, it can lead to conflicting information, and an uncertainty as to which system is authoritative.

They're not linked. [laughs] Yeah, so every time there's a change of [information], I need to change it in both databases...plus let [the other departments] know. [laughs]

So, each person that comes in kind of uses their own system. So you've got **systems layered on systems layered on systems** that change from person to person. And so the end result is that **you spend a lot of time looking up information** that should be, you know, at your fingertips.

Google for Education has made sharing and collaboration much more streamlined than was possible in a non-cloud environment, and most of the administrative staff are very enthusiastic about it, especially the collaborative editing feature.

Because you can just bring anything like any other spreadsheet, you just drop it into there, boom, and it's live. And you can share and edit with other people, and it's so, like, saving attachments is so, [makes negative noise]. [laughs] It's just, **it's just easy, it's just there, it's always up-to-date,** you can see all the updates that have been done, who modified what, I'm like, yay!

I use Google Drive **mainly to share things** with other groups.

Despite the acknowledged benefits, some staff are still hesitant to embrace the new technologies—often due to a lack of confidence.

It eludes me, this Google.

It was mentioned a few times, however, that it is very difficult to share files if staff members aren't putting them somewhere where they can be easily found by colleagues. There are Google Team drives, which do get used, but not always as consistently as one would hope, sometimes due to lack of consistent policy, and sometimes due to technical limitations.

[When asked about how a type of record is archived] Not at all in a cohesive way...**There's nothing that's been kind of mandated as let's do it this way...**I think that's like a general issue, uhm, here, is that a lot of that stuff is just kind of kept. Whatever I'm doing, it's kept with me, kind of thing. So there isn't anything that is really shared. I mean, I know some departments have certain things that are shared...I know I can access it if it's kept up to date and whatever, but there isn't any kind of system in place for [a type of record] in that way.

Everybody maintains their own system of organisation, and this is one thing that we've been talking about is that **we need to standardise the system of organisation** and we need to decide what's shared and what we maintain individually. And frankly, I'm more and more of the opinion that we need to maintain very little individually and most of it, like sure, maybe your drafts, but almost everything needs to be in a shared system so that we can access it if somebody gets hit by a bus or somebody quits or somebody goes on maternity leave it all needs to be there.

But we're up against technical limitations too, because we're using the Team Drives where permissions are set for the entire drive. **People want things more nuanced than that.** So there are good reasons for wanting to share folders out of their own [Google] accounts.

[About sharing files in a Google Team Drive] You can't share a folder. Don't ask me why, the settings are such and I asked IT about this because I said I wanted to share a whole folder. **You can't do that.**

We have [a Team] drive. Yes. **Which is underutilised...** a lot of the work that is shared between the departments doesn't actually end up there. I think **it stays in our individual Google drives...**We aren't copying and backing up. ...We flagged a couple things that we need to be making sure are on there and are consistently updated and doing that, but it's a little bit of running around like chickens with our heads cut off this year...**It's been a little messy.**

In an ideal world, what I had wanted to do two years ago, which never actually happened, was **I wanted to have like a big Google Drive where everyone has access to put things on** and you could just tweak the privacy settings...But that never happened.

The question of responsibility over the creation and management of specific records also arose. One very good example was meeting minutes—not very many people enjoy taking meeting minutes, but it was acknowledged that it was important to do, so someone should be designated as the official note taker and their notes should be made available to the group. However, when someone simply falls into the role by default and an expectation is established that they will continue to be responsible for this task, it can lead to resentment. Documentation is important, and it should be treated as an official task that is someone's job, not as a favour. This ad-hoc situation leads to meeting notes not being properly shared, or not being taken at all.

Meeting notes I share with everyone. But it's kind of like, I started sharing it, but **now the expectation is there**. That's what I find annoying because sometimes I'm not there at a meeting or whatever. Like, **I'm not the official notetaker for meeting minutes**. Like I just happened to share, which I don't mind when I'm there. But then sometimes I literally have people, are you going to be there? Because I won't be there. Like it's like, you know, **back off**.

4.2.2 Administrators' Role

Each person interviewed had a different role to play within the school. Asking each person about what they did day-to-day not only facilitated the creation of the school's functional analysis, but also opened the door to further questions. Some of the sub-themes that emerged from this area were:

- **Shifting job responsibilities**
- **Policies and procedures**
- **Support and training**
- **Relationships**
- **Pride**

4.2.2.1 Shifting Job Responsibilities

Of the 13 participants interviewed, 5 had been at the school two years or less, and 8 for longer. Of those 8, 7 had had their roles change at least once. Some shifts were overt, moving from one department to another (sometimes multiple times over the years), and some were more subtle, remaining in the same general discipline, but with the scope of their responsibilities growing and changing.

Uhm, well **it's been like a morphing** of this role...the role has kind of changed.

Well, it's, it's the same role, but it like as everyone else here knows, it evolves and changes and morphs. Right? So there's some basics that are the same and **everything else has changed**.

So I've been working...so **it's been changing every year**.

Since independent schools tend to be small, staff members are sometimes asked to take on new roles and responsibilities—often in addition to their current tasks. To justify the tuition fees that they charge, independent schools are also expected to be at the vanguard of new innovations—be they in student support, technology, curriculum, communications, etc., so even when a staff member remains in the same role for years, that role itself will change and adapt to the times, and the staff member must adapt alongside it. In fact, they are often the ones expected to do the innovating, which can be both frustrating and empowering.

So, these are the things that sometimes when you need people to do something maybe beyond their regular role. That's the give and take I was talking about...because **the school gives a lot but in return, we, from a time perspective, we could ask a lot**. Not all the time, but when we need you, we really need you.

It's really a big kind of area, uhm, **it's very broad. Which allows for flexibility too**. So that's good.

Independent schools seem to expect their staff to go above and beyond, and as such, good, dedicated staff are recognized as having enormous value to the organization. People who fit

well into an independent school environment are difficult to find, so once they are within the school, if the fit with their current role isn't working, they're often encouraged to stay on, but in a different capacity.

It's very hard to find someone to come to the school that is sympathetic and values the school...And it also is hard to find people that respects a school like [this school], it's an old school...A lot of people would say, well, I worked in corporate, and corporate's better than this.

And it basically speaks to the fact that not only do you need the right people on the bus, but they need to be on the right seat on the bus, because we've had people again, past life, that they just stunk at what they were doing, they were just awful. But they were a great fit, **they got the Harry Potter schools**, they were so dedicated. And then they moved to another seat? Stars...It's smaller here, so you wouldn't have as much opportunity. But I think people do like to move around and they look, do you know, there's a little bit of room for promotion? So why not look internally first?

I did that for three years and then **I voiced that I was ready to move on** [laugh] because it was not enough for me to do...I'm definitely always looking for opportunities to take on more. Yeah. To challenge myself.

However, not everyone feels comfortable speaking up to ask for a change in role, even if it is desired.

Well, I mean my degree is in [different discipline]. So, there's an aspect of [that discipline] in our office which I currently do not do...That's all handled by [colleague]. So, **I think there could be a little bit of a change in the role...**

Frequent changing of roles, having a certain amount of flexibility over one's tasks, and taking on extra work all seem to be common themes. It also means that most employees have hands-on experience outside of their own departments, which can be incredibly valuable. Having knowledge of what other colleagues are doing, the tasks that other departments are managing, and seeing where they as individuals can help the school to operate more efficiently seems to make for empowered, engaged employees. However, participants expressed frustration and anger when they were kept out of decision-making processes, change was

imposed on them, when the distinction between roles and responsibilities became muddled, or when they weren't kept in the loop.

It's challenging because there's definitely mandate and role confusion because **those lines aren't clearly established**.

It's a lack of information. And then because roles have been redistributed so frequently and people have kind of swooped in to wear a hat that wasn't properly theirs to wear. But **nobody ever really recognised that it wasn't theirs to wear**, so there wasn't like a flag with it. It's just disorganisation, really things are scattershot.

It's done a little bit more hodgepodge. So, you know, **there's frustration sort of throughout who does what** and who's on first and because little bits of it have always been done by other people.

There's no protocol, **there's nothing written anywhere**, it leads to confusion, it leads to disagreements among staff members...Recently, an issue came up because it was never written...How the information is disseminated, who's in charge of it, stuff like that. And just like **that whole clusterfuck** that recently emerged...because nothing was written down, the information wasn't written down. There are verbal agreements, but like, you know, it's not written down. People who are supposed to do follow ups don't, and it's not malicious, right? Like it's just they forgot, or don't have the time...I get how things get lost in that sense, but then, like, **it leads to all these troubles**.

4.2.2.2 Policies and Procedures

Many of the struggles that interview participants cited related to a lack of established policy and procedures. With independent schools being as small as they are, and with staff members' constantly shifting roles, it can sometimes be difficult to be clear on what everyone's responsibilities are, and how best to fulfil them. This is especially difficult for new staff members unless there is a continuity plan in place to guide them. If those aren't established, staff are having to repeatedly reinvent the wheel, which is not only incredibly inefficient, but also unnecessarily frustrating.

Nothing has been kind of organized in terms of what we should be using...**It's all very loosey-goosey**... there hasn't been a, not a forced, but a set system of this is how we do it.

Yeah, it was super messy. Very, very, very messy. So I've put order in it and ... there'd be a ton of information and you don't know what year it pertains to...No, no, **it was a it was a nightmare to figure out.** Yeah.

I think what's happened is that there has been...transition. Like, just, it's nobody's fault, it's just what happens [laughs]... **If there were more stability and, like, policies and processes** and then we know everybody knows year after year, it's a little bit more, like, now, we can prepare more.

I don't even know where some of [the files] are coming from or who archives them...**I'm not really sure where all these things are coming from.**

A lot of what I do, **there's no formal process or protocol** for you know... part of the reason nothing has ever been, no protocols been set into place, is because the turnover.

One participant mentioned about how the workflows that they had developed within their department could be helpful throughout the entire school, as they were aware that although the system that they were working with was regularly used by multiple departments, there had been no wider discussion on how it could be standardized amongst them.

I just came up with that, and we use that within [our department], it hasn't been generalized. There's no sort of manual. I mean, **because something like that should be used consistently** across...should it be in a master document? Absolutely...You know because when you just have one individual doing it one way and you get another individual who's doing it another way and then another individual comes in and does it another way, you end up with chaos.

That participant also brought up another very good point—that there is no sense in creating new systems if they aren't used and maintained.

But the challenge is that once I leave, if those systems aren't maintained, they fall flat again. Right? So **they have to be sustained at a higher level to ensure that they exist in perpetuity.** Otherwise, yes, they're created. But then if they're not used, and it doesn't take long for a system to become obsolete because if it's not updated within weeks—in some cases days—it becomes obsolete.

A lack of clear procedures can be overwhelming for new staff. In small independent schools, departments are often comprised of very few people, and sometimes people even work alone.

When that is the case, and there is no colleague to guide them through the processes, written procedures are incredibly helpful. The creation of these documents, however, are often seen as extraneous to one's actual job, as their benefit is most felt by one's successor. They're a nice thing to do perhaps if there's time, but there's never time.

I very quickly realised that there was very little to step into, very little onboarding. And so I said, okay, well, this is going to be my goal this year, **we're going to document everything...** We're going to do that. And I haven't done even what I set out to do. You know, I've created these beautiful sheets that haven't been touched since October. And that's just a time issue. Because, well, on one hand, **a school is a very busy place and a lot is happening. So there are always going to be things thrown at you. But the other side of it is the fact that there wasn't already documentation.**

In consideration of staff members' lack of time, in addition to specific workflows to streamline their processes, it was expressed that there should be an overarching macro-level strategy in place to guide priorities—clear guidelines as to what should be done **now**, and what needs to be focused on since there is never enough time to do it all.

I think part of part of strategy is priorities right? And seeing **what's actually serving the school right now**. What do the parents actually need right now? And where do we have to say, this is nice, and it's nice that we've done it, but it needs to be tabled until everything else calms down or we can bring in another person or whatever that means.

I think we're just at the stage now to try and implement them. Because unfortunately, everybody's so busy. And it's not uncommon. It's not unique to the school, **these things seem to fall to the bottom of the plate because everything else is on fire**. If I can say, you know, it's urgent, it's critical, it has to be done. And this is something that okay, when everything else is fixed, we'll move on. But the interesting thing is, **if we'd dealt with this first, some of the things you're fixing wouldn't even have to go there.**

There were some good examples of success stories, in which clear policy and established infrastructure made work more efficient.

That's pretty well organised and structured, because [IT] has always maintained a [Team Drive]...I don't know who maintained it before, but **it's been well maintained**. When [consultant] comes in, they send [their files], [colleague] takes care of that now they go straight on there... So [those files] **are one thing that are easy to find**.

And you know **it certainly has improved processes and whatnot having an infrastructure** [laughs]. Having document indexing kind of helps!

It was interesting to note that you can also have too many policies. One of the benefits of a small independent school is that there is significant flexibility, and you do get to adapt and change quickly since you aren't beholden to a school board. It's like steering a small boat versus a large cruise ship. Policies can be created and adapted as the situation warrants, and that can be a very good thing.

I'm not a huge proponent of policy because I worked at [other school], which was a unionised environment and that environment, there's just way too many rules. **What I like about these independent schools is that you don't have to have rules.**

It was mentioned that it is important to question existing policies and procedures, ask why they are there, and not be afraid to make changes if changes are warranted. That can sometimes be difficult, especially in an institution that has been around for a very long time.

I've overheard other people say that I've been doing this for the past 15 years. **I don't want to change it.** And change is always good. I mean, for the better, if it makes things easier.

Things need to change a little bit. But I think we're so steeped in tradition, tradition, that it's not always easy to do.

I think I feel sometimes we are too steeped in the traditions of the school that don't permit us to go to the places we need to get to in terms of improving the school, and I think that we need to question everything. We're teaching critical thinking skills. **We need to question why we do the things we do, and what things could we do better?**

4.2.2.3 Support and Training

The combination of small departments and lack of time means that many new staff members are left to fend for themselves. Because people hired are generally extremely capable, they

have managed to muddle through—often without management even being made aware of the struggles that they faced in trying to establish themselves.

I think **people just sort of figure it out on their own** and we shouldn't be doing that.

There's no specific protocols in place. So a lot of it is just learning on the spot, **learning through mistakes**.

Yeah, it was just more not having anyone...to actually like, touch base with on what was structured and how things are structured and how things were done in the past, was more figuring out how to kind of do everything and **basically reinventing the wheel**.

I kind of did it that way simply **because there was nothing in place**.

There were suggestions to help newcomers to better integrate themselves into the school environment, including a mentoring program that encouraged the development of informal relationships between staff.

So, you know, the idea of having someone, a buddy, that's one thing, but also mentoring ... **who you can go to and ask your stupid questions to**, because we all have questions. They're not really stupid, but to us, they may be stupid, so **we don't want to ask them**.

We used to have a mentor program when I first started, I was assigned a mentor...it was somebody I could go to if I had questions that I didn't feel comfortable going to my director about, **or you just need to talk to somebody**. There was a mentor. And we don't have that anymore...I think it's important for new people coming into this school. It makes you feel more part of the family because the school environment is a family environment. It's not like working in an office...**I think there should be more support and everyone's door is closed...**

Training on specific technologies was noted as sometimes lacking. Even though it was acknowledged that the IT department makes staff aware of various training opportunities, and that HR actively encourages staff to participate in professional development activities, training is not always prioritized. If a staff member is already overwhelmed with the amount of work that they have, they will not necessarily carve out time for themselves to participate in training. This

might be short-term thinking, but it's the reality, and without training being not just encouraged, but mandated by management, it will continue to be the case.

I have a hard time creating reports in [software]. It's not as intuitive to use as other systems... But then again, I haven't spent a lot of time on it. **I haven't had the time to spend a lot of time on it.** So, the other thing is that the training... is that there was no training... There was no space given to training which I think is kind of important, because if you want employees to use a tool well, you need to set aside time for them to actually get training on that tool. There are probably little manuals within [software], but you know, **when you're in a rush and you're trying to just keep the boat afloat, you're not spending hours at a time focusing on training.**

[Talking about a specific training] And occasionally in the short term, it might be a bit of extra work, but like, long term, **it pays off for everyone.**

One participant discussed the fact that the limited training that they had received was through a colleague, and mentioned the problems inherent with that type of informal technical support:

To be fair, there was shadowing. I did a lot of shadowing, and it was... So you're learning through somebody else, but if that other person isn't comfortable with technology **you're not getting the full picture...**

For non-technical matters, however, experienced colleagues were identified as a great source of information and guidance. This type of tacit knowledge is very difficult to capture, however.

It's really nice to have [colleague] right there because they have by far the most institutional knowledge in the room because they've been here a long time... They know everybody. So that's a real benefit to be able to just turn around and say, who's this person? Or what's this event? Or what's been done with this in the past? **And they know.** So, for me personally, getting up to speed this year, sharing an office with them has been invaluable.

4.2.2.4 Relationships

People do not work in a vacuum; they communicate regularly with others. How they interact with other people—and how they feel about these interactions—could affect how effectively information is shared between them.

In the interviews, it came up quite often that interactions with colleagues from outside of their own departments was quite limited. Some of the effects of this distance were mentioned—a lack of communication, and a lack of cooperation. This sometimes led to feelings of isolation.

I think a lot of **people do things in their own fiefdom**... I have no idea what goes on in [a part of the school]. That's probably not a good thing because it may be very different than what's going on in [another part of the school], and they talk, and they should talk...So when things come up and there's maybe small issues, **we deal with them then before they get bigger**...

But like, honestly, I don't like this. But there's always been a split between [two different parts of the school]. **We don't fit as puzzle pieces in the way that I think we should.** We should...There's a lot of things that should be aligned and that are not aligned.

I'm alone. So, I probably could use some help from the people across the hall.

One participant mentioned that there was a very distinct split between the administration and the faculty, and that sometimes that separation leads to impatience and outbursts.

I feel we're all separated...There is a degree of two-tier, like support staff and teachers. Some teachers feel that way, you're support staff and...but I don't have any problem with anybody. Then just, you know, **somebody yells at you**...

Another participant didn't seem to mind being left alone at all.

If you don't hear from anybody, that means that you're doing your job well... [laughs] It's when things don't go well then people come and see you. So **I'm kind of being left alone most of the time which is kind of nice.**

There were a few departments that shared a large communal office. There were some mixed feelings about the experience of working in that shared space.

Our office is quite social...So it's one of the good outcomes of lumping us all in the same place... **outside of the office it's more transactional.**

It is fabulous in terms of the ease of collaboration...if everybody's interruptible, we don't have to call a meeting, we can just say, hey, I'm working on this document for you guys. Can you just pop into the Google doc? And then we hash it out verbally and we type it out and things happen very quickly. Yeah, so just for sharing ideas and for quick turnaround on things, it's great. **For noise and focus and staying organised, it's impossible.**

A few participants talked about the importance of developing trust between colleagues—which they found was established mainly through good communication and feedback.

They don't know me as well, but it's trust that's built over time. Right? But the ones who have approached me and seen that I've acted on information they provided now approach me more often **because they know that I'll actually do something about it.** So, you know, it's a building process...Time and just being diligent and doing your work and thanking them for the information.

It can't be from a top-down. So, staff need to see the value of what we're proposing for them, not to tell them to do it because we're telling you to do it, but they do it because it is the best practice... **My job is to establish trust, is to have easy communication, easy understanding.**

In terms of working with colleagues, another issue that arose was a discomfort in proposing any changes to the way that things were done. New staff members were hesitant to upset their more experienced colleagues by suggesting that perhaps there might be room for improvement.

[When asked about whether they had mentioned their idea to a particular colleague] Um, no, no, I didn't. I didn't. Yeah. I didn't feel like yeah, **I didn't feel like they would appreciate me meddling.**

I didn't change that, because **that's one of the things that I was sensitive to when I came in**, because...they had some things set up.

I can't change things too much because certain formats of documents I have inherited...I can't change them myself into a better format that I think it should be. So, I tend to keep them as they are. **But on occasion, I will.**

During the interviews, in addition to one's colleagues, a group of people that was frequently mentioned was the families (parents and students), and how communication with them is vital. Since independent schools are generally small and have the flexibility to be able to pivot, they are expected to be able to react quickly to parent concerns. So, despite not being classroom staff, and not always having a lot of day-to-day contact with the students, maintaining the lines of communication between the administrators and the families was seen to be very important.

We've actually successfully intervened and adjusted whatever situation was less than ideal and you know, or there's infighting in the class with these kids and **it gets addressed and it gets dealt with** and then you know the problem is resolved so to speak. So that definitely happens.

We got to meet with the Parents Association, which was really, really helpful ...it'll inform our strategy for next year but got to just hear from them. A bit of what the last few years looked like from their angle. What was good, what got dropped this year, what they're wishing for...**We don't communicate with our parents enough**. Yeah, so there was I guess a big pullback last year, where some parents were complaining.

I love meeting all the families...I find it challenging and I enjoy working with all the kids ... **it's fun to know every student in the whole building** which is, it's very, I find it gratifying.

Parents always used to come into our office for sometimes questions about other than [my department], **or just to say hello**.

I think that the parents are more involved than I expected...**both the parents' and the students' voice and choice**.

And while the teachers did communicate these things to the parents, **parents don't necessarily always read**. But they just, you know, simply grab the phone and **they find that it's easiest to just call**.

I do also wish we included parents more in the stuff, like not just like have them come volunteer at lunchtime, but like workshops for parents.

When it came to supporting the school's more vulnerable families, the staff spoke of going above and beyond to ensure that they are well cared for. This level of 'high-touch,' as some participants referred to it as, seems to be expected at independent schools. What is very interesting is instead of resenting the increased workload, the administration really seemed to

appreciate that they are given the time and space by management to strengthen these relationships with parents. They are not just clients, they are seen as part of the school's family.

We also try and help them integrate into school. We help teach them about the school, we help teach them about Montreal, we help other families if they really need to... **They were new here and they didn't know what to do, it was scary.** They relied on their kids who then relied on their teachers...I have an app where I connect parents with me and so they can ask me questions...I would try and arrange a meeting if it's something serious, then we'll sit down, and I'll try and explain...Parents are just as important as a student. And **the school goes to great lengths to make sure parents feel like they're part of the school.** It's not just a place where kids go to every single day, it's a place for their kid and for their family. We have a lot of events that are catered to families, and I really enjoy that because that's another way for a student, let's say, whose parents don't speak English or French, for instance, to at least somehow partake, right? **And be there for their child and it makes a big difference.**

The relationship that was the most precious to interview participants seemed to be with the students themselves. Those with close relationships with students really appreciated them, and clearly saw the benefits, both professionally and personally.

And it's been very meaningful for the kids to come to the staff and ask any kind of question, not be afraid to get a no, because **we're there to help them.**

The connection with the kids is really important and they have to understand that they're not being dismissed, that...**whatever struggles they're going through, other people are going through the same struggles,** and I need to be able to understand what's going on and how I can help address that...So that's the purpose. That's what. And **it's also developing a positive relationship with the kids because that's important too.**

You don't have that contact [with students] in bigger schools...having that here, **having the kids come to me directly for whatever they need is really cool.** Like they still know me, and you get to participate in the school life as well which is great. Like I've gone on trips and stuff like that with them, so it's really fun.

It's very few kids that are reluctant or too shy to meet with me. Whereas before they never wanted to meet...never asked for help or support...I've really seen that progress and that makes me really happy. I know a lot of the kids one-on-one.

And a lot of the **students that have graduated here ... love coming back with like, reports of like things that happened** [professionally after graduation] and what they got away with and like it's like, heh heh heh, good! [laughs]

Those without the opportunity to regularly engage with students often expressed a desire to have more contact.

In my role, I can't split my time with anything else. I do, however, volunteer for games and team supervision and whatnot, even though I probably shouldn't be. But I do after my work hours because **I want to be more involved with the kids and kind of not just be there.**

I used to know a lot of the younger students when I worked [in another role]. So, I do miss that angle because the younger kids are so precious. **There's nothing like the feeling of walking down the hallway and a student smiling and saying: Hi, how are you?**

One of the super cool things about this school, **[the students] come up with their own initiatives and they propose them**, and you know, and then we get to kind of talk with the kids who are running these initiatives. But I have very little...much less student contact than I'd like.

4.2.2.5 Pride

Participants were sometimes hesitant to discuss their work proudly, but they were generally happy to brag a bit once they were encouraged to do so. Many of the comments related to creating structure and protocols in their departments where that kind of formality had been lacking.

I can't say I'm super proud of it because it's kind of basic but setting up an indexing system for [our departmental] documents...**taking chaos and trying to make it a little bit more orderly.**

We're trying to develop a more comprehensive risk-management kind of area. So, from protocols that we have, but also **developing more documentation and support.**

You know, we've maintained a [departmental] calendar this year, that is ongoing, and that we can look back at next year and say, what were we doing in March? Okay, that, that, that, that, that. And maintained at least a purchasing spreadsheet, so we can look and say what did we buy last November? Okay, that and it cost that much which we need this November. So, **those two pieces of documentation at least exist now.**

I think a lot of what we've tried to do is **putting sort of a structure in place.**

I like going digital. **I've been trying to go digital.** I have this filing cabinet that whenever I have free time, I try to scan.

I guess starting the programme along with [colleague]. Yeah, it's really helped...It's hard to imagine, but **staff were very stressed when we didn't really have any kind of structure in place**...So by trying to help the kids, as soon as they step foot into the school, to the moment that they leave, we're always there.

One participant's insightful comment really brought to the forefront one of the most important purposes of a school: to have a positive impact on its people, its community.

I'm not proud of anything that's still here because it could all fall apart tomorrow and five years from now everything that's in the school will be ripped out and replaced with something else, so you don't get proud of, like, nuts and bolts that are around in the school. **You be proud of what you did for people in the past, right? That's more concrete in the end.**

4.2.3 The School

The last line of questioning during the administration interviews was about their school. The reason for this inquiry was first to help identify which school functions and values were deemed most important to inform the framework of the functional analysis (see Appendix I). Second, it was to determine the qualities of this specific independent school. These answers were later compared to the answers given by the school's teachers during their survey, as well as the archivists at five other independent schools (who were also asked about their schools during their interviews).

12 different elements emerged from the interviews about how the participants perceive their school. Table 4-1 ranks them by the number of participants that mentioned them during their interview.

Table 4-1*School Elements from Administrator Interviews*

Important school elements	Number of participants
Community	9
Opportunities	8
Teachers	8
Size	7
'High touch'	6
Individuality	6
Academics	4
Leadership	4
Philanthropy	4
History	2
Innovation	2
Scholarships	1

4.2.3.1 Community

The element that came up most frequently was community—the idea that the school is like a family in that it provides a warm and comforting place for their students. That the younger kids look up to the older ones, and that the older ones are protective over the smallest. This came up repeatedly and seemed to elicit the most pride from the administrative staff.

They like the sense of community. They like the low-key, they like the fact that **everyone is approachable that their children are known and loved by all their teachers**...there's just a warmth and family spirit here that I don't think happens at other schools.

The kids know that **we care about them** as a school, not just as the teacher, the individual, or the adults, but that they're cared for by their peers, by their teachers, by the staff. I mean, you look at even, we know our maintenance staff. Our maintenance staff know our kids...It's really everybody knows everybody. [Facilities coordinator] watches the basketball games and **they're, like, their number one fan**.

One of the first things I witnessed my first year was when a senior student, grade eleven, came down into the kindergarten area and brought a kindergarten student to the gym **and they were hand-in-hand**. And it's the connection. It doesn't matter what grade they're in, they are all connected. I think it's a little bit harder, the grade tens and elevens, like you're a senior, but when you witness a senior playing with someone and **the little ones look up to the older ones**, to me that's a real connection.

I think what helps is having a junior school here also. That makes a difference. **The students have really, literally grown up here.** And they see there's a built-in leadership because they're models for the younger kids.

I think it's this personal touch that we give attention to each student that we are involved with. It's not just another job. **We feel like a big family or a team**, so there's no such thing as that's not part of my job, I'm not doing that. It's mostly if I can do it, I'll help you out.

4.2.3.2 Opportunities

The school provides many opportunities for students to explore areas of interest—through clubs, sports, special activities, and even independent projects. Staff recognize the incredible benefits of these opportunities.

We have clubs. We have the sports program. All the arts and we have all our festivals...and the music concert...**All of this grows self-esteem and confidence and leadership and collaboration** and, you know, getting all the kids to get to know each other.

I don't feel like I lead like that: here's a list, get all of this done. It's, okay, Earth Week for example, **that all came from the students.** I didn't have any hand in it other than making sure that communication went out to parents. From the flyer, the proposal, the organization that they chose to support, all the different initiatives, the plans, that was all from the kids. And so it's **creating that opportunity to support them**, but not overpower them.

I think it's just that they take on so much on themselves, that they kind of succeed and **it's not just all about grades, but just kind of developing passions for things.**

Some respondents did say, however, that a certain number of children are perhaps availing themselves of too many opportunities.

I think part of it is just because **we have too much. We do too much.** We need to cut back and just improve the quality of some of the other things that we have... There's too many clubs...Some kids are a part of four or five, six clubs. It's like no, we say no, and we stick to the no, you know? But we don't do it.

We've got some incredible kids here. The stresses that these grade tens and elevens feel is enormous. **The stresses that they're feeling from the school, from their parents, from society. It's not healthy.** It's not healthy. We get a lot of stressed kids in the school.

4.2.3.3 Teachers

The skill and dedication of the school's teachers and their close relationship with the students were seen as a particular strength of this school. This was not limited to just academic excellence—in fact, that was not mentioned nearly as often as was their passion and commitment to the kids.

I think the commitment of the teachers. That's huge for me. Like, **I love the bond that they have with the students.**

What I find special here is that **our teachers are so passionate about their subject areas.** Sometimes I say it's almost to a fault, but they are so driven to—in their field—that they really just strive to just be really good and elevating the level of the students. So then that's like a full circle: The teachers feel that, and then they empower the kids, and then that develops the students in a different way, **to learn from people who are really into what they do.**

We give all the hours of our days to the kids. Teachers come and early in the morning at 7:30 to work with students, they give their recesses, their lunches, after school time to work with the kids.

Teachers are passionate about the clubs that they support...I have been myself to debating clubs and everything, so I think that **once we infuse this passion for it, I think they see it as a positive thing for inspiration.**

4.2.3.4 Size

A major feature of many independent schools is their small school and class sizes. This can lead to more personalized attention, a decreased likelihood for kids to become lost in the shuffle, increased confidence, and a closer sense of community.

Another special part of the school is that we are small, so we do have that ability to know every student in this building, and that every kid has a face and a name that we all know. And so, **in that connection, the more person-to-person connection you have, the more you develop that in somebody.**

I think because of size, **we have a really tight knit community**...I find too, because we're small, we don't have a lot of cliques, compared to other schools, right? ...When they're not in class too, I find the dynamic is different. The kids are friendlier. They're not afraid to ask for help. They're not afraid to talk to strangers. **They're not afraid to ask questions of any kind**, right?...I feel like the kids don't see things like other kids would see in a bigger school, for instance, like they're not inhibited, **they don't feel inhibited.**

Because their classes are small, [teachers] have more of a chance to kind of **work one-on-one with the kids**.

Some participants did mention, however, that there can be drawbacks to small class sizes.

The opposite side is parents will say yeah, but **if they have any social problems, the building's so small**, they have only 40 other kids to rub shoulders with. **What do they do?**

I think a class can be too small. I think if you have five students you're not really having that feeling that, I don't know. **I don't know how to describe it, but I think you need more**. I think there should be a minimum.

4.2.3.5 'High Touch'

The relationships between the school and its families were seen as very important. The idea that these relationships should be actively nurtured throughout the student's time at the school—from before they are admitted to well after graduation—is considered a vital part of what makes this school special. It's the idea of whole-family care, where if a parent or a child needs any kind of support, the school will step up. This relationship was referred to several times during the interviews as 'high touch' due to its personalized nature.

We have to maintain a relationship with the families. **It's too easy to lose them**. And we've worked too hard to get them in.

I have friends who work in public schools, one thing I do know, though, **is how much we care about our students**... There are a lot of students, as we know, who go to public schools because their parents most the time can't afford to send them to private school... So there's that big issue where there's not a lot of caring I find in terms of helping them integrate. So this is all integration. [This school] is wonderful because **I feel we help integrate students into our community, the school community, we try and do it as much as possible. We also do that for their parents**.

4.2.3.6 Individuality

In large schools, students are given many options for activities because the population size is significant. In smaller schools, there may not be as many different options available, but

independent schools tend to have higher resources per capita, and can therefore tailor more individualized programs to cater to a specific child's needs. This can mean academic or psycho-social support for a child who is struggling, an accelerated program for those who could benefit, or a personalized curriculum deep-dive if a student has a particular passion. The smaller class sizes offer teachers the opportunity to focus closely on each student—something that would just not be feasible in a larger school.

I guess, you really try to tailor to the individual student as well. You could say like at a public school...when you have 500 students in a graduating class, you can have a lot more sports teams, you can have a lot more art clubs, right? A lot more things, so there ends up being more variety and more options for this child to find their own way. But they have to select and find their own way themselves. Whereas here, **one of the great benefits of a private school is that a kid who is sort of lost at sea or less inclined to look for those things themselves can be encouraged in that way.** Or teachers and staff can recognise something in a kid that they might not even have figured out themselves and encourage, like, **have you thought about this?**

We do also try to tailor and individualise a lot—I do like that. **We try to take a very, like, whole person approach** I find. We don't always succeed, but we try.

There's even an independent study course that they can take in grade 10 if I'm not mistaken, where they determine what they're going to study, and then they get support, guidance and direction from a chosen teacher to pursue that area of studies. So **it's not an area of study that is offered by the school, it's one that they can select and then move forward with.**

4.2.3.7 Academics

A major motivator for parents to send their children to an independent school is to encourage academic success. This school is one of the top-ranked academically in Quebec, with a six-year average ranking of 20 out of 469 post-secondary institutions (Fraser Institute, 2020). Many parents chose this school for that reason. That said, only four administrators mentioned academics when describing their school. Interview participants acknowledged the importance of academics, and the fact that their students succeed highly in that arena, but that it

is part of a larger picture. It is certainly not the most significant element of their school. To them, their school is about much more than grades.

You're good because we've got good teachers. The kids are learning. They're all prepared by the time they go out to CEGEP¹². It's like, you know, how are you doing in CEGEP? **Are you overwhelmed? Oh god, no. So easy. I mean you've been there and done that.**

The students have a certain ability to approach academic study rigorously and with, you know, sound pedagogical methodology and **know how to navigate an academic context and academic challenges**, but are also confident enough to **put themselves out there and go beyond** just what is required of them by the school.

Two participants were concerned about the academic pressure that their students feel.

I will say though, specifically with independent schools, maybe it's not a good thing, but **kids are way too concerned with marks**. Way too concerned with marks. It's a day-to-day thing for them too. But I feel that though they get stressed sometimes when it comes time to do a test or an exam, for instance, **that kind of motivates them too**.

I had a meeting with the grade 10s last week. Exactly that—**too much homework**, not enough life balance, too many activities...**It's too much**.

4.2.3.8 Leadership

The interview participants were very impressed with how the school encourages their students to become leaders. Every grade 11 student holds a leadership role in the school, but opportunities are made available to even the youngest kids. Each club is headed by students, and many school activities are organized by them. Not only that, but kids are encouraged to come forward with any ideas that they might have to improve their school or their wider community, and staff will do what they can to help facilitate their plans. Imbuing the students

¹² *Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel* (CEGEP) is a post-secondary college, unique to Quebec. Students normally enroll immediately following grade 11 in either a two-year pre-university program or a three-year technical program.

with confidence and hands-on experiences seems to be at the forefront of this school's priorities.

The administrators of the school **believe in the leadership of the older students** and look to them for change and for support of the school. They listen to them. **They take their opinions.**

The school puts its money where its mouth is, and that's something that I find amazing. Like, I've seen this a couple times since I came here, students who have come up with an idea and submitted a proposal...and **I have now heard that this happens as early as Junior School.** They've been told: you have an idea? Great! Write it up as a proposal, so we can all look at it, and then we'll see what we can do with it. So, **they've been told since they were little, like, your ideas matter.** But you have to actually do something. You can't just say you have an idea. We can't do anything with that. So get it down on paper, flesh it out. **And then the school does it.**

4.2.3.9 Philanthropy

Encouraging students to volunteer is probably quite common in most schools, and this one values philanthropy very highly. It is a deeply ingrained part of its history, and many school events are based around fundraising for various charities chosen by the students. Since a good number of kids who attend independent schools come from wealthy families, there can be a sense of entitlement that these children are born into. Being aware of this, the school tries to make their students aware of their privilege and help them to find ways to channel it altruistically.

Sensitizing them to the importance of getting involved in the community. So, the volunteer program does that, where they get kind of credits, points for participating in volunteering efforts and initiatives outside of the school. And so, **you're not only providing them with opportunities and ideas for opportunities, but actively encouraging them. It's not just lip service.**

But what's beautiful too about the school is that **the altruism piece is very real in the way that they interact with the students.** So, they're not going to go out just saying like, I'm entitled to become a CEO and make a bajillion dollars and sit on my money and feel great about myself. They are going to have a sense that **they have a responsibility**—to the greater world, whether that means that they're going to innovate in a way that is going to bring something new that is going to solve a social problem, or whether that simply means that they are going to give back with their time or their

money.

4.2.3.10 History

A school with a long history feels different than a newer school. Knowing that they're a part of a generational family with deep roots in the community could affect how staff and students feel about their school. With this school, history was seen as a defining element by interview participants.

I think every school has a culture. This school has more than a culture, **it has a history and tradition that very, very few schools have...**It's a school that's been going for over 100 years...**You immediately feel that culture the minute you walk in the building.**

4.2.3.11 Innovation

To stay relevant and to attract new applicants, independent schools are expected to be on the vanguard of innovation. Two of this school's staff recognize that, at least, they're trying.

And we've kind of always been, like, dealing with things, coming up with solutions ahead of... **we've developed a reputation of having already dealt with problems that other schools are beginning to face.**

I also like that we try, **we try to keep up with the times.** And I know the irony of that, because I say we're behind, but at least we do have professional development on, like, meditation or wellness or like, use of digital. I do like that. **But it's not everyone.**

4.2.3.12 Scholarships

Independent schools charge sometimes quite high tuition fees. To have a well-rounded, diverse student population, scholarships are an important element to any school. These can be means-based, but can also be targeted to encourage growth in specific segments of the student population—those with a propensity for scholastic aptitude, athletes, artists, entrepreneurs, and kind souls.

We now have a suite of scholarships that are for non-academic purposes. So **it's not just scholarships for being an academic high achiever**, but there are new sports scholarships. There are young entrepreneur scholarships that are going to be launched next year. There's community service scholarships...the **kindness scholarship** in grade four. It's like focusing on the things that go above and beyond just academics.

4.2.4 *Summary*

13 administrative staff agreed to be interviewed. A lack of institutional guidance on how to manage records was seen as a problem by many of the participants. However, it was acknowledged that nobody had the time to develop any. In some cases, information-management policies and procedures had been informally developed within individual departments, but there were concerns that if the person who developed them were to leave, that the systems put into place would quickly fall apart. This had been seen before in the past.

Participants felt that, even though most of the records being created contemporarily were in digital format, there was still too much paper. They complained of a real lack of physical storage space, which contrasted dramatically with the unlimited space that Google provided for their digital files. Some expressed a concern that they didn't know what to do with older or inherited paper files, and while some said that they sent records to the archive when they were no longer useful for their jobs, others destroyed them. Some liked the idea of digitizing, and had begun to do so, but there was some desire for guidance on what they could and could not retain in a purely digital format.

As for born digital files, the staff interviewed used any number of different methods for storing, retrieving, and sharing them, including USB sticks, within emails, locally on computer desktops, individual cloud drives, and shared cloud drives. These inconsistent filing methods often led to trouble finding files that had been created by colleagues or predecessors (and sometimes even themselves!). Google drive spaces were often only shared between people

from the same departments (with some exceptions), so when they collaborated on projects with people from other departments, files were often shared sparingly on an individual basis, so people would not have a complete picture of what the group was doing.

Databases were seen as useful, but participants did not always know how to best use or leverage them. Different departments or even individual staff members would use them in different ways, so information often wouldn't sync up even if they otherwise could have. The Google for Education suite was seen as hugely beneficial, although there was a small handful of participants who resisted using it as they didn't really understand it or know how to use it properly. Staff would usually learn how to use computer systems from their colleagues, but the quality of that training was of course limited by their colleagues' own knowledge, which was often lacking.

Finally, participants spoke at length of the knowledge that could only be found in peoples' heads. It was agreed that there was a lot of incredibly valuable knowledge there, but that it was difficult to transmit and even harder to capture. Working in close quarters seemed to help, as colleagues were able to observe and have informal discussions with each other as issues arose, and while that was an incredibly effective and useful way of transmitting knowledge, it just turned one person's tacit knowledge into another person's tacit knowledge if none of it was ever documented—kicking the can down the road. In addition, the quality of knowledge passed from one person to another was very dependent on the quality of the relationship between the two people, and trust was seen as vital. As there was often very little opportunity to interact with people from other departments or between administration and faculty, there was minimal chance to develop relationships and trust outside of one's inner circle.

4.3 Faculty Survey

To understand the information needs of the school's teaching staff, a survey for the faculty was developed. 20 out of 45 faculty members participated in the survey (a 44% response rate), which was separated into 8 sections (see Appendix H for survey instrument):

- 1. Demographics**
- 2. Technology and records management**
- 3. Record sharing**
- 4. Onboarding and information sharing**
- 5. Meetings and professional development**
- 6. Historical archives**
- 7. The school**
- 8. Conclusion**

4.3.1 Demographics

The school has students from kindergarten to grade 11. Junior school is from kindergarten to grade 5, middle school is from grade 6 to grade 8, and senior school is from grade 9 to grade 11. Table 4-2 shows the grade levels that each of the participants taught. Participants were allowed to choose more than one option, as many teachers teach multiple age groups. Two of the junior teachers also teach in either the middle or the senior school, the other three only teach juniors. The middle and the senior schools share most of their teachers, so in the comparative analysis that follows, teachers who teach in either the middle or senior schools have been aggregated into a single category, middle/senior, which includes 17 participants.

Table 4-2*Grade Level(s) Taught*

Grade level	# of participants
Junior (K-5)	5
Middle (6-8)	15
Senior (9-11)	15

Figure 4-1 shows the different fields of study taught by the participants. Most teachers (15) specialize in a particular subject area, but some, especially in the junior school, teach multiple subjects. Certain subject areas that may not have had many participants were aggregated to maintain anonymity.

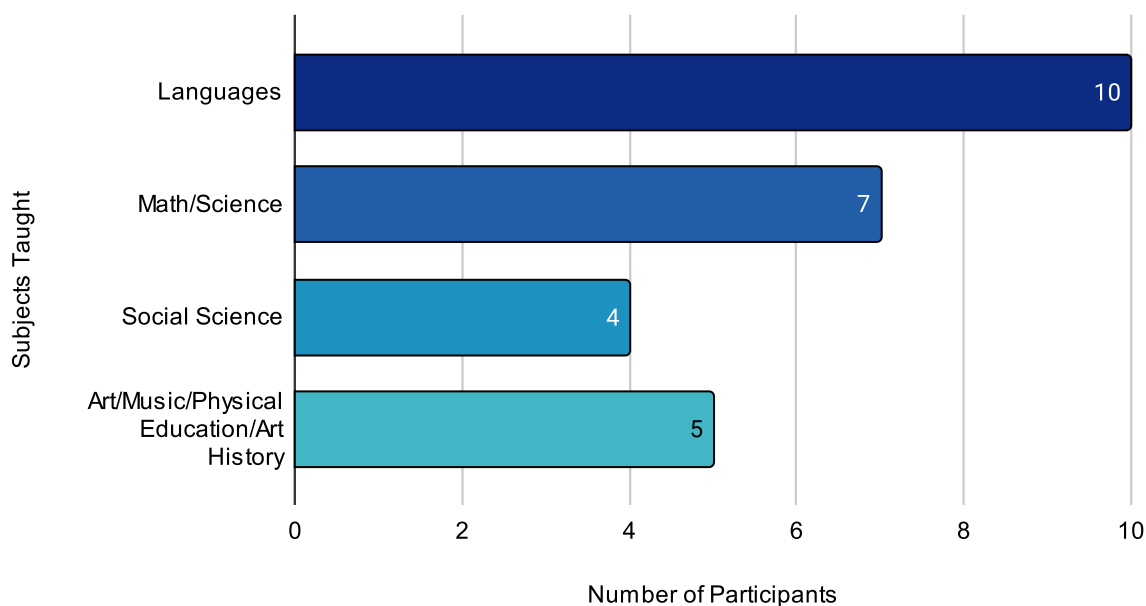
Figure 4-1*Field(s) of Study Taught*

Table 4-3 shows how long each participant had been teaching during their whole career as well as at this specific school. Most respondents were very experienced teachers, and only one was just beginning their teaching career. Most of the new hires over the past two years were very experienced teachers, not people early in their teaching careers.

Table 4-3*Length of Time Teaching*

# of years	Whole career	At this school
<2	1	5
2-5 years	2	2
6-10 years	1	1
>10 years	15	10
Prefer not to say	1	2

4.3.2 Technology and Records Management

Of the 20 teachers who participated in this survey, 5 taught in the junior school and 17 taught in the middle or senior schools (2 staff members taught in both the junior and either the middle or the senior schools which is why both categories together add up to 22). The list of software and services choices was decided on in consultation with the IT department during the survey's development.

As seen in Table 4-4, Google for Education programs (Docs, Gmail, Classroom, Drive, Slides, and Sheets) had very high usage rates across the board. The equivalent Microsoft programs (Word compared to Docs, Excel compared to Sheets and PowerPoint compared to Slides) were also widely used, but Google services were slightly more popular. While Microsoft products used to be the productivity software of choice at this school, management now encourages its teachers to use the Google suite to centralize curriculum management, and they seem to have made the switch.

Table 4-4*Computer Software or Services Used for Job*

Software used	All (20)	Junior (5)	Middle / senior (17)
Google Docs	20 (100%)	5 (100%)	17 (100%)
Gmail	19 (95%)	5 (100%)	16 (94.1%)
Google Classroom	19 (95%)	4 (80%)	16 (94.1%)
Dash (grade reporting)	19 (95%)	5 (100%)	16 (94.1%)
Google Drive	18 (90%)	5 (100%)	15 (88.2%)
[Parent portal]	16 (80%)	5 (100%)	13 (76.5%)
MS Word	14 (70%)	4 (80%)	12 (70.6%)
Google Slides	11 (55%)	2 (40%)	9 (52.9%)
MS PowerPoint	11 (55%)	3 (60%)	10 (58.8%)
Google Sheets	8 (40%)	0 (0%)	8 (47.1%)
MS Excel	8 (40%)	2 (40%)	7 (41.2%)
Canva	6 (30%)	0 (0%)	6 (35.3%)
Seesaw	5 (25%)	4 (80%)	2 (11.8%)
IXL	5 (25%)	4 (80%)	2 (11.8%)
Math Help Services	3 (15%)	0 (0%)	3 (17.6%)
Adobe Creative Suite	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	2 (11.8%)
BrainPOP	2 (10%)	2 (40%)	0 (0%)
Gizmos	2 (10%)	1 (20%)	1 (5.9%)
Facile Learning	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)
Prezi	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)
Turnitin	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)
Other - Keynote	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)
Other - Google Forms	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)
Other - Google Drawings	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)
Other - Antidote	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)
Other - Google Translate	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)
Other - iMovie	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)
Other - YouTube	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)
Other - Teachers Pay Teachers	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.9%)

Note. Participants had the option to write in their own options under “other”—those that are not in bold below the line (‘Keynote’ to the end of the list) were write-ins.

In terms of how many teachers tended to use only widely used software and services versus how many branched out to less popular options, 11 out of 20 respondents only used software and services used by at least 25% of participants (at least 5 out of 20 respondents saying that they used it), and 9 out of 20 said that they used some of the less popular options.

During the administrative staff interviews, training was identified as an issue—not because the IT department wasn't supporting them, but because they didn't have the time carved out for them to complete training courses. As seen in Figure 4-2, teaching faculty seemed to be relatively satisfied with the level of training they receive on widely used software/services as well as ongoing technical support that they received from the school. There was a high number of “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” to the question of training in software not widely used, which supports the data from Table 4-4 that showed that fewer than half of survey participants were using software or services that were not widely used in the school—so they were likely not reaching out for help with them because they weren't really using them at all. One respondent stated that they felt that they learn best on their own, and while recommendations were welcome, things tended to go faster when they learned independently.

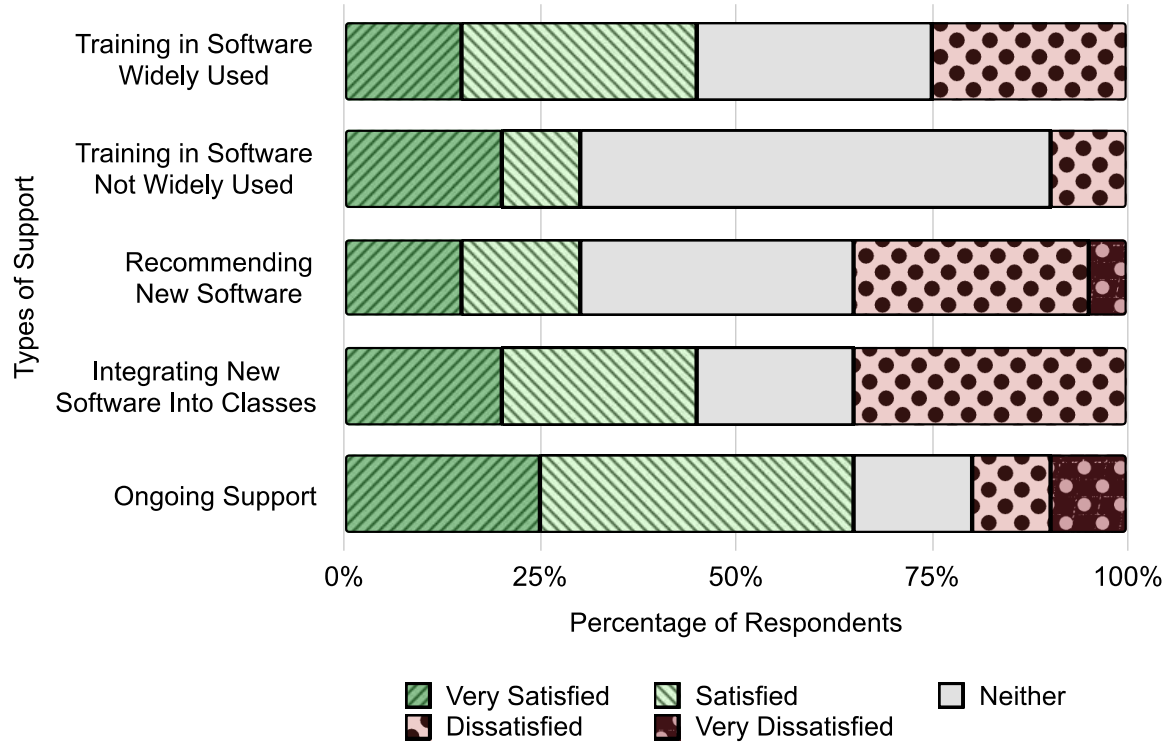
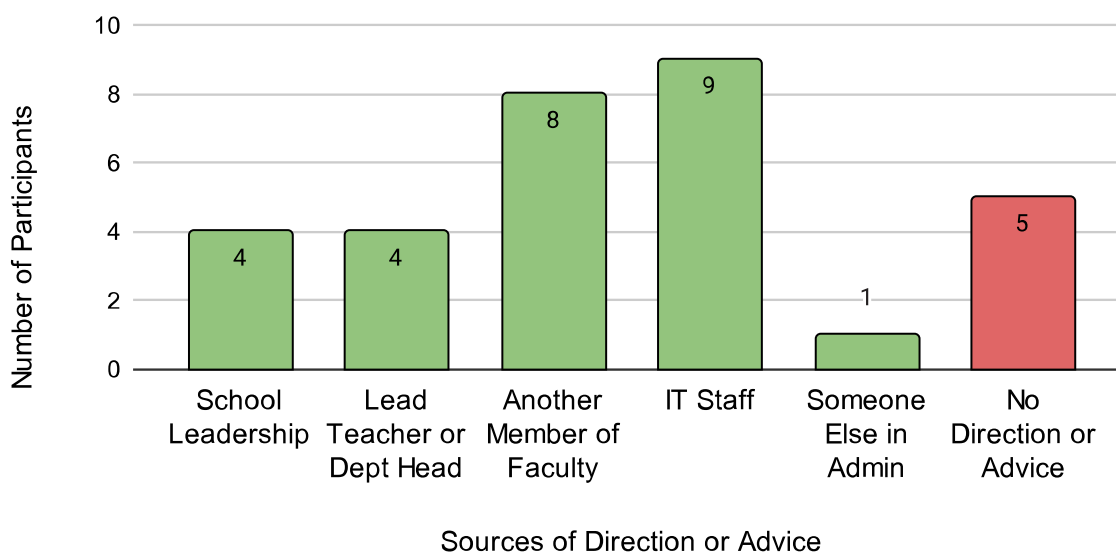
Figure 4-2*IT Support Satisfaction Levels*

Table 4-5 shows the different types of work records created by the survey's participants and reported as free text. There was some question as to what defined a record: For example, one respondent said that they felt that their lesson plans could be very rough sometimes, and that they are not something that they would want to share with others. After many years of teaching, they felt confident enough to use their own judgment and experience, so their lesson plans looked more like notes and collections of resources, such as pictures, websites, and videos. They did not seem to consider these collections of thoughts to be 'records.'

Table 4-5*Records Created by Faculty*

Record type category	# of participants
Curriculum planning (assignments, tests/exams, presentations, outlines, class notes...)	5
Grades/evaluations	5
Administration (meeting minutes, budgets, statistics...)	5
Media (photographs & videos)	4
Examples of student work	3

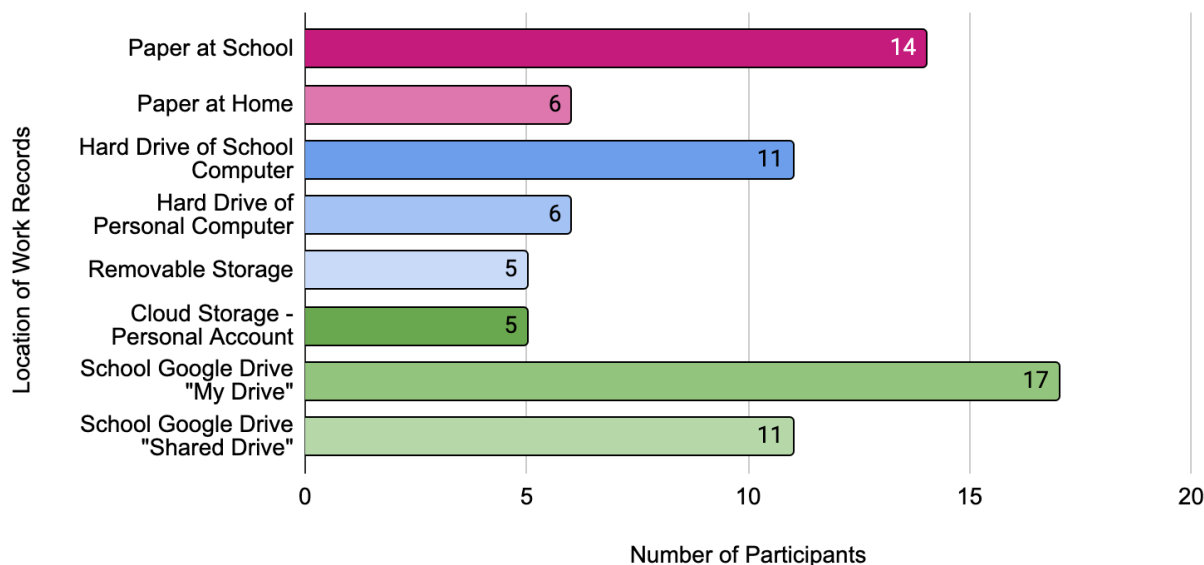
During the administrator interviews, it was clear that administrators were not given any authoritative advice on how to save their work records but were left to fend for themselves. As for teaching staff, Figure 4-3 shows that participants had been given advice from several different sources (if at all), and that there doesn't seem to be a centralized authority for managing work records.

Figure 4-3*Sources of Direction or Advice by the School on How and Where to Save Work Records*

Unsurprisingly, as they had been given no centralized advice, as visualized by Figure 4-4, the teaching staff surveyed tended to keep their work records in different locations and in different formats. Looking at the individual answers more closely, only two respondents didn't use the school's Google storage (neither their "My Drive" nor a shared drive), and five reported not keeping any paper files at all.

Figure 4-4

Location of Work Records



Each department (French, English, Math, Social Studies, etc.) had a department head (or a lead teacher in the junior school) tasked with the guidance and support of the teachers who work under them. They also acted as a liaison between the administration and the teaching faculty. Department members met regularly, and often worked together. Figure 4-5 shows whether participants' departments used a dedicated Google Drive shared workspace. 13 out of 20 participants used some form of shared Google Drive space with their department regularly, and another four also did, but not often. Only three participants didn't use the Google Drive collaboratively with their departments at all.

Figure 4-5

Department Use of Google Drive (Either a Shared “My Drive” or a “Shared Drive”)

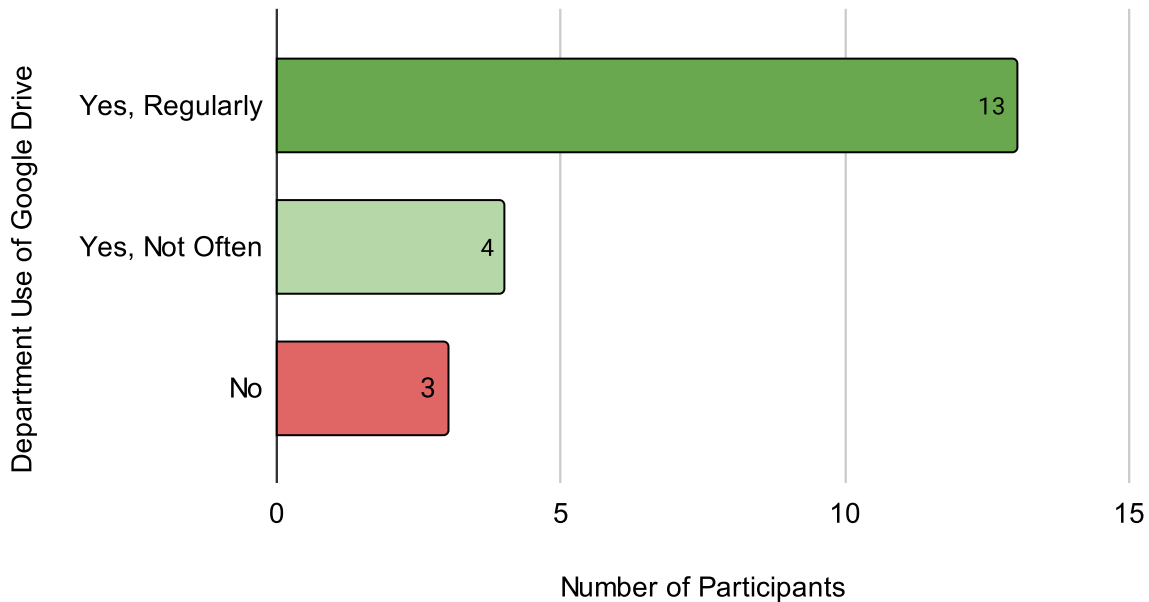
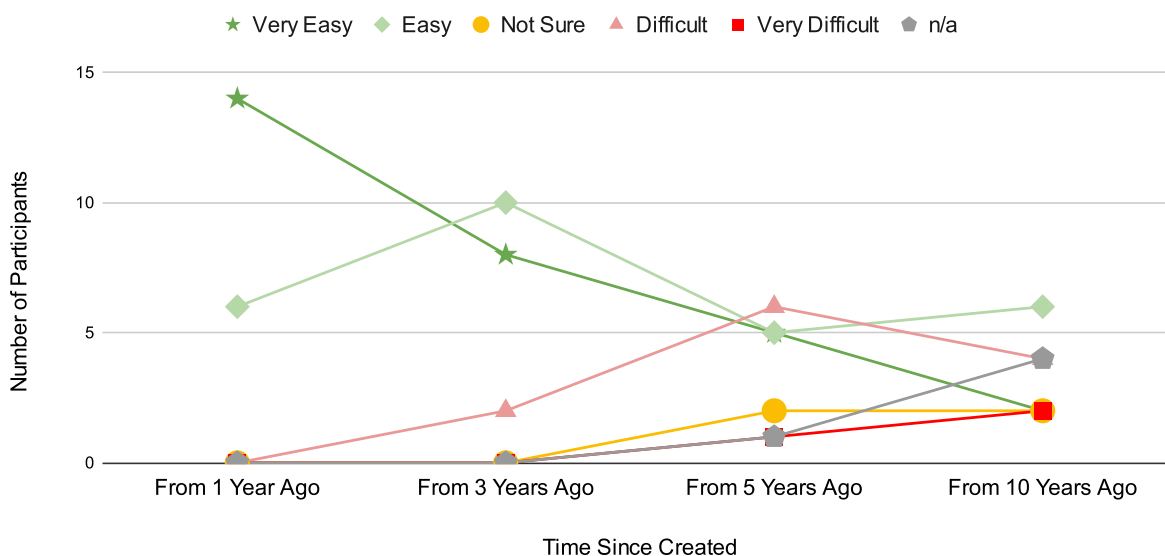


Figure 4-6 illustrates the efficacy of the teaching staff's individual records management. All participants seemed relatively confident that they could find a lesson plan that they had created a year ago, but they became progressively less confident as time passed. By 5 years later, just over half of those who had been teaching at that point (one participant had not been teaching that long) still felt confident that they could find that lesson plan. What's interesting is that, at 10 years, of those who had been teaching that long (16 respondents), still close to half were relatively confident that they could find the lesson plan. So, there wasn't much change in difficulty in finding one's own record from between 5 and 10 years ago. Half of the respondents were quite confident in their personal records management skills, even into the long term.

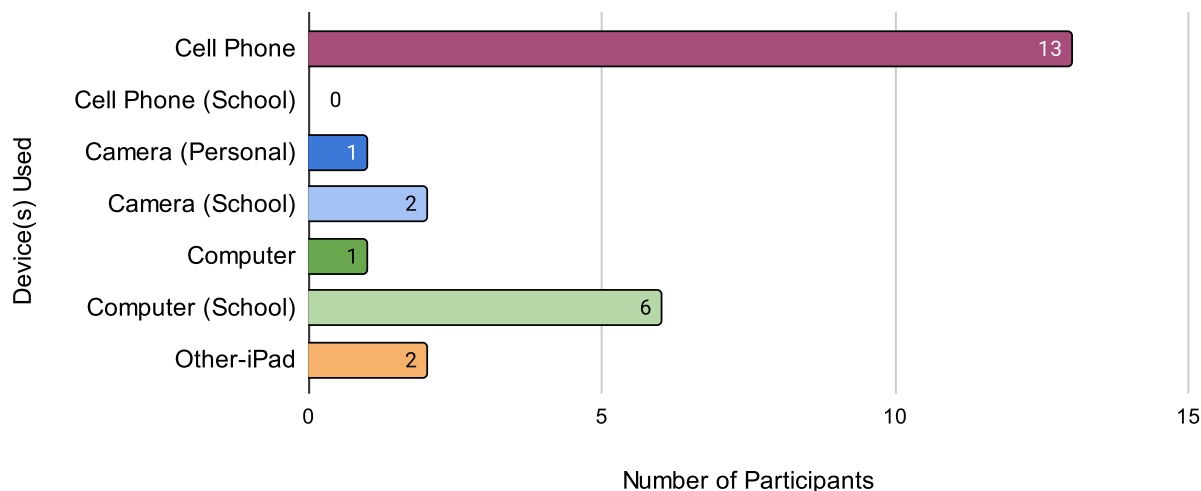
Figure 4-6

Ease of Retrieving a Specific Lesson Plan That Participant Had Designed in the Past



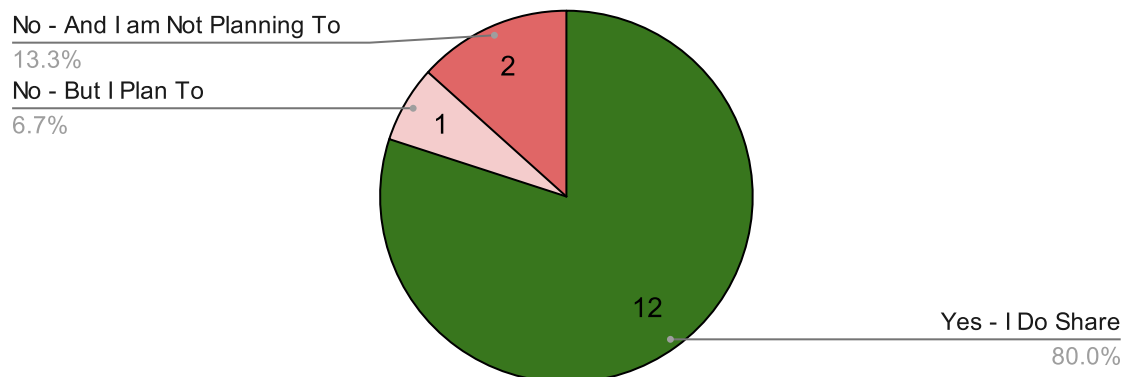
4.3.3 Record Sharing

75% of participants (15), at least sometimes, took photographs and/or videos of their students, while 5 did not. Figure 4-7 shows what devices faculty used to capture these audio-visual records. All 15 participants who said that they took pictures or videos of their students answered this question. Participants could choose multiple options. Most participants who recorded their students used their own personal cell phones to do so (13 out of 15). School computers came in next (six). iPads were not offered as an option on the survey but were added in by two respondents as an “other” option. It is worth noting that the vast majority of participants used their own personal cell phones rather than a school-owned device to create these records.

Figure 4-7*Device(s) Used to Record Photographs or Videos*

Note. 16 participants answered this question, but one response was removed as they had responded that they did not take pictures or videos of their students, and I only wanted answers from participants who said that they did. That participant's answers were removed from all questions relating to photos and videos.

As seen in Figure 4-8, most participants either shared the media that they recorded with their students and/or their parents, or they intended to do so. Only just over 13% (two participants) said that they did not plan on sharing. In terms of how they are shared, Table 4-6 shows that email was the most popular option. One participant qualified their answer by saying that they shared through the communication department's social media accounts, and another said that while they did post on social media, they only post work that the students created, never their likenesses. The communications team encouraged teachers to send them images that showcase the school's activities, and 10 out of 15 participants had done so at some point, with three saying that it hadn't occurred to them to do so, and two saying that they simply didn't want to.

Figure 4-8*Sharing Photographs or Videos with Students and/or Parents***Table 4-6***How Pictures and Videos are Shared*

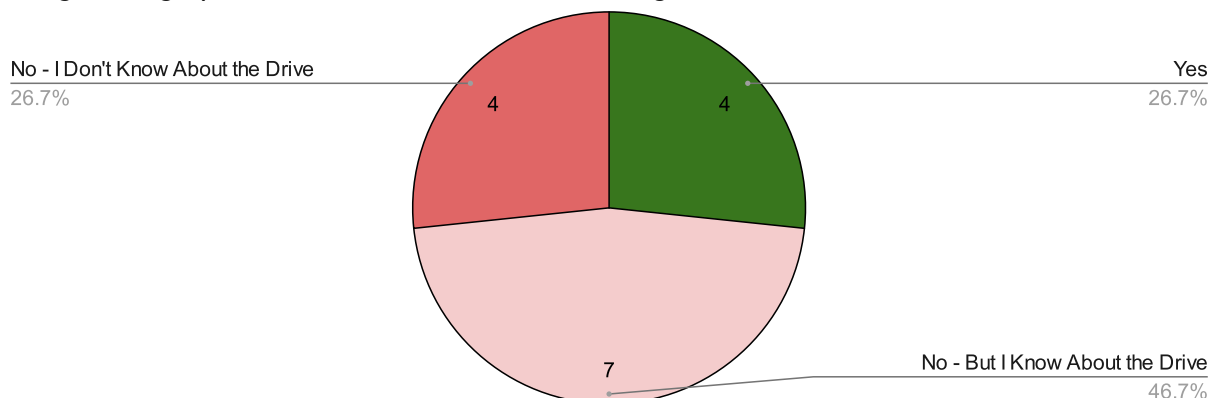
How	# of participants
Email	7
Google Classroom	4
Seesaw	4
Facebook/Instagram	3

The communications team had set up a Google Drive folder as an archival repository for school photographs and videos. It was organized by year and by event, and all staff were encouraged to put the media that they produced into the drive—not only for use now, but also for archival purposes. They are not catalogued beyond putting them into an identifying folder (for example, 2018-2019/Junior Halloween Party), but the location is centralized, and the images are at least minimally identified. As can be seen in Figure 4-9, very few participants saved their files to the Archive Drive. In fact, four didn't even know that the drive existed. One participant commented that they only just found out about it because of this survey but would have used it if they had known. Another said that they knew about the drive but didn't know that

they could add to it. One last comment simply said, “I keep my own stuff. **I just feel like no one really cares** about [my subject]. :(”¹³

Figure 4-9

Saving Photographs or Videos on the School’s Google Archive Drive



4.3.4 Onboarding and Information Sharing

The data collected during the administration interviews suggested that staff wanted to feel informed and supported. During their interviews, numerous administrators had mentioned feeling that their onboarding process had been lacking, and at one point, I had observed a new teacher wandering around somewhat aimlessly because nobody had told them where to go on their first day. Four distinct areas that should be addressed when a new employee begins working were identified: human resources (for general school policies and procedures and non-financial benefits), finance (for pay, pension, and expense reimbursements), department (for teaching support, departmental policies, and curricular information), and social (getting to know colleagues and feeling welcomed). Figure 4-10 shows that most participants felt at least somewhat supported in all onboarding areas. The areas of most support were departmental and

¹³ No identifiers were attributed to the participants' quotes used in this study. This was because if multiple quotes attributed to a single participant were examined together, it might be possible for the individual to be identified by their school's management.

social—so the smaller, more intimate, decentralized areas rather than the institution-wide centralized ones. Since people who had joined the school years earlier would have had a different experience than people who had joined recently, the data was then filtered by how long the participants had been at the school (Figure 4-11).

Figure 4-10

Level of Support When Newly Hired

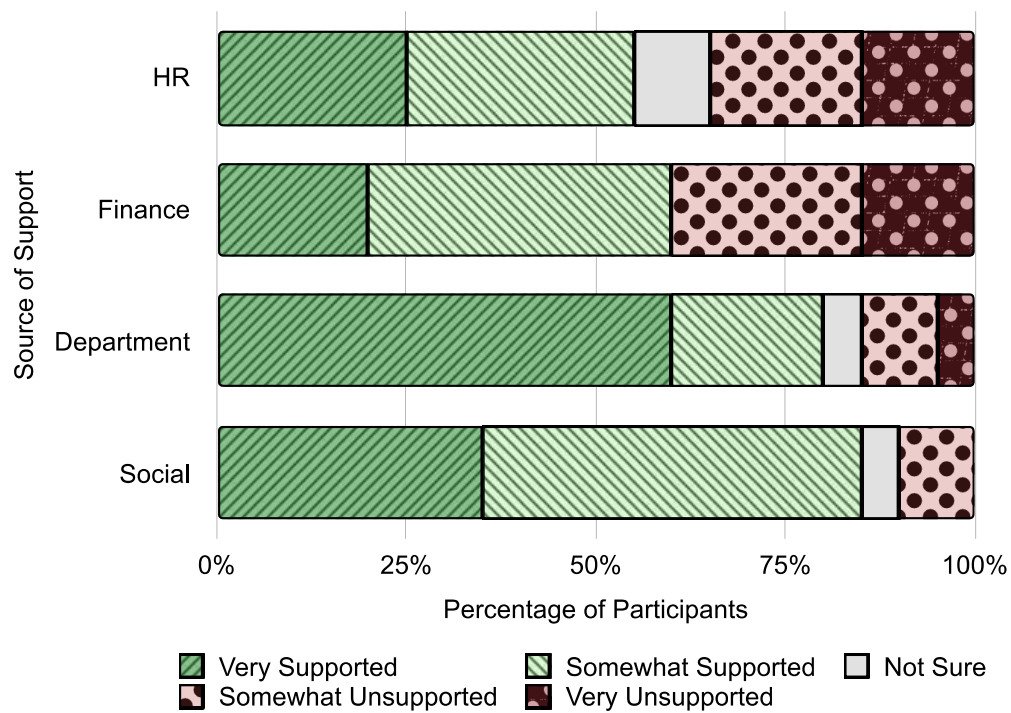
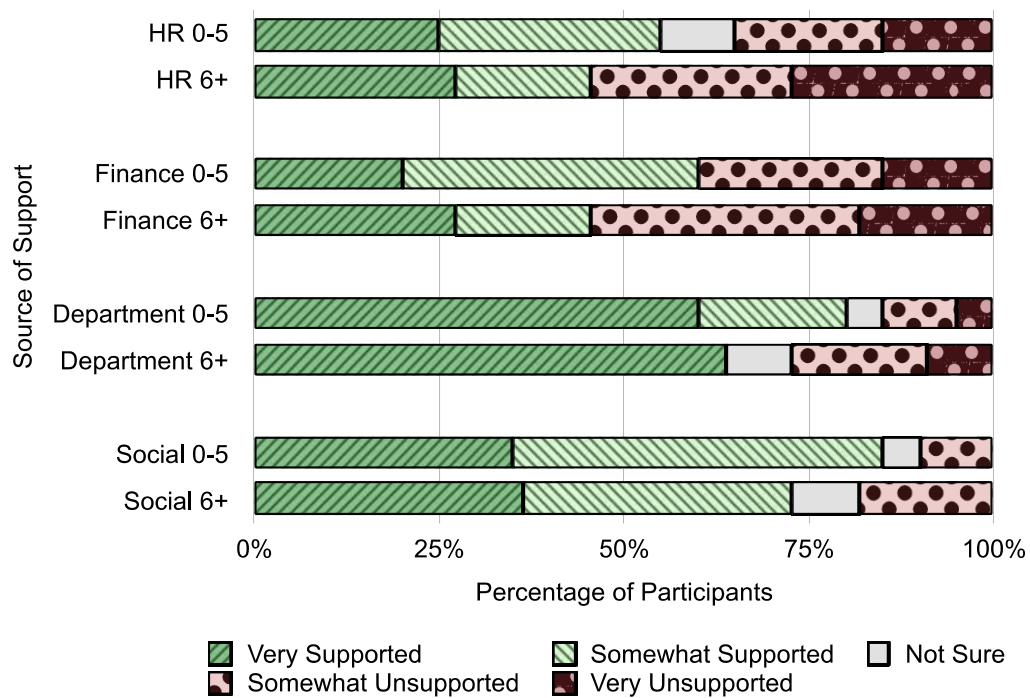


Figure 4-11*Level of Support when New Employee by Length of Time at School*

The filtered data shows that more recently hired teachers seemed more satisfied with their onboarding than teachers who had been at the school for a while. This could mean that the situation has improved recently, or that more established staff members are perhaps more jaded and feel comfortable expressing negative opinions in a survey. Either way, the trend of teachers feeling more supported by their departments and close colleagues than by centralized school administration holds.

When asked for specifics about their own onboarding experiences, some comments were quite positive, and others negative (Table 4-7).

Table 4-7*Describing Onboarding Experience*

Where resources came from	Positive experience	Negative experience
Department/colleagues	12	2
Mentor	4	2
Documents	4	2
Administration/leadership	2	4

Participants generally spoke about where they received their information from, so the four categories in Table 4-7 emerged from the content of the answers. A statement was counted as a positive experience if someone said that they felt supported by a particular resource provider and a negative experience was counted if they said that they felt unsupported by a particular resource provider, or if they mentioned explicitly that they did not have access to a particular resource. For example, “I felt that the middle and senior school directors were **supportive and ‘had my back’**” was counted as a positive experience in the administration/leadership category, whereas “the school administration **left me largely to my own devices**” was counted as a negative experience in the same category, and “**no mentoring system** when I started” counted as a negative experience in the mentor category.

Supporting earlier findings, participants said that they received most of their support from colleagues rather than from the administration (“I had **amazing colleagues** who showed me the ropes”). Some mentioned being paired with a buddy (“**Mentorship and guidance**, all questions were directed to someone who could help”), others said that there was no mentoring program when they began (“**Nothing**, I seek this information out myself when I need it. No mentor or binder, etc.”). Some said that they had a very supportive experience (“Staff very welcoming...**Felt welcome** to ask for support”), others were confused (“...we had one day of training, which **confused and scared me** even more.”), stressed (“**Stressful**. Fortunately, I had

support from my department”), and isolated (“**I was physically sick** because I felt overwhelmed and left alone”).

When asked if there were any information or resources that they wish that they had been given when they first began teaching at the school, the answers were evenly split between people who were satisfied, and those who felt that having additional information and/or resources could have helped them. Some of the deficiencies that were listed included curriculum support (four), information about the school’s history and special events (two), HR information (one), a school tour (one), details about extracurricular expectations (one), and proofreaders for teachers whose first language isn’t English (one).

Another question asked what types of records were shared with them the first time that they taught a particular course. Six participants said that no records relating to their course were shared with them, and 14 said that they were given some records. Examples of the types of records that were shared were lesson plans, PowerPoints, tests, assignments, course outlines, textbooks, ministerial guidelines, and advice. Most of these were shared through a Google Drive folder, some by email, and some by hard copy. Some people mentioned that these documents were shared by a teacher who was leaving, and some by colleagues who were still at the school:

Experienced teachers, when asked, **do not hesitate to share** their drive with me.

If you had a good mentor they could share their hard copies of examples they personally used.

All of the above are provided by **department colleagues**.

When asked if there were any records that they would have liked to have had but were **not** provided when they taught a course for the first time, the types of records mentioned included lesson plans, tests, curriculum documents, expected outcomes, previous years’ budget

information, and past report cards. One participant mentioned that “it is **expected you will figure this out yourself**”, and another spoke about what facilitates document sharing:

As technology has improved, it makes it easier to share documents and lessons. Working within a team always helps as well.

However, one respondent mentioned an electronic centralized repository for lesson plans that the school had attempted to implement many years earlier. This project did not take off as it had been onerous to work with and many teachers had chosen not to participate. They felt quite discouraged by the fact that all the work that they had put into it had gone to waste.

Since much of the information and support that is given to teachers is at the department level, the department head (or lead teacher in the junior school) plays a very important part in these teachers’ professional lives. Participants were asked what they considered to be the role of a lead teacher or department head. Table 4-8 displays the categories of roles that emerged from the answers given by respondents. The vast majority (14) of respondents felt that supporting the teaching staff that sit within their department was an important task of a department head. The other six categories of tasks that were identified were generally evenly spread amongst the participants.

Table 4-8

Perceived Role of Lead Teacher or Department Head

Role	# of participants
Supporting department members	14
Teaching and curriculum support	6
Maintaining and improving the quality of the department	6
Liaison between faculty and administration	6
Keeping abreast of new developments in education	5
Resolving disputes	4
Administrative tasks (such as budgets...)	4

Participants who had ever held the role of lead teacher or department head (11) were asked what kind of training or guidance that they had received from the school prior to taking on this added responsibility. 100% of them stated that they had received no training at all.

None, except by example.

I never had training. I just observe and do it myself after.

None, I even asked for a job description and none was given to me.

No training there... But I observed my predecessor... So, with time, **I kinda guessed what the role was and what to do.** We've been given a document indicating the role and functions, but no specific training.

No training given...guidance but **only initiated by me.**

I had no guidance, or support to know how to proceed...**I was left to discover it all on my own.**

All participants said that they shared work records with their colleagues. Table 4-9 shows the different methods used by these teachers to share records with each other. Shared drives (which includes Google Drives) was the most popular option, closely followed by email. Surprisingly, paper was quite high on the list, although every participant except for one did offer at least one electronic method for sharing records. I'm not entirely sure how one shares records verbally, but I suppose they meant sharing thoughts and ideas, which while that wasn't exactly the question, still brings up the important idea of knowledge sharing, and how some people prefer to communicate face-to-face rather than through technology.

Table 4-9

How Teaching Materials are Shared Between Colleagues

Method	# of participants
Shared drive	15
Email	12
Paper	10
In person (verbally)	4
Google Classroom	1
Curriculum mapping software	1

Participants were asked if they would want to share with their colleagues the experience of a very successful lesson plan, as well as a very unsuccessful one (as a cautionary tale). For the positive experience, 18 out of 20 participants said that they would want to share, two said that they weren't sure, and nobody said that they would not.

It depends on the colleagues. When I gave a presentation a few years ago, **I felt that some colleagues were ridiculing and dismissive.**

I'd be happy to talk about it, share pictures of the result or explain the process. I feel **it's much more interesting than a written lesson plan with no life!**

While more people (seven) were uncertain about whether they would want to share a negative experience than they were about a positive one, still nobody declared outright that they wouldn't. Three participants left comments—two expressed some wariness (**"I trust some department colleagues to do so, but not all."** and **"It depends** on what it was."), and one showed genuine enthusiasm (**"Yes! I would definitely laugh about it!** And my colleagues **might have a solution** or see what went wrong").

In terms of how they would want to share these experiences with their colleagues, as can be seen in Table 4-10, most respondents liked the idea of having this type of sharing happen in an informal situation, such as in the staff room. People also mentioned that department meetings were an appropriate place for such a discussion. One was hesitant to recommend sharing with the rest of the school because they felt as though their subject matter was quite different from the others and that people who weren't teaching that type of material might not benefit from the sharing. Someone mentioned that they aren't afraid to share failed experiences, but that the occasion to do so is so rare. They liked the idea of having a "failure festival" for the whole teaching staff during a pedagogical day.

Table 4-10*How to Share Experiences with Colleagues*

Method	# of participants
Informally in person	15
Department meeting	8
Electronically (email or shared drive)	3
Whole-school meeting	1

The participants were presented with a list of statements that expressed different sentiments and were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each. All 20 participants answered every single element of this question, except for “School leadership hears my voice”, which received 19 answers. The results can be seen in Figures 4-12, 4-13, and 4-14. Some of the statements used in this question were positive statements (such as “I feel appreciated”), and some were negative statements (such as “I wish that I had more support”). In order to easily visually compare the data, all of the negative statements were identified with an (R), and the answers were reversed—if someone answered “strongly agree” to a negative statement, the figures below will display it as “strongly disagree”. The “strongly agree” answers can therefore be read as “very positive”, and the “strongly disagree” can be read as “very negative”. The purpose of these questions was to gauge how the teaching faculty felt about certain areas: feelings of **influence**, feelings of **appreciation**, and access to **information**. These three general categories emerged from the administration interviews. I had noticed that staff seemed to be most frustrated when they felt unappreciated, when they felt as though they didn’t have influence over their situations, and when they didn’t have access to the information that they needed. The statements themselves were based on sentiments that I had seen expressed while working and during the interviews. Some of the statements are alike, and some are opposites—this was done to confirm the internal reliability of the survey instrument by checking for

consistency between the respondents' answers (see section 3.2.3, Data Collection and Analysis for details).

Figure 4-12

Statements Regarding Experience as a Teacher at This School (INFLUENCE)

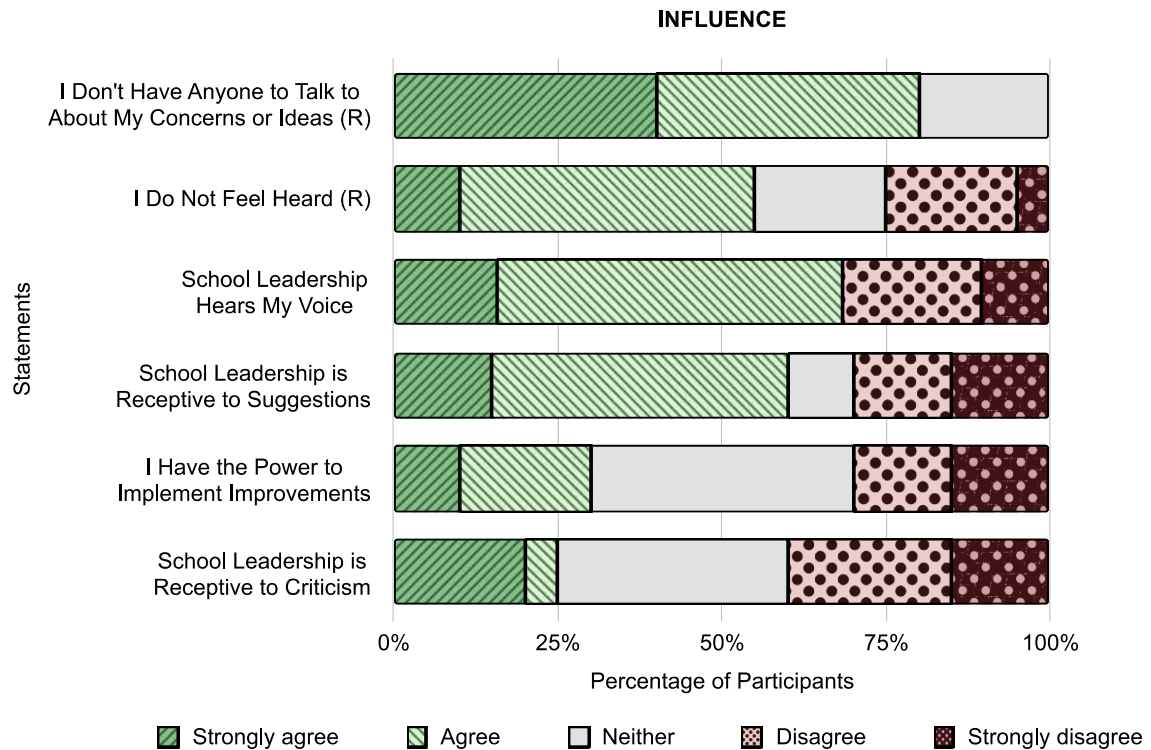
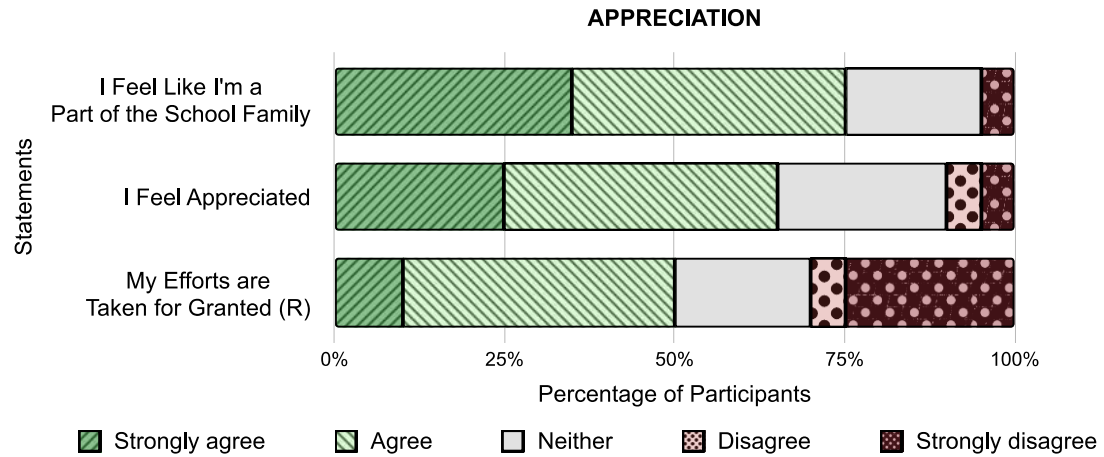
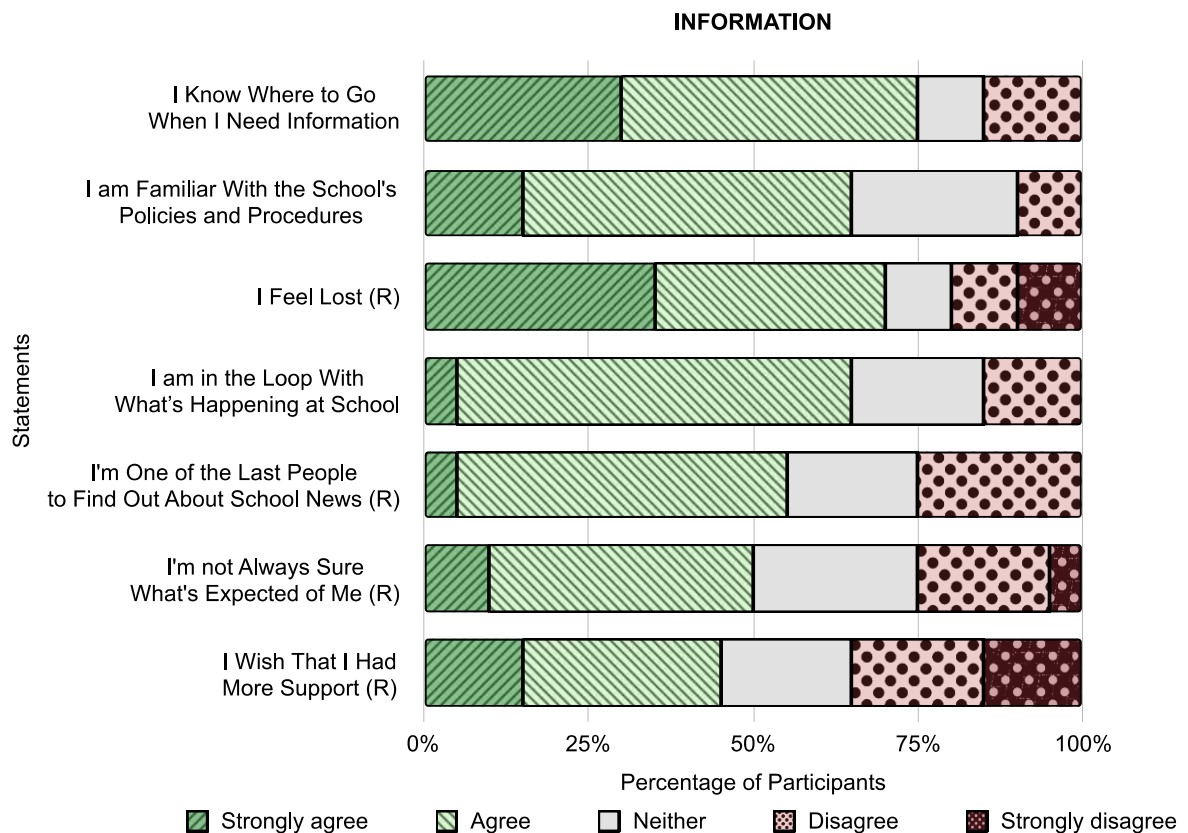


Figure 4-13*Statements Regarding Experience as a Teacher at This School (APPRECIATION)***Figure 4-14***Statements Regarding Experience as a Teacher at This School (INFORMATION)*

The area where participants seemed most satisfied was the ‘appreciation’ category, and where they were the least satisfied was ‘influence’—although the most agreed-with statement, “I don’t have anyone to talk to about my concerns or ideas” (or after reversing the negative statement, “I have someone to talk to about my concerns or ideas”), was in the ‘influence’ category. This discrepancy could be because participants may feel as though they are heard at the departmental or colleague level (as was discussed earlier in the survey), but perhaps not at the school leadership level (heads of the junior, middle and senior schools, the head of school, and the directors). The other outlier was “My efforts are taken for granted” (or, after reversing the negative statement, “My efforts are not taken for granted”), which was the only statement in the ‘appreciation’ category with a low score. Statements in the ‘information’ category seem to straddle the mid-range of the scores with respondents being more positive with their knowledge about the school and their ability to find information, and less positive about being confident about what is expected of them at work and the level of support that they receive.

Five participants offered up their feelings about this section of the survey. Three made a point to mention specifically how much they love the school. Two said that they felt as though the administration doesn’t respect the faculty’s opinions, one spoke about how they make a point to keep themselves informed by asking questions, one expressed a (understandable) desire that any identifiable answers from this survey not be shared with the school, and one questioned the survey design: “Your questions **lack the nuance necessary for authentic answers**” (See Limitations, Section 6.2).

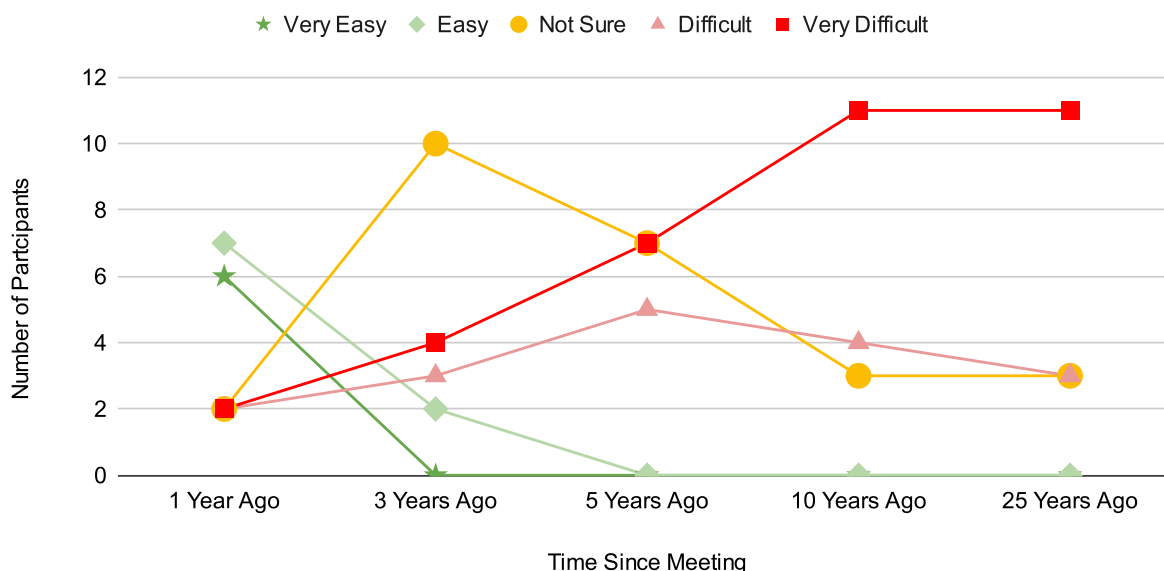
4.3.5 Meetings and Professional Development

Earlier in the survey, participants were asked how easily they would be able to retrieve documents over time that they themselves had created (see Figure 4-6). Most participants felt

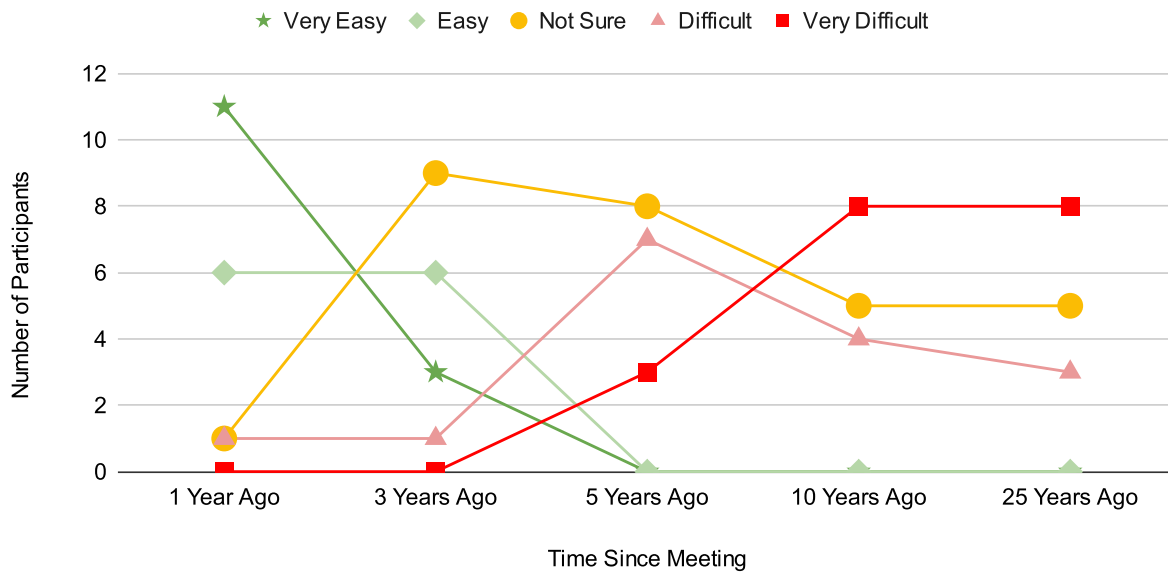
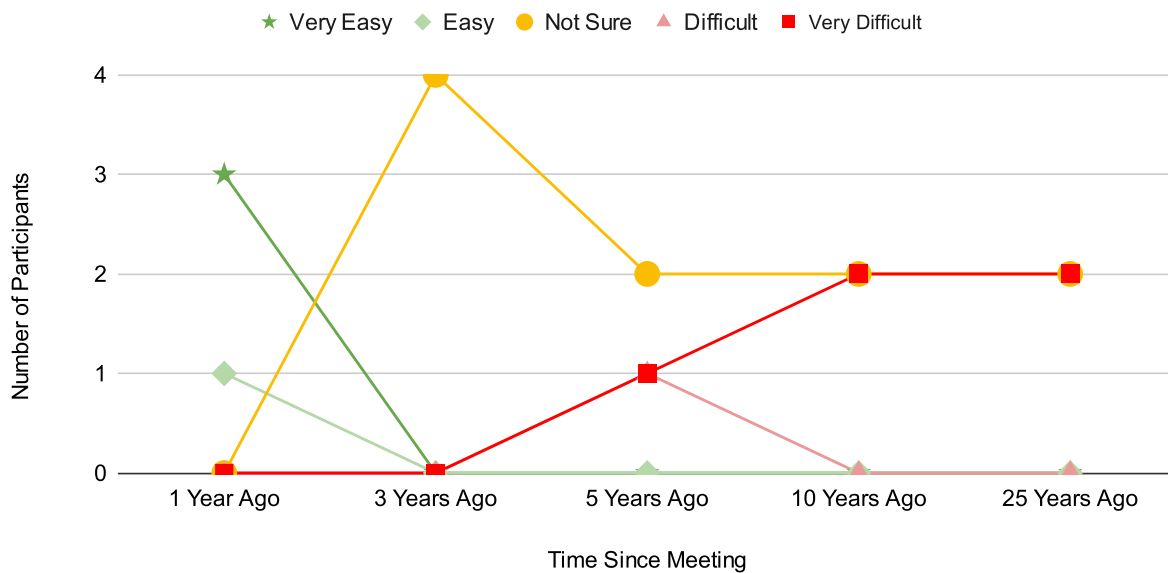
quite confident in their own personal records management, even years and decades down the road. In this section, faculty were asked how easily they thought they could retrieve a record that they did not themselves create, but that should have been retained by the school and made available for reference: staff and departmental meeting minutes. The results can be seen in Figures 4-15 (whole school staff meetings), 4-16 (middle and senior school department meetings), and 4-17 (junior school cycle meetings¹⁴).

Figure 4-15

Ease of Retrieving Minutes from a Past Staff Meeting



¹⁴ In Quebec, elementary school is separated into three cycles: Cycle one is for grades one and two; cycle two is for grades three and four, and cycle three is for grades four and five. Cycle meetings are the closest comparison that there is in the junior school with department meetings in the middle and senior school.

Figure 4-16*Ease of Retrieving Minutes from a Past Departmental Meeting***Figure 4-17***Ease of Retrieving Minutes from a Past Cycle Meeting*

Most participants felt as though they could probably find staff meeting minutes from a year ago, but that level of confidence drops significantly by three years. By five years, most respondents felt as though it would be very difficult to find any meeting minutes.

Departmental meetings are significantly smaller in size than the general staff meetings. They are also decentralized and, as was seen earlier in the survey, there is no consistent training given to department heads, so it was uncertain how easily department members would be able to find department meeting minutes, or whether minutes had been consistently recorded at all. The results show that, in fact, departmental meeting minutes are perceived to be easier to find than staff meeting minutes. There is a very high level of confidence in being able to retrieve departmental meeting minutes from one year ago, and relatively high for three years. For both one and three years, the number of participants who thought it would be either “easy” or “very easy” to find departmental meeting minutes was significantly higher than for school-wide staff meeting minutes. By five years, confidence disappeared for both types of minutes. In the junior school, confidence in being able to find cycle meeting minutes disappeared by three years.

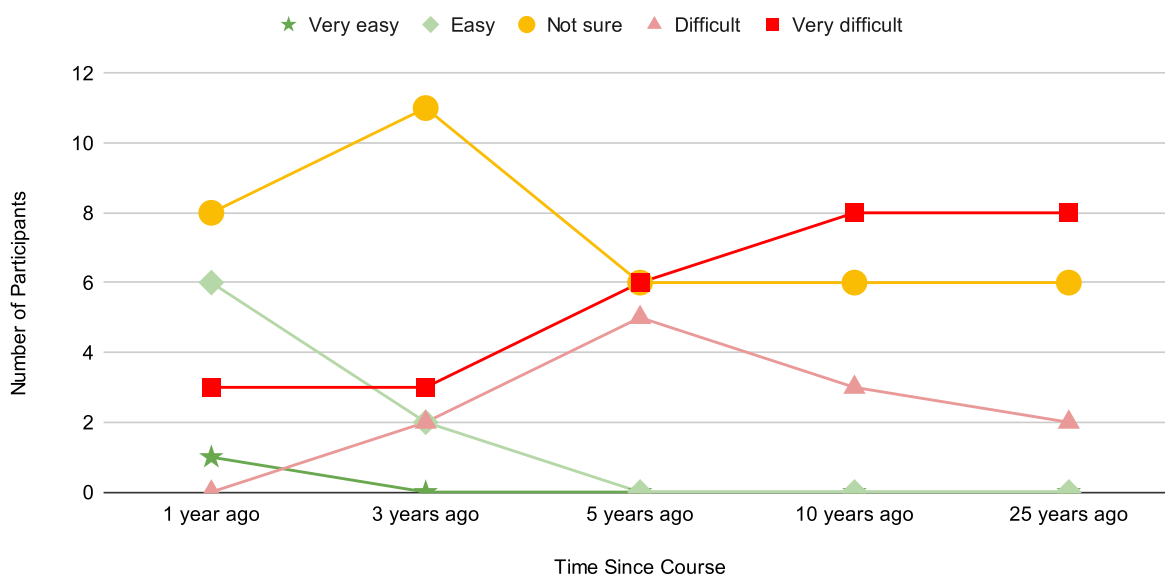
Participants were asked where they would go to try to find these meeting minutes. For the newer records (one to three years old), participants said that they would look on the Google Drive or search through their emails. For records older than three years, participants said that they would ask someone: some respondents named specific people who they would ask (the librarian, the registrar, the head of school, a specific colleague, their department head, and a director), others were vaguer (“Ask someone...**not sure who though**” and “a **long-term employee**”). It was funny though: Even though I had been volunteering as the school’s archivist for four years and had given two presentations to all the faculty over the previous year about the work that I had done with the school’s historical archives, not a single person said that they would ask me—and I was probably the only person in the school who knew how to find any of the older minutes.

Every school has a few days during the year that is dedicated to professional development. The students do not come in, but staff do, and the school will often organize training for them—they will have guest speakers, there will be workshops, there might be CPR certification...the

purpose is to keep faculty up to date in current pedagogical, safety, and psycho-social issues. During these sessions, faculty are often given handouts and participants are also encouraged to take notes. This question was designed similarly to the last few about meeting minutes, but it focused in on the notes and handouts from these professional development presentations offered by the school. Looking at Figure 4-18, it feels as though these professional development materials might be considered mainly ephemeral, as very few participants seem to have prioritized keeping them.

Figure 4-18

Ease of Retrieving Notes or Handouts from a Professional Development Course at the School



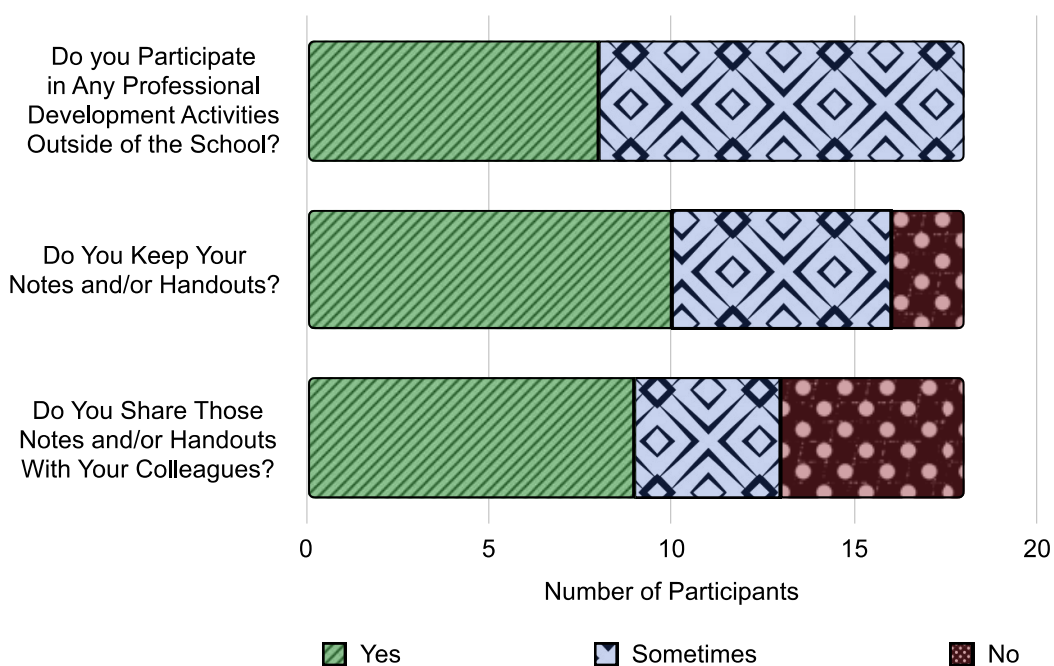
As with the meeting minutes, participants were asked how they would go about finding these notes or handouts. Again, asking someone was the most popular option. One participant mentioned that they kept paper copies, which makes sense if the handouts were given as paper. One person who said that they used email mentioned that all older emails were lost when the school moved from FirstClass (legacy email system) to Google (in 2016), so they wouldn't be able to retrieve any attachments that had been sent with an older email. One person

simply wrote “I don’t think I would,” which I gather as meaning that they wouldn’t bother looking for any of these materials, perhaps because they don’t imagine that they would want to reference them.

School staff are encouraged to participate in professional development training outside of the school. These series of questions ask whether faculty participates in this type of training, whether they retain their notes and handouts, and whether they share that material with their colleagues. The results are displayed in Figure 4-19. The methods of sharing these professional development materials were pretty evenly split between in-person, Google Drive, email, and paper. For in-person transmission, three respondents mentioned department or review meetings specifically. One person said that they did not share however because “there is no venue for this,” so it must vary by department.

Figure 4-19

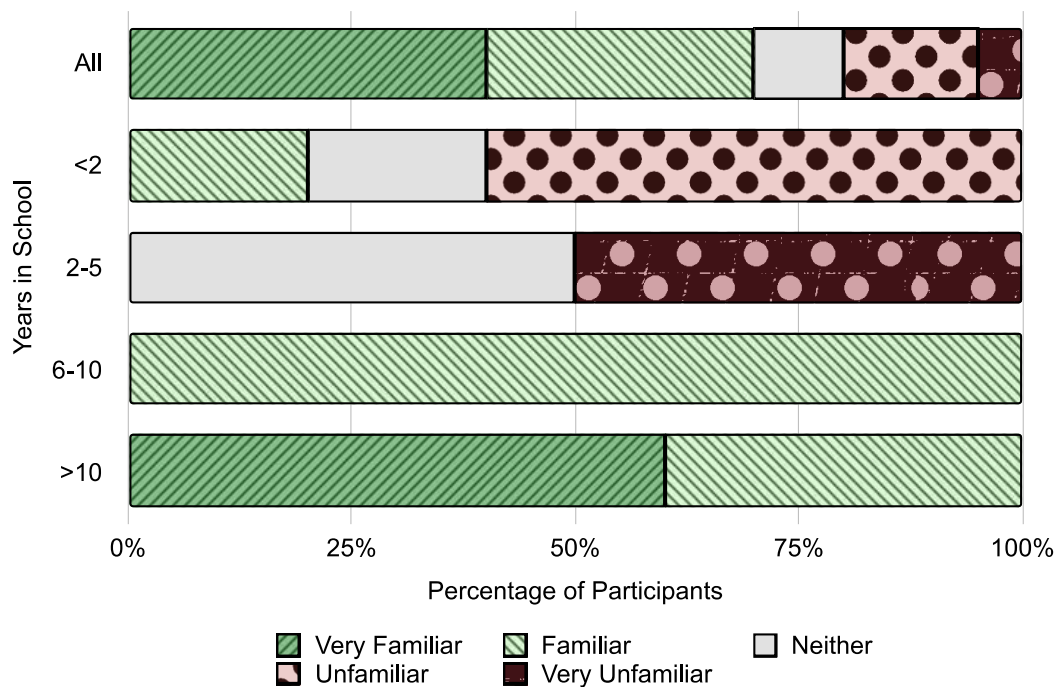
Professional Development Training Taking Place Outside of the School



Sometimes teachers find interesting resources online. When asked if they share these types of resources with their colleagues, 16 out of the 17 respondents to the question said that they do. Email was by far the most popular option for how to share online resources with colleagues. This could be because this type of information is seen as more informal than other types of work-related information sharing, and it is easier to send a hyperlink electronically than in person. One respondent said something interesting that might resonate with other faculty members: “**I still prefer discussing** than writing and reading!”—if what is being shared can be done quickly and casually (such as an interesting website that one found over the weekend), informal communications such as having a conversation or sending an email makes sense and could be more satisfying socially. In one of the administrator interviews, however, a participant mentioned how they would like to put together a database of online resources for faculty and support staff to be able to refer to, something that would take these informal nuggets of information and transform them into something that could be referred to by others. That level of information capture and sharing, however, was not mentioned by the survey respondents.

4.3.6 Historical Archives

This school was founded over 100 years ago and has a very proud history. All 20 respondents answered this question, and 14 people said that they were either “familiar” or “very familiar” with the school’s history and traditions. Unsurprisingly, when the data is filtered by length of time working at the school, generally those who had been working there longer felt like they were most familiar with the school’s history.

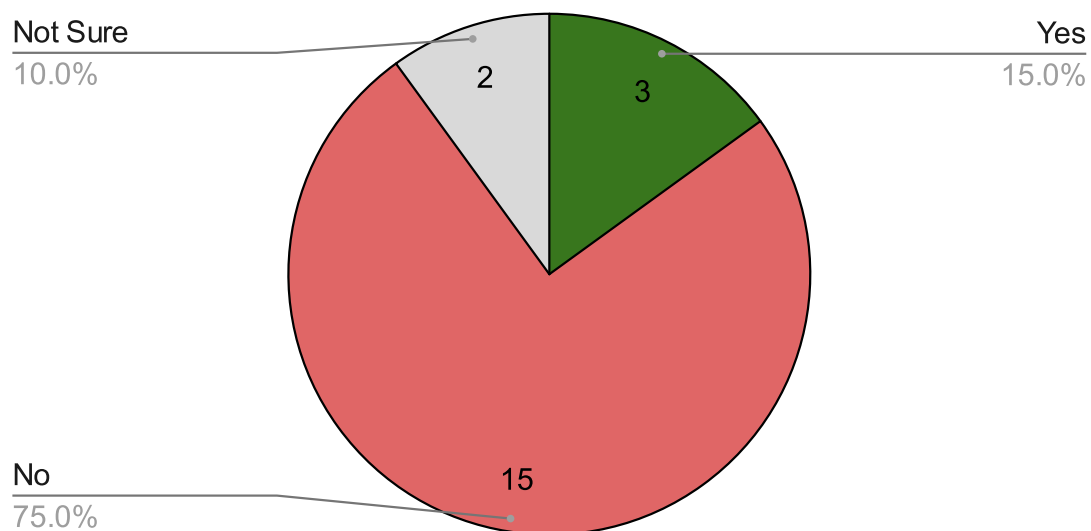
Figure 4-20*Familiarity with the School's History and Traditions*

As a school's archive is intended to contain evidence of all the school's important functions, it would make sense to include some records created by the teaching staff—who, as a group, are undisputedly the most important employees in any school. In looking through the school's historical archival collection, however, I found that besides official student records, historical documentary evidence of actual teaching and learning was sorely lacking. The purpose of this question was to determine whether any current faculty had donated anything to the archive. All 20 participants answered this question, and as seen in Figure 4-21, three responded that they had donated something to the archive, 15 said that they had not, and two were uncertain. Three people described what they donated: Two said that they donated photographs and one said that they used to deposit digital files onto an older server, but that they didn't think that it existed anymore. Two respondents discussed why they had not deposited records: One said that they

would participate when they were more familiar with the school and the way that it does things, and the other wrote that it “doesn’t occur, **nor do I think anyone is interested.**”

Figure 4-21

Have Ever Submitted Anything to the School’s Archive



At the beginning of this section of the survey, participants were given a definition of primary-source records:

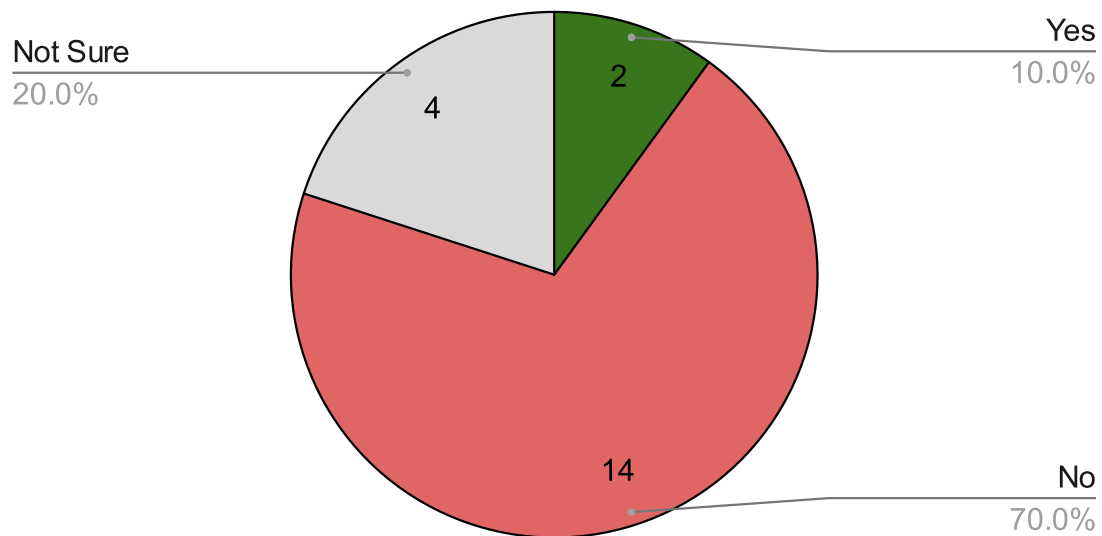
In the following section, primary-source records refer to original archival items or their surrogates (paper copies or digital versions). They can be photographs, textual records (letters, business records, newspapers...), or audio-visual materials (not modern-produced documentaries, but original newsreels, raw footage, home movies, advertisements ...).

Participants were asked if they had ever used a primary-source record in any of their classes. As can be seen in Figure 4-22, two said that they had used primary-source records in their classes, 14 had not, and four were uncertain. One said that they had found the records that they had used on the McCord Museum of Canadian History website (specifically from the Notman Photographic Collection), one said that they had used records that I had given them

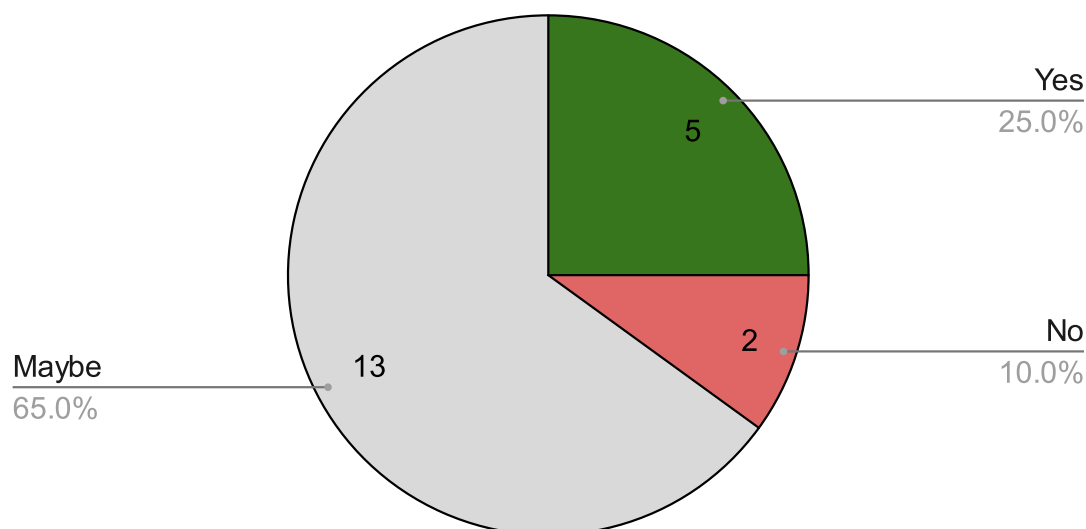
from the school's collection, and a third said that they didn't understand what primary-source records meant.

Figure 4-22

Use of Primary-Source Records in Classes



When asked if they would be interested in using any materials from the school's own archive in any of their classes (Figure 4-23), only two participants said that they were not interested in using items from the school's archival collection in their class(es). Five said that they would, and 13 said "maybe."

Figure 4-23*Interest in Using School Archival Materials in Classes***4.3.7 The School**

As in the administrator interviews, I wanted to ask faculty their impressions of their students and their school to both inform the framework for the functional analysis (see Appendix I) and to better understand the qualities of this specific independent school. To get an idea of how teaching staff perceived their school and their students, participants were asked to describe an archetypical graduate. Certain descriptors emerged frequently: ambitious, confident, accomplished, hard-working, kind, and happy. One respondent did use the word “anxious” to describe their students, which was interesting. The idea of these children being overwhelmed also came up in the administrator interviews.

They are **ready to embrace the world**.

Proud, happy, **loved**.

They have grown from an inquisitive child to being an **empowered, empathetic young adult**.

Ready to succeed, prepared for higher education, **a person of integrity and character**.

Confident, strong, knows how to learn, inquisitive, **takes time to play and laugh**, works hard, committed.

Proud, **anxious**, and hopeful.

Accomplished, confident, hard worker, leader, **aware of the world surrounding them**, kind, and authentic.

When asked to identify what the school might have done to help these students to become the graduate that they had just described, a few different variables were identified: small school, family-feeling, involvement in different activities, student leadership and empowerment, and strong academics. One participant did mention that students are often overwhelmed, and another suggested that the school should integrate more wellness activities into the curriculum.

We **get involved in events** that are happening around us.

They were given a **warm and stimulating** school environment.

The fact that we have small classes and that I teach the same students for six years in a row makes the teacher-student relationship unique. I get to know them really well, and I see them growing...I believe that **the special bond that we have with the students in class is one of the biggest reasons the students love the school**.

The athletics program helps the students with time management, character and teamwork.

The school helps them achieve, but **our students always seem to be certain that their work is too much** or is beyond them.

Strong leadership program and academics, caring teachers, small family-like environment, **student-centered school**, small classes, open to student voice, strong traditions and expectations.

The school tried to give them **any opportunity to feed their interests and passions—**grow their confidence.

Participants were then asked what makes their school unique. The themes that emerged from the answers included the close-knit community, the experiences provided for the students, and a strong, personalized education.

Allowing students a place **to find their voice**.

Small school, dynamic and loving staff, offers many things a student can enjoy and learn, **find their strengths**.

The student-teacher ratio allows for more personal teaching. **The financial means of the school allow to live rich experiences** and to support learning.

Family-like environment, really caring teachers, small school, and **very student-centered**.

Here, **it's a big family**, and all the students are known.

The fact that the students have a close connection with teach other and with their teachers creates very strong relationships. Isn't it what humans are about? **The closer we are to each other, the stronger we thrive and the greater we become**.

The **students take their education seriously and want to do well**. The classes are small and there is a very good learning environment in the classes.

Empowering young people **to be leaders** in their field of interest.

4.3.8 Conclusion

The survey concluded with a sincere thank you for their participation, and an invitation to add any thoughts or comments. Three participants answered, and all of them wanted to thank me—which is generally an unusual response after spending a significant amount of their own personal time to complete a survey. It might be because the participants saw this as a unique opportunity to express their thoughts and concerns safely and anonymously.

I would like to end this section with a quote from an answer to this final question that speaks to the perceived value of the relationship between the faculty and the students, and how special it is:

I don't have kids, but the school has given me the opportunity to experience what it is to accompany young students during the course of their education. **It is something that I have never seen in the several previous schools I've taught.**

4.3.9 Summary

The teaching faculty who participated in this survey (n=20, 44% response rate) used the Google for Education suite extensively, and all but one participant used Google Classroom for their curriculum management, which was encouraged by the school. There was no definitive centralized authority telling participants how to manage their work records, as advice came from many different sources. This led to the participants storing their work records in different locations and formats, although the vast majority used the school's Google storage for at least some of their digital records, which is also how many records were shared amongst department members. Half of the respondents were relatively confident that they could find their own personal work records from a decade ago, but very few felt that they could find a copy of staff meeting minutes, department/cycle meeting minutes, or in-school professional development notes and handouts that had been created more than three years earlier. When asked where they would go to look for those older records, not a single respondent said that they'd ask the archivist.

Seventy percent of participants said that they received at least some documentation from either current or former colleagues to support them when they first taught a class. There had been an attempt at the school to create a centralized library for lesson plans, but it was quite onerous and very few teachers participated, so the project died quickly. Those who did participate felt discouraged that they had wasted their time. One respondent said that they felt that their lesson plans could be very rough sometimes, and that they were not something that they would want to share with others. All participants said that they shared some records with colleagues, and the majority did so through the shared drive, email, or paper. Most participants would want to have an opportunity to share examples of both their professional successes and failures with their colleagues, but the majority would prefer to do so informally or through their department rather than with the whole school.

Most participants did, at least sometimes, take photographs and/or videos of their students, and most of those who did used their personal devices to do so. More than half of those participants shared some of those photos or videos with the school's communications department for inclusion on social media, but twenty percent said that it hadn't occurred to them to do so. There was a section of the school's Google drive where staff could deposit pictures and videos of school events for the archive, and just over a quarter of participants said that they had saved files to that archive drive in the past, but close to fifty percent said that they didn't even know that the space existed. Fifteen percent of participants had contributed at least one item (physical or digital) to the school's archive at some point, while ten percent were not sure if they had or not.

The areas where participants felt most supported when they began working at the school were departmental and social (compared with HR and finance)—so the smaller, more intimate, decentralized areas rather than the institution-wide centralized ones. When asked to describe their experiences when they first began working at the school, most participants spoke positively about interactions with their department and colleagues, but there were more negative than positive comments about the school's administration and leadership. Even though these participants seemed to receive most of their information and support from their departmental colleagues and heads, none of the department heads (or former department heads) who reported said that they had ever received any training or guidance on how to do their role from the school—so each department was left to do things their own way.

Just over half of the participants felt either familiar or very familiar with the school's history. As expected, this number was significantly lower for participants who were new to the school. Ten percent of participants reported that they had used any kind of primary-source record in their classroom activities, and when asked if they would be interested in using items from the

school's own archival collection in their classroom, a quarter said that they would be, and an additional sixty five percent said that they might be.

Three participants responded to the final survey question asking them if they had any thoughts or comments they would like to add—and all three thanked me for the opportunity to have their voices heard.

4.4 Archivist Interviews

To see whether some of the themes that had emerged at the case-study school were present at similar institutions, archivists from other Quebec independent schools were interviewed. These interviews also gave insight as to how school archivists perceive their role, their place within their organization, their frustrations, and their joys. Individuals in charge of the archives at five different independent schools participated in semi-structured interviews (see interview guide in Appendix L) which were organized around three major themes:

- 1. Records and information**
- 2. Archivists' role**
- 3. The schools**

4.4.1 *Records and Information*

This first line of questioning related to the records themselves. There were three sub-categories that emerged from this theme:

- **Archival management**
- **Use of archives**
- **Organizational context**

4.4.1.1 Archival Management

When four of the five interview participants began working for their respective schools, there had been no formal archival repository established. Some staff who had worked for their schools long ago seemed to recognize the fact that there were items that should be kept for posterity, but they didn't quite know how to deal with them, so they were stashed away to be dealt with another time. The fifth participant inherited their archive from a former colleague but had some very serious concerns about how things had been managed before they took over.

They never had an archivist. **It was never their intention to get an archivist...**I ended up creating my own position, when I saw that they needed to do things in an organised

fashion with some awareness of the principles of archival science, which hadn't been followed at all. I mean, **all I had when I started here was three black garbage bags of stuff**. No phone, no anything. **No chair**.¹⁵

We didn't have computers in the school, we had the old Apple II things and stuff going with that and they took me into a room beside the office now which was a French room, and opened a covering, like **reams of the old dot matrix paper rolled out on the floor** and yearbooks and stuff and they said, I need to get all of this onto something we can use on the computer so we can start talking to our alumni. **I said sure...**[I] was finding that there were places in the school, particularly in the attic, that had boxes and filing cabinets full of broken frames and pictures behind it. Huge job, huge job, and then there were boxes and cupboards inside...**just finding all the little hiding places** and stuff.

I've heard stories of what it used to do a long time ago. So, it was just like, **people would just dump, you know, like the archives in the room**, then my predecessor kind of organised it but in a very non...It was not organised, like they had just put some pictures there and some documents there. **There was no logic behind how it was, and it was, like, spread in, like, five different rooms**. And they also, there was no record of it, no system of logging information, and people would come in and out. And since then, the school has gotten bigger. So, **I've lost all those rooms**, and everything has been dumped into one giant room. So, any sense of organisation was lost when that happened. So I have to organise everything.

I walked into this little space that was across the hall from where my archives were...and found a photograph room. And there were photographs everywhere. I mean, they were literally everywhere. **There were slides in garbage bags** and the kids had just had a field day in there, nothing marked, nothing dated, right?...And **I just gathered everything up as carefully** as I could, bags and boxes, and tried to do sorting and things. I had all these, I had...I guesstimated with measuring, 16,000 slides.

After gaining custody of their collections, the first major task that all the participants had to take on was its organization and description. This is an endless task for any archivist (especially for those who mainly work alone), as it is very time consuming, not all items can be definitively identified, there aren't enough manhours dedicated to it, search requests (and non-archival tasks, apparently) take priority, and as more records are accrued, the mountain of items to be processed grows.

¹⁵ No identifiers were attributed to the participants' quotes used in this study. This was because if multiple quotes attributed to a single participant were examined together, it might be possible for the individual to be identified by their school's management.

I still have hope that I could do some cataloguing of photos, **the real archiving**.

The proper treatment for [former head of school's] files—they're there, but **they're not, you know, properly accessioned and listed** and you know, I have [colleague] trying to do box listings on them now. But getting the time is, like, I said someone else is always driving that wheel.

I have to organise everything. I bought a software this year. **So now I'm cataloguing everything.**

A major research request that came up frequently during these interviews was finding photographs of specific former students. The advancement department, which is the managing department for most of the participants' archives, is tasked with alumni relations, so being able to efficiently retrieve photographs relating to specific people or years is incredibly important. The problem is that to do so, each photograph must be described at the item level and catalogued in a database, electronic file, or indexed within alumni files.

[My priority] right now it's to organise the rooms, the boring part, but it's to organise and catalog because **it is going to make my life and advancement's life way easier** because then when you have a request from someone, it takes two seconds, type the name of the person, and then boom, you have everything we have on that person and where it is. **Right now it's not possible.** So that's the main thing that has to happen.

[About organizing and describing photographs] I always put them under decade...I have some subcategories of course...So, as I built that up it became more and more useful to me...**I realise that if I had started off with a searchable database for all the photos that it would be very beneficial to have. But this is how I started...Because it worked for me at the time,** starting very small with no infrastructure to work with whatsoever. I didn't have computer programs; I didn't have a computer. It was one of the first things I did, I inventoried the photos I had on hand just to see what I had. So, I had to start putting them in something.

I get any hardcopy photographs, I do ask that they [identify them if possible], but as I said, sometimes I get some good names on them, and sometimes I don't. So, which case, so you want a photograph of who? So they were here for what year? So then here's some boxes of these years of photos, **you're welcome to go through them and I hope you recognise them... My dream is to have a big database...**and then you launch off into your database and you say, that was me! That was carnival, that was me! That was Cadets, **that was me!**

Before any detailed photographic cataloging can happen, however, someone must have identified the subject of each photograph and have made that information available. In some cases, identifying information had been already written on the back of these archival photographs, but in many other cases, that information is just not there. A huge struggle that the participants mentioned is trying to encourage people who might know the subjects of the photographs (or could research them) to volunteer their time to help with identification. It takes a lot of time, however.

When [former staff member] was looking through the slides and finding people that they recognised, **I had them write their names down and they were noted in their files.** As I was going back and was pointing at them: **You see how long is this taking? You see what investment of time this is?** Well, you know, they were happy to do it for those, but don't think that that spills over to 16,000 slides worth of identification. That did not happen.

[The assistant archivist] does a good job of, they're going through all these old photos and **just trying to identify them** and then scan them and put them in and **they're quite happy doing it.**

[Talking about working with student volunteers] **I would like eventually to say, hey, there's this picture and we'll go through the yearbook and find who that is.** But they are also like mildly, mildly interested, the kids that I have right now. It always depends on who I get...two years ago it was just kids that had signed up for community service in general. So, they were not into the, you know, like, history of the school and all. So, it's just like listening to their music...If I continue, **I'll try to get history buffs...**

Identification is such a problem...At one point I had hoped a couple of recently retired teachers would offer some time to come back and maybe work on identifying photos, and **they all categorically refused.**

As these schools are still operating, every day more records are being created. The only reason that these archivists have any collections today was because people in the past had decided to keep contemporary records that they felt were important. It is equally important that today's archivists are acquiring today's records for preservation. This can sometimes be a bit of a struggle, however, when there is a lack cooperation from the records creators coupled with a major influx of digital records.

I have a wonderful collection of old programmes going way back. Well, how did I come into those? **I guess someone had saved a lot of them** and I continue to save them as new productions were launched here and **I'm always, always begging them** to please send me the programme! send me the poster! Or send me this, send me that!

Anything that's published or goes out usually goes through [communications]. So they have all the publication stuff to go out, and then it's kept in the various media folders and stuff that they have, published by event or by year, but always by year, but then by whatever the event or grade or a whatever it's done for.

The communications department...keeps everything and in fact, they take photos and I asked them you know, **please don't forget!**

So having that key individual seeing what's going on the floor, you know, is able to check out things that they know I would want for archives. And the same thing with [colleagues], so **they're my watchdogs. I depend on them greatly** for getting things into archives, they hesitate when they see things being tossed out of the way. You know, let's let [archivist] make that decision. And yeah, send that all down to them.

They usually know that they have to transfer to me the programmes and communications does a lot of the programmes for us so they're on top of things. They're really—**they're a friend of ours, you know what I mean?** But yeah, for the DVDs, also, there's, we outsource the person who comes in and they're one of alumni, so they know, you know, to send them in. Okay, don't forget, eh? The [recordings of the] plays, send them to me, so I have some plays here. Yeah.

The day to day...most of the emails, so I saved them and then I print them. **I ask key people to give me a copy of whatever they produce...**it's harder because there's no paper copy now, it's all by email, so I there's a couple of things that I used to get that we used to keep that **we cannot keep anymore.** And then it's telling, you know, the head of sports, you know, hey, can you transfer a copy of everything you produced, and then I'll print it.

I have gradually become a repository of the history of the school, but not ongoing History. **I try**, for example, to always acquire by going and finding it. The latest yearbook, the latest report to Corporation, the latest this, latest that. So, I have certain collections that I keep up to date to present, but a lot of my material—most of my material—is really, I would say pre-1990. **Information exploded here. Digital information exploded;** digital photography exploded.

Despite archivists' best efforts, records do get lost. This is sometimes due to them not having been acquired by the archive in the first place, a disaster, or negligence along the way. This is a frightening prospect for archivists, since the collections that they manage are filled with unique, irreplaceable, sometimes ancient records. The interview respondents expressed their

anxieties about losing records, and the methods that they had implemented to mitigate those losses going forward.

At one point, we had a Head of School...[who] had an extremely organised administrative assistant, always the same one for years...they religiously categorised and filed all their papers, all their correspondence, everything that went through their office they saved, filed. When the files became too much, I was there one day, they had put the excess in big plastic bins all in order with a contents list on the top...and those bins, because we had limited storage in school, they were renting a large space...for quite a few years, maybe 10 years, and **all those bins were carried over to that space**. Well, the [space] was renovated...and they ended the school's use of that space. We had to move everything out. So at one point, I asked what happened to all [the Head of School's] records that they had accumulated. They weren't too sure. And I don't think they've ever really found them to this day, and we're talking about that a large volume of paper. It's too bad. Of a Head of School. Yeah, all this correspondence all...**I wouldn't even know**.

That's the first thing that has to happen is that, and I guess saying that it's to **make sure that we have a copy of everything**. Paper or picture but then yes eventually probably have a digital so **if the building burns down, there's another water leak**. Then we don't lose everything forever. We do have a copy of it.

I'm often mortified by having to, you know, someone contact us for school records and have to tell them that **I'm sorry we don't have your student records**, you have to contact the government... You know, so sorry to have to tell you that, I'm sorry. We don't have your records. Why not? And **you feel like you've dropped the ball and you were responsible**. Sorry, I wasn't the archivist at that time. You know, so I can't tell you why not...But now we're with **locks and doors and, you know, access forms and separation sheets**. I'm slowly training them that if you do have access, do not take advantage of it. Please do take the time to fill out a separation sheet and put it in the place of the item. I said in case, you know, **something comes up and we have to go back and the thing's gone**.

Sometimes, when archivists discover that there are gaps in their collections, a call is put out to alumni and former staff for donations of items. These donations serve two purposes: one, to enrich the collection, and two, to engage with alumni and former staff—to show them that their school cares about them and values their memories. These donations are not always easy to come by, but when it does work out, it can be a gratifying, emotional experience for both the donor and the archivist.

[Older alumni] were wonderful. They used to give me stuff, school badges and rings and old jackets and ties and their old report cards...they were very good about that. But the ones since are not so great. It's more of an older person mentality, I guess...**the world is different now**. I don't think people save things like they used to. They're too mobile. **Everything gets tossed**. You know, it's all about minimalism, not saving physical objects. So, we'll see. It's an interesting discussion there, actually... I'm not sure what they would donate at this point. **Everything's digital**.

We did some call-outs, just general, to the alumni, seeing if they had stored, or their parents might have had it stored at their place, and **you find some stuff like that**, so you can use them to hopefully pick up some things that they remember: Oh, I had it, yeah, **it's in that box at home**. **I'll talk to my mom** and get it out or something.

Once in a while we get donations from people...sometimes we get stuff from alums that donate.

[A very old alum] kept it so close to them, and was even reluctant to take stuff out of the bag and put it on the table. But when they saw me handling it, and they saw my pleasure, and so this was your hockey jersey? And what team were you on?... And oh my goodness, **this is so neat**. And yes, this was my beanie, and you know, I said, this is the first we have in our archives, a beautiful little velvet beanie with the silver tassel...So they were thrilled, and they were thrilled that I was thrilled to be getting these artefacts...Later on that day I came up and [saw] the Director of Advancement...And they said, guess what we got today?...a [very large] cheque. That they signed after seeing the archives. So I said, excuse me, **you know why you got that cheque, don't you?** I said because that alum came downstairs, I said, and gave me their royal treasures. I said you didn't see the parting of that, you didn't see the way these things were handled. I said, this was the crown jewels. **You got money. That means nothing. This is where their heart is**. This is where their heart is.

Another way to fill in gaps in collections is through oral history interviews. Four of the five participants said that their schools had used oral history interviews to elicit stories from their alumni in the past. Two said that their interviews were organized by the archivist, one said that it was done through the communications department, and a last one had said that it was done by someone from outside of the school years earlier.

I've interviewed people. Students, mostly ex-students, **I tried that when I started**. I had a couple of those keen older alumni in who were here in the late 30s. And they were two siblings, and I recorded, I still have that recording. Tell me about your teachers. Tell me about your classroom. What did you do at lunch? You know? Yeah, **that was really fun**. **But I just never had the wherewithal to continue that**. So, you know, there's so much you can do!

If I hear a really interesting story and stuff, **I'll get [communications] to formally do a full interview, and then it can be published** in [alumni magazine] and online and stuff. So we do things like that.

I'm trying to reach as many alums as possible, ask them about their memories of the school. I've started doing that too. Yes, **once in a while I get, like, turned down**. But sometimes, you know, you get a couple that are super happy and **it creates connections**...it might be alums that you didn't know and that were very participating in events and now there's, oh, we can contact that person. I'm kind of the first foot in the door.

We've talked about it on numerous occasions. It's to get all our people in a row is not an easy thing to do. But I have talked about, with especially the history teachers, please, you know, set up an oral history thing...I would love to have a [student with a dynamic] personality, sit them down with some of our alums, and, you know, **have this little chitchat conversation about what was life like for you in school?** What do you think of when you think of [school] in your days? What did you like? What did you hate?...Or it might be a matter of getting a few of the more chatty alums together, yeah. Saying, you know, **you guys reminisce, we're just gonna listen, man**.

All respondents expressed anxiety about dealing with digital files. Archiving boxes of paper is a very different beast from archiving digital records, which requires a separate skillset. There were concerns about how to deal with the enormous amounts of contemporary digital files, how to open and preserve older digital files, and feelings of general distrust towards the longevity of digital files.

Before I arrived on the scene, **there was a major computer crash** and advancement lost a large amount of information. So, they put in place this comprehensive backup system. **I didn't trust it**, I've never trusted it. I think your chances of actually getting everything back the way you had it are pretty nil. So I keep...I backup my own information in addition. And I keep, I basically I do it on an external hard drive...I have a repository of files that I back up as a group and I add to that repository and I have a backup of my backup that I keep in the school fireproof safe, and I back it up every couple of years... **Technology has been both good and bad**, as you know, particularly in this environment, for the type of work I do. **It just it was just like this monster that came in and exploded everywhere.** [laughs]

I've got these big old-fashioned floppies [disks], I guess they were state of the art at the time here. Now nobody has the hardware to extract them to see what's on them and I'm going, really? And the school goes, **I don't want to spend the money to have that transferred**. Because we don't even know if it's worth it. And I'm like oh, you know? Now what? Now what? You know, so I said you know what happens, this gets shelved until

some...looks like a **possibly fertile ground comes through**. Oh, no, no, we have to have that done.

The next biggest task on this, and again, it's a time consumer and it'll cost, is how to manage the digital backlog we have. And **unless we can find something that's going to really make that super easy, it's like not worth doing**.

I used to get them paper. They're in there [points at computer] now... I cannot even look at it...I don't have access I, I could, sorry, I could have access, but to retrieve it, to print I believe and do it because it's all digital.

What's scary about the digital age is everyone is doing everything on computers. It's not the good old days, like when your board member says, oh, by the way, I have two boxes of documents from when I was the Chair of the Board, I would like you to put them in the archives. And I'm like, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for doing that. Because not everyone does. And especially the computer people, **they don't say, so, here's a [USB] key with all my files from when I was a director of whatever or I was a Board Chair. They don't do that.**

The management of digital photographs, specifically, is an enormous task for school archivists. Photographs are kind of the bread and butter for school archivists, as they are probably the record type used most often to engage with alumni. With the switch from analog to digital in the early 2000s, the task of preserving these photographs became a lot more complicated. Not only do digital files require significant, purposeful preservation activities that archivists might not be comfortable with, but with the switch from expensive film (and processing) to relatively cheap file storage, the sheer number of photographs exploded. And when photographs don't take up physical space in the communications office, administrators are less likely to transfer them to archival custody than they might have been in the past.

All our [digital] pictures are in [online web service]. So, I need to save them, and then I print them...I'm also in the process of making a copy of every single digital [photograph] that we have...**So a lot of my job is printing pictures.**

Our old IT person, it was a battle of wills with archival photographs because of course, **the volume of precious space they take up and costly space and blah blah blah**. So yeah, a lot of people aren't very good about actually vetting their photographs. Let's keep good ones, really crappy photos, let's actually get rid of them. They're good about taking 1000 pictures but **they're not very good at bringing it down to the 400 really good ones.**

We haven't even started work on the digital stuff yet. I mean, there's just like, probably hundreds of thousands [of digital photographs]. I mean, every school has that, **they just take so many pictures.**

I think the **communications department will always be the one in charge of modern photography.**

Despite this trepidation surrounding digital files, another major task for all archivists now (and our participants were no exception) is the digitization of older analog records. This facilitates access and creates digital backups in case anything were to happen to the original records.

So we knew we had to scan them. And then I checked around and we made a contract with Iron Mountain. So then we started our stuff from that, so our archives. And **every year we send stuff to the archives, once we have it, scanned and done**, we put it in acid free folders, we do all the things we're supposed to do. Get it off and out to [database].

VHS films, oh my God, to get them converted, **\$100 for a VHS!** I went to [a digitizing place]...Pretty good. They're nice to have. A lot of, you know, machinery from back in the days for VHS. Yeah, so they could have them converted. **We've started—watch out!**

I've digitised a lot of photography, and I have categorised my photos by decade. **I have quick accessibility to everything I digitise because of the way I've organised it.** And I use that a lot. I use it in the publications. I use it to answer queries from people. I've used it on Facebook, I often get requests; do you have a photo of such and such? And I managed to come up with something I would continually work on that I'm continually adding to it. **Will I ever have everything digitised? That is in my possession? Probably not.**

[Colleague] was really computer savvy. They got us a flatbed scanner. And by hand, most of—all what you see there we were doing on the flatbed scanner. And then [other colleague] spent hours of time doing OCR [optical character recognition]. The early one. We had trouble with any—all this was typewritten. So any little blip on your typewriter was messing up the computer and the computer's going: I don't recognise that...So all that work was done. You know, like I said, **we were just pioneers.** Let's get, you know, all the things that people are asking for a lot—the yearbook. And the histories of the school, and we have cookbooks...

I don't scan. I've been scanning pictures. But documents? I haven't scanned any, no, **we're not there yet.** I don't even think we will get to the point where everything will be scanned. I don't know, maybe, but that's not in the near future.

4.4.1.2 Use of Archives

The participants cited many different examples of ways that they disseminated (or possibly could disseminate) their archival collections. For example, they mentioned adding content to the school's website, answering specific research requests, providing material for reunions or other school events, organizing Remembrance Day activities, and creating physical displays on the school's grounds.

There was a very successful event two years ago...I participated in that. **I provided loads of photographs of students at the school in the different years and stuff.** That was a big success because they worked on it so hard.

There was a group of kids, you know, working on I think the history class, you know? And I showed them newspaper clippings. That's back in, in 2010. It was a group of kids that wanted to see old newspaper clippings. Yeah, I did. **Oh, they were really interested in that for sure.**

This [school] archive [web] page, I'll be able to build more new little, like, you know, **snippets on the school history**. So, in the future I want to, but I cannot, like, if even if I spread myself in 10 different projects, like, I'm slowing the process on every single one of them and so, eventually, yes, yes, that would be nice.

And [student] was interested in why doesn't [school] have some kind of museum thing set up? And I laughed, and said, we argue over space. I said that's why, I have said, you know, I keep saying that we deserve the old [X] building. Because it's a lovely, perfect space. And they laugh and say yeah, you're right. **That'd make a great museum.**

You can put too much stuff up [online]. It has no relevance. So, we took key pictures that were either group pictures or things who were honoured or whatever else. And we try to put those things up... The yearbooks are on there. Yeah. So, yearbook stuff is all in there. And then the [alumni magazine] is actually right on our web page. And all the previous [alumni magazines], so you can get all of those. They're all PDFs. You can download them and search if you want that sort of thing.

The main value of disseminating these archival materials was seen to be to increase engagement with different stakeholders, mainly alumni. Independent schools are heavily dependent on monetary donations, and archives are a way to remind their alumni that their experiences as students were formative (and ideally positive!), and that they should consider giving back. These engagement activities can also lead to archivists developing relationships

with alumni, which can serve to enrich the archival collection through learning more about the history of the school as well as donations of artefacts.

I found that that the key thing we're doing, the key thing for me, and this will tie into archives and stuff too, the key thing for me was that they all express this idea **that it's important to build relationships**, to continue building and not so much with me but with the school and to try and make sure that they're just, we're just always in touch. And you're just, it's the touch. It's out there. **We get to see them. We have a reunion. We have a drink.**

I used to go to luncheons with alumni...And **I would use those occasions to gather information**, right, among other things to build relationships where I could call those former students on the phone and say, **I'm trying to understand something** about how something was done back in the 1940s. Do you remember anything about it?

Through alumni relations, sometimes they do come to me and, like, request a copy of a VHS. So, I went through our [archive], you know, and I went to [digitizer], and got it done.

The school is a business, and we are a business of acquiring students, and **we are a business of getting alumni donating to the school**. And I see my job as facilitating that...they've asked for things when an alum would visit the school or for events, but even that I feel has been under-exploited.

They allowed the [alumni] to come for a tour [of the old school], and the tour fellow who's supposed to be taking them around says, oh, this part's off limits because there's construction. We're busy renovating. They were like, **oh hell to the no**. You can't tell these 60-plus, 70-year-olds and 80-year-olds where they're going in their school. Noooo. They scattered like, they were everywhere! **It was incredible to watch** this whole—they were, like, barely getting out of vehicles when they arrived you know? Struggling, kind of stiff, kind of, you know—old. **They became 12-year-olds instantly**, and suddenly had all the energy in the world for flying up the stairs, down the hall—it was hilarious! It was one of those things you wish you could have captured on camera because it was wonderful to watch as they're reliving all these memories...**Watching these alums just flip back time, and the memories come flowing out**, and you're like, I want to write this down. Please write it down. **Tell us the story.**

One participant mentioned using the archive to perhaps engage with current students' parents, and another thought that perhaps admissions could make use of archival materials to engage with prospective parents—but that didn't work out as well as they had hoped.

We have a beautiful little parent activity committee. They do help us in so many things...**Maybe they can help me, you know, do some sort of stuff, cataloguing and things like that.** I don't know if I can tell them how to do it or, you know, but yeah...I

would have loved to get more time to do it...maybe I could bring some photos out there and get them scanned.

My predecessor had built a display, like along the wall, like in the basement...And they wanted, actually, admissions, that when they gave a tour of the school that they give a tour [of the display], and they never really did. They did it the first week, and then **they stopped because they realised that people don't care about the history of the school** necessarily when, you know, that's not one of the reasons why they want to come here.

A few of the participants mentioned privacy concerns when disseminating records. Schools hold many record types that are sensitive in nature, most importantly student records. In all the schools who participated, while the students are in school and the student files are active, they are not in the custody of the archive. However, once the students leave the school, in some cases, the archivist takes over management of the files. Two of the schools send their inactive student records to off-site storage, and three keep them on-site. Three participants never see the student records, and two of them become in charge of them once they're inactive. One respondent spoke about how they triage the student files after they are no longer students:

I'm the one who culls the files because when they graduate, they're no longer a current student. And **by law, there's only certain things you're allowed to keep**...You're only allowed to keep their last report card. You should have their last report card whenever they left, the last report card. You can't keep anything that is detrimental, anything that is disciplinary, conflict—that has to go, because that's nothing to do with them being an alum. We keep their admissions records so that we know when they were here, their parents' names and stuff are on there, if there's anything good, you know, a good...we put an article or something in or whatever else we can keep that. **Good stuff you can keep in, bad stuff you can't because they're accessible.**

Another participant, however, talked about their own school's student files, and how they contain more than just the 'good stuff'. They mentioned how they don't allow people to see the 'bad stuff', because they don't want to hurt feelings unnecessarily. They wouldn't want to permanently remove any part of the file, however, because it is a historical record that shows how the school functioned during its long history.

[A former student] might want to see their student file. I need to see it first. To see if there's anything. **I don't want people to see a painful letter written about them, you know?** This, this person's a total mess up. As a university, you really ought to consider twice...[laughs] you don't, you know? So some records can get, you know, not shared with, like I said, you don't want to hurt feelings... I guess do a little triage of their file...It does no purpose to hurt their feelings with some of the commentary that was made at a time when they would never have dreamed that they are— the adult person will be able to see that, you know where **they might have even thought twice of writing it and putting it on paper.**

4.4.1.3 Organizational Context

Each school's situation is unique, which affects how their administrative records are managed. In terms of purely physical infrastructure, some are in a city where space is at a premium, others are in more rural areas and can afford to sprawl somewhat. Some use off-site storage for a portion of their records, and others can keep everything on site.

My limited space has been a huge issue. **I don't have space to properly store things, to properly work,** to keep people from dumping piles of stuff on me.

I have about 633 boxes there, at Iron Mountain. And of course, some of them are archival and some of them are semi-active...91 in the vault—**this is the good material—the archives.** And then the ones downstairs which I have to take care of, there's about 100.

You know, well, unfortunately, there's security issues, but also our problem. **And space.** You know, we're always living in the moment, and oh, we need a yearbook room, and ooh, **that room across the hall from archives is a good space. No, this is dedicated space!**

The participants spoke about the budgets that they received from their institutions for archives management. One of the participants was a director, and oversaw their departmental budget, so they had a lot of flexibility when it came to spending. That said, they did mention that many archival tasks that they would like to do weren't necessarily a departmental priority, and that they would rather spend their money on other things. Most of the participants said that they did not have a problem securing finances for smaller, day-to-day expenses such as boxes and

folders, but that if they wanted to spend outside of their regular budget, such as for a storeroom refit or a large digitization project, that they weren't certain that they would be able to get permission to do so.

Money has never been a problem. If I need something, they gave me an account number. And I would always need to get approval for any major expense like you know, over a couple hundred dollars, but any routine expenses were always you know...always approved routinely. And then they used to ask me once a year, do you foresee any major expenses because we're preparing our budget for the department. And that was when I was buying steel shelving and a lot of supplies. So I would give them a figure for that. Or sometimes I had big projects, like I did a massive display project...so, **I budgeted in advance** for all the framing and all the stuff. They were all archival photos. So, for the digitization, the printing on nice paper that, yeah. So but money has never been a problem.

I get right now, [amount] per year. This is what I got, I think. My first year I got [twice the amount], and **then it was cut in half**. Because I didn't use it, like, I learned that you need to use your full budget: notice they didn't use it that year, so we're gonna cut. Um, so they cut it in half. And that's what I've been able to keep. Because I've been using it. And I use it very fast too. Because if you don't use it, at a certain point...they'll take your budget and give it to [other programs]. **So yeah, so I use it fast. I use it quickly.**

I have to ask my supervisor, like, let's say, [to scan all the yearbooks]. Oh man, I had it almost there, back in 2017, it was [amount], but they didn't want it. So, they said no, and I went a couple of years back too, and **they said no. So right now, I'm not saying anything anymore right now...** If I need boxes, let's say, there's no problem. I'm gonna, you know, buy them and all that, but...for big projects, like if it's over \$1000? I can't, yeah no, but \$100, let's **say I want my Hollinger box from Carr McLean? I'm going to go buy it.**

All the participants noted that their historical archives were generally kept separate from their school's active and semi-active administrative records. In two of the cases, the participants were actively involved in the management of at least some of their school's contemporary administrative records, and in one case, the archivist was aware of what administrative records were being created and kept in close touch with the administrators, but wasn't very involved in those records' management. In the last two cases, there really was a distinct separation between archives and administrative records: Those archivists didn't seem to have much contact with the other administrative units at all.

When I first started here, I wanted to know what their retention schedule was. And basically, they just fulfilled the provincial norms, you know, for financial information, which they still do to this day, **but I'm not involved in that**. But when I first got going here, I made a recommendation that they **establish a comprehensive archives for all**, all the academic records, the financial records, the faculty files, the headmasters files, which were all managed as independent entities. And there was no comprehensive accounting for all these different sources or streams of information other than maybe the financial and **they never responded well to that**. They didn't really see that they had the space or the need for it.

[The school has a retention schedule], **but it's not for me**, it is for the business office. And so they're the ones who keep all the papers. **We have an archive room in the back here**. So every year they have all these boxes. There's all their accounts receivable, accounts payable, things they have to keep...as far as the business office every year, they take everything for the year, they box it up, once they've done and the auditors have been through, and then it gets sent off to Iron Mountain...**They bring the boxes to us, and then we put the stamps on them and archive**.

I started here in [year]. In contract basis, you know, for the records retention schedule, that's for the government. We needed to inventory the whole files, back then you know it's paper copies. **So it was like going through filing cabinets**. You know, in the archives, they already had some archives...then a couple years later, I tried so, if you needed my help, you know to implement, yeah, implement in a way the records retention schedule. **Only when they get to semi-active. Because to implement active was like, I was not capable**.

Not all schools prioritize or value their archival collections to the same extent. The interview participants all mentioned that archives are not always given the priority that they feel that they should have.

They asked me to create a [digital] photographic timeline for the school[’s website]. And boy, I worked on that thing...And **I was so stupid**. I thought that would be permanent. They changed servers, and they lost the whole thing. They can never recuperate all that work I had put in...I thought, okay, I'm creating something of permanent value here. And **they didn't see it in that way**.

And they seem to have the impression they could destroy everything at seven years. And I said no. You can't. I need your general, you know, ledger information. Or even trying to convince foundation that they should be responsible for their archive? No, no, we're responsible for what's here and now. We don't need to be responsible for what? No...**They're not invested in anything they can't see an immediate use for**.

I mean, we could. I could add [another archive staff member] but I think the point is, **it's not a high priority for me at this particular point. So many other things are**.

It's sometimes like **fighting to make sure that they don't dump the archives at the church where it's all mouldy** and everything...[laughs]

One participant told an astonishing story that demonstrates what can happen when administrators place little value in historical records. Decades ago, this participant's school had acquired another school. The records for the newly-acquired school had been left behind in their old building, and after some time had passed, the acquiring school wasn't able to get custody of those records because the new building's owner wouldn't hand them over. Two of this school's young alums (in their 20s) decided to take matters into their own hands, snuck into the building one night, and put as many papers as they could carry into bags and brought them over to the acquiring school. To this day, the contents of those bags make up the bulk of the records from the original school. The current school archivist had a chance years later to ask an administrator from the time why the records hadn't been brought over when the school had been acquired, and shockingly, they said that they had been specifically told to leave them behind.

Don't bring your—that luggage of [previous school] with you, **you know you have to leave that behind, you're part of [new school] now**, and you're going to learn about our school and our way of doing things. And so they said we thought that there would be a time we would go back and slowly kind of incorporate, but they said that just never happened...so they very much got that impression that you're a [new school] person now, you're in the—top down mentality of this school. **We don't want to know about that [previous school] part.** So, they said, I honestly don't know what happened, what became of the records.

Some of an institution's contemporary records will ultimately become its archival records, so it does make sense that archivists should be involved at least somewhat in their management to ensure that they are preserved appropriately. Since they cannot possibly manage all these records personally, they need to implement policies and procedures to guide the records creators on how to best deal with their own documents. Depending on the strength of the relationships between archivists and their school's staff, these procedures can be followed

closely, largely ignored, or, as was the case for most of these interviews' participants, a bit of an enigma.

They were talking about conserving certain items in a more systematic way, or at least preventing the ones that they had, the stuff they had collected, from being thrown out. **They were kept in cupboards here and there.**

[Discussing whether the marketing department is preserving the school's contemporary digital photographs] Hopefully they are...we have not...when you're [part time]? No, **you don't have those conversations.** You just hope? **You hope.**

I started off trying to put in place, for example, **systems for teachers who ended their employment here**, whether through retirement or otherwise to turn over their files, and I'd provide boxes and things for them. But **I had very little compliance with that.**

One participant had a staff intranet where important documents and policy/procedural information could be found by staff, and their compliance levels were relatively high. Making the information readily available seemed to make a difference.

I told everybody how to do it. I did a procedure and all that, so they have to start doing it every end of the school year really basically, you know...**They're pretty good.** Yeah. Some of them you know, every year it's okay. It's once a year they do it, you know what I mean?

Without having authority over other staff members or centralized policy, archivists are dependent on enforcement from school leadership to ensure that records management procedures are followed by staff.

I'm used to having an admin that has a mind of their own, you know, and they're not responsible, and recordkeeping and things are treated in ways they shouldn't be and, you know, but you talk to deaf ears. You know, when you're talking to the head of the department...saying, you know, something really needs to be done about your little [records management issue] you have going around, because things aren't being properly taken care of **if they don't take up arms for you and make the decree.**

I don't know if being **maybe under the head of the school, archives maybe would have more power.**

[When asked if they had a records retention schedule] No! I tried to make one and you know, **when they realised that the archivist was dictating to the offices?** That little

hierarchical thinking was still in place. Not so much now, but there was—Yeah, no, they were like all **you can suggest it, but...**

When there is no mandate from management, a school's archive becomes at the mercy of staff good-will and compliance. This, however, according to some interview participants, is not something that can be counted on.

[Talking about a teacher who donated some records to the archive] And they brought me a box of things. Quirky things, but interesting things. Yeah. **They were the only one who ever did that.** The others, it was a no go. So, I think in a school where there's ...today there's turnover. You don't have people for 40 years. And everything is lost every time a teacher leaves. Now maybe there's not that much of value. **Who knows?**

But the [department] is bad about making sure the archivist actually has their earlier records, but then the question comes up...But you're the [department], and **that's exactly where that contract should be.** You should have that information, and why don't you? Oh, because **we needed room in this filing cabinet.**

4.4.2 Archivists' Role

All five participants held the title "archivist" except for one who was a director whose mandate included the school's archival collection, but they had been charged with the archives for decades, well before they held their current role. The purpose behind these questions was to discover what it was that these professionals did as part of their jobs, what was expected of them, what the reality of their situation was, and where they fit into their organization. There were three sub-categories within this theme:

- **The role of archivist**
- **Their situation**
- **The organizational context**

4.4.2.1 The Role of Archivist

The participants were asked about what types of tasks that they do as part of their jobs. All of them mentioned traditional archival tasks: there were appraisal activities, such as meeting with donors and discovering records in nooks around the school; archival management activities, such as arranging and describing collections, facilities management, security, digitization, and attempting to manage born-digital records; and dissemination activities, such as creating exhibits (both physical and online), aiding researchers, and writing articles.

I think it is a dual role. **I think it's archivist historian.** In the case of a school archivist. It's so much more than just filing things and conserving things. **It's making it all make sense.**

I got involved in a lot of different things and I think **it was actually the different things I enjoyed the most.**

Performing research also emerged as a very important part of an archivist's role—to properly describe and use a collection, one needs to be knowledgeable about it. Archivists will often become the local expert on their institution's history and alumni, so when questions arise, they are either expected to know the answer or be able to find it. This ongoing, growing body of institutional knowledge is often documented, and these information files become an incredibly valuable part of the school's records.

I'm also trying to dig everywhere else to find, you know, **like missing pieces.** So, the BAnQ [Quebec National Library and Archives] has a lot of newspapers that they have scanned, so I'll go and try to, you know, like, find articles about the school that we don't have and then find a copy...Right now it is just in my brain, pretty much...But yeah, **I'm gathering a lot of information right now.** And not just about the school, but the city, the town and even the region, as well. And eventually, yeah, eventually my goal is to start writing more papers **to share the knowledge.**

I got into researching all the alumni who died in the wars, and **I have a whole drawer there full of my research on them, which has proved very useful actually over the years.**

Finding out who played, you know, football in 1967, if there was a winning champion game. Yeah, **we want to know who the people were,** so we put that stuff in [the

database].

Of the five interview participants, two worked part-time at their schools, and the other three worked full-time, but they also worked on non-archival tasks. Not a single school employed an archivist to work full-time on archival work. These supplemental tasks included advancement activities, clerical administrative work, writing and editing for the communications department, and teaching history. Archivists tend to be detail-oriented, organized, creative solution-finders, and passionate historians—so once their schools recognized how valuable these employees were, they were asked to take on more, different tasks that were considered a higher priority than archival work. In the interview participants' situations, these extraneous roles played up to their unique skillsets, but they also took time away from their archives.

Then I got into writing again, I got into writing for the magazine, I got into editing for the magazine. **Once they recognised my editing skills, I started editing things other than the magazine.** I started editing all kinds of stuff where they wanted a polished finished product.

Office support is giving support to the receptionist, to the administrative assistant...**They need me [for something], well I leave everything behind, and I go.**

They said, we need this...**can you do both the [teaching] and the [archives]? And I said, sure, sure. I could do that.** So, I'm doing all these things.

4.4.2.2 Their Situation

In terms of education, only two participants had any kind of formal archival training at the university level: one had their master's degree in library studies, and one had an undergraduate minor in archives and records management. One had a Bachelor of Arts in history, another a Bachelor of Education in history, and another a master's degree in educational administration. All participants had, however, clearly educated themselves on archival best practice and their collections were very well cared for.

That's when I went back, and I took [an archives] course and did reading...I had to just do a lot of reading on my own really. But **that gave me enough of a grasp of archival principles that I could at least apply the most basic aspects here**, you know.

I did a minor in records and archives management. That's why I was, I did the record retention schedule, I did the inventory, but then it was it's—as you go, you know what I mean? Like **I didn't have so much experience when, you know, I just had university**. So that was it.

[Talking about their predecessor] So they were able to get, like, to laminate a couple of things because they thought you thought you could un-laminate. And we had a letter from Buckingham Palace that they glued on a poster...GET THEM OUT! They had no idea what they were doing, right? So...and I'm not, I'm, like, **I'm obviously not trained in that, but already some stuff makes sense**. I make sure that you don't heat the room 'cause they used to—it was, like, little things like that.

Three participants had had another permanent employee on staff to help them out with their archives, but two of them didn't last long. Three mentioned that they sometimes received help from their school's students, two had volunteers, two had archival interns, and one received no help at all. The participants weren't always enthusiastic about the help that they had received: Archives need to be treated in a very specific, very prescribed manner, and unless those helping are capable and enthusiastic, they are often not much help at all.

Every year they ask parents, would you like to volunteer to help with this or that or the other, like in the shop, right?...**But I never wanted anyone interfering**. I didn't want anyone tying me down, having to come in at certain hours, giving them stuff and then they don't do it properly, etc, etc. You know, so I just thought no, **it would actually be a hindrance. Unless they were an archivist**...Once I actually had a brief internship with a person from the [local college] technician program, yeah. And I agreed to that to see what it would be like, and **they actually were great. They were very professional, very mature**...I gave them an assignment, which they started, didn't finish, and then their stage was over! Yeah. You know? And they really hadn't gotten that far into it. So, um, that was my one experience with that.

We always do all our scanning and photos into [database]...So we're doing that, but it took years, and so in the beginning I was doing it, and it's okay, **I can't do all this and all the other stuff I'm supposed to do**. But what I found was I hired students [from the school] for the summer. But you know, they were great. They would come in and they would work for eight hours. And they, you know, they'd go through this stuff, and they'd love the scanning. So, we had we bought scanners and everything else, they had to scan and do it and do their computer work. So, they got a chance to do this stuff...they were excited to do it. And when you have two of them there, they're just talking all day

and doing it and helping each other back and forth. And just, it's an easy day for them, easy gig. And **it got a lot of work done for us that I don't have to worry about.** Yeah, you know, and then I check what they've done after, so I'd see it you know, and see if there's something, an anomaly. And say, okay people, be careful when you go—I don't want to see this stuff like this, it's gotta be square, it's got to be this, you know, and you put the names underneath, make sure you type it correctly, because we're going to take that and put it out. If you don't have to check it again, it's even better. But **we always check it**, to know that they would take the care to do it.

No, no volunteers. Because what's happening is, by the time I explain and everything...and plus, in the summertime, I'm not even here, like you know? [The school] closes, shuts down... no, **I can't. And that's it. So, I'm on my own**, I do what I can.

We have a club that we have, a couple of kids that will help out once a week... I just make them like, uh, I have piles of papers and I'm like, separate it in decades, or when it's separated in decades, separate it in school year, and that's pretty much what they do. I've told them to put pictures in the right folders per year. **They're very slow, because you know, they're teenagers, right?** It would go a lot faster if it was me.

Worst case scenario, it's just me. Best case scenario is what I have right now: I have the intern thanks to the Young Canada Works program. And I have a volunteer parent who has worked in archives before, so they were familiar with some of the processes and things and are an excellent help of, you know, another person helping with the research and that, as **we're called upon for all kinds of crazy requests.**

Scheduling and salaries were topics that were brought up by most of the participants. Since none of them work full-time on archival projects, most participants wished that they were given more time to dedicate to archives. One talked about how they spent extra unpaid time at home on archival work. Another, however, was not looking for more hours and was happy having a flexible, part-time schedule as they had a family and other things going on in their life that took priority.

They gave me part time. I would do [records management] on Saturday and maybe sometimes Thursday, Friday night... and then I left for a couple years. and then I tried again here...Do you want me to do archives? **I was always, you know, willing to do archives, but they couldn't give me full time.** So I said okay, anything else? So they gave me office support and archives. Now I'm full time.

I was taken on at that point as a part-time hourly employee with no benefits, okay? **But I could set my own hours...**I made a big campaign to have a salary...And so they conceded to that but very minimal wages. I didn't complain. They've since been more

than doubled. **But it's not what I would earn in the outside world, let's put it like that.**

Well, officially [I work with the archives] three hours per week, **but I definitely do a lot more than that but it's just I guess on a voluntary basis...** Sometimes I do three hours a day, right? So now I work during breaks and on weekends at home. **I just love it.**

If you had somebody who's like, 50% attention was on [archives], more of this stuff would probably get done and catalogued. **But there's nobody here who has 50% of the time for you to do that.**

[My schedule] depends on my boss, depends on when I have time, like last week...I had fewer hours [at my other job]. Can I put in more hours here? And it's, **oh yes, please do!** You know, or this summer, I don't have as many hours at [my other job]. Can I put in more hours here? Oh yes, please do! **Other times I'll hear oh, we don't have money in the budget for that. But we have money for a golf tournament.**

The participants spoke about their physical working conditions. Archivists generally are accustomed to working independently in storerooms, isolated from the rest of the staff. Sometimes their storerooms are in pretty dire straits, which besides being unpleasant, can sometimes lead to dangerous situations. Their jobs are also physically taxing, as they have to move heavy boxes and items around. Dust and dirt also play a large part in their professional lives, not only because they're working with very old records, but often because archival repositories need to remain secure, so they are not usually cleaned as often as other areas of the school.

About two years ago, I was putting some things on a shelf of a standing unit. And **when you're in there, no one knows you're in there. And no one hears you if you're in trouble, right?** And it was after hours when everyone was gone...It was a little more wobbly and I didn't realise how wobbly and I was carefully putting some stacks of framed things on it. And the whole thing started to topple toward me, the entire thing! And I was using all my strength, like Superman, to slowly push it back. And then it was wobbling like this, and I almost got crushed by that thing! I never told anybody here what happened because **I was afraid they would say you're not allowed to work here alone anymore.** So I never told them. You know, I've had some interesting things happen here.

[My work area had] no windows, no nothing. **I worked in there for 14 years in the tunnel.** I loved it because I didn't care what's happening outside, I never saw it. It could

have been a nice day or a crappy day, it didn't matter, which suited me fine 'cause I just worked at it. **I'm a workaholic.**

The physical working conditions actually have been quite challenging. I didn't fight that because I was willing to put up with it. **I was more interested in the work than fighting for, you know, a pretty office or something.** But I put in a lot of hard physical work here...I think a school archivist should be someone who really is willing to, to heft a heavy box, to climb up on a ladder, to endure a lot of dust and dishevelment in their space, because it's not a front office, you can't wear a pretty little suit to work. You're going to get filthy every time you come. You're going to be breathing, probably all sorts of allergens. And **it just goes with the job.**...But when I think of some of the stuff that I've put up with here, it's amazing, and I saw what I did, though **I got very proud of it.** I thought. People see me carrying these heavy boxes around and I just say, oh, don't worry, it's fine. I do this all the time, you know. And I got really strong! I mean, **I can lift boxes like nobody!** [laughs]

I've heard stories of what it used to be a long time ago. So it was just, like, **people would just dump, you know, like, the archives in the room.**

When facilities are prioritized and properly funded, however, it can make a big difference to both the collection (as records enjoy being secure with a specific temperature and humidity) and the well-being of the archivist who works there. During one of the facilities tours after they were interviewed, one participant proudly showed me their recently-renovated storeroom, and it was glorious. They said that an alum had seen the old archival storeroom, was horrified by its condition, so gave a large donation to the school specifically to create a new home for the school's archival collection. The archivist did note, however, that if that money hadn't been strictly targeted towards the archives, that it would almost certainly would have been sent elsewhere in the school.

All participants spoke about how overwhelming the job can get at times. It is worth noting that all of them were only offered part-time hours for archival work by their institutions, even though for most of them, their biggest stressor seemed to be the lack of time to get things done.

I just never had the wherewithal to continue that. So, you know, there's so much you can do...you know, **it's endless.**

Yeah, we have lots, but they are totally not treated. Totally not, **because of the time and the human investment**. So that again becomes quite a challenge.

You do what you can. Yeah, well, I put my energy elsewhere. Like, I have so many projects, so many things I want to do that I'm gonna work on things that I can work on, and improve, and then **the rest I just put it on the back burner**.

I mean the archives. Certainly, if you have the time, the money, and the inclination, **you really need people to do this. This is not another job that I wanted to add on**. I mean, I did in the beginning because I was the only person here. Okay. Understood, but I knew it had to be started. I figured hopefully once it started, maybe I'll get more people.

I don't have time. No. **I don't even want to get into that. I can't. I can't**. Yeah, so basically, I just do the minimum, because if they wouldn't give me so much, I could maybe even update this. Even get the storage boxes that are in storage that are there temporarily...I got plenty. And you know, they'd save us more money for storing, right? **There's lots that I have to do**.

I need like some kind of like, list of priorities because I'm being, like, sometimes I get bombarded with, like, oh can you do this? Can you do that? And this? **And then I'm like, woah**.

I just never get around to getting in there.

Despite all the struggles and the sometimes-questionable working conditions, these archivists all seemed to love their work, and showed a real emotional attachment to the collections that they managed. They received genuine pleasure and satisfaction from working with archives, and their enthusiasm was contagious.

I just loved [archives]...I just was passionate about it, and just started getting involved...there was no official position at the time, [previous archivist] was doing it too because they liked it...I was already into archives, so they said hey, you know we could create this position for you, and we'll give you more money...so that's how I think it got officially created. But **I love it, so I do a lot more than what I'm supposed to do as well. And I made it what it is now**.

These little payoffs that come from unexpected sources helped me to realise the value [of what I do]...I still tell my students no matter what you do in life, set out to find where your heart is. Because it will not matter, truly, will not matter how much you earn, how much you're paid, what you're paid for, no no no. **You have to find [where] your heart is, because that's what's going to make your work worthy and make you feel that I'm here for a reason. I said it's going to feed you back**.

There's been some wonderful moments and times here when I've really been so pleased at the reception things have received or the work I've done, and that's why I'm still here, right? Because I've had a sense of accomplishment and appreciation...It's been, it's been a really great experience. Um, I, if I were to do it again, is there anything I would do differently? Probably not...**I did have years where I was just bursting with enthusiasm**...there were things that were so rewarding...So no, it's been great. I'm sorry. I've mentioned some of the frustrations but, you know, that goes with it.

Some also expressed appreciation for being asked by me to talk about what they do.

Archivists often work in isolation, so being able to share stories about the work that they do and network with another archivist seemed to be gratifying.

And it's kind of fun to talk about all of this. You know, whatever. **No one else is interested!** [laughs]

These aren't meetings...You know, a cohort in another school doing a lot of the same work that we do here?...**This is a relationship-building and stewardship thing.**

4.4.2.3 Organizational Context

Four of the participants worked out of the advancement/development departments within their schools, and one worked out of finance. Sometimes it took some time for their schools to decide where their archivist should fit into the institution's organigram, so some participants had been moved from other departments, or from being their own standalone entity.

I was more under the communications... the Director of Communications actually, and **I worked equally for advancement and communications.** And then they switched me to advancement.

I have floated, **I have floated. I kind of am in the no-man's land**, like, when the position was created it was a new position, and it was I was not assigned to someone in particular, like a department in particular. I was kind of like, yeah, I've been under one person to the other. And then I recently just asked at one point, I was under the Head of School, um, and I just asked if I can go kind of be under, you know, like, advancement and work with them...when I have projects and when I have an idea I, sometimes I run through [the Director of Advancement], sometimes I run through the Head of Communications at the school, who's also like, who kind of was involved with the history of the school before, you know, I came in and they're still doing stuff on that as well. So, um, yeah, **we kind of work as a team, I guess.**

Despite being seated under a departmental director, two participants mentioned that the work that they do is quite independent from the rest of the departmental work, and that their directors generally just left them to their own devices—which they tended to appreciate.

[My director] **interferes almost to no extent with what I do**, yeah.

...you met [the Director of Advancement]. **They're kind of a little bit my boss.**

Being left alone, however, can also have its drawbacks. If an archivist is expected to preserve the documentary evidence of their school's functions, they need to have an awareness of the school's activities and access to the records that are being produced. Participants mentioned that to effectively do their job, they benefited (or would benefit) from having close contacts throughout their organization.

I'm so dependent on making sure that the powers that are in the offices keep aware and make sure the archivist gets information on these things.

I gave up because **I just didn't get the cooperation I needed**, and I couldn't even anticipate going to look for something because things happen here all over the place. **There's so much going on and I'm not here all the time.**

I don't know what they create in, you know, in the digital format, right? understand? it's only the paper format. So, I don't know.

To cultivate these professional contacts and increase cooperation, the role of archivist needs to be understood, respected, and valued by non-archival colleagues—which was, unfortunately, often not the case.

[The role of archivist is] not really recognised as a fully professional position at the school. **It's more recognised as something helpful to have around if you need it.** But a lot of people aren't even aware it exists. Even if they've been told about it, it's, you know, they don't quite get it, which is just as well, because I have plenty to keep me busy.

Like I said, with having an IT person it's, like, **the last thing on earth we need is archives.**

I think the information we provide is rarely just at our fingertips. We do have to put things together for people and **that's what they don't see, that's all done behind the scenes.** Yeah. So, you know, that's just part of the job.

So that's a challenge, of convincing powers that be that investing time and energy and staff in [the archives] department is worthy. Because one thing, you're always asking [archives] for things, so do you realise [what goes into that]? [whispers] **They have no clue.**

It used to be nothing. It used to be just, oh, it's [former archivist's] playground and you know, they're just, oh, **they're cute with their stuff.**

Related to the idea that school colleagues don't always fully understand what archivists do (or could do), access to records and information emerged as a problem for some respondents. As the keepers and protectors of all the school's information, it would make sense that archivists should be given access to all informational systems within their school. Sometimes they were, but other times, they were not.

[Database] is mainly used by the faculty and the people in the admin departments. It covers everything from class schedules to student records to God knows what else. I'm not on [database]. **I was never even asked if I wanted to be.**

They do have information on alumni, don't get me wrong. On [advancement database]. Yeah...And **I don't have access to it. I don't think they'll give it to me...** So, yeah, because I don't have carte blanche.

All the interview participants discussed how the work that they do, when it is recognized by their colleagues, is highly valued. This positive recognition seemed to contribute significantly to their job satisfaction.

I was really providing a service that they'd never had before and **the people who benefited from it were very appreciative.** I started to feel quite fulfilled by the work I was doing here. I was getting some recognition for it.

They're seeing the potential...like I started putting pictures on the [school's] alumni page so that you have alums coming more to events because I reached them. So, **I'm constantly selling my potential.**

When they said, you know, oh you're such a wonderful archivist and **what a treasure for the school**...I said I'm so honoured. So, you know, I just, wow, I said, I can pat myself on the back for things, and **hearing that from them was, it meant everything.**

4.4.3 *The Schools*

This final line of questioning was about the participants' impressions of their schools and their students. This was to get different viewpoints on the characteristics of independent schools to compare with the data collected from the case study school—which elements are the same, and which are unique for each institution. When asked to describe their schools, all the participants had very good things to say. The smaller schools focused on the sense of community and closeness that develops between their students and teachers, and the larger schools tended to focus more on the opportunities afforded to their students. They all agreed, however, that their schools were wonderful, and that any child would be lucky to go there.

It is a very top notch, modern, forward-thinking, innovative and successful private school. It's at the top of the lot...The quality of everything here is absolutely amazing. The opportunities that are presented in terms of global involvement among the students, the exchanges...We wished our students to become versed and what it is **to be a world citizen**, to know students from other countries, to interact with them to exchange ideas...It's a rich school of people. The donors are extremely capable of pouring money into the school and they do. Our endowment has soared. Not without work, but we have a huge endowment. We have a lot of bursaries.

[What makes this school special], I would say, is **the faculty culture**. And the reason I say that is because everyone's finding out the whole thing about mental wellness and, and faculty that care for each other...It's got to come to the top down because they're not used to it. It's not a bottom-up thing. This is the administration saying, you know what? You're important. And they're finding this in the research for the business that when the company starts focusing on its employees and their efficiency and their well-being...You know, **the school is what it is because of the faculty.**

It's a unique **progressive school**. Everybody now is like, you know, saying focusing on the child, we did that back [when the school was founded in the early 20th century]. **Small groups**...and we continue today to have that, and you know it's the kids, really.

The kids, that is, we don't have to tell them to move to our rules but you know, it has to be a freedom of expression...They give them beautiful classrooms, you know, to express themselves, and also to do activities, like you don't see anywhere else, I find. You know, ideas, and self-expression, you know, **and no restraints**: I have that idea. Let's go for it, explore it, you know, by your own, and that makes the difference. So **they're not scared when they go to college**.

I know when we say that we're a small school, **we're like a family**. It's the ratio. Um, I know that this is one of the things that we sell to parents. I know that we're pushing more and more, we're becoming more and more a hockey school. So we're recruiting a lot of people for hockey. **But I think it's the family atmosphere**. And it's the smallness, the small groups. That's what we sell as well. So that's our main thing, I think.

Community, the connections. You know, when you're a student here, even the custodial staff will know you, know your interests, know that you're on a hockey team or you're, whatever you're, you know, if you show any connections, any visibility to them, they will connect to you. You will not feel like you're a fish in a very large pond. **You'll feel the bowl**. In a good way.

Participants were also asked to describe a typical graduate from their school. Four out of the five mentioned that they would be academically prepared, three said that they would be kind, respectful people, and two discussed that they would be part of a close-knit community of other former students.

Well-prepared academically for any higher education that they should choose given, given their own personal limitations or talents...more than well prepared...There's a real recent emphasis on **building the whole student**, the mind, body, heart...There's not a spiritual element here, although it might creep in in subtle ways from other things, but preparing the whole person, the person who is confident, who whose differences are recognised, who respects their fellow students and **respects people of diversity**. There's a big been a big push here to diversify the student body so that it's not all white rich kids...Very lucky, very lucky child to go to this school. It's not for everyone. I think a real introvert...it would be challenging but **there's so many support mechanisms here!** There's so much mentoring.

I'd say they'd had the opportunity. **Each student had the opportunity to experience as much academic and experiential activities as possible in the time that they were here**. They've probably developed...a set of friends that they will keep for life...So you've got somebody hopefully who's going out who has an open mind and feelings...the kids learn about their own culture. Culture giving, okay? Basically **their time, their energy, their empathy**.

Oh my god, **free. Beautiful future, happy, happy person, kind...** They're so ready, and they're so smart, you know? But good people and, you know, go-getters, leaders. Yeah, definitely.

They're ready to go to university. They're usually independent. They're organised. They have good study method. They usually know how to combine a very rigorous sports schedule to an academic schedule. We're kind of known for being very demanding academically wise... We have a lot of athletes. So yeah, we prepare them to continue in their athletic field and at the same time have good grades. So, it's varied, I mean **we have a very, varied background when it comes to where they're coming from as well.**

The community is a connectedness, because that's what I hear from the people when they come back. It's that feeling of I can be [school] class of 2007 but I can, you know, go to a reunion of [school] people in London, England, and we're all together and all like somehow family, like distant cousins, and you know, that's exactly how I've heard it described: Like we're family, we're distantly related to each other because of underneath this one little banner that holds us together... If there are outliers out there, of course, we're not going to hear from them... but boy, this was, you know, meant the most to me. This was like a life experience that I carry with me always... **Something little, you know, falls off and stays with them.**

At least two of these schools had been involved in horrifying scandals during their histories relating to sexual and physical abuse. When asked about these incidents, both archivists were clearly devastated about what had happened, but seemed glad that they had the records available to be able to help the victims with their court battles. They were not looking to hide any part of their institutions' histories, even the ugly parts.

I have the experience of talking to, you know, grads who are, you know, from the 40s and 50s, in the 60s and 70s, and the stuff and having all of that and, and having the same stories. I mean, **it can't be wrong. Different people from different decades telling me the same style story.** Now, we had our problems, we had our lawsuit, you know, everything else went through all of that, and that, and that, that killed me because they—all the names had to be vetted through me [as the archivist]. So I found out everybody who was on, **I just I felt so badly...you're talking about a terrible feeling.** And I met a lot of them after, you know, and some of them had talked to me anyway. And they knew that I had to look up stuff, and that that they were here at that time. And I said, look, I said this school has apologised. And I certainly, I said, I had no idea. And I worked with [the abuser]... it was very, very, very tough. But even through that, you know, they came back to the school, they came back to the school. And **I think it's because they knew there were other people there who really cared about them.**

Historically, there had been corporal punishment within many of these schools; sometimes imposed by staff, and sometimes by other students (especially prefects). There were certainly abuses of power, and children suffered for it. For kids who attended these schools, physical punishment was not necessarily considered irregular, but they could sometimes get out of control. It appears alums have been able to gain strength from each other, knowing that they were not alone in their experiences.

We've had, well, as you know, tense situations over the last few years, truth and reconciliation, and [abuser] and their unfortunate legacy... **It's a context of the time** and it's a recognition that what was being done...the first heads of school here, the first schoolteachers here, were all pulled out of England, you know, there's nothing homegrown. We didn't have anyone decent enough here... **so the traditions that were there were here**... It didn't matter if you were [a child of the Head of School], you still got the same treatment...There was not a favouritism there. So, **the pain was shared**... And behaviours, then that would have been seen as part of punishment, now can be looked at in a different light under different viewing...What the student saw as punishment, the adults would assume was only being meted out responsibly... I think what their comrades coming to them and saying, listen, you know, we were there, too. We get it. You know, **we may not have suffered as you did. But we were there too**, and we want you to remember the good times, the best parts, the camaraderie, and team sports, and the games, and the fun times, and this is what we would like to remember of each other. So, you know, let's set aside the nastier parts and let's focus now more. So, I think the reconciliation part has been fairly good.

This is one of the many reasons why school archives are so important, so that we can learn from the past and understand what people went through during different times. Perhaps that reflection could discourage some of these atrocities from happening again.

4.4.4 Summary

Five archivists from five different independent schools in Quebec were interviewed. When most of the participants began working for their respective schools, there had been no formal archival repository established.

One of the most common research requests that these school archivists were presented with is finding photographs of specific people or events. Unfortunately, many of the subjects of the photographs in their collections are either unidentified or uncatalogued with the names written on the back, so not easy to retrieve. Trying to get volunteers to help with identification or transcription, however, sometimes proved to be difficult. The digitization of these photographs (and other records) was also an enormous, and costly, job.

When the participants discovered gaps in their collections, they put a call out to alumni for donations of materials (which was sometimes met with mixed results), or used oral history interviews, both of which also helped to promote engagement with alumni.

All respondents expressed at least some concern about dealing with born-digital files: How to manage the mass influx of them, how to open and preserve ones that are already older, and how to mitigate their own scepticism about the longevity of all digital records. Digital photographs specifically were a large concern, with most participants leaving their custody and management to their respective communications teams.

All participants had found themselves in the privileged position of being the local expert of their school's history and traditions. They spoke of the information files that they had created to document and easily reference all aspects of their school's stories, and how these files had become extraordinarily valuable and important archival records in their own right.

Most of the participants said that they had far more work to do than time to do it in. Not one of them was authorized by their school to work full-time on archival tasks. Most had sought out help from students or volunteers, but the reality that they had found is that while sometimes the help was wonderful and welcomed, in other cases, helpers actually created more work as archival tasks, if done properly, require a lot of patience, training, and attention to detail that not everyone is made for.

Some of these archivists spoke about how they often felt detached from the rest of the school staff, and how there was a disconnect between the historical records and the contemporary ones. They sometimes struggled to get access to information, records, and systems, and relied heavily on sympathetic managers and colleagues to ensure that records were being deposited with the archive, but that compliance was not consistent between departments. Some participants had been officially tasked with current records management, and they were able to enforce certain procedural rules for the transfer of records to the archive, but for the others, acquisitions were inconsistent.

In describing the condition of their archival storerooms, the participants spoke of working alone (or with a helper), hauling heavy boxes around in what was often described as less-than-desirable conditions. However, despite their (justified) complaints, all the participants genuinely adored their work and the collections that they managed with such care and tenderness. They all told heartwarming stories of wonderful experiences of when their work helped a colleague, uncovered long lost truths, saved the day, sparked the imagination of their students, or made pensioners feel like children again. Speaking with these impassioned professionals was an inspiring, heartwarming experience that I feel humbled to have been able to share.

4.5 Functional Analysis

Please see Appendix I.

5. Discussion

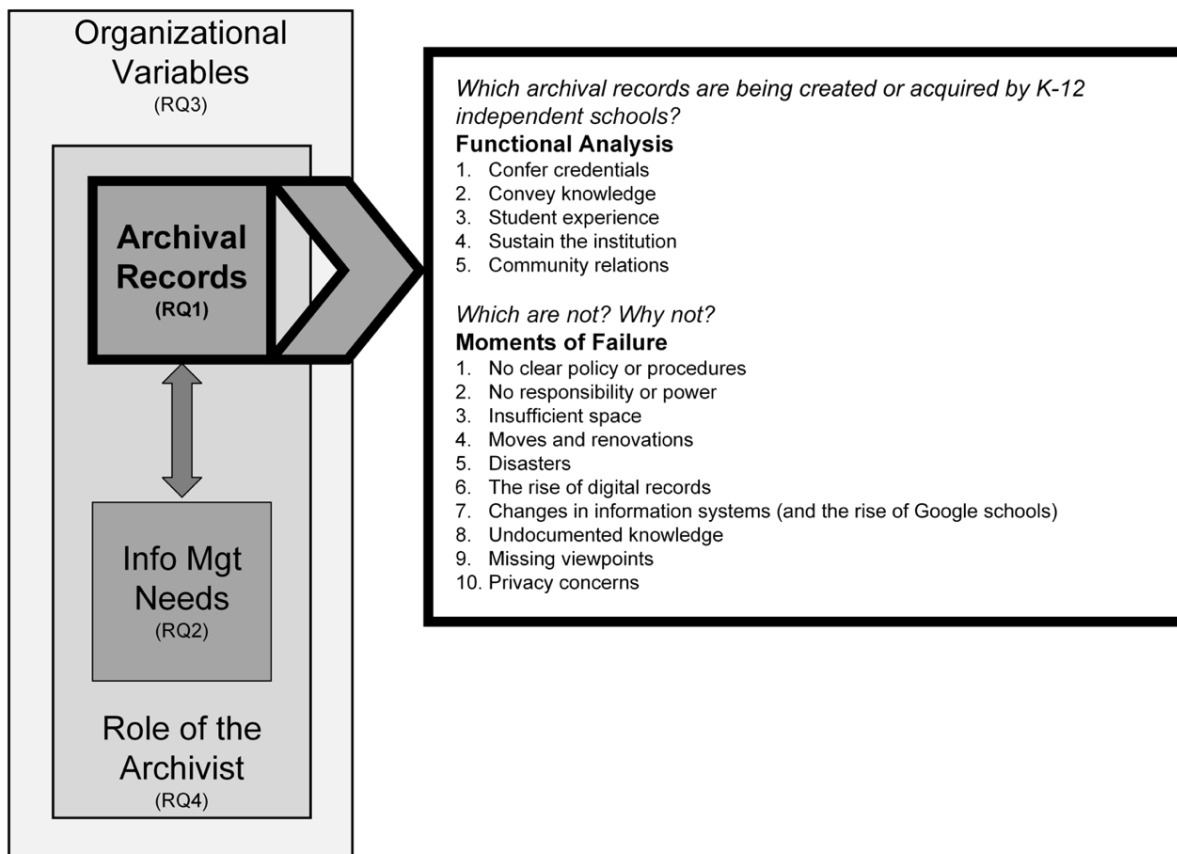
This research explores the relationships between the specific information management needs of independent K-12 schools, their archives, the role of school archivists, and organizational variables that could be important regarding information management. Both the literature and the data collected infer the presence of potentially valuable mutualistic relationships between schools, school staff, and school archivists that in many cases are not being leveraged. This research investigates why this might be the case and discusses different ways of approaching school information management that could greatly benefit both the schools and their archives.

Each section in this chapter addresses one of the research questions (see Section 1.2) as illustrated by the conceptual framework (see Section 1.3).

5.1 RQ 1: Which Archival Records are Being Created or Acquired by K-12 Independent Schools? Which are Not? Why Not?

Figure 5-1

Conceptual Framework: Archival Records



Schools, like all businesses, create records that evidence the work that they do. Some records must be maintained for legal or financial reasons. In Quebec, the following records are mandated by law to be retained either permanently or for the long-term (over 75 years) (Fédération des établissements d'enseignement privés & Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2016):

Constitution
Policies and procedures
Official declaration of registered students
Statistics, research, and annual reports
Student lists
Report cards

Statistics about medical services and incidents at the school
Employee and payroll files
Staff insurance records
Staff pension records
Union accreditation records
Collective agreement records
Employee grievance and labour dispute records
Audited financial records
General ledger
Campaign finance records
Foundation records
Major contracts
Acquisition and disposition of capital improvements, buildings and land
Major renovation plans
Legal opinions
Legal proceedings
Access to information request rulings
Legal deposit ISBN list for publications produced by the school
Classification plan and records retention schedule
Records detailing the conservation, digitization and destruction of business records

The case study school was generally quite good about keeping those records, especially report cards, employee files, and financial records. These records alone, however, do not tell the story of an institution, so other records should be preserved for historical, community, brand, and accountability purposes. No school is forced to keep photographs, video recordings, yearbooks, student-produced publications, information bulletins sent to parents, cafeteria menus, examples of uniforms, activity schedules, class trip itineraries, presentations from student assemblies, promotional materials, copies of the school's website, examples of class work, lesson plans, programs from theatre and musical events, copies of speeches, posters, information on student clubs and committees, details about school events, registers of student volunteerism, student support program outlines, testimonials, science fair posters, trophies, alumni newsletters, school bus routes and schedules, obsolete classroom equipment, job descriptions, social media posts, or community event details, among others. There is extraordinary value in these types of records, but without purposeful intervention by an archivist, because they do not have to be kept, they oftentimes won't be.

The exercise of producing a functional analysis of a K-12 school did not only produce a summary of the records that exist in school archives (see Appendix I), but also provided significant insight into those that are not, but perhaps should be. This brought up questions about why this might be the case, which led to the identification of ten moments of documentary failure.

5.1.1 Moments of Failure

School archives are made up of records that document evidence of a school's functions. Not all institutional knowledge becomes codified as records, and not all records do (or should) become archives. In both the administrator and archivist interviews, participants spoke of records and information being lost and/or not making it to the archive.

Figure 5-2

Relationship Between Records, Knowledge, and Archives

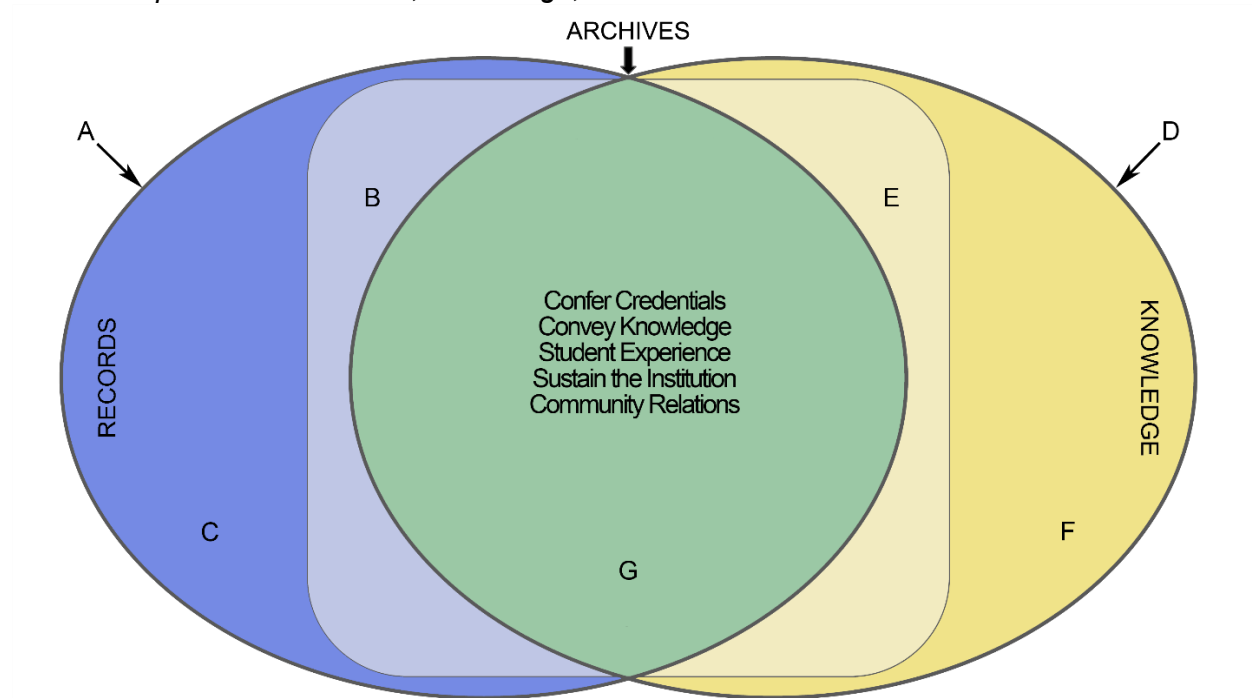


Figure 5-2 illustrates the relationships between an independent school's records, its institutional knowledge, and its archives. The square in the centre (B, E, G) represents all the school's functions as identified by the functional analysis: **confer credentials, convey knowledge, student experience, sustain the institution, and community relations**. The circle on the left (A) represents all the records that are created or collected by the school—where it overlaps with the functions (B, G) represents the records that are created or collected that support those functions and should be archived. The area outside of the functions (C) represents records that are created or collected but should not be retained permanently (not relevant, duplicates, drafts, sensitive material...).

The circle on the right (D) represents all the institutional knowledge of the school's staff, students, alumni, and other stakeholders. As with the records circle, the area that overlaps with the functions represents knowledge that relates to those functions that should ideally be captured and retained (E, G). The area outside of the functions (F) is knowledge that does not relate to the school's functions (or should not be documented for, say, privacy reasons or due to its informal, ephemeral nature) and would not need to be codified or archived. The area in the centre where the two large circles intersect (G) represents the knowledge that has been codified as records and has been archived.

The areas marked B and E that are within the centre square but outside of G represent gaps in the archive: significant information that had not been codified (E) and significant documents that aren't in the archive (B). This research identified ten different moments of failure found in schools that could contribute to these gaps:

1. **No clear policy or procedures;**
2. **No responsibility or power;**
3. **Insufficient space;**
4. **Moves and renovations;**
5. **Disasters;**
6. **The rise of digital records;**
7. **Changes in information systems (and the rise of Google schools);**

8. **Undocumented knowledge;**
9. **Missing viewpoints;** and
10. **Privacy concerns.**

5.1.1.1 No Clear Policy or Procedures

In both the administrator and archivist interviews, as well as the faculty survey, many participants brought up that there were very few (if any) information management policies or procedures in place at their schools. Administrators repeatedly talked about how they were having to re-invent the wheel whenever there was any kind of transition (such as a job change, new employee, a retirement, or having new tasks assigned), and faculty spoke of how they often had to figure things out for themselves. As there were no centralized policies or procedures regarding information management, different departments chose to operate in different ways, creating silos that made it more difficult to collaborate with other teams. Where important information should have been systematically documented, such as taking minutes during staff meetings, nobody had been formally tasked with the responsibility, so it would often slip through the cracks. This all led to the loss of important institutional knowledge, as well as frustration amongst staff. This is not unique to these schools: The literature speaks of a lack of information management policies in many institutional archives, including colleges, universities, small businesses, and local governments. This research confirmed the findings from the literature, but also specifically demonstrated the negative effects that a lack of structured information management could have on individual school staff and the toll that it took not only on their work performance, but also on their emotional well-being.

In 1986, a task force from the Society of American Archivists came up with several goals and priorities for archival professionals, one of which was “Participate in policy making about the creation and retention of records. Technological change, legislation, and organizational structures are important factors that affect records creation, maintenance, and preservation.

Archivists must analyze such factors and intervene as necessary in the creation and retention process to assure the preservation of historically important records” (SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities, 1986, p. 12).

When dealing with cases of abuse, proper policies and procedures are vital to ensure that documentary evidence is preserved. In a report on the abuse of children in Scottish residential schools and children’s homes during the second half of the 20th century, it was noted that records were often very difficult to come by. “When people left or retired from organisations, they often took with them significant knowledge about records and past practices. Records were scattered across organisations, archives and even countries. Some records are now being examined; others sit in boxes on shelves with little or no hint of what they contain; others were destroyed” (Shaw, 2007, p. 5). Grant & Heinecke (2019, p. 215) listed a number of current issues in the United States that allow teacher offenders to be hired or remain hired that could be addressed with more robust, centralized information management practices, including unsearchable child welfare and criminal records; non-existent national database of incidents; poor recordkeeping; confidentiality agreements; underreporting; unawareness of policies; lack of training; informal reprimands; informal or mismanaged investigations; and limited evidence. In a Canadian report on educator sexual misconduct and assault (Stop Educator Child Exploitation, 2022), researchers found that many schools’ procedures for dealing with teacher discipline were one-size-fits-all, where tardiness and rape were managed following the same formula, and that school staff were unqualified to deal with these reports competently or fairly. The researchers could find no evidence on how these schools managed their internal investigations (p. 8), but it was clear that in most cases, committees were made up of unionized teachers whose role was to protect the rights of the accused, not the child accusers (p.10). The Canadian Centre for Child Protection (2022, p. 32) identified problematic issues surrounding the safety of children in Canadian school settings, some of which have to do with policy, procedures and

documentation, including the lack of independent oversight and transparency in processes and decision making; reporting protocols that are not fit for purpose that fail to catch early indicators of problematic sexual behaviour; and inconsistent recording of reported incidents or concerns, leading to insufficient documentation and the inability to monitor personnel behaviour over the long term.

5.1.1.2 No Responsibility or Power

Every archivist interviewed spoke of a time in their school's history before there had been an archivist on staff, and of the records that had sadly been lost during that time. They described the state of their archival holdings when they began their employ: boxes in offices, garbage bags full of documents, photographs in broken frames...there was even a story about a dramatic middle-of-the-night heist by former students to save their school's records. This vividly demonstrates the importance of having a key person on staff who is responsible for their school's archives. "[A]n archive will function best when administered by a full time professional with the authority to run the archive" (Shkolnik, 1990, p. 20).

In addition, the role of school archivist needs to be recognized as a professional who is responsible for the appraisal of contemporary school records across all departments, and as such, with few exceptions (such as counsellors' notes), should have full access to all active institutional records and databases. "Visibility and authority make possible a vital role in the company and are the goals for which business archivists must strive" (Gardner, 1982, p. 295). This issue came up repeatedly during the archivist interviews, and the only participant who did not feel overly restricted when it came to access to their school's administrative records held the rank of director (who, of course, had very few access limits, if any at all). You cannot have responsibility without power, and archivists cannot appraise records that they don't even know

exist. "Archival organisations have a 'top-down' monitoring role as do corporate archivists and records managers...You cannot easily monitor that which is not known to you" (Upward, 1997, p. 19). Staff need to be made aware that the records that they create at work do not belong to them, but to their organization, and as such, they cannot be possessive over them, and they must allow access to the person who is charged with their safekeeping. "It must be made clear through a directive from management that the archivist has full and clear authority to collect information from all departments of the corporation" (Shkolnik, 1990, p. 20).

5.1.1.3 Insufficient Space

Both the literature as well as this research indicated that archives have often suffered from a lack of physical space for both storage and processing, so archivists have had to be choosy during appraisal in deciding what is accessioned, with decisions coming down to legal requirements and perceived future historical significance (Winget & Ramirez, 2006). Both the administrators and the archivists discussed this problem during their interviews. Some administrators expressed concern about the lack of space for storing paper files, and that they either had to be moved to alternate locations or destroyed to make space in offices. The archivists all spoke about how storeroom space is at a premium, and that the limited space that they have is often encroached upon by management for other school needs. So even if they do have space, they can't count on it in perpetuity, because when school populations expand (as they often do), one of the first spaces that is sacrificed is storage. Schools sometimes attempt to remedy this situation through offsite storage but having that physical barrier to access discourages use. Digitization (with the originals sent to offsite storage) was cited as a possible solution, but that takes time and resources.

5.1.1.4 Moves and Renovations

Related to the problem of limited storage space is what happens to office records during a move or renovation. The administrators who were interviewed told stories about a construction project that had taken place at the school a few years prior, and that quite a few paper records from before that time had disappeared during the upheaval. In the archivist interviews, one participant told a story about how several boxes of historically significant records were hastily sent to an informal off-site storage during an office move, never to be seen again. This problem comes down to the fact that there is often a lack of policy and procedures for school records management: If there had been clear, documented guidance on how to care for records during an office move and a strict tracking system for those records during times of transition, many of those losses might have been mitigated. This was noted as a problem when trying to track down records from Scottish residential schools: “They’ve often been moved, for example when services close, or move, or management changes and for lack of storage space. When this happened the transfer wasn’t tracked, making it difficult, if not impossible, to know where records were sent” (Shaw, 2007, p. 121).

Digital records can be also impacted by virtual moves and renovations. One archivist told a story about how they had worked enormously hard on a dynamic history timeline for their school’s website for an anniversary. A few years later, the school upgraded their website to a different platform without consulting with them and the timeline was lost before it could be migrated or archived.

5.1.1.5 Disasters

“Even companies situated in so-called safe areas or away from concentrations of essential industry or services have an obligation to plan for protection against nuclear attack and possible

sabotage” (Shiff, 1956). While there may not be much aside from off-site backups that archivists can do to protect records from nuclear war, there are much more prosaic calamities that can befall archival storerooms and servers such as fires, floods, and computer crashes where damage can be mitigated with appropriate interventions. Fortunately, this study’s participants did not experience many disasters—during the archivist interviews, there was a mention of a computer server crash, and another of a small flood in a storeroom where some of their school’s records were lost. Most of the archivists did, however, speak of their fears of losing records. As such, they were all quite cautious about making sure that their storerooms were as safe as possible as well as creating copies of their important records so that if something were to happen, that they would have backups. Most were wary of trusting computer systems.

Administrators also seemed aware of the potential for disaster, and some said that they kept backups of their files. This might be why there were so few dramatic incidents mentioned in the interviews because people had been so cautious. A flood or a fire seems like an obvious risk even to those without archival training, and IT staff are normally quite careful about maintaining adequate backups for digital records. There are however always people who take unnecessary risks, such as storing their digital files on their local computer’s desktop rather than on the protected server or keeping boxes of files on the floor of the boiler room. They may have been relatively lucky so far, but luck has a terrible habit of running out.

5.1.1.6 The Rise of Digital Records

Depositing boxes of paper files with the school’s archivist has always been seen as a normal, necessary task by school administrators to free up office space. When digital records began to outpace paper ones, the space-related impetus to proactively deposit records with the

archive was removed. Due to this lack of motivation by staff and no clear policy mandating the appraisal and acquisition of digital records, loss through neglect was inevitable.

The case study school from this research project started using computers for administrative purposes in the late 1980s, but the earliest digital files in the archive are from around 2005 with just a few sparse examples from the mid-1990s. By the early 2000s, the use of digital cameras had begun to overtake analog cameras for documenting school activities, and as such, the boxes of printed photographs in the archive began to dry up in the early 2000s. Unfortunately, the school was lax in preserving copies of those early digital pictures that had been created, so those from the early 2000s to around 2015 are either extremely low resolution or completely missing: Over ten years of photographs are dramatically underrepresented in the archive. Most of the archivists from other schools that were interviewed said that the situation was similar or even worse at their institutions. The case study school was lucky in that their older file server, while not currently being used, was still able to be accessed in a limited fashion. Many of the files from the shared spaces were extracted onto an external hard drive and minimally processed by the archivist, which is the only reason that the archive contains any older digital files at all. In many cases, however, when an older system is replaced by a newer one, archiving the legacy files isn't considered a priority, often until it's too late.

5.1.1.7 Changes in Information Systems—Google Schools

In the late 1990s, the school established a local file server and began providing email accounts to staff and students in 2001. Both legacy systems were replaced by the Google for Education suite in 2016. For a short time, IT maintained both email systems—people could access their older emails on the legacy platform but had to use Google to send and receive email. They tracked how often staff would log into the old system, and usage dropped to almost

nothing within three months of the transition. This is interesting because during the interviews, many staff members talked about how they used their email accounts as a kind of personal archive rather than copying attachments to the school's Google Drive. However, in practice, it seems as though they just didn't refer to their older files at all—at least not if it necessitated logging into a different system to do so. As one teacher said in the survey when asked where they would find an older document, “everything **before Google...may be hard to find.**”

Now that the school is fully a Google school, they are in good company: In April 2020, over 120 million people worldwide were using Google for Education (Yeskel, 2020). This is hardly surprising, as Google offers tools, email accounts and significant storage space to schools—often for free. The case study school had been paying tens of thousands of dollars a year for their old email and file servers, and they didn't offer nearly as many functions as the Google experience. As expressed in the interviews and the survey, the school's staff and faculty enjoy the collaboration features, the cloud-based storage, the ease of access, and the tools that integrate seamlessly into the classroom experience. Google for Education seems like a perfect solution for schools, but there are some areas of concern. “[Translated from the original French] [C]loud computing [...] is very practical but poses data security challenges for organizations” (Bourhis & Denis, 2017, p. 39).

In terms of access, it is helpful that files can be retrieved from anywhere in the world. This became particularly useful during the global pandemic when staff and students were all working from home. However, it does necessitate stable Internet access—if the Internet is out, nobody can access any of their files unless local copies are maintained (and they generally aren't).

Being a Google school means being entirely dependent on an external company for one's business records' continued integrity. In their terms of service document, Google says that they guarantee to give at least 12 months' notice before discontinuing “any core service,” but also note different circumstances where they could suspend service, including if they cease business

operations or to avoid a “substantial economic or material technical burden”—so if the program becomes financially unsustainable. They also say that they only have to give 30 days advance notice if there is a change in pricing, so if a school is using the free service and Google decides to impose a fee, the school would have 30 days to either agree to pay or to quickly find another solution and migrate all their data. If the agreement between Google and the school were terminated for whatever reason, the school would lose all access to their data (Google, 2021), which would be removed permanently from Google’s servers within 180 days (Google, 2022).

In terms of data privacy and intellectual property, Google claims that client data stored on their servers belongs solely to the client and that Google will not make claims over it and “will use reasonable care to protect against the disclosure of the disclosing party’s Confidential Information”—although that would not limit them from sharing data due to a legal proceeding, a government investigation, or if not doing so could lead to death or serious harm to an individual (Google, 2021). Google details all of their very impressive data security measures in a data processing amendment document, but also vaguely states in the terms of service that the amendment could be changed if it “is commercially reasonable” (Google, 2021). Google also says that all customer data could be stored within any country where it has servers, so the schools have no control over the jurisdictions where their files are kept (Google, 2022). Google describes the painstaking precautions it takes to protect customer data, including security and multiple layers of redundancy for its backups (Google, 2022), but also makes it very clear in bold lettering that it can only be held liable for data loss to the tune of \$1,000 USD or 12 months of customer fees—whichever is higher (Google, 2021). So, a school has little to no recourse if Google loses all their data. The case study school seems quite comfortable with their arrangement with Google, however. As one of the participants in the administrative interviews said, “we’re in the same boat now as thousands of schools across the world. So **if Google**

doesn't play nice, there will be a market for people who want to switch, and there will be competition in that market.”

In terms of how Google benefits from this relationship, they receive significant feedback from educators about how to improve their systems, which is extremely valuable for research and development. As opposed to how they manage regular public accounts, Google claims to not use any information gleaned from their education accounts for marketing purposes, so they are ostensibly not profiting that way. They are however cultivating an entire generation of future customers: Once a child becomes accustomed to the Googleverse, they are likely to continue to use that familiar system after graduation (Singer, 2017), moving to a public commercial account that offers far fewer privacy protections.

The Google suite is user-friendly and lends itself well to content creators who are not altogether interested in actively managing their information. “[S]ites such as Gmail are perfectly suited to the benign neglect that users often demonstrate when it comes to managing their content” (Lindley et al., 2013, p. 792). However, ensuring the long-term preservation of digital files from within a cloud storage service is currently more complicated than from a local server. Unless their digital content is tracked, regularly audited, exported, migrated, and backed up on a redundant system, schools are taking on significant risk. Google schools are trusting a commercial enterprise with the safekeeping of their digital assets which, as discussed earlier, can end very poorly. “Google is a library or an archive in the same way that a supermarket is a food museum” (Scott, 2011, 38:53). In return for a free, well-designed digital infrastructure that staff and students alike are enthusiastic about using, schools are being forced to place their faith in the sustainability of a commercial profit-motivated cloud-based service (McLeod & Gormly, 2017, p. 349) that, without thoughtful, purposeful intervention, will almost certainly end in important records being lost.

None of this is to say that schools should not use Google or any other cloud-based commercial solution, but they should be aware of the risks and take necessary precautions.

5.1.1.8 Undocumented Knowledge

A continuing observation that came up in the administrator interviews was that whenever a staff member left the school, that they felt that their department was affected negatively due to significant institutional knowledge leaving along with them. If that knowledge can't even be found by colleagues, there is next to no chance that it will end up in the school's archive. Knowledge assets, when codified or encapsulated, become tangible (M. Evans & Ali, 2013, p. 156). These tangible assets could be archived, and since most school archives do not have the resources to create detailed finding aids for their administrative records, these tangible knowledge assets would not only be records in their own right, but could also provide contextual information that could add significant value to a school's entire archival collection. One could even argue that it should fall within an archivist's purview to facilitate the capture of significant tacit, intangible assets into codified knowledge containers. This would encourage contemporary knowledge sharing amongst school staff as well as ensuring its preservation for future archival reference. "[K]nowledge management is of increasing importance in modern organizations, and there are links between ECM [enterprise content management] and knowledge management. ECM implementation within organizations is underpinned by the idea and practice of information sharing. This enhances knowledge capture and knowledge transfer" (Svard, 2013, p. 167). This link between records management and knowledge management has been acknowledged by other scholars: Duranti and Xie (2012) explored this connection, and while they did identify a strong symbiotic relationship between the two disciplines, they ultimately concluded that the two domains should remain separate but that a deep understanding of each other and close

collaboration were vital. In small institutions such as K-12 schools, however, where the likelihood of having a dedicated independent KM program or professional is slim to none, I would argue that it makes sense for the two disciplines to be amalgamated under a single information management banner. Under-resourced institutions often have to function pragmatically to best fulfil their mandates (Bwalya et al., 2015).

I am an archivist, and I do not claim to be an expert in knowledge management, but the data collected, supported by the literature, has convinced me of a very strong potential link between knowledge capture and filling gaps in an institution's archive. It is already widely accepted that oral histories can be used to complement traditional archival records, so it would be worthwhile for schools to implement proactive approaches to knowledge capture to not only support contemporary administrative functions and employee morale, but also their archival holdings.

5.1.1.9 Missing Viewpoints

For institutional archives, even in a *total archives* environment, due to legal and operational requirements, during appraisal, priority will always be given to institutional records over associated personal records. This is through no fault of archivists, who must often make difficult choices for logistical and budgetary reasons. However, I would argue that a school's most important stakeholder is its students—they are young, vulnerable, their time at the school represents their formative years, and they are the institution's main clients. Yet, the vast majority of a school's administrative records are created and curated by adults. In situations where extreme corporal punishment and other abuse had been present in schools (unfortunately, not an uncommon occurrence historically), the details of which as well as the toll that it took on the children are not always well documented. "Acknowledging that research tools will always be

partial, it then focuses on the gaps and silences in the archive, most problematically in relation to the voices and experiences of victims and survivors themselves” (Bingham et al., 2016).

It's not only important to document the tragedies, but also the positive experiences that wouldn't normally make it into a school's archive. Co-curricular clubs are often headed by student leaders, and they create administrative records that represent the club's activities from the students' perspective, but these records are not often included in a school's archive. A wonderful example of how a school activity can be seen quite differently from two different viewpoints (and the importance of documenting students' perspectives) was found in the case study school's archival collection. In the 1980s, the school organized a trip the Soviet Union for its students. The archive contains the official documents that were distributed to participants and their parents, including a trip itinerary. In 2018, the school conducted oral history interviews with alumni and one former student spoke about their time on that specific trip. Table 5-1 contains some excerpts from the official itinerary, as well as select quotes from the oral history, demonstrating the colour that a differing perspective can bring to the official record:

Table 5-1

Official Itinerary vs Oral History

Itinerary	Oral History
Today your local tour guide provides you with a once in a lifetime opportunity! Meet a group of Soviet high school students and exchange ideas and views on current events and daily life in the U.S.S.R. and the West. This meeting is especially informative since your Soviet peers have grown up under a system of government so radically different from your own.	We were staying in this hotel that had been built for the Olympics. Uhm, for the Moscow Olympics, if I'm not mistaken. And it was somewhat out of the city centre...But somehow we met these...they sort of knew to hang around the hotel...we invited them up to our room, we were just, you know, chatting with them, it was an opportunity to get to know some locals ...But we, you know we did, we had brought jeans and I think pharmaceuticals and other stuff like that. And I remember this guy, the guy who, you know, looked stereotypically Russian, said to me, okay, you've got to accompany me out to, you have to escort me out, so no suspicions, you know, are aroused. So I thought this was

Enjoy an excursion to the countryside this morning when you visit the Trinity Monastery in ZAGORSK...After dinner this evening **board a night train to LENINGRAD. Spend the night in a comfortable couchette speeding north!**

Get ready for an entertaining evening tonight! **Enjoy a performance by the world famous Bolshoi Ballet**, the State Circus or a **dance troupe skillfully performing complicated folk dances.**

On your return to Moscow this afternoon spend some time shopping for souvenirs. **Popular buys are traditional nested, painted wooden dolls** called matryoshkas and beautifully painted black lacquer boxes. Or pick up some caviar!

very, kind of, you know, MI-5, very espionage, so, yeah, I escorted this guy out and that was that, and on he went on to, I don't know, greater black-market trades.

We went to Moscow, then a monastery called Zagorsk, which was just sort of east of Moscow, then we took the train overnight to, well then it was **Leningrad, and that overnight train, uh, trip, was just like total adventure.** It was total adventure. **We had our bunks and whatnot** and we, you know, left Moscow and woke up in Leningrad. And Leningrad is, architecturally, a total wonder. A gem.

So we went to the opera... But I do remember we went to the discotheque the first night, and we brought tape cassettes of Michael Jackson, or somebody had. So we kind of just—I can't say that we engulfed the discotheque, but we were, just, there was a whole bunch of us and in we went. And lo and behold, there were some Hungarian international students...And so in comes this sea of, what, we were 17-year-olds or something like that, and it was like [snaps fingers] instant, and trays of shots of vodka just came flowing out, somebody threw this tape cassette to the music person and in went the tape cassette, Michael Jackson, **and we were all on the dance floor.** It was, like, just amazing.

[S]o we're having a bite to eat and it's close to this tourist store, and the woman who was waiting on our table, **I'd just gotten, you know, a babushka doll**, I was bringing home, and Russians could not buy in those shops, it was just tourists. And evidently, they couldn't, so she couldn't go in, couldn't buy a babushka doll, and she asked if she could buy mine, and I regret now, sadly, I did not, um, sell it to her, because I could have, you know, in theory, gone back and shopped and gotten another one. I still have the doll, and that memory.

If students generally are underrepresented in school archives, marginalized students are even more so, as their unique perspectives often wouldn't have been considered important, or perhaps could even have been seen as threatening to their organization (Alexander, 2012, p. 136). This could include members of the LGBTQ+ community, racialized communities, children with disabilities, those who suffered from depression or anxiety, the financially disadvantaged, those who were abused, abusers, those who became pregnant, those who kept their babies, those who didn't, those with substance abuse problems, those with medical issues...anyone who detracted from the glossy image the school strove to maintain. Any kid who didn't see themselves reflected within the image that their school projected to the world might have felt as though they didn't really belong to their school community, which is an isolating, lonely experience—and one that should be remedied through better representation (Caswell, Migoni, et al., 2016). "For communities who are pathologized and/or demonized by mainstream media (and left out of or misrepresented by other community archives that purport to represent them), self-representation can catalyse a profound ontological change, from a position of loneliness and despair to one of solidarity and hope" (p. 17).

As discussed, in cases of child abuse in schools, direct evidence of abuse is often missing from the school's records. This can be for many different reasons, including the paring down of student or HR records due to privacy concerns (J. Evans et al., 2019, p. 187), or even attempts to protect the reputation of teachers or the school itself (Grant et al., 2019). If one looks closely, however, there could be traces of evidence within all kinds of records, such as policy and procedural documents (how children were disciplined and how abuse accusations were dealt with); correspondence with parents in student files; disciplinary notes (in both HR and student files); disciplinary logs; notes from meetings with survivors, parents, witnesses, and the accused; incident logs; emails to and from the head of school; requests for schedule changes; school withdrawal forms; report card comments by teachers; logs of extended absences and/or

or health complaints; records of outbursts that seemed out of character; yearbook photographs, quotes, and inscriptions; stories in literary journals and student newspapers; candid camera photographs etc.

Teachers are also underrepresented in school archives: Other than being mandated by a general curriculum and advised by their departments, faculty are generally left to their own devices when it comes to course design and assignment conceptualization, which can lead to very creative and unique classroom activities! In the teacher survey, it was made clear that faculty had not ever really been solicited to include any of their work records within the archive. They submit general course descriptions, grades, some notes for report cards, and occasionally audio/visual materials of activities, but not much more is archived than that. It doesn't seem to occur to teachers that curricular material such as lesson plans or examples of assignments and tests could be considered valuable to anyone other than themselves. One issue could be that these types of records aren't necessarily documented in a way that is obviously conducive to sharing with colleagues or the archive. As stated by a survey participant, "[l]esson plans can be very rough written sometimes; **they can look like a brainstorm** and they are not always organized...That's why **I prefer keeping them to myself.**" The case study school had at one point in the past subscribed to a system to capture teachers' lesson plans, but it was not popular: Many chose not to participate, and those who did invested a lot of time in an expensive system that wasn't maintained and was quickly dropped. This was a step backwards for information management at the school, and it will be a struggle to gain the trust of those teachers again.

In the archivist interviews, one participant spoke of how difficult it was to get materials for the archive from teachers. They said that during their decades of time with the school, there was only one occasion where a faculty member who was leaving donated a box to the archive: "They were the only one who ever did that. The others, it was a no go...**everything is lost**

every time a teacher leaves.” Archivists and historians are very interested in the work of teachers, but teachers need to be made aware of that and, hopefully, feel encouraged to donate materials for preservation without being coerced or adding to their already heavy workload.

As mentioned in the literature review, the ownership of the copyright over a teacher's lesson plans is determined by individual schools (Blanchard, 2010). Regardless of legal ownership status, I would not recommend that schools force teachers to archive their lesson plans. Teachers work incredibly hard and do so much for their students with their own personal time and money. Good teachers are worth their weight in gold, and school leaders shouldn't ever do anything that would make them have to do even more extra work or could possibly make them feel taken advantage of. That said, if a school had an organizational culture that actively promoted knowledge sharing, faculty could perhaps feel encouraged to share lesson plans with each other. This could benefit the recipients, as they would have inspiration for their own lessons; it could benefit the sharers, as they would be seen as knowledgeable and helpful professionals by their peers and management; it could benefit the school, as their faculty would be part of a supportive, friendly community; and it could benefit the school's archive if mechanisms had been put in place to share lesson plans that seamlessly allowed them to be submitted to the archive without much extra effort on the part of the teachers.

5.1.1.10 Privacy Concerns

“[H]ow can we anticipate what children will feel in the future with regard to documented representations of their lives, and how can we create non-static archival processes that might adapt mechanisms for coding, sharing and retrieving materials that underscore the complex process of documentation?” (Emberly, 2015, p. 177). A good example of a privacy issue that emerged from this research was the dissemination of yearbooks and photographs online.

Yearbooks are publicly available published materials, and as such, one would not think that their distribution would be curtailed in any way by privacy legislation. That said, the searchability of the Internet has changed the landscape dramatically, so what was once only discoverable on a library's shelf or on a display table at a class reunion, once digitized and placed online, can now be seen instantly from anywhere in the world. Not only that, but if the book's text has been processed with OCR (optical character recognition) technology and made searchable, just putting someone's name into an Internet search engine could turn up potentially embarrassing pictures from their adolescence. It's a similar situation with photographs and videos taken during school activities that have historically formed a significant part of a school's archival collection and are often used to enrich a school's relationship with its alumni. Archivists work diligently to tag the subjects of photographs, but if those tags are included within an online content management system, depending on how it is configured, they may be discoverable through a web search as well. In Quebec, individuals can request the removal of personally identifying information that can be easily discovered through electronic search engines (*Quebec Act Respecting the Protection of Personal Information in the Private Sector (P-39.1)*, 2024, art. 28.1). Larissa Miller (2013, pp. 532–533) discusses some concerns surrounding making archival materials available online, especially those that can be full-text searched. She lists different strategies that archivists could employ, including allowing access only in-person, password protection, using forensic software to identify and redact potentially sensitive information, and invoking fair use to make collections available with a liberal take-down policy.

A privacy situation arose at the case study school during this research. Both the yearbooks and photographs were catalogued within an Omeka S site which had been made publicly available online. The school received a lot of very positive feedback from alumni, former staff, and historical researchers telling us what a joy it was to be able to access these records online. One day, however, an email was received from a former student who was very upset that when

their name was searched online, one of the first images to come up was them at twelve years old attending an elite independent school. This was not the image of themselves that they wanted publicized online. They had worked their entire professional career curating a very different persona, and they felt that this could affect them negatively. They also felt that, given some of the people that they worked with, that it could even turn out to be dangerous for them. They understandably wanted the pictures taken down. After removing the pictures from the site and going through a song-and-dance with the search engines themselves (they were very resistant to clear their caches), the problem for this one former student was fixed, but it didn't solve the issue going forward. This alum would not be the only person to want to protect their privacy, so the decision was made to hide the entirety of the Omeka S site from all search engines by protecting it with a password (rendering it uncrawlable by search engines). This meant that to find the collection, researchers had to know about the school, go to its website, find the alumni page, click on the link to the archive, and enter a password. Once in the site, the content could be searched by full-text and catalogued metadata. This made the school's history infinitely more private without rendering it completely inaccessible. One of the archivists interviewed for this project told a similar story, where a former student complained that they didn't want the school's yearbooks to be accessible on the school's website. The school had digitized over 100 yearbooks going back to when the school was founded and had made them available both on their website and on the Internet Archive. After receiving their complaint, they decided to remove the yearbooks from their website, but maintained their presence on the Internet Archive. I'm not sure if that appeased the former student, but the yearbooks are still available on the Internet Archive, along with those from a great many other K-12 schools, colleges, and universities from around the world.

Student records also emerged as a somewhat contentious issue in terms of privacy. Between a lack of professional guidelines and privacy legislation that discourages any

dissemination of student records, how school archivists manage student records can vary between jurisdictions and institutions (Stein, 2021, pp. 88–89). The Quebec act Respecting Private Education states that all schools must keep a record for each student in the form and tenor prescribed by the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports (*Quebec Act Respecting Private Education (E-9.1)*, 2024, art. 63). The Act does not specify what exactly that entails. In the guide for archives management for private schools in Quebec, in their sample records retention schedule, they make recommendations on what should be retained in student files, but in the section where they are supposed to list the related laws that justify those suggestions, there are none listed (Fédération des établissements d'enseignement privés & Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2016, p. 128). Vague guidelines can lead to confusion in implementation, which was evidenced by the experiences of the archivists who participated in this research study. When asked about what was retained within student files after graduation, some of the archivists interviewed said that they removed and destroyed all but the legal bare minimum (evidence showing what years the student attended the school as well as their final report card), whereas others maintained a more complete record that included all report cards, behavioral and disciplinary notes, commendations, and sometimes even health information. All the schools were very strict about access to these files, but what was retained seemed to come down to the risk tolerance and personal preference of each institution. One archivist interview participant spoke of how they would sometimes limit an individual's access to their own records if they found items within the file that could possibly upset them, such as a negative letter of recommendation or hurtful comments. This archivist made the decision to hold those items back because they knew that the subject would be hurt by them, despite the fact that this action goes against the Quebec privacy Act, which decrees that “every person carrying on an enterprise who holds personal information on another person must, at the request of the person concerned, confirm the existence of the personal information, communicate it to the person and

allow him to obtain a copy of it" (*Quebec Act Respecting the Protection of Personal Information in the Private Sector (P-39.1)*, 2024, art. 27). The negative impact of finding hurtful contents within one's own files is well documented (MacNeil et al., 2018, pp. 9-10), so one can understand why that archivist made the decision that they did. And given that the negative comments were created by a third party (the teacher or administrator who wrote the letter, never intending their words to be read by their subject), it could be argued that redacting those items could be justified under privacy legislation (p. 12). Many privacy laws and short retention periods are put in place to protect consumers from exploitation and abuse, but these regulations often don't consider individual and collective memory, identity, and accountability evidence that is contained in these records and would be lost if destroyed. But retaining these records when its immediate administrative purposes have elapsed and the reasons to keep them are vague or as of yet unknown can sometimes feel difficult to justify (J. Evans et al., 2019, p. 187). As such, one might be tempted to simply destroy any negative items in student files (another interviewed archivist stated that they do just that, as justified by the records retention schedule recommended by the Quebec government). Keeping more personal information about former students than legally mandated to could be a breach of data protection legislation, but one could also claim that within those negative comments could be evidence of abuse or a validation that the former student is remembering their experiences accurately which could help to support the construction of their identity (MacNeil et al., 2018, p. 4). Also, if examined all together by a discreet, respectful researcher—especially if the school holds a run of student records going back over 100 years—these sensitive, complete records could help to paint a more unfiltered picture of what life was like within these schools. "Certain collections are filled to the brim with student and faculty records...While some of these records may not seem to be of tremendous importance, they still document the history of the institution" (Stein, 2021, p. 94). Another type of contentious documentation discussed in the literature is medical records. While not normally

found in schools, these types of sensitive files could be compared with student records when discussing privacy concerns. Lorraine Dong (2015) spoke of the rich information that can be found in medical records, and the different research needs that it addresses over the course of time, well beyond the lifespan of their subjects. She argues that information professionals must take a “long view” when determining retention policies and access restrictions to these types of records.

There is a very good framework in the literature for how to balance privacy needs vs research needs when it comes to sensitive records (Holden & Roeschley, 2020). Based on it, one solution that schools could implement could be to request a financial grant to hire someone to go through all existing student records to list their contents and flag any references to questionable situations, including those of abuse. This way, historical researchers would be able to do more targeted searches rather than having to open all the student records to find what they are looking for, or even make use of aggregate, anonymized summaries. For many schools who followed government retention directives that prioritized privacy and the destruction of sensitive records, existing student files may be very limited in scope. But for those who haven't pared down their collection, using this framework could be a way to sell the idea of preserving those records to both their board of directors and the government agency charged with approving their updated records retention schedule. Regardless of the current state of their student records, all schools should be developing updated appraisal policies and procedures that balance both their need for protecting the integrity of the records under their care as well as the privacy and dignity of those who they are written about.

What is important to note is that different schools have implemented privacy legislation differently, and that there seems to be a bit of wiggle room where archival records are concerned, as long as institutions document and justify their decisions within a legally approved records retention schedule. This can lead to confusion and uncertainty on what one can and

cannot retain, but also flexibility if one plans thoughtfully. And while some board members might want to destroy all records at the end of their mandated retention period in the name of risk management, they should be reminded that risk cuts both ways (Van Camp, 1982, p. 298). “The same attorneys who advise that records of sensitive proceedings might better not be kept at all, are likely to acquire an insatiable lust for documentary evidence in the heat of litigation” (G. D. Smith, 1982, p. 288).

A final thought on privacy: One of the most exciting documents that the case study school holds in its archive is a series of letters written by one of their student boarders back in the mid-1910s. This child lived at the school from around the ages of 12 to 14 and wrote letters home to their parents quite regularly. They spoke (often quite critically in an incredibly charming, childlike way) about the city, the school, their friends, their teachers, the quality of the food...anything and everything. They are a glorious snapshot of life in Montreal during that time, and a brutally honest, unfiltered description of the school from the perspective of a student—something that, as has been discussed, is not well represented in the archive. Far more details about the early years of the school were gleaned from those letters than from any other document in the archive. This student went on to become a politician and quite a prominent member of society. A few years after they died in the mid-1970s, their nephew found the letters and donated them to the school. The creator of those letters had no say as to whether they should have been donated or made public, so one could question whether they should they have been (Lehew, 2020, p. 97). The school is certainly glad that they were. These types of records created by children are very infrequently found in institutional archives. Researcher Kaisa Vehkalahti (2016) spoke of the difficulties in trying to find evidence depicting the lives of children, but that when those records were uncovered, that they were often an incredible source of insight into the lives of this otherwise very under-documented segment of society. She argues that archivists and historians together need to have very important discussions about the ethics surrounding

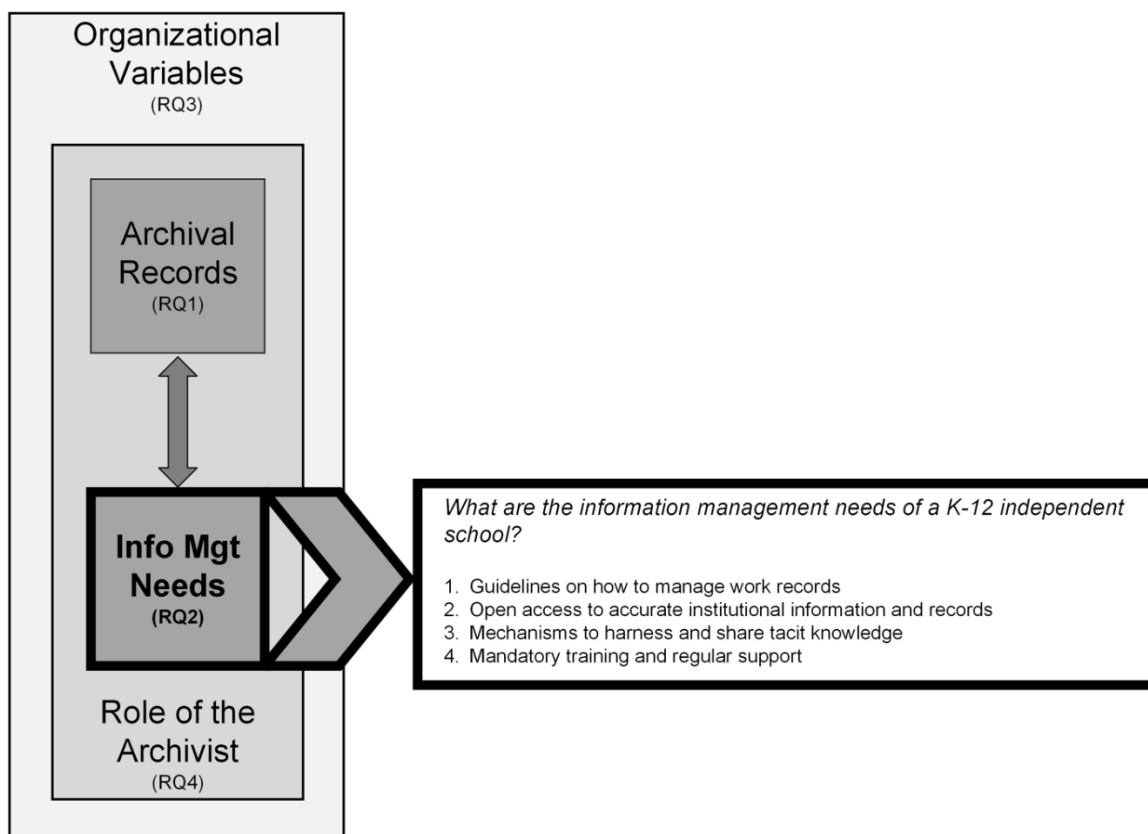
the preservation and careful access to institutional records created by and about children, otherwise due to privacy concerns, much will be destroyed.

Where possible, documented consent by not only the record creator but also any subjects represented therein should be acquired. If for whatever reason that cannot happen (if, for example, the people in question are deceased or can't be found, or if resources don't allow), archivists could weigh the risks against the benefits, and proceed pragmatically. In the case of photographs, most could probably be safely disseminated without names attached. For more sensitive records, such as personal letters, archivists could think to the future and impose strict access restrictions until the subjects would almost certainly have passed away, or only release redacted excerpts that ensure anonymity. What archivists need to be very careful of is that if their current management has a low risk tolerance, there could be pressure to destroy precious documents out of an abundance of caution. There's no coming back from that. Yes, protecting privacy is an incredibly important part of the job, but archivists must also unreservedly advocate for the integrity of their collection, if necessary, by limiting access, but not accession.

5.2 RQ 2: What are the Information Management Needs of a K-12 Independent School?

Figure 5-3

Conceptual Framework: Information Management Needs



During this research, it was observed that school staff often struggled when it came to information management. This led to frustration, confusion, redundancy, and loss of productivity. It also had a negative effect on the school's archive, as many records that should have been preserved were not.

This study found that despite most records being electronic, staff still complained that there were too many paper records, most of which had been created by predecessors, and that they weren't entirely sure how to manage them. They also were not given any consistent, centralized guidance on how to manage their electronic records, and so people did whatever worked best

for them as individuals, without necessarily considering the retrieval needs of present and future colleagues. This meant that many files were being stored on personal Google Drives rather than the shared drives, and instead of using directory structures to cluster related files together, they were often created in the root directory and retrieved by using the search bar within Google Drive. Similarly, emails were often not categorized, but left as unfiltered inboxes and sent folders. This was normally not seen as problematic until they needed to find a file that had been created or received in the past either by themselves, a colleague, or a former colleague. The inevitable struggles to find said files would lead to frustration, but not necessarily a change of habit, perhaps due to the fact that nobody was instructing them on what should be done.

Staff also struggled with the use of more complex systems, such as databases. Different departments would use the same system but in different manners, or they'd maintain different systems that purportedly held the same information, but inconsistently and inaccurately. They knew that these systems were capable of more functions than they were currently being used for, but they did not have the expertise nor the time to figure out how to configure them properly. Training was often ad-hoc, provided by colleagues who may or may not have had a solid grasp on the software themselves. Data security was recognized as important, so information and records were often being unnecessarily siloed to the detriment of efficiency and collaboration.

There was a concern that much institutional knowledge resided only in colleagues' heads, and that access to that knowledge was wholly dependent on the quality of the relationship between themselves and those colleagues. Staff tended to trust close colleagues more than those who they did not see or work with often, and many trusted management even less.

Some wished that they had had more informational and emotional support when they first joined the school, and felt that authoritative organizational information wasn't always easy to come by. In terms of how they performed their jobs, many study participants felt that they were left to figure things out as they went along, and that guidance, mentorship, organizational

standards, consistently applied procedures, and training would be helpful and beneficial. They also wanted to have a say in how things were being done, and wanted to feel as though their opinions were valued and taken into consideration by management.

Based on the research and the literature, the following four different information management needs for K-12 independent school staff were identified:

1. **Guidelines on how to manage work records;**
2. **Open access to accurate institutional information and records;**
3. **Mechanisms to harness and share tacit knowledge;** and
4. **Mandatory training and regular support.**

5.2.1 Guidelines on How to Manage Work Records

The research showed that the vast majority of contemporary records being created by school staff were digital. Most staff seemed very comfortable retrieving their own files if they had been created within the past few years. Where they chose to save those files varied considerably: local computers, the school's cloud storage within personal folders, departmental shared folders, no folders at all, and within emails. Problems arose when people needed to find records that were created more than a few years ago or by their predecessors. Quite a few participants spoke of the frustration of trying to find files created by former colleagues, ultimately giving up and starting from scratch. This is an unnecessary drain on a school's resources and a source of annoyance for staff. An article about records management with the Cirque du Soleil (Dufresne & Gratton, 2016, p. 86) discussed the struggles that the organization had when they first started using Microsoft SharePoint for their document management. As there were no guidelines in place, staff created work areas (sites) in an ad-hoc fashion, would lose access links, would forget that many sites existed, and failed to have any consistent or logical structure between or within the sites. They became very complicated to use. This led to staff sharing

documents away from SharePoint, leading to entrenched silos. Having a system in place isn't enough if it is not coupled with consistent guidelines and ongoing support.

Quite a few staff members said that they usually didn't bother creating an organizational structure for their digital records, and that instead they would find their files through their Google Drive and Gmail search bars. A 2012 Harvard Business Review survey reported that of its respondents of US workers, 76% used email to exchange documents and 59% to search for information. Half believed that using email reduced the need for other file storage methods, yet a third found email-searching to be time-consuming and difficult (Gill, 2013). One problem with this kind of file storage and retrieval is that it requires a certain situational knowledge that could either be forgotten or not passed on to the next postholder. Using a search bar to find records would necessitate knowing that the file exists, what keywords to use, or which individuals were likely to have sent related records. This is a fine system if one has a good memory and only needs to retrieve one's own files, but it does nothing for one's colleagues, those who will follow in one's role, nor the school's archive. If the school were to establish a semi-standardized folder structure (allowing for some flexibility with sub-folders), anyone could browse and see what files were saved regarding any specific school function, and they could easily be bulk exported by the school's archivist for permanent preservation.

Some may subscribe to the idea that sharing business records between departments should be restricted to a 'need to know' basis. In the interest of privacy, there are certainly some records that should fall under that category, such as applicant and student records, human resource files, and donor information. Most administrative records however should be accessible to all administrative staff, as most school functions are addressed by many individuals across multiple departments. School records however are traditionally clustered and restricted by department, so someone in advancement would not necessarily have access to the shared workspaces of the communications or finance departments—even though they often

work together. This leads to records relating to the same function being split, and nobody ever having a complete picture. Information is power, collaboration is strength, and management should want their staff to be effective. This is not possible when people are operating with limited information, sequestered from each other in their departmental silos. If people are working together, they should, where appropriate, be sharing their records and knowledge with each other. “Open and unencumbered access to records and archives supports democracy, transparency, and accountability, and helps to foster a sense of personal and collective identity” (L. Millar, 2014, p. 117).

5.2.2 *Open Access to Accurate Institutional Information and Records*

The teachers who participated in the survey reported that they got most of their knowledge, support, and socialization from within their departments, meaning that teachers’ perspectives of the school are seen through their departmental lenses.

This is a problem when institutional information needs to be consistent, accurate, and up to date—such as HR information (personal and sick days, insurance, payroll, extracurricular hours, etc.), curricular expectations, recurring events, and school rules. There needs to be a decisive informational access point populated and regularly maintained by an authoritative source rather than colleagues informally sharing anecdotes and outdated handbooks with one another.

In the administrator interviews, one staff member spoke about the difficulty they had accessing required files because the creating department had imposed access restrictions on them. Instead of having to jump through hoops to get permission to access the files every time they needed them, they just decided to start from scratch and create their own files, leading to two separate series of records about the same function, neither of which were complete nor

definitive. It is important to be protective over sensitive information, but it is also important that those who should have access, do.

School archivists could help support their staff in not only ensuring that they have access to the records that they need, but also the information that they are looking for. Teachers and school administrators are not historical researchers and aren't necessarily interested in spending time and energy looking through finding aids or a multitude of files to find a piece of information—they just want the information that they want as quickly as possible. This was the case for the archivists interviewed for this research, as most of the participants mentioned that they were often called on by staff to provide not just archival records, but information about the school and its history. The literature talks about how corporate archivists can bring extra value to their organizations by pulling and synthesizing relevant information from their records (Fogerty & Adkins, 1997, p. 20) in a timely way, becoming “an in-house reference and research facility,” (Wirth, 1997, p. 2) “as indispensable as possible to as many people as possible as much as possible” (p. 5). The archivists interviewed mentioned building up information banks about their institutions that they would refer to regularly.

5.2.3 Mechanisms to Harness and Share Tacit Knowledge

The information needs of a K-12 independent school extend beyond just its records. There is significant important institutional knowledge being lost that, if captured, could support the school's operational functions, improve employee morale, encourage a sense of community, and add significant value to the school's archive. Both the literature and this study support the idea that independent schools must be responsive and innovative to attract and retain students. A recent study demonstrated that organizations with strong knowledge sharing practices amongst their employees were more competent in chasing open innovation, and that open

innovation influences organizational performance (Singh et al., 2021). In a school, open innovation could mean discovering and assimilating knowledge from external sources, prior experiences, or, given the internal silos that exist, even just departments apart from one's own.

This is not to say that all tacit knowledge should be codified and archived—there is significant social and trust-building value in ephemeral knowledge being shared in an informal, verbal fashion. Unfortunately, this knowledge sharing does not always happen easily in schools. “[T]he tremendous demands on a teacher’s time during the workday coupled with traditional organizational structures has led to the creation of a professional culture in which teachers work in virtual isolation from each other and rarely share their knowledge” (Blankenship, 2009, p. 5). A 2021 study of knowledge sharing and hiding in businesses identified a number of different types of organizational support that could encourage knowledge sharing, including having a knowledge sharing system that is prevalent in the organization, encouraging specialists and experts to share their knowledge, hosting workshops between retirees and new staff, rewards and encouragement, training, education, mentorship, planning, strategy, and technology (Pereira & Mohiya, 2021).

“[T]he wider the repertoire of knowledge strategies, the more informed a person can potentially become” (Hamid, 2008, p. 260). A school could encourage casual information sharing amongst staff by curating opportunities for regular social interaction. A 2016 study looked into what encourages and discourages social learning in ‘huddles’—small, informal groups within workplaces (Quinn & Bunderson, 2016). As was noted in the administrator interviews, informal discussion and collaboration between colleagues can be very valuable, but the informal nature can also interrupt other work, lead to hurt feelings, or as people tend to gravitate towards people with similar viewpoints, cultivate a lack of diversity of ideas that could be valuable to mix up a bit (p. 411). A teacher friend of mine told a story once of a school where she had worked briefly as a substitute. Every day after the students were dismissed, the school

provided snacks for the teachers in the staff room, such as fresh fruit or warm cookies. The teachers loved this perk, and they would descend on the staff room to socialize briefly before going back to their work doing planning and corrections or going home. It was a school-sanctioned opportunity to unwind together at the end of the day that didn't feel forced or trite. It was a nice way for management to reward the hard work of their teachers with the extra perk of encouraging them to mingle with colleagues from outside of their own departments—to be part of a larger, whole-school community. Having opportunities for spontaneous knowledge sharing in these types of congregational spaces can be incredibly valuable to staff as they learn from each other and solidify relationships (Mawhinney, 2010). Even if knowledge sharing doesn't occur at these informal get-togethers, just improving the social relationships between colleagues is a major facilitator of future knowledge sharing, even in online communities (Tseng & Kuo, 2014).

Staff should be encouraged to share their knowledge not only amongst themselves, but also with management. The decisions that business leaders make are informed by the information that they hold. If their information is streaming from just a few sources, it is next to impossible for them to make educated, nuanced decisions, so encouraging that flow of information from all staff (and students, and parents) can certainly benefit schools (Weinberger, 2001). In both the survey and the interviews, staff mentioned that they wish that there was more opportunity to give input to management:

The teachers are always told that they are the most important part of the school, because we are front line with the students. But in reality, all decisions are taken by the admin (or head of School) and **we clearly have nothing to say about it**, even when it affects our day to day workload. We have to follow regardless our opinion or concerns. When we try to speak, we're labeled as negative and complaining. (Survey participant)

[W]hen we are complaining we feel that **the administration thinks that we are lazy**. (Survey participant)

I feel like **I'd like to be part of these meetings** because obviously it affects what I need to prepare as well, but I'm out of it until they decide that it's time for me to [do my part of

the job]. And then it's like, okay, you've got two days. (Administrative interview participant)

No, no, no, **you don't have much choice**. (Administrative interview participant)

If feedback isn't actively requested, then staff could believe that their advice is seen as a complaint rather than welcomed, helpful information. People on the ground, be they teachers or administrative staff, have valuable insight that could help inform managerial decisions, but only when people feel comfortable sharing. A recent study examining knowledge management in South African schools found that the leadership style of school management directly impacted knowledge sharing within their staff, and that schools that encouraged open two-way collaborative communication amongst their staff had much more successful knowledge sharing than those who imposed a rigid top-down approach (Romm & Nkambule, 2022, p. 175). Independent schools are small and self-governed, so they can adapt quickly to issues as they arise. Management obviously can't make changes based on every suggestion that comes their way, but they should want to be as knowledgeable of what is happening in their school as possible, and for that to happen, their staff must feel actively encouraged to share their perspectives. Recommendations could be filtered through department heads, but they should be enthusiastically sought out by management. The fact that both survey and interview participants expressed their thanks to me for asking them questions and listening to their responses was very telling: Staff want opportunities to be listened to, and they want to be heard.

Knowledge management literature abounds with insights on how to encourage staff members to share and capture knowledge, and the educational literature hints that this is not very well established in most schools. As my background is in archives and not KM or education, a deep dive into this area is well outside the scope of this research. That said, I do believe that an archivist holistically situated within a school could be in a good position to encourage information transfer between different departments. For example, alongside

management, they could establish and oversee professional learning communities both in person and asynchronously online where teachers would be encouraged to share ideas and strategies across departmental lines. This would help staff to break down the departmental silos as well as to improve engagement between faculty and management. This could be especially valuable when discussing the well-being of individual students—if a teacher notices that something is amiss with a child, there could be an established workflow and medium that supports sharing that information in a timely manner with their other teachers from different departments. The more general knowledge that is shared in these forums could be captured and archived, while the personal, more sensitive information would be protected and destroyed after resolution. A staff intranet could have a collaborative knowledge base wiki, and a section with profiles of all staff members that detail their areas of expertise (and interests!) to encourage colleagues to reach out to each other with questions. New staff members could be partnered with a mentor to help guide them. Management could sponsor internal conferences where teachers and administrative staff share their success stories with their colleagues, and these presentations could be recorded for the archive. Staff and former staff could be rewarded for tagging people in archival photographs. These activities would not have to be limited to just staff: Alumni could be invited to tell stories about their time at the school to current students, which could be recorded. Current students could create video journals about their experiences at school for course credit, and co-curriculars could be leveraged to create informative records about the school from the students' perspective, such as with the creation of newspapers or podcast clubs.

If they learn from established KM strategies, school archivists are in a good position to encourage knowledge capture and sharing within their organizations.

5.2.4 *Mandatory Training and Regular Support*

As part of their jobs, faculty and administrative staff use various computer systems. At the case study school, the teaching faculty generally seemed quite satisfied with the level of training and support that they received from IT. Most of the systems that they used were part of the Google for Education suite or Microsoft Office software, which are built to be relatively intuitive. In addition, to support the teaching staff, the IT department had become quite familiar with the intricacies of these programs and were always available to share their knowledge with faculty when approached.

However, in the administrator interviews, participants felt that the systems that they used were perhaps not being leveraged to their fullest extent as there was a lack of understanding of what the software could do. School management systems are often very extensive (and expensive!). Sales teams will tout their impressive features to convince schools that their software solutions will solve their information problems. In some cases, it works out quite well—if at least one staff member claims ownership of the system, learns all its features, takes the time to configure it properly, and provides ongoing support to its users. But if that staff member leaves the employ of the school, or if nobody steps forward in the first place to become the local expert, then you have a behemoth of a system that is capable of a great many things but is providing minimal support because nobody fully understands how it works or what it can do. A 2006 study that examined the relationships between technology training and employees' acceptance and preparation for mandated technology use at work found that the most important variable was to have access to resources to help with the technology use, such as time, documentation, and other support (Marler et al., 2006). IT staff can help, certainly, but unlike teaching faculty, the job functions of administrative staff vary considerably, and unless IT are very aware of how and why each staff member creates, uses, and finds information, they won't be able to effectively configure the systems or provide proper support. With technology

infrastructure in schools becoming more and more integrated and vital, IT staff do not have the time to develop an intimate understanding of how each staff member does their job. Therefore, it is in the school's best interest to ensure that their staff are trained extensively in all the systems that they require so that they can continuously support each other and so that the people who do the work can have an understanding of and a say in how the systems that they use are used (*Strategies for Documenting Government Business: The DIRKS Manual*, 2018, p. 132). Having an awareness of how other departments use the same (and different) systems could also lead to shared information, fewer redundant tasks, and improved relationships throughout the organization.

The case study school encourages staff training, even having a policy where they are supposed to spend at least 1% of their gross salary budget on professional development. The problem is that people are very busy, and any time that they are spending in training, they aren't working on other things. So even though the school actively encourages its staff to seek out training, staff tend to not participate as much as perhaps they should. If, however, instead of being simply encouraged, staff were mandated to participate in targeted, specific training, it might not only result in increased knowledge, but also improved efficiency over the long term. Taking a day to learn how to use the system to automate a tedious manual task early on in a staff member's tenure could lead to significant time and cost savings over time. And ensuring that there are always at least a few highly trained local experts on staff would provide a reliable, valuable local resource so that any issues could be resolved quickly.

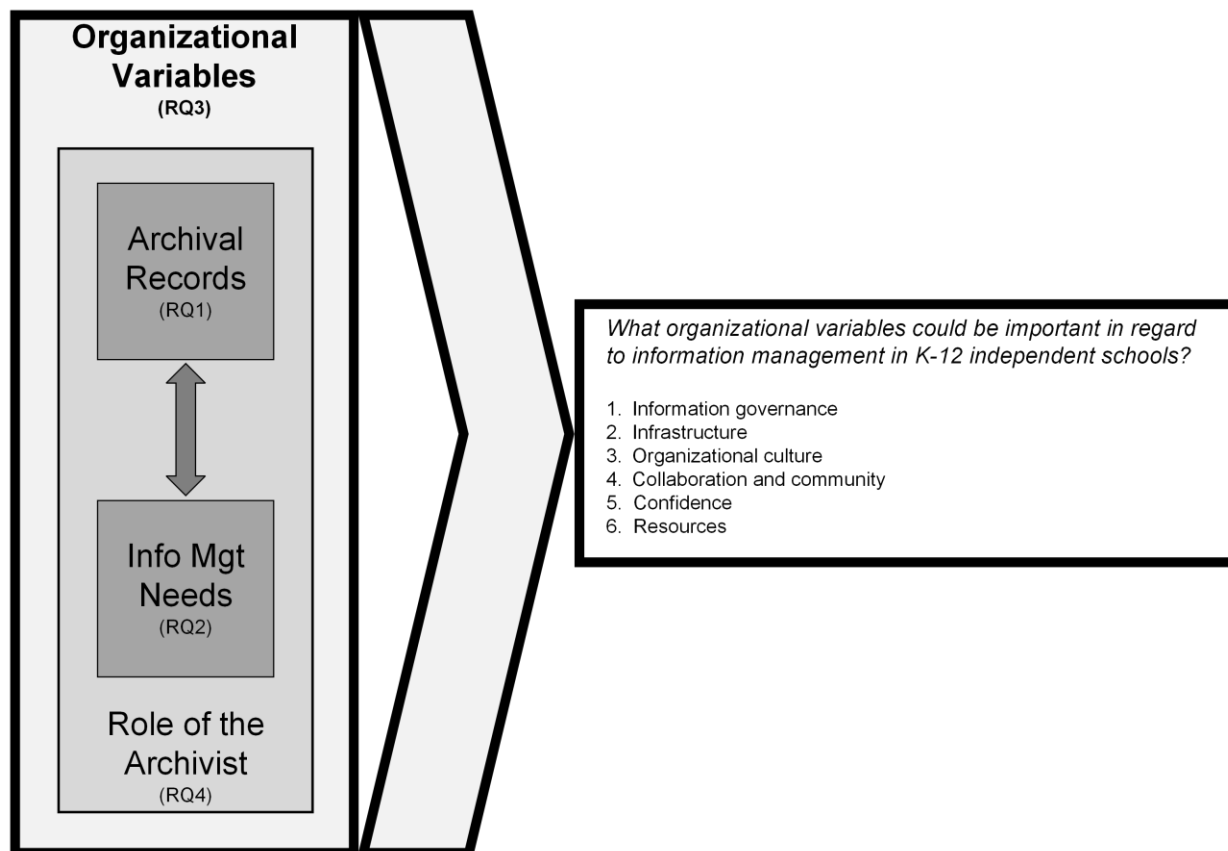
In schools where there is no archivist or if the archivist isn't implicated in contemporary records management, staff members are by default tasked with keeping records of historical significance, often without explicitly asking them to do so, or anyone showing them how. "The consequences of poor recordkeeping can be devastatingly harmful, but it doesn't follow that they are always intentional. One of the explanations provided as to why recordkeeping was so

poor in one of these many examples was that ‘staff members did not understand the importance of creating records and were not adequately trained’” (Daniels, 2021, p. 17). These staff members often don’t seem to recognize the value of what they are creating or show any interest in dealing with them. This is not only setting a school’s archives up for failure, but its operations as well. It has been established that it is beneficial to have high-level, interdepartmental policies and procedures for how and where to save work records to ensure their accessibility and reliability. Policies and procedures, however, tend to fall by the wayside when not prioritized and kept at the forefront of people’s consciousness. In addition to training all new staff individually on how to manage their records, regular audits (and the cooperative development of new strategies as needs change), prompts, and refreshers would go far in reminding staff that information management is an important part of their roles, and not something that is easy to neglect.

5.3 RQ 3: What Organizational Variables Could be Important Regarding Information Management Within a K-12 Independent School?

Figure 5-4

Conceptual Framework: Organizational Variables



Every organization is unique, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to establishing an information management program in schools. That said, there are certain things that, if addressed, might help stack the odds of success in one's favour.

A major theme that emerged from this research was the lack of prioritizing of information management by schools. Despite acknowledging the benefits of robust information management by both staff and school leadership, not much was done about it. Without formal policies and procedures, staff were expected to manage their own information in whichever

ways they wanted. Systems were in place, but not designed or established collaboratively with the organization's actual information needs in mind. Management didn't model sound information management practices, and failed to nurture an environment that facilitated and encouraged regular information flow and trust-building beyond one's own department. In addition, archivists were expected to much with very little, which is unsustainable.

After considering the literature and analysing the data collected during this research project, six organizational variables were identified as being important regarding information management in K-12 independent schools:

1. **Information governance;**
2. **Infrastructure;**
3. **Organizational culture;**
4. **Collaboration and community;**
5. **Confidence;** and
6. **Resources.**

5.3.1 Information Governance

Information governance [is] the **specification** of decision rights and an **accountability framework** to ensure appropriate behavior in the **valuation, creation, storage, use, archiving and deletion of information**. It includes the **processes, roles and policies, standards** and **metrics** that ensure the effective and efficient use of information in enabling an organization to achieve its goals (Gartner, n.d.).

Institutional information comes with both risks and opportunities (Maurel & Zwarich, 2021). Managed poorly, and you open yourself up to privacy breaches, security vulnerabilities, and the loss of important information. Managed well, and you have troves of institutional information at your fingertips, leading to increased productivity, staff empowerment, and a robust archive. An analysis of various definitions of corporate governance determined that its key factors are "direction, leadership and accountability, combined with systems and processes" (Willis, 2005, p. 87). The benefits of a robust information governance program includes supporting the organization's mission; informing decision-making; reducing risk; identifying gaps; ensuring

consistent policies; including all information assets; eliminating silos to encourage cooperation; supporting ethical governance relating to existing and emerging technologies; providing a comprehensive and systematic approach to governing information; identifying organizational information; underpinning systematic organization of information assets; providing a reliable framework for information asset maintenance; reducing costs associated with storage and discovery; and preserving corporate culture and memory (*ISO 24143:2022 Information and Documentation — Information Governance — Concept and Principles*, n.d., pp. 3–4). Both the literature and this research conclude that much institutional information in schools is managed in a decentralized, ad-hoc manner, poorly planned and unstructured: lacking in governance.

A large part of school information governance deals with the management of school administrative documents, yet school archivists are often only tasked with the handling of older records, not contemporary ones. Even where archivists are given responsibility over their institution's contemporary records management, it is not always in a formal, effective manner. In 2009, OCLC Research launched a survey of special collections and archives in the US and Canada. 29% of respondents (47 out of 162) said that they were not responsible for their institution's records management, and an additional 22% said that they were, but only informally. "The sad reality is that no formal records management program exists in many academic and research institutions" (Dooley & Luce, 2010, p. 52).

The core legal document that governs records management in schools is the **retention schedule**. In Quebec, it must be approved by both the school's Board of Directors and the Quebec National Library and Archives (BAnQ). As such, once finalized, it acts as a definitive authority of what business records must and must not be retained by the school's archive. It is a key policy document that not only guides future appraisal decisions, but also protects the institution against risk as it documents the justifications for keeping or destroying certain records (Stein, 2021, pp. 90–91, 94). It should be designed thoughtfully, taking the school's values,

priorities, and future requirements into account. “The profession [archivists] also needs to encourage records creators to participate in policy making about the creation and retention of records, and to promote legislation, regulations, and guidelines which foster the retention of historical records” (SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities, 1986, p. 11). If built collaboratively with those who create the school’s records, it could be a fantastic way to implicate staff in the recordkeeping process, prompting dialogue, and providing them with some agency over their own records while also giving them a fuller understanding of their responsibilities and the considerations that archivists must address.

A school’s records retention schedule must go hand-in-hand with institution-wide information management **policies** regarding what information should be captured, how information is used, what data should be collected, which records are shared and with whom, and how information is communicated. These policies should be determined collaboratively by the archivist, school management, and the Board of Directors. Both the literature and the research show that archivists are often overlooked by management when it comes to creating information governance policy (Adams, 1995; Davis, 2008), yet archivists overwhelmingly feel as though they ought to be included in these types of decisions (Noonan & Chute, 2014). To ensure a seat at the table, they must be recognized as professionals who bring value to their organization. “[Translated from the original French] The drafting of an archival management policy is the first step for any archives service wishing to make its mission, activities, aims and objectives known, and to claim its rightful place within the administrative structure of the institution” (Fédération des établissements d’enseignement privés & Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2016, p. 6).

Policies are of no use unless it is made clear how to implement them. Working closely alongside record creators, archivists are in a good position to design bespoke **procedures** that address the high-level organizational policies while also considering the ways that individuals

and departments have chosen to work. They can find a middle ground that ensures standardization within the organization to provide consistency between departments and over time, without forcing unnecessarily onerous requirements that don't consider personal preferences and styles of working. Studies have shown that trying to enforce rigid rules on staff almost never ends with compliance (Cunningham, 2011a; Mas et al., 2011), and that it is far more useful and pleasant for those involved to focus on the outcomes rather than being too particular about how one gets there. When schools had to quickly pivot to online learning at the start of the global pandemic, a principal of an Italian school wisely decided to wait to see what solutions her staff would come up with and supported their efforts. She then consulted with her team, and using a bottom-up approach, developed a strict set of guidelines based on the needs and feedback of her teachers. She was able to find the best possible solutions that emerged from her own institution and use them to create a uniform, effective plan (Iacuzzi et al., 2020). High-level policies can be centralized, but as most staff receive their information and support from their departments and colleagues rather than from management, procedures need to be planned at a more granular level. By partnering with records creators during the design process, school staff would have ownership and pride over their own procedures. In addition, the archivist would gain valuable insight on how their jobs function, leading to a holistic view of the entire organization and its information flow.

Policies and procedures surrounding child abuse in schools need to be developed with information management in mind. This includes both privacy protection as well as preservation of evidence, which may seem contradictory, but should not have to be. The literature provides much advice on what school administrators should be doing. In the United States (Shakeshaft, 2004), some of these recommendations include developing policies at both the governmental as well as the school level; centralizing information under control of an impartial third-party; creating state and federal registries; refusing to expunge abuse findings from records (which is

often part of teachers' unions' collective agreements); developing thorough investigative practices that do not cease if the employee resigns; and educating both employees and staff about how to identify abuse (as grooming can be difficult to spot) and what to do when you see or experience it. Similar recommendations came out of Australia (Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2017a, 2017b), but they also note that children should participate in the decisions that affect them; families should be informed and involved; diverse needs should be taken into account; standards should be continuously reviewed and improved; full and accurate records should be created and maintained appropriately, and only disposed of in accordance with law or policy; and that individuals' rights to access, amend, or annotate records about themselves should be recognized to the fullest extent. They also recommended that any records relating to child sexual abuse be retained for at least 45 years to allow for delayed disclosure by survivors that accounts for statutes of limitations. It is important to note, however, that in Canada, there is no statute of limitations for sexual abuse (Stop Educator Child Exploitation, 2022, p. 4), which should be taken into consideration when determining retention periods.

Independent schools tend to be small in size, and since they are not beholden to a large school board, they are nimble and adaptable. This is an enormous strength, as the retention schedule, policies, and procedures that make up a school's information governance can—and must—be reassessed and updated regularly as situations change (Upward, 1997, pp. 18–21). “[T]o be effective, a policy must include not only a clear description and definition of its mechanisms and intents, but also a clear standard for successful implementation and evaluation” (Grant & Heinecke, 2019, p. 207).

5.3.2 Infrastructure

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines infrastructure as “the underlying foundation or basic framework (as for a system or organization)” (“Infrastructure,” n.d.). Policies define the scope and mandate of an information management program, procedures detail how to fulfil that mandate, and infrastructure supplies the foundational tools to make it so. This can take many different forms: IT systems, cloud-based service subscriptions, hardware, and even a strategically placed cardboard box.

“There's a fundamental difference between managing an information system and running an information ecology; just as there's a difference between operating a grape press and making wine” (Schrage, 1997, p. 184). A popular opinion is that if there is an IT system designed to solve a problem, that the purchase and deployment of said system will solve the problem. It has been shown, however, that this is usually not the case (Lemieux, 2001, p. 54), especially if the system's purpose is considered by staff to be extraneous to the organization's core function, such as a document management system. This was demonstrated in the teacher survey with the software that was introduced to track lesson plans: It was burdensome, teachers didn't see its benefit so resisted using it, and the project quietly failed. This is such a common occurrence, that a term to describe it was coined in the business press: “shelfware.” (Lanzolla & Suarez, 2012, p. 837) “Managers intent on establishing technical systems subscribe to different values and practices than managers trying to set up productive environments for their workers” (Schrage, 1997, p. 184). “Individuals creating records...should not be viewed as mere cyphers in the structuring of recordkeeping. If they are ignored they may subvert or ignore the system” (Upward, 1997, p. 19). Fiorella Foscarini (2010) spoke of the importance of ‘soft’ approaches to records management, and the importance of developing a profound understanding of how an organization's staff actually work when designing and implementing information management strategies. Aligned with pragmatic philosophy, she speaks of the messiness and inconsistent

manner of humans, and describes how traditional 'hard' systems and models often don't jive with the reality of day-to-day work. She identifies three complimentary approaches to records management in organizations: soft systems methodology, Giddens' structuration theory (which, if you recall, was one of the inspirations behind the records continuum theory), and genre theory. They all rely on an organizational culture that supports communication, understanding, observation, adaptability, and user-centered collaboration, where information professionals act as mediators between people and information systems.

There has been much research done on factors that impact people's adoption of innovations, all of which is well beyond the scope of this research. That said, it is worthwhile to briefly acknowledge and examine a significant model that has been mentioned in the literature and discuss how it could relate to systems adoption by staff.

Reasoned Action Theory is "the dominant conceptual framework for predicting, explaining, and changing human social behavior" (Ajzen, 2012, p. 11). It helps to explain the relationship between beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. The related **Planned Behavior Model** moves beyond simply measuring people's attitudes, and puts them in context to examine their cause, as well as their implications (Ajzen, 2012; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, 2005; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Within the Planned Behavior Model, behavioral intention is measured by calculating the strength of specific subjective values that an individual holds about the object (or person, or idea) in question. It went through a few iterations before it settled on its final form, but the three main values that it determined impacts behavioral intention are: (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005, p. 194)

1. **Attitude towards the behavior** (strongly-held beliefs + perception of the implication of the behavior);
2. **Subjective norm** (expectations and opinions of others * how much we care about what they think); and
3. **Perceived behavioral control** (elements that could have an impact on the behavior * the power of them to either facilitate or inhibit said behavior)

This means that people are more likely to do a behavior if they feel positively about it and perceive that it will help them, if the people who matter to them do it or expect them to do it, and if they feel that circumstances will support them doing it. These are important to keep in mind when designing information systems.

School administrators spoke of databases that they did use, but not to their fullest extent as they were not configured effectively, and staff weren't entirely sure how to use all their features. Acquiring and establishing useful systems is a vital step in information management—but it must be done thoughtfully, in collaboration with those who will be using the systems, department heads, and management. "In general, the underlying pragmatic reason for employing participatory design is to construct better system designs that effectively take into account the views, requirements, and work of real users" (Chin, 2004, p. 34). Systems, like procedures, cannot be imposed on staff without their input, or they will rightfully be met with resistance. "[E]nsure that the system supports, and does not hinder, business processes" (*Strategies for Documenting Government Business: The DIRKS Manual*, 2018, p. 156).

Archivists must work closely with IT staff and make their needs understood, as information professionals' system needs are complicated by the fact that they need to ensure the authenticity and reliability of records over the long term. In a study out of New Zealand, during the implementation of a cloud storage solution for their digital cultural assets, there was a disconnect between information managers (IM) and information technology (IT) professionals—IM felt like they weren't being heard, and IT felt that IMs concerns were often over the top and unnecessary (Oliver & Knight, 2015).

Once systems are deployed, there must be immediate training for all users and a continual iterative process of feedback and adaptation so that the staff's needs are always being met. "Historically, most school districts do not employ the necessary and qualified personnel to plan, design, and implement even the most basic information systems. Nor do they provide—often

due to fiscal constraints—adequate training necessary to ensure the information system’s survival” (Petrides & Guiney, 2002, p. 1708).

One pragmatic strategy would be to adapt systems that staff are already working with to facilitate records management workflows. It is far easier to get staff to use a system they already know and see the value in than trying to implement sweeping changes. For example, most of the staff interviewed or surveyed at the case study school used Google Drive to store their records—some more effectively than others. Instead of trying to get people to use an external document management system, in consultation with the record creators, the archivist could set up a Google shared drive and configure it with a high-level folder structure that represented each of the school’s functions. Staff could be trained on where to save their work records, there could be regular reminders sent out, and this archiving of significant records could be documented in their formal job descriptions so that its importance is underscored by management. The case study school had some success in this manner when the communications department created a special drive where all staff could save and find photographs and videos of school events. The University of Montreal adopted a similar strategy where their archivists established a server directory structure for their active and semi-active records based on their official classification plan and offered staff continuous assistance from the conception of the structure through training, workshops, and post-implementation support (Bourhis & Denis, 2017, p. 56). If staff save important files in a space that has been earmarked by the school archivist, then they can easily be identified, captured, and processed within an external archival system to ensure their integrity and reliability over the long-term: crossing the archival threshold. Staff would still have access to their original files, but an archival copy would be migrated over and protected from alteration or accidental deletion (Belin & Rietsch, 2017, p. 49). School staff may enjoy the convenience of Google Drive, but for long-term preservation, important files must find their way out and into a dedicated archival management system (p. 60).

The faculty survey indicated that most participants used their own personal devices to capture images and video of their students during classroom activities. In addition to having clear policy and procedures to encourage teachers to document their students in this fashion, if the school were to provide a small pool of cameras that teachers could sign out, the archivist could periodically download all the media and add them to the archive drive on the staff's behalf. This would be a good way of ensuring that these items are being added to the archive without adding to teachers' workloads.

Certain information should be included in an archive, but the way that it is being recorded might not facilitate that process. For example, complaints made against the school might just be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and never logged in a centralized location. If administrators were provided with a secure digital logbook and trained on how to consistently track complaints (as well as any supplemental documentation such as correspondence that relates to those complaints), then that evidence could be easily preserved. This type of lack of infrastructure was cited as a challenge in finding records from voluntary organizations in Scotland from the late 20th century (Shaw, 2007, p. 128).

While the world is becoming more and more digital, paper documents and artefacts still exist in schools. In the administration interviews, several participants expressed an interest in scanning some of their paper records for ease of access, retrieval, and storage. To scan a document at the case study school, staff must go to the photocopy room, hope that nobody needs to photocopy or print anything, configure the settings on the large multi-function printer, enter their email address or insert a USB key, and then hit scan. The effort required has been shown to be a deterrent. If the school however were to provide key staff with desktop high-speed scanners, once configured with the user's personal preferences, scans can be performed almost instantly without even having to stand up.

During the archivist interviews, one participant spoke of how they had streamlined the process for accessioning boxes of institutional records into archival custody by making all the instructions and required forms available on their school's staff intranet. They didn't have to chase anyone down, and the boxes would arrive at their office in the correct format with the required documentation. This simple yet effective structure functions well for established record groups that are archived every year, but sometimes someone will discover a single document or artefact that might be of interest to the archive. A school archivist could place a large box in a central location, such as in the mailroom, and make it known that it is for staff (and students!) to deposit unique items for the archive. There could be a small stack of forms attached to the box for the donor's name and contextual information. The idea is to make information management visible and as straightforward for records creators as possible.

5.3.3 *Organizational Culture*

"Evaluating and rewarding knowledge sharing is necessary to signal to employees that they are accountable for knowledge sharing and that it is valued by the organization; this helps create a culture and establish norms conducive to knowledge sharing" (Wang et al., 2014, p. 1001). Organizational culture is when certain behaviours and ways of functioning are seen as de facto, normalized, and expected of staff. They would be taught to new employees, modeled by management, and agreed upon by all as the way that things are done. A study on employee acceptance and use of corporate wikis showed that the strongest knowledge sharing behaviour predictor is perceived critical mass. "If potential users perceive that the wiki has enough content and/or contributors, these potential users may begin to use the system, which may put pressure on other colleagues to adopt the system to avoid being out of the loop" (Iglesias-Pradas et al.,

2015, p. 1484). Since information management is not a core function of a school, to make it part of the organizational culture requires some effort.

First, the school archivist would have to make the benefits of solid information management known and understood by staff. Change is often difficult to sell, even when the change is ultimately in a staff member's and their institution's best interest: Inertia and habit are difficult to break (W. E. Brown & Yakel, 1996, p. 280; Koopman & Kipnis, 2009, pp. 114–115). Designing an information management program collaboratively around staff's specific information needs seems to be more effective at encouraging participation than through threats of legal reprisals (Kaczmarek, 2006, p. 24). It is also vital that any information management program have the support of senior management (Ravenwood et al., 2015, p. 95; Shkolnik, 1990). Without their enthusiastic buy-in, getting the acquiescence of other administrative staff is much more difficult.

If school leadership wants to show that they're serious about information management, they must model the behaviour that they want to see and enforce their standardized policies. Prior to adopting the Google for Education platform, the case study school had been encouraging the use of Microsoft products by their staff. Once they signed with Google, they realized the savings in cost and effort that came with switching to the equivalent Google software, so staff was directed to make the switch—and they did, mostly without resistance.

To create and sustain support by staff, a school archival program must be both visible and effective, ideally headed by an archivist who can heartily advocate for the records that they steward (Blais & Enns, 1990, p. 104). In the teacher survey, some participants said that they would have donated material to the archive, but that it either didn't occur to them, that they didn't know how, or that they didn't think that anyone would be interested. If the archive and its mandate were more visible to staff, and if depositing and referencing school records was normalized, it would probably be used more often.

If school staff can be convinced of the value of information and the benefits of an effective information management program, then the battle is very nearly won. By teaching and encouraging staff to properly manage their own records, and by establishing an efficient and well-designed infrastructure that facilitates information retrieval (and deposit!), one can promote an organizational culture that embraces information sharing.

5.3.4 *Collaboration and Community*

“[F]or the knowledge management process to become effective in a business environment, the organization must understand and appreciate the human element that adds value to the information” (Petrides & Guiney, 2002, p. 1704). Information becomes knowledge through social exchanges (Fullan, 2002, p. 415). “People learn much (if not most) of the knowledge and skills that they need to help their organizations succeed through social interaction... This learning can occur through feedback-seeking, advice-seeking, observational learning, socialization, or information-seeking... [and] is very much influenced by the organization, has consequences for the organization and produces phenomena at the organizational level” (Quinn & Bunderson, 2016, pp. 386–387). As staff receive most of their information and support from their close colleagues and departments, this can lead to feeling emotionally disconnected from the rest of the school. Having a centralized organizational culture promoted by school leadership is one thing, but finding ways for staff to feel as though they are part of a larger community would go far in encouraging the natural flow of information throughout the organization, making departmental silos less rigid. Fostering relationships between colleagues is beneficial towards encouraging effective work in organizations. It is widely accepted that recipients of information and resources benefit from those relationships, but under certain circumstances, it has been shown that assistance providers’ performance can also be positively impacted (Shah et al.,

2018). Being an active part of a supportive community—collegiality—“is perhaps the single most important organizational characteristic influencing teachers’ professional commitment, sense of efficacy, and performance...It is also understood that the organization can influence the development of this sense of community by the structural arrangements it utilizes, the processes it adopts, and the values it conveys” (Osterman, 2002, p. 174).

Office location can have an impact on staff relationships. In the administrator interviews, one participant spoke of how their office used to be centrally located, and that colleagues and parents would pop into say hello frequently during the day. Following recent renovations, their office was moved off the beaten path and their day-to-day interactions were dramatically reduced, causing feelings of isolation and sadness. Another few participants spoke of how, during the same renovations, their three departments that each used to have their own office were suddenly moved together into one large room. While there were complaints about noise and distractions, they also said that collaboration and information sharing was made significantly easier.

Much of a teacher’s work is done in isolation, independently of other teachers (Carroll et al., 2003; Gutierrez, 2021; Hew & Hara, 2007; Hou et al., 2009; Selwyn, 2000; Shriki & Movshovitz-Hadar, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). A recent study from the Philippines looked at the impact that collaborative lesson planning could have on faculty. It found that collaborating led to learning, improvement, professional support, and increased feelings of trust and improved relationships amongst colleagues (Gutierrez, 2021). Teacher collaboration could happen informally in person (Mawhinney, 2010), on an online forum or wiki (Hew & Hara, 2007; Hou et al., 2009; Selwyn, 2000; Shriki & Movshovitz-Hadar, 2011), or through a combination of technological and face-to-face strategies (Carroll et al., 2003).

The use of historical archival material to reinforce a school’s values could help to provide a sense of community for both staff and students, especially during periods of transition or strife.

“A shared history is a large part of what binds individuals into a community and imbues a group with a distinct identity” (Seaman Jr & Smith, 2012, p. 46). A fun example of this in the business world was when Kraft acquired Cadbury in 2010. Cadbury’s staff were fiercely resistant to the acquisition, fearing that the smaller company’s spirit would be squashed by the larger firm. “To help smooth the process, senior executives turned to Kraft’s long-established archives. Company archivists quickly launched an intranet site, titled ‘Coming Together,’ that honored the parallel paths Kraft and Cadbury had taken. Poring over historical materials, they had found much evidence of shared values, and the presentation reinforced those common themes” (Seaman Jr & Smith, 2012, p. 46). One of the archivists interviewed for this research told a story about how their school had at one point acquired another school, but that they were not interested in the acquired school’s archives. Perhaps this was a missed opportunity to make the newly acquired staff feel more at home.

Another way to encourage that sense of community for teachers and students would be to use archival materials in the classroom. In the teacher survey, when asked if they were interested in using school archival materials in their class(es), only two participants said that they were not. Five said that they would, and 13 said “maybe”. This makes sense, because for subjects that don’t touch on historical topics, teachers might not be able to imagine how they could integrate primary-source documents. Archivists from many different organizations have created curriculum aids for teachers to facilitate the use of their materials in a classroom setting. In some cases, it might be more challenging (for example, a math class), but archives can form the basis for very creative art projects, drama prompts, free writing exercises, critical thinking discussions, ethical debates, etc. Teachers are not as familiar with what the school’s archive holds as its archivist, and they are already spread thinly enough to preclude being able to afford the time to perform extensive research when designing a course project. So, while most of the teaching staff at this school who participated in the survey are at least somewhat interested in

the idea of integrating records from the school's archival collection into their classes, they would need to have extensive collaborative support from their archivist to make that happen—something that also would go far in strengthening the relationship between them.

To achieve a comprehensive, holistic view of what is happening in their school, archivists must develop strong relationships with staff from all departments. They should be forging alliances within their organization—such as with IT for technical support, and advancement to shore up relationships with alumni. They should work closely with student leaders to ensure that the administrative records of student clubs are maintained and archived. Archivists should be an integrated part of the community, helping to collaboratively troubleshoot with a whole-organization perspective. During my time at the case study school, I may have affected the administration simply by facilitating discussions and solutions regarding information management. As an impartial interviewer, I didn't contribute any ideas during the interviews themselves but encouraged the participants to reflect on their information management—almost like a therapist. During an administration interview, one of the participants started thinking out loud about what a multi-year, student-centered, participatory, collaborative information and progress tracking system could look like, and their excitement was palpable: “Wow. Yeah. That would be...I'm not sleeping tonight!...**We should have met more, earlier!**” (and, as an aside, such a project would be an incredible way to include students in the curation of their own student files for permanent retention, so this participant also inadvertently inspired me!). Another participant accosted me in the copy room a few weeks after their interview to tell me about a whole digitization project that they had begun after being inspired by our talk. Another one had felt incredibly daunted by the boxes of records in their office, but soon after our meeting, began to tackle them enthusiastically. They also expressed frustration over a systems integration problem, but I had an idea of how to fix it, so after our interview, I did—much to their delight.

If school archivists develop visibility and working relationships with students and alumni by reaching out to them and including them as partners in the development of their archive, this would foster trust and facilitate communication, which in turn would go far to encourage participation in collaborative archival projects and the building of an ethical appraisal and access framework (J. Evans et al., 2019; Jansson, 2020; Rolan, 2017). One example of an often underrepresented record group is examples of student work, which is usually taken home and not collected by a school's archive (Lehew, 2020, p. 19). There is unfortunately a widely held belief by the public that the work of children is ephemeral in nature, and not seen as archive-worthy (pp. 24-25). Changing that narrative might go far to ensure that these items are retained. School archivists may have to get creative to find ways for the voices of children to be better represented in the archive in a participatory, ethical manner. Perhaps it could be made clear that the archive is very interested in children's schoolwork by sending children home with professional acid-free archival folders (or sharing a Google Drive folder in the case of digital records) at the start of each school year within which to keep their favoured works. Then, at the end of the year, they (along with their parents) could decide to either keep the folder for themselves or donate it to the school's archive where they would be safeguarded until they turned 18, at which point they could either take them back, or officially donate them to the archive. An infrastructure would be created, and a procedure would be developed and normalized as part of the school's organizational culture.

Community participation should, however, also mean having a hand in designing the policies, procedures, and infrastructure that guide and facilitate the management of the archival program. Three high-level principles of community-based participatory research (CBPR), as used in an archival context (Jansson, 2020), are *shared influence* (participants are all included in all stages of the project and with all decision making), *mutual development* (participants recognize each other's unique knowledge and perspectives and learn from them), and *mutual*

use (participants all benefit from the project). CBPR in a school archives context could lead to the formation of a committee comprised of students, parents, alumni, and staff, where discussions could take place about how they see themselves in the school's archive (and importantly, how they don't), how they feel about how their community is being remembered, and how they might be able to address any shortfalls in order to facilitate the collection being used to bring about a greater understanding of their community (Brilmyer et al., 2019).

Participants would learn from each other and develop proposals and plans that would lead to outcomes that would benefit their community. One example of a project that a school community could tackle together would be an assessment and design of the appraisal and management of student records. As previously discussed, there are so many issues where student records are concerned, including representation; ethics; individual privacy; third party privacy; evidence; retention laws and guidelines; and access by the subjects themselves, their parents, their decedents, and future historical researchers. Another good example would be HR records, and finding an agreement with the teaching staff of what records should be created and/or retained permanently due to the potential evidentiary needs of adult students as well as themselves (such as evidence of exoneration after an accusation). All these different projects could lead to not only more ethical choices for the committee's individual school, but also recommendations that could be disseminated to the larger school archivist community for consideration in other institutions.

It is common practice for school archivists to put out calls for any stories about former students' and staff's experiences at the school. When doing so, it should be made clear that the school is looking for all types of narrative, both the positive and the negative experiences. In case during these oral histories or written testimonies any experiences of abuse are brought to light, the school should have a policy in place beforehand on how to deal with it that follows established legal and ethical frameworks (which I imagine would be different depending on

whether the alleged perpetrator is still alive and in a position to do further harm). Having an infrastructure that facilitates such disclosures as well as a track record of receiving them compassionately and respectfully could encourage more people to come forward with their stories.

When individuals are hesitant to tell their stories to the very institutions who mistreated them, community archives could be used to fill that gap. In addition to managing their institution's archive, school archivists could also help support their alumni associations to form external community archives to seek out stories and records about their shared experiences. This could be done in collaboration with other schools' archivists and alumni associations and funded and/or housed by a university or national archive. This community archive's mandate would be quite different from the schools' institutional archives, focusing on outreach, accountability, and research.

However, at least for the archivists interviewed for this research, there does not seem to be a lot of networking that goes on between them and other school archivists. Sarah Buchanan wrote of school archives and archivists in a report for the Society of American Archivists (2012, p. 11). She spoke about the reality that many archivists work alone or as part of a small team, so participation within archival professional associations and communities of practice is an incredibly valuable undertaking that could enrich both their own school archives as well as others'. A formidable example of cooperation between school archivists is the UK-based School Archives and Records Association (SARA), formerly known as the School Archivists' Group (SAG). Founded in 1998, the association has organized annual conferences, regular training sessions, workshops, and get-togethers. Their website (*School Archives & Records Association*, 2022) includes an active discussion forum and resource library that, in addition to links to useful external resources, includes annual conference documentation, training presentations, meeting minutes, and survey results. It is a veritable fount of information and community support that,

despite much UK-centered content (such as local privacy and copyright legislation interpretation), is a valuable resource for school archivists worldwide, as many issues that archivists contend with transcend international borders. More locally, the Quebec Association of Independent Schools (QAIS) has established committees for groups of different professionals from their member schools, including administrative professionals, elementary directors, IT directors, student life advisors, academic advisors, curriculum representatives, and marketing/communications directors. These communities of practice meet a few times a year to discuss trends in their disciplines and issues that they encounter in their individual schools. The establishment of a similar group for school archivists, perhaps supported by the BAnQ, would be heartily welcomed by many of the ones I spoke with.

5.3.5 Confidence

For a successful information management program in schools, staff need to have confidence: confidence in their colleagues, confidence in school leadership, confidence in the archivist, confidence in the reliability of the organization's records, and confidence in themselves.

Studies have shown that one of the most important predictors of information sharing at schools is trust (Ekinci, 2012, p. 2517). A few participants in the administrator interviews spoke of the effect of trust on work relationships, and by virtue, the ease in which information was shared. "When teachers do not trust their colleagues, whether due to perceptions of a lack of competence, benevolence, reliability or other factors, they are not likely to feel comfortable putting their own professional practice at risk through shared instructional planning, peer observations, or reflective dialogue" (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p. 61). A lack of trust between colleagues came up in the teacher survey, where a participant said that they were hesitant to

share their stories with colleagues because one time, they found them to be ‘ridiculing and dismissive.’ “A comfortable and happy work environment, where all the teachers are sincere and true to each other and sure that what they say and do will not be used against them, is a basic need for a teacher” (Kars & Inandi, 2018, p. 145). At the case study school, the strongest relationships were mostly between departmental colleagues. This is due to working closely together, sharing information, and helping each other out. The relationship ties weakened the further away they get from their close inner circle. As previously discussed, these circles of trust can be expanded and reinforced by creating appealing opportunities for staff to work or socialize with colleagues from outside of their departments. “Schools need to intervene to develop more frequent social and informal settings where professional can meet to actively and intensively utilize the information they have in order to create new knowledge” (Hamid, 2008, p. 266). For example, committees could be created with members from across the organization, giving staff a role to play outside of their own departments, an opportunity to be part of the greater whole; there could be a staff choir; freshly baked pastries could occasionally appear in staff rooms; management could sponsor wellness and social activities such as running clubs, book clubs, and movie nights; and employees could be encouraged to publicize their own out-of-school activities on the staff intranet. Social activities won’t appeal to all members of staff, but if someone were feeling like they wanted stronger connections with their school colleagues, there should be opportunities to make that happen.

As previously discussed, both the administration and faculty of the case study school expressed a desire to have more confidence in their school’s leadership, and for the school’s leadership to have more confidence in them. “[F]aculty trust in the principal has been linked to healthy and productive school climates whereas when faculty distrust the principal the climate is likely to become closed and dysfunctional” (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p. 58). Open, accurate, and straightforward information sharing between teachers and their supervisors can help

establish a foundation for more trusting relationships, especially when teachers feel that they are active participants in decision making within their schools (Moye et al., 2005). Democratic leadership behaviors have a significant and positive effect on all dimensions of organizational trust in schools (Kars & Inandi, 2018). School leaders should be actively encouraging dialogue with their staff and should ensure that they never feel as though their thoughts or suggestions were troublesome or unwelcome, no matter how critical. Otherwise, staff will keep their thoughts to themselves, which will ultimately lead to frustration and dissatisfaction. Mechanisms for safe, anonymous feedback should be established.

Staff would be more likely to follow information management policy, work to develop procedures, and deposit records with the school's archive if they have confidence in their archivist and their professional standing—the “literary warrant” of the Pittsburgh Project. This confidence would come more easily if the archivist were a high-ranking full-time member of the administration than if they were a part-time volunteer (Gardner, 1982, p. 295). If the school's archivist has authority, effectively does their job, displays self-confidence, backs up their assertions with verified authoritative sources, and has spent time and effort to develop trusted relationships with people from all the school's departments, then staff will likely have enough confidence in them to respect and follow their information management mandates.

Having confidence in the school's archivist would likely translate into confidence in the school's records. If the information that they are looking for is complete, accurate, easy to find, and if sensitive information is well protected, (Van Camp, 1982, p. 298) the archivist has done their job. Staff will be more likely to deposit their own records with the school's archive if they have experienced past successes in using it to retrieve school information.

Lastly, staff must have confidence in themselves—self efficacy. “Teachers with a higher sense of efficacy are more likely to help their co-workers in work-related matters, restructure their working timetables to accommodate others and adopt different innovative classroom

instructional approaches” (Choong et al., 2020, p. 877). Staff need to be fully trained and practiced in the systems that they use, they need to know where to get help if they need it, and they need to feel empowered and encouraged to share the records and information that they hold with their colleagues, their management, and their archive (Bandura, 1986, 1989). Some respondents of the teacher survey said that they did not submit any records to the archive because they did not see the archival value of the records that they created. Some even said that it didn’t occur to them to share lesson plans with colleagues because nobody would be interested. This lack of self-confidence also appeared in a study on knowledge strategies of school administrators and teachers. “[M]any teachers responded that they had not even given any thought about the value and longevity span of their work. Both groups of teachers and administrators seemed to be unaware of how teachers’ work can, and really, ought to be treated as professional documents depicting process and product. If schools were to make the effort to gather a large database on their teachers’ work documents which includes lesson plans, reflective notes, and classroom management, imagine the vast resource available for staff development and novice teachers!” (Hamid, 2008, p. 263).

In an ideal world, all school archivists would be professionally trained with post-secondary (ideally graduate) degrees in information studies. However, as we have seen in the literature and this research, this is usually not the case, and realistically, is unlikely to change unless the job description evolves to make the need for professional qualification clear. Regardless, school archivists must be extremely well trained in the management of digital records, and not only participate in regular professional development activities, but network extensively with other school archivists to share knowledge and experience with one another. Imposter syndrome is a common occurrence with archivists (Anderson-Zorn et al., 2021), as it is with many domains, and the only way to build up one’s self-confidence is to proactively ensure that one keeps up to date on current practices, and to invite positive feedback from one’s peers.

5.3.6 Resources

“Corporations will eventually discover that a corporate archives, much like any other department, will be productive (or nonproductive) in direct relation to the support it receives” (Bakken, 1982, p. 285). Both the literature and the research show that the reality for many school archives is that they are under-staffed, under-funded, and that the little space that they have for storage and/or processing is always at risk of being expropriated for other school needs. To have and promote a successful information management program, one must have access to resources: staff, money, space, equipment, systems, etc. Without the necessary resources, many school archivists are hesitant to promote their archival programs within their organizations in fear that increased demands would overwhelm them even more than they already are (Bance, 2012, p. 7). The catch-22 is that, to secure adequate resources, one must have administrative support—which is unlikely if the archive is not visible or effective. “I am fairly certain that many archivists who complain about their resource allocators not appreciating or understanding them do not take the initiative to consistently educate their administrators” (M. A. Greene, 2011, p. 95). Senior management will either support their school’s archive or defund it, depending on how they perceive its value to their organization (D. R. Smith, 1982, p. 277). This is why it is so important for archivists to advocate for their archives. “Advocacy skills are becoming increasingly essential for archivists to cultivate. As funding becomes more constricted, archivists will continue to find themselves required to argue for the value of their work” (Buchanan et al., 2017, p. 283). In a presentation at the Society for American Archivists’ annual conference, Erin Lawrimore (2013) explained how archivists can improve their perceived value to their employers with strategies that included understanding your organization’s mission, determining how you can best support that mission, finding ways to demonstrate the positive impact that you are having on that mission, getting to know your colleagues and what it is that they do, and ensuring that your colleagues understand who you are and what it is that you do

(and can do for them!) so that they can in turn advocate for you and your archives. Archivist François Cartier (2018) wrote an inspiring article about the different ways that he was able to acquire resources for processing a specific archival collection, including strategic selling of the project to resource-holders, applying for grants, and using the collection itself to engage with the public.

Some of the archivists interviewed had success with recruiting some of their own high school students to help with simple tasks (although it was noted that some teenagers are more enthusiastic about archival work than others, and that they need to be constantly supervised). As independent schools are non-profits, they can be eligible for grants to hire archival students for the summer. If the school archivist has the educational qualifications, they can also sometimes offer positions to interns for course credit.

Another possibility would be to try to donate a school's older historical records to a collecting repository such as a museum, a provincial, or a national archive (Cunningham, 2005). While one cannot really compare the size and scope of a small independent school archive to a massive company, it is worth mentioning how the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) decided to manage their archival collection. With records beginning in 1670 created from and stored in numerous locations across Canada and England, it was decided in the 1970s to bring all of its archival holdings together under the custody and administration of the province of Manitoba (J. B. Davenport, 1980; Simmons, 1996). Under this initial agreement with the province, HBC maintained ownership of the records, they were managed separately from the rest of the provincial archive by a full-time archivist (plus support staff) employed by the province, and HBC would regularly deposit records of historic interest. In 1994, the records were officially donated to the province and their care was funded through the establishment of the Hudson's Bay History Foundation (where the financial outlay by the company to establish it was offset by significant tax savings) (Simmons, 1996, p. 77). The province benefited in that it was able to

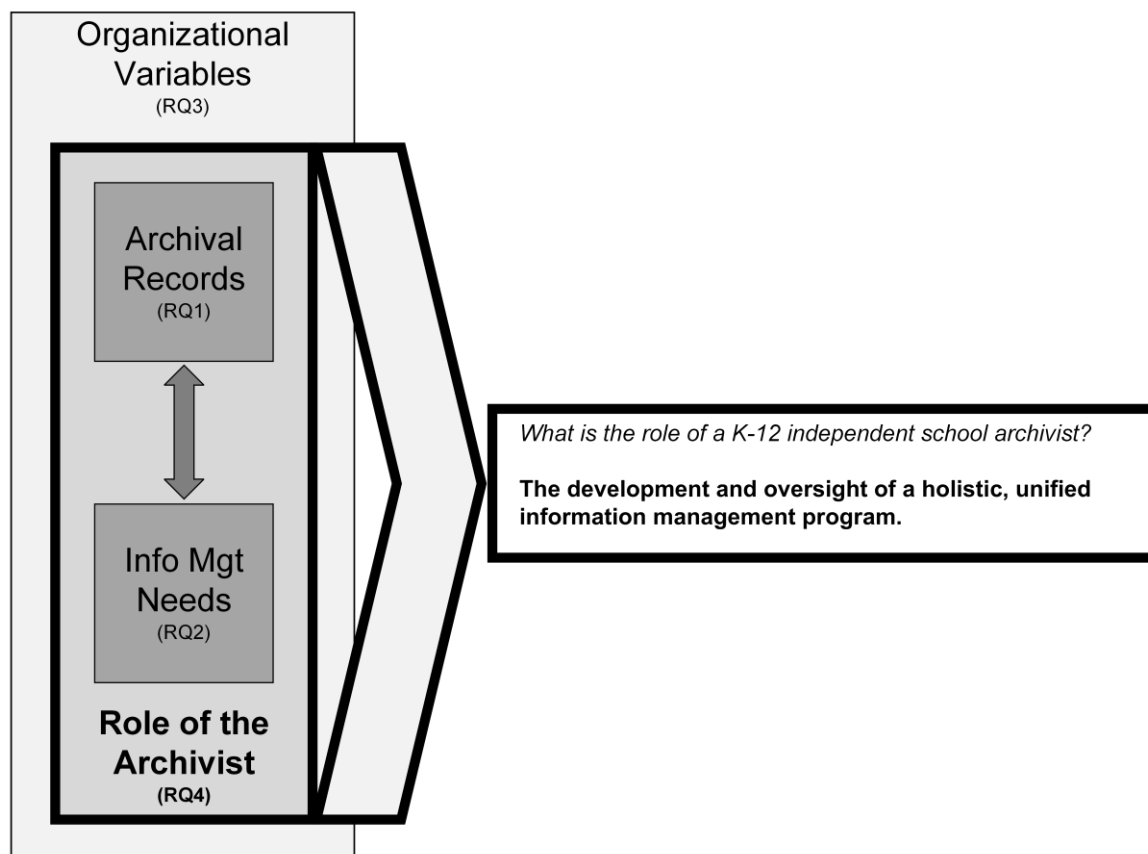
gain ownership of an enormous quantity of records that represented an important aspect of Canadian history. The company benefited in that it had continued access to and use of its historical materials, but they didn't have to fund an infrastructure or personnel to properly manage their care. A small independent school would obviously not carry as much weight as HBC, so collecting their individual historical records would not be as compelling an opportunity to their federal or provincial archives as the HBC papers were, but it may be worthwhile to gauge interest. Perhaps the school could receive a tax credit, or the collecting archive might offer to digitize older materials in return for donating them so that the school could continue to use the materials without having to pay to store them.

When resources are scarce, school archivists are forced to employ creative, pragmatic solutions to their institution's information management needs. Institutional archivists have been known to do great things with very little, but there are limits. Resources can only be stretched so far before they snap.

5.4 RQ 4: What is the Role of a K-12 Independent School Archivist?

Figure 5-5

Conceptual Framework: Role of the Archivist



The literature and this research make the case that the role of a K-12 independent school archivist, to bring the most value to their organization and to ensure the integrity of their archival collection, needs to extend beyond what has traditionally been expected of them.

Most of the archivists who took part in this research project were not situated centrally within their organization, making it next to impossible to effectively care for the school's contemporary records. They often felt that management had a very limited vision of what the role of a school archivist is, and that they often had a difficult time achieving recognition as a valuable professional. Through advocacy activities such as creating exhibitions, making archival records accessible, fielding requests, solving problems, creating informational databases and promoting

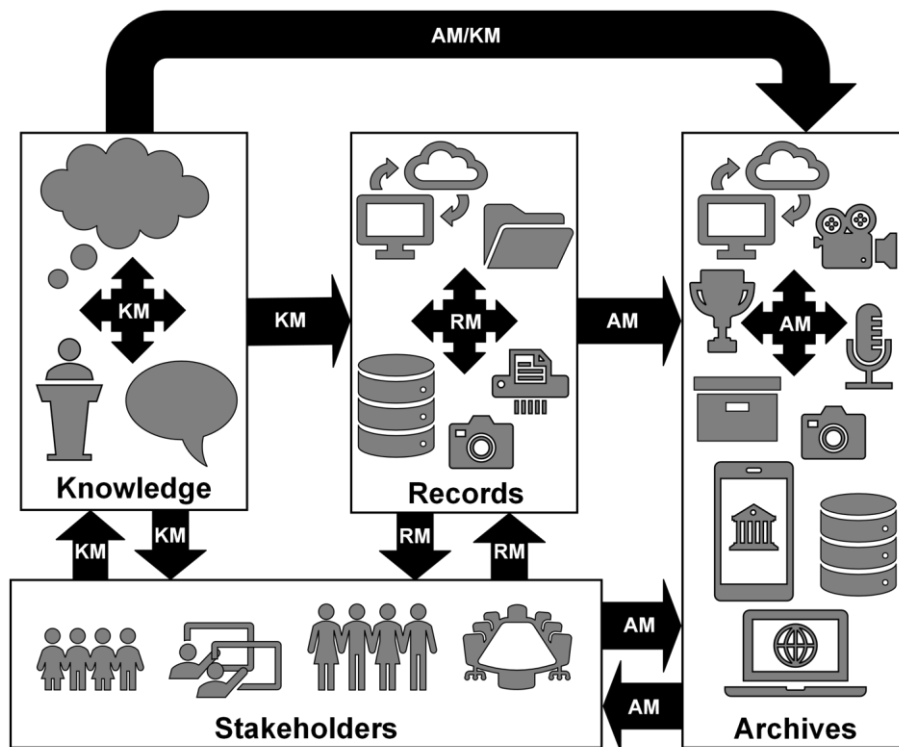
the school's history to the public, the school archivists who participated in this research all made very successful cases for the utility and value of their historical collections, but this research and the literature show that non-archivists need to be taught that historical records management is only one part of the job, and that if contemporary records aren't also managed, then the school as it is now will not be archived, and the work that all school staff are currently doing will be forgotten. School archivists depend on their colleagues for access to contemporary records, yet without documented and enforced policy and management's vocal support of what they're doing, staff cooperation is wholly dependent on their inclination to help, either due to them feeling the benefits of a robust archive or simply the state of their professional or personal relationship with the archivist. Without mandate and authority, appraisal becomes an enormous struggle, and without appraisal, the archive ceases to accrue.

"Some corporate archives exist primarily for the use of researchers, while others are utilized in nearly every department of their corporation...Vic Gray, director of the Rothschild Archive and Head of Corporate Records for the multinational investment banking company N.M. Rothschild & Sons, describes a kind of 'business support unit' that thoroughly understands all aspects of the company and makes themselves useful in every conceivable sector. This echoes Lasewicz's insights on the importance of all-encompassing 'knowledge managers' and highlights a clear need within the business community for archivists who are multidisciplinary and adaptable. Though there are certainly many non-archival information professionals who would be able to do this job competently, Gray makes the case that an archivist's understanding of the individual 'informational potential' of just one file, paired with an acute understanding of the kinds of questions that might be asked by potential inquirers, make them the ideal candidates to design and manage an information system of this kind" (King, 2018, pp. 6-9).

Many school archivists are under-resourced, overworked, and under-appreciated. This traditional role of school archivist, operating in isolation from the rest of the school staff, is

proving to be less and less effective in these digital times. Even in Quebec, where according to legislation (Government of Quebec, 2024d) archivists are charged with the management of records of any age, in practice, there is often still a split between historical and contemporary records (Baillargeon & Lévesque, 2024, p. 289). A continuum approach to archival management necessitates that the roles of records manager and archivist are combined so that the management of institutional records begins prior to creation with policy, procedure, and system design.

In addition, both the literature and this research have shown that strategic knowledge management strategies are not generally present in schools. A well-designed and implemented KM program would not only support the school's administrative and curricular functions but could also be used to fill in gaps in the school's institutional memory and archival collection. As such, I would argue that since it is incredibly unlikely that a small school would have the resources to employ a KM professional, that it should fall to the archivist to establish a holistic, unified information management program. Figure 5-6 illustrates what this could look like.

Figure 5-6*Holistic, Unified School Information Management Program*

Note. AM = archival management; KM = knowledge management; RM = records management

K-12 independent schools have different stakeholders, including students, teachers, administration, management, parents, and a Board of Directors. These people have and use knowledge, and they create and use records.

Using **knowledge management** (KM) techniques, an archivist could facilitate the identification, sharing, use, and codification of knowledge amongst the school's stakeholders through purposeful social and mentoring interactions, documented formal and informal discussions, collaborative documentation (such as wikis), and other knowledge harnessing and capturing activities.

The knowledge that becomes codified would become school records that could be managed along with the other records created or acquired by the school's stakeholders using **records management** (RM) processes. These records could take the shape of paper files, multimedia, databases, and documents on individual computers or in the cloud. The school's archivist would be charged with establishing records management policies and procedures, as well as configuring computer systems to ensure that institutional standards are applied uniformly across all departments (while also allowing for a certain flexibility so that staff are able to work in a way that makes sense to them). This would not only facilitate retrieval of records creators' own records, but also those created by colleagues (both within and without one's department) and past employees. The school's retention schedule would be applied, and inactive records that should not be retained permanently would be securely destroyed.

Using **archival management** (AM) methods, the archivist would appraise materials for inclusion in the school's archival repository. To ensure that all functions and viewpoints are represented, these materials would come from the school's institutional records, memorabilia, external donations, and by tapping into stakeholders' tacit knowledge through oral histories, wikis, and crowdsourced descriptions. "The field of business archives has been professionalized with best practices developed by the Society of American Archivists and the role of 'business archivist' has evolved into a so-called 'knowledge manager' who, supplemented by business historians and folklorists, meets the information needs of corporations large and small while still ensuring that business history remains alive and well." (King, 2018, p. 12)

Given that school archivists already have more on their plates than one could reasonably handle, it seems unrealistic to ask them to take on even more responsibilities. However, I truly believe that they don't have a choice. If their role doesn't change to include contemporary records management and knowledge management, there will be guaranteed gaps in the archive. Perhaps some institutions don't value their archives and are willing to accept that fact

and continue as-is, but they would be opening themselves up to significant legal risk as well as operational inefficiencies, which should be enough to give any school leader pause.

I also believe that, if well-designed and valued by the organization, the scope of this proposed role would be reasonable. It would, however, need to be a full-time position, ideally management-level (Gardner, 1982, p. 295), with some additional support from student interns and/or community volunteers. Establishing the program would take significant time and effort, but once up and running, if designed pragmatically, it would only require limited intervention by the archivist to maintain itself. “[P]erhaps the areas most central to the future lifeblood of a business are strategic planning and public issues monitoring...It requires a particularly able and energetic archivist to secure these responsibilities for his department, but his training, analytical skills, and understanding of the organizational development should make him a prime candidate for the position” (Mooney, 1982, p. 292).

A pragmatic school archival program should be based on academic and professional research and proven best practice but designed around the institution’s specific needs and limitations. Institutional archiving is both a science and an art, requiring technical and organizational knowledge, adaptability, creative problem-solving, and a can-do attitude. School archivists must develop an extensive toolkit and network of resources, and engineer a modular program, as different record types are unique and need to be managed in a bespoke fashion.

Not all solutions will be perfect or elegant, but they will all be a vast improvement over nothing at all. Not all strategies will have the same effect, so overworked archivists must choose to spend their time and effort on interventions that will bring about the best outcome. In the original MPLP article (M. Greene & Meissner, 2005), one preservation strategy was to ensure that the archives storage room climate is at optimal levels, which would have a major impact on the longevity of all the records it contains in one fell swoop. For the preservation of digital records, similar strategies should be used. Macro-level appraisal may need to take place to

ensure that digital files aren't lost. This could include downloading entire staff email boxes and the contents of Google Drives to preserve them in their entirety rather than appraising individual files or even folders. Regular, proactive preservation activities could still take place using batch processes, including media and file format migration, and recording hash codes to ensure files' integrity. Once the files' stability has been ensured, more detailed appraisal and processing could take place in the future.

For description, it is important that photographs be described at the item level as one of the most popular research requests is for images of particular people and events. This is one area where minimal processing would not be appropriate, but because so many digital photographs are being taken every day, should still be approached with a certain amount of creativity and pragmatism. Folders could be labeled by date and brief descriptor such as "2017-10-31 Grade Two Halloween Parade" and could then be batch uploaded to a web publishing platform such as AtoM or Omeka S with their date, description, and one or more access points based on a controlled vocabulary (such as "Halloween", or "Class of 2027"). The site could be secured by a password and current and former students and faculty could be regularly invited to tag themselves and people they know (again, based on a controlled vocabulary list of all current and former students and staff). For older digitized photographs with subject identities written on the back of the original picture, volunteers, paid summer students, or archive interns could be approached to tag people on the site. As technology improves and facial recognition software becomes more accessible, these early tags would be able to help teach the AI and ultimately, manual tagging might end up being mostly unnecessary. Yes, there will be some privacy and ethical concerns surrounding the use of facial recognition to identify photographs, but archivists should be involved in the discussion to ensure that these technologies will be used responsibly.

For analog textual documents, Miller (2013) recommends scanning with OCR as a strategy to allow full-text searches to make records more accessible when resources are unavailable for

more detailed cataloguing. Born-digital textual records are already optimized for full-text searches, and many types of digital records have metadata attributed to them on creation, such as date and creator, which can be used as preliminary archival descriptors. “[M]etadata in itself is capable of yielding tremendous insights into the processes and ideologies underlying the creation and management of the materials and the programs and other activities through which they were generated. This also makes metadata in itself a form of evidence” (Wood et al., 2014, p. 414). Relying solely on automated metadata as a way of describing records must be approached cautiously, however, as it can be quite vulnerable. For example, Google Takeout is an effective way of migrating records out of a Google Drive, but when the files are downloaded, much of the metadata is stripped. Archivists should be lobbying software developers to create systems that produce archivally-sound automated metadata, but in the meantime, especially if school records are being created or stored within a cloud environment, they must also educate school staff on how to accurately describe their own records, at minimum through filenames and folder structures.

School archivists must teach and learn. They must be professional and knowledgeable, keeping up to date on laws, tools, and strategies. They should share their knowledge with other school archivists. They must be adaptable, approachable, and integrate themselves into their organization. They should find the gaps in their archive—the missing voices—and ensure that they are represented. They must protect individuals’ privacy fervently but promote their collections ardently. By applying knowledge management, records management, and archival management methods in concert, school archivists could create an effective, unified, holistic information management program in their schools. And then, having addressed the business needs of their organization and assured their continued existence, they can comfortably extend themselves to the record continuum model’s fourth dimension, and focus on pluralisation activities comprised of meaningful engagement with all community members and other school

archivists, as well as creating links between their institution's evidence and memories and those from beyond their walls.

6. Conclusions

Most K-12 schools don't hire archivists.

School management does not always see the cost-benefit of having an archivist on staff. The literature shows that they see the value of records in terms of how they can be used to serve their immediate operational needs, but not necessarily to document decisions for posterity or to serve the interests of community members or future historians (Atherton, 1985, p. 49). This presents a barrier for archivists, but I would suggest, also an opportunity.

School management want their staff to be able to do their jobs well. To do so, staff need to have reliable access to accurate records and information, and they need to be encouraged to share knowledge with each other. In short, they need a strong information management program.

To appraise and ingest contemporary digital business records, school archivists must have access to and authority over the management of said records, which need to be bestowed upon them by management. Archivists could request authority by informing management of the benefits of having a trusted archival program, including having evidence in cases of litigation, avoiding fines and humiliation, being able to support business decisions, having archival material for writing the company's history, marketing, building a corporate identity, facilitating community engagement, supporting employee recruitment, and encouraging corporate responsibility (Gray, 2002; Lemieux, 2001; Logan, 2017).

This is all a good start, but perhaps not enough to justify the expense of an archival program that extends to contemporary records to school management. However, if archivists also offer to collaborate with staff to help them to manage their contemporary business knowledge and records so that they can better do their jobs, management might recognize the immediate operational benefits of having a full-time, integrated professional archivist on staff. When employees are mandated to follow records management procedures, buy-in is often quite low.

However, if records management procedures are designed around their specific needs, collaboratively with an information professional, staff tend to be far more enthusiastic (Kaczmarek, 2006). A happy by-product of that symbiotic relationship would be that archivists would gain access to and authority over the school's contemporary records that had once been out of reach, allowing for them to be appraised, accessioned, used, managed, and preserved for the archive.

This research study explored the state of information management in K-12 independent schools from an archival perspective using a pragmatic, exploratory approach. A single school was used as a case study, and over the course of 14 months the school's records were analyzed, 13 administrative staff were interviewed, and 20 faculty members participated in a survey. Following the case study, archivists from five different schools were interviewed.

While there was not much existing literature about archival or information management in K-12 schools, what there was asserted that information management is often neglected in schools. The data collected during this study supported this assertion. In addition, the data showed the effect that this neglect can have on a school's records, administrative staff, faculty, and archivist.

Inspired by Helen Samuels' book *Varsity Letters* (1992), a functional analysis was produced detailing a K-12 school's functions and many of the record types that they create or collect (see Appendix I). It also included an examination of some of the appraisal and accession, use and access, and management and preservation considerations that should be addressed.

Ten 'moments of failure' were identified—situations that can lead to gaps in a school's archive, including **not having clear policy or procedures**, no archivists or archivists without adequate **responsibility or power**; **insufficient space** for archives to be stored or managed; inadequate physical control over records during office **moves and renovations**; **disasters** such as floods, fires, and computer crashes; not adapting quickly enough to **the rise of digital**

records; changes in information systems, including the rise of **Google schools** and other cloud-based commercial services; **undocumented knowledge** that would be valuable to have harnessed; **missing viewpoints** from important community members such as students and teachers; and not accessioning or destroying certain records due to **privacy concerns**.

This was followed by an examination of some of the information management needs of a K-12 independent school. They included creating and mandating clear **guidelines on how to manage work records**; ensuring appropriate **open access to accurate institutional information and records**; establishing palatable and straightforward **mechanisms to harness and share tacit knowledge**; and providing **mandatory training and regular support** for using systems to their full advantage and managing work records in a consistent manner.

These led to an analysis of six organizational variables that could be important regarding information management in schools: **Information governance** must be prioritized, and archivists, in collaboration with school leadership and staff, must be implicated in the development and implementation of a school's records retention schedule, policy, and procedures; institution-wide, trans-departmental **infrastructure** must be established by leveraging existing systems where possible and establishing new ones where required; an **organizational culture** must be modeled by leadership, embraced by staff, and nurtured by the archivist; **collaboration and community** must be an integral component of the organizational culture, as close relationships lead to more and deeper knowledge sharing which leads to a greater understanding of each other; staff need to have **confidence** in their colleagues, confidence in school leadership, confidence in the archivist, confidence in the reliability of the organization's records, and confidence in themselves; and despite being able to rely on pragmatism to do much with little, some **resources** must be made available for staffing, space, equipment, and systems.

Finally, the role of school archivist was discussed. It was determined that a school archivist should occupy a **centralized, trans-departmental** position within their organization, and employ a **holistic, continuum-based** approach to **contemporary and archival** records management as well as **knowledge management**, implicating themselves in **collaborative policy, procedure, and systems** design throughout their school.

6.1 Contributions of the Research

The archival management of K-12 schools is a remarkably understudied area. As a theoretical contribution, this research added rich empirical evidence to the existing body of knowledge and brought together different theoretical models to inform the design of a holistic institutional information management program. In terms of practical contributions, an analysis of both the literature and the data collected identified variables for school archivists to consider, which led to the creation of valuable best practice recommendations.

This research underscored from a unique perspective the importance of ensuring that school resource-holders have a **clear understanding of the role of archivist**, that archivists **integrate themselves** centrally within their organization, that they **expand their scope** to address the greater information and knowledge management **needs of school stakeholders** (and leverage those expanded responsibilities to better support the archive), and that they apply **creative, pragmatic, continuum approaches** to the design of their archival programs.

6.1.1 Theoretical Contributions

The archival literature on K-12 schools is quite limited in scope. Works from the 1990s to the early 2010s identified a number of barriers that school archivists faced, including a lack of interest by management which led to a lack of resources (Garnet, 2012), missing records (Mogarro, 2006), no clearly defined scope, and limited responsibility over or access to contemporary records (Riley, 1997). Sadly, these issues were also mentioned in more recent articles (Allahmahani, 2014; Cheng, 2018; Garaba, 2019; Mojapelo, 2022), so it seems as though for many institutions, the situation is not changing. This research built on the identification of some of the issues that were brought up in the literature, but also conceptualized some pragmatic solutions that might begin to address them.

The issue of a lack of interest in archives by management has been seen throughout the archival literature back as far as the 1950s (Browne, 1953). It came to a head in the 1980s with the SAA-sponsored Levy and Robles (1984) report that stated that archivists must convince resource holders that a well-managed integrated records program would lead to cost and time efficiencies. Collecting repositories, such as national archives and university special collection libraries are often in a better position to be able to give their archival collections the attention they deserve as their management prioritizes them because archives are a core function of their business (Yakel, 1989). In the case of institutional archives, however, its perceived value is directly tied to how it can support its organization's operations (H. Anderson, 1982), which is usually not related to information management. **This lack of interest by management in archives was expressed by a most of the archivist interview participants, so for at least some school archivists, this is an ongoing problem.** A resource-holder's narrow view of the role of archivist will limit the scope of their work to historical records, which, in this digital era, won't get the job done.

The records continuum model (Upward, 1996, 1997) is a theoretical framework for effective archival practice. It considers all space and time and asserts that archivists need to be involved in all elements of document management, from designing methods of capture before a record's creation to ensuring its availability far into the future. It also acknowledges that not all viewpoints and situations are captured within a single archive, so archivists must practice pluralisation to engage with other archives and communities to ensure that our collective memory is lit up by many different perspectives, not just those held by those in power. The theoretical idea of pluralisation was interpreted practically by Helen Samuels in the development of both her documentation strategy (1986) and her later institutional functional analysis (1992). **The data collected during the case study's document analysis showed that in the case of this school, there were significant gaps in the archive where digital records had not been**

appraised or collected, and important community voices, including those of students and teachers, were barely represented at all. The participants in the administrator interviews spoke of significant institutional knowledge that was stuck in people's heads that they wished that they had ways to access. This knowledge, if it could be captured and appraised, would add another source of light to the archive's collective memory.

Many recommended archival practices, while based in strong theory, are decidedly difficult to implement by under-resourced institutional archivists, including Samuels' functional analysis (Brichford, 1993; Schultz, 1994; Robyns, 2014; *Strategies for Documenting Government Business: The DIRKS Manual*, 2018). To address this issue, Greene and Meissner (2005) developed *More Product, Less Process*, where they recommended that archivists prioritize their workload by focusing on tasks that have the most positive impact. This was not to say that important tasks should be neglected, but that perfect is the enemy of good, and when it's impossible to do everything, you should do the things that matter most and do them efficiently. This view is based in pragmatism (Shusterman, 2010; Morgan 2007), which in some circles may be considered a dirty word that justifies laziness and corner-cutting. **This research has embraced the philosophy of pragmatism and has used it as a guiding framework for not only the research design and data collection, but also in the conceptualization of the best practice recommendations offered in the discussion chapter** (and summarized below).

School archivists are often having to do a lot with a little, and it is important that they feel empowered to interpret and adapt archival theory and practice to their own situations, using their knowledge and their own experiences to confidently guide their actions. They should have regular discourse with work colleagues and other archivists to ensure multiple perspectives and learn from the insights of others. They need to look to the future, anticipate change, and take action to find creative adaptable solutions to problems that account for the ever-changing nature of the world and society. They need to look at situations holistically and consider all elements

(internal and external) that might be affecting their plans, and not be afraid to change tack if things aren't working. All these aspects are important for all archivists, and they are all rooted in pragmatism.

6.1.2 Practical Contributions

Part of this research was the creation of a **functional analysis** that was intended to demonstrate how a school could go about starting to develop an acquisition plan and documentation strategy. It not only listed the main functions and activities of a K-12 independent school, but also identified some archival management issues that should be considered by school archivists. Its purpose was to encourage archivists to think about their collections and strategies, and perhaps find some inspiration or ideas to help them with their own practice.

This research culminated in the creation of some **best practice recommendations** for school archivists. They don't all necessarily need to be addressed for the implementation of a successful information management program, but they might help, and if things aren't going to plan, they may be worth exploring. The following is an idealized example of how some of these recommendations could be implemented in practice:

Before anything else can happen, a school archivist must **convince their colleagues** (Shkolnik, 1990) of the value of archives and information management. **Speak with them** (G.D. Smith, 1982) about what you do, and what you could do. **Listen to them** and learn about their jobs and how what they do fits into the whole organizational structure. **Learn the intricacies of the systems** (Lanzolla & Suarez, 2012) that they use. **Think about the paths that information takes** (Cunningham, 2011a) as it travels through the school and beyond. Ask them how they manage their own information, encourage them to tell you about their struggles, and then use your organizational and professional knowledge to come up with a **plan for how to help**

(Iacuzzi et al., 2020). Get them on board, and then together, approach management to **sell your case** that you are an untapped, valuable resource that could **improve the school's operational efficiency** (SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities, 1986) if tasked with oversight over its contemporary records management.

Once your mandate has been broadened, implement a few simple solutions immediately to **foster feelings of trust and respect** (Tschannen-Moran, 2014) towards you and information management. Ensure that you are **approachable**, and always **look for ways to help**. Once you have established feelings of goodwill, perform a **holistic examination of the organization** (Samuels, 1992), including a pared-down functional analysis and greater documentation strategy. **Working together** with management and records creators (but let's be honest—you're going to have to be the one to make this happen), design a **robust governance structure** (Maurel & Zwarich, 2021) that includes high-level **policy**, easy-to-follow **procedures**, **infrastructure** that doesn't create more work for the records creators (ideally adapting or pulling from systems they already use), regular **training**, and **continual reassessments and adaptations** when required (Foscarini, 2010).

Start a **dialogue with management about student records** (Stein, 2021). Citing lessons learned from the TRC and child protection associations, impart on them the importance of **maintaining complete and accurate records** (Bak, 2021). Explain that even if government guidelines prescribe the culling of records after their administrative use has passed due to **privacy concerns** (Government of Quebec, 2024b), that in the case of Quebec schools at least, one can submit a **revised records retention schedule** (Government of Quebec, 2024d) to the BAnQ (National Library and Archives of Quebec) that justifies keeping the complete record for historical and accountability purposes, and that if approved, would allow the school to maintain the integrity of those records. The idea of including the students' own viewpoints and works within those files through **participatory archiving techniques** (Lomas et al., 2022) could

also be brought up as a topic for discussion. This would need to include a real consideration of the **ethical issues** (Lehew, 2020) involved of documenting records created by and about children.

Find ways to use **knowledge management** (Valmohammadi & Ahmadi, 2015; Awang et al., 2011) techniques to capture tacit knowledge and create a centralized **knowledge base** (Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2015) that all community members could contribute to and benefit from. This could include starting a wiki that documents school activities and events, creating **access points** (Benoit III, 2014) that could then be **linked semantically to existing archival documents**. It could also be organizing regular events where community members can share stories: alumni could talk about their time at the school, teachers could speak of lessons they gave and what they themselves learned from them, administrators could share insights with their colleagues. All of these could be recorded and shared within the knowledge base and would **enrich the archive**.

Engage teachers (Hoyer & Schwier, 2019) with the archive. Ask them about their curriculum, and work with them to come up with some ideas for how they could integrate your records into their lesson plans. When you do, be sure to **document those lesson plans** (Saito, 2017) for future use and to inspire other teachers and archivists.

Engage students (Addonizio & Case, 2015; Anderberg et al., 2018; Burckel, 1976; Carini, 2009; Chepesiuk, 1983; S. A. Cook, 1997; Dowling et al., 2018; Garcia, 2017; Gilliland-Swetland et al., 1999; Fernekes & Rosenberg, 2008; Hendry, 2007; Mills et al., 2020; Palmer, 1979) with the archive as well. Beyond using historical documents in classroom lessons, you can announce ‘fun facts’ at weekly assemblies, show pictures of past events during the same contemporary event, draw parallels and contrasts between what life was like then versus life now, **encourage alumni** (Gallo, 2012; Riley, 1997) to visit the school and talk to the students about their experiences so that they all feel like they belong to this greater school community.

Collaborate with alumni associations and other school archivists to promote **pluralization** through **community archives** (Caswell et al., 2018; Gilliland & Flinn, 2013), **communities of practice** (Buchanan, 2012), and **cooperative digital repositories** (Caswell, Cifor, et al., 2016) where records and subjects are semantically linked to create a representative network of knowledge.

6.2 Limitations

This research was based around a small, single-institution case study. If it had taken place at another school, it is quite possible that there would have been very different conclusions drawn. However, the data collection also included speaking with archivists from other schools, which supported the findings from the case study. In addition, the data collected was supported by the literature.

I had hoped to complete at least a few more interviews with archivists from other schools, but the 2020 global pandemic shut the world down the day after I had completed my final two interviews. The ones that I had scheduled for the following week were, understandably, cancelled. That said, I do believe that the data collected during those five extensive interviews provided me with significant valuable insight.

I do wish that there had been the opportunity to examine how students' perspectives could be better represented within a school's archive. It was very clear at the outset of this research, however, that focusing in on the school's staff was already going to be a significant undertaking, and I felt that given all the complicated ethical and logistical aspects of archiving the viewpoints of children, that it deserved more attention than I would have been able to give it alongside my other work.

One participant in the faculty survey questioned its design: "Your questions lack the nuance necessary for authentic answers." It is very true that more complete and genuine answers would have come from interviews, which had been the original idea, but that was unfortunately not logistically possible as only one faculty member agreed to be interviewed, but it was never able to be scheduled due to them being so busy. Even though no definitive conclusions can be drawn from this survey, it did provide some very interesting data which could inspire further—more nuanced—research into this area.

Over the 14 months at the case study school, I developed close working relationships with many of the staff members, some of whom participated in the administrator interviews. I do not believe that would have negatively impacted the results in any way—in fact, I believe that they were much more honest and open than they would have been with a stranger, which supported one of my findings that strong relationships can lead to deeper and more meaningful knowledge transfer between colleagues.

6.3 Future Study

"As exploratory data analysis performs the function as a model builder for confirmatory data analysis, abduction plays a role of explorer of viable paths to further inquiry" (Ho, 1994, p. 3). The current study was exploratory, designed to examine the current information management situation in K-12 independent schools. While it did answer many questions, it also unearthed a lot more.

The discussion section puts forward recommendations on how to design an effective information management program in an independent K-12 school, but unfortunately there was no opportunity to make any systematic implementations to test the recommendations. That would be the next logical step.

It would be incredibly valuable to explore how students' perspectives could be better represented in school archives. Would knowing that they are a part of the collection make them feel like more of a member of the community? Would more exposure to their school's archive make them feel like more of a member of the community? Would it instill feelings of collegiality between students (much in the same way as being part of a sports team) and reduce instances of bullying and isolation?

There should be a modern large-scale survey of different people's perspectives on the role of archivist, including the perspective of archivists themselves.

It was beyond the scope of this research to explore exactly how to integrate knowledge-capture activities into an independent K-12 school, but that would certainly be worth exploring from a KM perspective.

A large-scale survey of K-12 school archivists around the world could be used to see if the conclusions derived from this study's rich qualitative data collected during the archivist interviews would be seen elsewhere.

It would be worth researching about whether better information management could lead to a decrease in feelings of isolation and a greater sense of community amongst teaching faculty.

It would also be interesting to explore how the global pandemic may have affected information management in schools. During lockdowns, information had to be transmitted in different, less personal ways—how did staff and students adapt? And now that they are back to in-person schooling, what new practices will remain going forward and what will be dropped? Since knowledge transfer had to be done digitally, did it create more records that could be archived, or did it just lead to entrenched isolation?

Lastly, it would be valuable to test the transferability of this research by examining information management in other similar organizations, such as public schools, small colleges, and small to medium-sized businesses.

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Glossary

Archival records: For this research, archival records refer to all the records of any age, analog and digital, that are produced or collected with the intent to retain permanently for legal, fiscal, administrative, or historical purposes.

Born-digital record: A record that was created electronically, rather than being analog and then digitized. Examples include word processing documents, spreadsheets, digital photographs, and databases.

GLAM organizations: Galleries, libraries, archives, and museums.

Independent schools: “Independent schools are not-for-profit and are overseen by an elected Board of Governors. They are licensed by the provinces in which they operate and must comply with provincial standards.” (CAIS Canadian Accredited Independent Schools, n.d.).

Information governance: “[T]he specification of decision rights and an accountability framework to ensure appropriate behavior in the valuation, creation, storage, use, archiving and deletion of information. It includes the processes, roles and policies, standards and metrics that ensure the effective and efficient use of information in enabling an organization to achieve its goals” (Gartner, n.d.).

K-12 schools: The term “K-12” represents an educational institution that is a combination elementary and high school (kindergarten to grade 12) and is the demographic focus of this dissertation. Even though in Quebec, most high schools end in grade 11, this research will still

use the term “K-12” rather than “K-11” to maintain a standard, more universally understood terminology.

School archives: The archival records of a school, both analog and digital. They can contain both the school’s institutional records as well as private records that have been acquired to enrich the collection. This can include audio-visual material and artefacts.

School Leadership: The Head of School and any other staff members in a leadership role, such as Vice Principal, Junior, Middle or Senior School Head, Academic Head, Director of Finance, etc.

Total Archives: A Canadian-born archival strategy where an institution collects different types of records from alternate sources, including personal papers. The purpose is to develop a comprehensive archival collection that reflects many viewpoints from different communities (L. Millar, 1998, 1999).

Appendices

A. REB Certificate



Research Ethics Board Office
James Administration Bldg.
845 Sherbrooke Street West, Rm 325
Montreal, QC H3A 0G4

Tel: (514) 398-6831

Website: www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/human/

Research Ethics Board II Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 134-0818

Project Title: The Power of Archival Records in Independent Schools

Principal Investigator: Morgannis Graham

Department: School of Information Studies

Status: Ph.D Student

Supervisor: Professor Eun G. Park

Funding: MITACS

Approval Period: October 25, 2018 to October 24, 2019

The REB-II reviewed and approved this project by delegated review in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

Deanna Collin
Ethics Review Administrator, REB I & II

* Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described.

* Modifications to the approved research must be reviewed and approved by the REB before they can be implemented.

* A Request for Renewal form must be submitted before the above expiry date. Research cannot be conducted without a current ethics approval. Submit 2-3 weeks ahead of the expiry date.

* When a project has been completed or terminated, a Study Closure form must be submitted.

* Unanticipated issues that may increase the risk level to participants or that may have other ethical implications must be promptly reported to the REB. Serious adverse events experienced by a participant in conjunction with the research must be reported to the REB without delay.

* The REB must be promptly notified of any new information that may affect the welfare or consent of participants.

* The REB must be notified of any suspension or cancellation imposed by a funding agency or regulatory body that is related to this study.

* The REB must be notified of any findings that may have ethical implications or may affect the decision of the REB.

B. Mitacs Approval

October 24, 2018

Application Ref. IT12793

RE: Mitacs Accelerate Proposal

Project Title:	The Power of Archival Records in Independent Schools
Internship Supervisor(s):	Eun G Park
Intern(s):	Morgannis Graham
Department:	School of Information Studies
Institution:	McGill University
Partner Organization:	

Dear applicants,

Your application to Mitacs Accelerate has successfully passed research review. Your **research project** has been approved for a total grant of \$45,000.00 that will be delivered through **eligible internships**. Your internship should not start prior to confirmation of eligibility as outlined below:

1. Mitacs must receive partner funds before each internship start date to pay the intern(s) on time;
2. Project leads must confirm intern name(s) and start date(s). No costs for an internship can be incurred prior to the research project approval and the receipt of partner funds for the internship;
3. To identify a new intern, the Intern Profile form (including CV and memorandum) must be submitted to Mitacs before the applicable internship's start date and obtain Mitacs approval;
4. Project leads must obtain the following certification(s) or approval(s) before the project begins: University Research Ethics Board approval.

All awards are subject to ongoing program eligibility, continuation of funding by the partner organization(s), and continuation of funding by our government partners. Mitacs-Accelerate gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada and the Government of Québec through the Ministère de l'Économie, de la Science et de l'Innovation (MESI).

Welcome to Mitacs Accelerate. With this program, interns can apply their specialized expertise while companies gain a competitive advantage. We look forward to the success of your project.

If you have any questions, please contact Sheila Oakley, Spécialiste de la gestion des subventions/ Grant Management Specialist, at soakley@mitacs.ca.

Sincerely,

Olga Stachova
Chief Operating Officer

Enclosures:

- Appendix A: Referee comments
- Appendix B: Terms and Conditions of the Award
- Attachment: Intern Onboarding Information

● Montréal, QC
405 avenue Ogilvy
Bureau 101
Montréal, QC, H3N 1M3

● Toronto, ON
Banting Institute, University of Toronto
522 – 100 College Street
Toronto, ON M5G 1L5

● Vancouver, BC
Suite 301 – 6190 Agronomy Road
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3

C. Case Study: Administrator Interview Participant Recruitment Letter



Dear [REDACTED] staff,

My name is Morgannis Graham, I am an [REDACTED] alumna (class of 1995), the school's part-time volunteer archivist (since 2015), and a PhD candidate at McGill University's School of Information Studies. [REDACTED] management has agreed to allow me to use your school as a case study for my doctoral research, so I will be on-site at the school for the next academic year researching the creation, management, preservation, use, and re-use of the school's archival records by both faculty and administrative staff. Independent schools have unique challenges that differ from those faced by public schools. This research study will examine whether an independent school's archival records could help to support some of those challenges.

All administrative staff and faculty members (both junior and senior school) are invited to participate. Over the next few weeks, I will come by to introduce myself to all of the administrative staff individually, and to answer any questions that you might have about my research. All faculty members who would like to participate are encouraged to [get in touch with me](#).

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary, and I will not be reporting to management who has chosen to participate and who has not. Participation will involve at least one semi-structured interview. Administrative staff will be asked to discuss your role at the school, the types of records that you produce, how they are stored and managed, how they are used, and what challenges you face in your job. Faculty will be asked about the records that you create or collect (lesson plans, student work, photographs etc) as well as ideas for how to use historical records in your classroom. Your privacy will always be strictly protected. These interviews will likely be followed up with informal interviews and brief discussions over the course of the year.

There will be no compensation provided for your participation in this study. I hope to be able to use the information that I uncover to help support the administrative and curricular functions at the school, so your participation could have a positive impact on your day-to-day work.

Please find attached a copy of the participation consent form which contains more detailed information about the research project. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask me either by email or in person at school. I can usually be found in the office at the end of the hall on the second floor of the senior school.

Thank you so much for your time. I'm really looking forward to getting to know you all over the next year!



Morgannis Graham, PhD Candidate
McGill University School of Information Studies
morgannis.graham@mail.mcgill.ca



Academic Supervisor:
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Associate Professor
McGill University School of Information Studies
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REB File # 134-0818
This research has been funded by [Mitacs](#)

D. Case Study: Administrator Interview Participant Consent Form

**McGill**School of
Information Studies

Participant Consent Form

Researcher

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Title of Project

The Power of Archival Records in Independent Schools

Purpose of the Study

You have been invited to participate in a research study to explore the creation, management, preservation, use, and re-use of the archival records at [REDACTED]. Independent schools have unique challenges that differ from those faced by public schools. This study will examine whether an independent school's archival records could help to support some of those challenges.

Study Procedures

Over the next school year, the researcher is hoping to speak with most members of [REDACTED] administrative staff (and some faculty) to discuss the records that you create and use (or could use) during the course of your employment at the school. These discussions will be exploratory in nature, and will take the form of semi-structured interviews. Over the course of the year, you may be requested to participate in follow-up interviews or informal discussions to clarify or elaborate on certain points that have emerged from conversations with you and your colleagues.

Confidentiality

Interviews will be audio recorded unless you ask for them not to be, in which case detailed notes will be taken during your interview(s). The audio recordings will only be heard by the researcher, and only for the purpose of transcription. These audio recordings will not be shared with anyone. Once the recordings have been transcribed and the transcriptions verified by you, they will be only be accessible by the researcher and the supervisor and the original audio files will be destroyed after the required retention period (7 years following the end of the research project). All transcripts and research notes will be anonymized: you will be assigned an ID code (with the key kept in a password-protected separate file) and never referred to by your real name. The only people who will know your identity are the researcher and supervisor.

Any summaries of your statements or direct quotes that may appear in publications will not be attributable to you, either directly or indirectly.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is absolutely voluntary, and you may refuse to answer any question or withdraw your consent at any time, for any reason. The researcher will not be reporting to the school's management who has and who has not participated, so there will be no impact on your employment status. To ensure that there are no misunderstandings, after any information about you has been gathered (following an interview or informal discussion), the researcher will present to you a transcript of the conversation, and you will have the opportunity to confirm, clarify, or refute your statements.

Potential Risks

There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. If, during your interview(s), you happen to express any feelings or observations which could put your job or relationships at risk (for example, being critical of management or colleagues), they will not be reported on unless directly relevant to the research, and even then, only if your privacy can be absolutely guaranteed.

Potential Benefits

You will not be compensated for your participation. This study will be exploring how [REDACTED] archival records can help to support their administrative and curricular challenges. I will be asking you about your opinions and perspectives about your job, and hope to be able to work with you to find improvements through the management, use, and re-use of the school's archival records.

Questions

If you have any questions or require any clarifications about this project, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at morgannis.graham@mail.mcgill.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca.

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

I consent to be audio recorded (circle one): Yes No

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

REB File # 134-0818

This research has been funded by Mitacs

E. Case Study: Administrator Interview Question Guide

- Name, title
 - How long have you worked at the school? In current role?
 - Describe your job
 - What records do you create? How? What software do you use? Where do you save your files? Walk me through the process.
 - Do you know how long to keep records for? If so, how?
 - What records/information do you share with other stakeholders? How? In what format?
 - What records/information do you take from other people? How? In what format?
 - What job-related struggles do you have?
 - Is there anything work-related that you are particularly proud of? Innovations, strategies?
 - What information do you wish that you could access more easily? Why? Can you think of ways to make it easier?
 - What do you wish that you could be doing for the school that you are not (perhaps outside of your job description)?
-
- What makes independent schools different from public schools?
 - What are [this school's] most important values?
 - What makes [this school] different from other independent schools?
 - Describe the ideal graduate from [this school]—how has the school helped to shape them?

F. Case Study: Administrator Interview Codebook

Code	Description	Representative quotes from interviews
Job-Changes	Participant discusses how elements of their own job has changed or staff turnover	"In the past it was [other department] who maintained this. And then [former director] left and it kind of got transitioned into [my department] just because there was no one else to do it. So now it's going to go back to [other department]."
Job-Description	Participant describes their role at the school	"I do a real mishmash...and part of what I have been doing this year has been trying to sort of de-mishmash because we have a [department] team now which the school hasn't had before."
Job-Desires	Participant speaks of what they wish that they could be doing at their job that they are not (and often why)	"I'm definitely always looking for opportunities to take on more. Yeah. To challenge myself."
Job-Pride	Participant speaks of what they have done in their work that elicits feelings of pride	"I'm proud of our [project]...we created new taglines based on the strategy plan and then did a an audit of [same project] from schools all over Canada and looked at what people were doing."
Job-Struggles	Participant discusses struggles that they have encountered while doing their job	"It's challenging because there's, there's definitely mandate and role confusion because those lines aren't clearly established."
Job-Support	Participant discusses the support (or lack of support) that they or others receive at work	"Our onboarding here is not very good. It's not very good at all."
Job-Training	Participant discusses the training (or lack of training) that they or others receive at work	"I think having really solid training is really key to make sure that your staff is using the tool the way you want it to be used and to make sure that there's integrity across, you know, the data."
Job-Workflows	Participant describes their procedural workflows, policy that guides them, or the implications of not having them defined	"If there were more stability and like policies and processes and then we know everybody knows year after year, it's a little bit more like now we can prepare more."
School-Values	Participant expresses their thoughts on what the school's values might be	"They like the sense of community. They like the low-key, they like the fact that everyone is approachable that their kids are known and loved by all their teachers. They love the fact that it's individualized. It is every kid, every way, and every day."

School-Students	Participant speaks about the students	"There has been a shift from kind of adults telling students what things should look like, or what we've done, to a really student-driven side of things. I am a firm believer that it's not going to work if it doesn't come from the students themselves, so I don't think we need to repeat things year to year for the sake of repeating them. If the kids are not interested, then we don't do it."
Knowledge-Sharing	Participant talks about sharing knowledge or receiving shared knowledge	"It took a fresh person to come in...I know [everyone] so well you can just point to a child and say who's that? I'll say that's [name] and [important information about child]. Like I know all the kids like that. Well [new person] came in and said I don't know anybody. So they had [registrar] put in a few extra fields [in the database], and now they've got more information."
Knowledge-Struggles	Participant discusses any struggles they experienced regarding the sharing or receiving of knowledge	"I don't know who follows under who. Yeah I don't know anymore."
Relationships-Administrators	Participant discusses relationships between themselves and their fellow administrators	"We used to have a lot more 5-7s [social happy hour], just little gatherings with staff there's not a lot of that anymore."
Relationships-Alumni	Participant discusses relationships between themselves and alumni	"They also do most of the alumni relations for the advancement office because they're an alumni. So they create most of the content for the alumni newsletters and also do whatever sort of here and there tasks they need for alumni relations."
Relationships-External	Participant discusses relationships between themselves and people from outside the school	"No I think that the title thing had more of an impact on my ability to communicate with the government, because they won't talk to me because I'm not a director, and they want to talk to somebody in a position of power. So I've had to divert a lot of my work to [registrar] or [head of school] because I don't have the title though I'm doing the work."
Relationships-Faculty	Participant discusses relationships between themselves and teaching faculty	"Some of the more seasoned teachers kind of know to sort of say hey, you know you might want to follow up with this family because I think they might be a little uneasy about this, or they might want to know more about that, or they might be concerned..."
Relationships-Management	Participant discusses relationships between	"So I [made a plan] with [executive], then they was gone. Then I did it with [new

	themselves and school management	executive] then they were gone before that I did a reading with [a third executive], but then their position changed. You know, I've gone through the process of making a plan and it not happening at least three times."
Relationships-Other schools	Participant discusses relationships between themselves and people from other schools	"We also collaborate like there's...coordinators or directors so we have a, uhm, QAIS runs maybe 2 or 3 meetings a year where those people get together and talk about kind of somethings that are going on in schools."
Relationships-Parents	Participant discusses relationships between themselves and parents	"We have to maintain a relationship with the families. It's too easy to lose them."
Relationships-Students	Participant discusses relationships between themselves and students	"I think that the student file there's... there should be, actually, there should be two files. There should be the academic file, and then there should be a file in terms of the way... an understanding of how they learn, what they like to learn, and that kind of learning folder...like, there is an idea about a portfolio, right?... And to have the kid responsible the student responsible for putting things in that they value, that they see is important in terms of their learning... and I think that's something we need to ... That's a really that's a profound idea actually."
Records-Access	Participant speaks of access restrictions to certain records	"I mean, my access, I think is limited."
Records-Archival	Participant mentions the permanent preservation of records, or anything to do with the school's archives	"And then there's the archive drive. And the, well actually, I don't know who maintained it before, but it's been it's been well maintained. When the professional photographer comes in, they send their pictures, [colleague] takes care of that now they go straight on there, everything's well...So photos are one thing that are easy to find."
Records-Management	Participant speaks of how records are managed	"So when you pull up a student file, you don't have the same documents in the same places in each student. So you're constantly going back and forth because there's not a protocol for, well, first you have this type of document, then you have that type of... or maybe there is, and it's been waylaid or there's not been training on it but ... So each

		person that comes in kind of uses their own system.”
Records-Sharing	Participant speaks of how they share their records, or how records are shared with them	“Normally we just we paper trail for shared documents but I believe we could export to Excel and then [department] could receive it that way but it's easier to explain...they may [have questions]. So it's easier for me to actually print the [document] and bring it to them and explain.”
Records-Struggles	Participant speaks of any struggles that they have encountered regarding their work records	“The challenge that we have is that [database] started to be used ... about three years ago I think? And files that were in the [different] system before just got mass imported and then you can't append files to the students who were previously in the system.”
Technology-Systems	Participant mentions an IT system (database or other software) that they use in the course of their work—except for Google for Education	“Prior to [database] we didn't have this this capability of pulling our data. So it was all done very manually before three years ago.”
Technology-Google	Participant mentions any of the Google for Education components: Gmail, Drive, Classroom, Docs, Sheets, Slides, etc.	“The G-Suite is amazing. I love it. It's so easy... you can just bring anything like any other spreadsheet, you just drop it into there, boom, and it's live. And you can share and edit with other people, and it's so, like, saving attachments is so, [makes negative noise]. [laughs] It's just, it's just easy, it's just there, it's always up-to-date, you can see all the updates that have been done, who modified what, I'm like, yay!”

G. Case Study: Faculty Survey Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear [THIS SCHOOL] teachers,

Hello! As many of you know, I am working on my PhD in Information Studies at McGill University and am using [THIS SCHOOL] as a case study. I have been at the school for the past year interviewing many of the administrative staff, reading business documents, observing the goings-on, becoming intimately involved with various databases, and lending a hand whenever needed.

As part of my research, I was hoping that you, the teaching staff, could help me by participating in a survey about the records that you create, the information that you share and seek out during the course of your employment, and the use of primary-source documents in your classroom:

[LINK TO SURVEY]

Some important points to note:

- This is an anonymous survey, and all questions are optional. Skip whichever ones you'd like for whatever reason, but **please be sure to submit the survey at the end** or I won't receive any of your answers.
- **Please only submit the survey once**, and do not forward it to anyone else (I need to be sure that the only responses I receive are from [THIS SCHOOL] classroom teaching staff).
- **Your individual answers will not be shared with anyone at the school.** I will only present my results in aggregate, and I will make sure that any quotes that are reported on are completely unidentifiable.
- On first glance the survey might seem long, but you will note that the vast majority of the questions are multiple choice and are very quick to answer. You should be able to power through the whole thing in under 15 minutes if you're really focused.
- You do not need to answer the short-answer questions with complete sentences. Just get your point across as quickly and efficiently as you can.
- Please answer honestly.

- The purpose of this survey is not to pass judgement on anyone. I am trying to learn from all of you how to ensure that everyone has access to the information and resources that they need to feel confident, empowered, and effective in their jobs.

The results of this survey will not only help me enormously with my research, but based on your answers, could also lead to recommendations and policy changes here at the school. Please don't hesitate to mention any other related concerns that you might have in the comment boxes, and I'll do my best to help make things happen.

As an added incentive, if I receive at least 40 responses **before November 1** (I have sent this to 45 of you), I will inundate both staff rooms with tasty treats.

I can't thank you all enough for both your time and your enthusiasm about my research. I know how busy you are, and I hate to ask this of you, but the data that I will get from this will be absolutely invaluable.

Have a wonderful weekend!

Morgannis

PhD Candidate, School of Information Studies - McGill University

Information Ninja, Preserver of Memories, and Enthusiastic Helper—[THIS SCHOOL]

H. Case Study: Faculty Survey Instrument

Faculty - Information Management Survey

Researcher: Morgannis Graham, PhD Candidate, McGill University School of Information Studies

Supervisor: Dr. Eun Park, PhD, Associate Professor, McGill University School of Information Studies

You have been invited to participate in a survey to explore information management issues for [THIS SCHOOL]'s faculty. This survey has been distributed to all [THIS SCHOOL] classroom teaching staff to explore issues surrounding the records that you create, the information that you share and seek out during the course of your employment, and the use of primary-source documents in the classroom.

The survey shouldn't take more than about 15 minutes to complete (unless you have a lot to say!). In order to ensure your anonymity, you will not be asked for your name, and the field-of-study-related demographic question has been clustered to make you more difficult to identify. In addition, any of your answers that may be included in the published research will never be able to be attributable to you, either directly or indirectly. The raw data will not be shared with anyone at [THIS SCHOOL] - only the researcher and her supervisor. Survey answers will only be reported to the school in aggregate and no quotes will be shared if there is any chance that the participant could be identified.

Participation in this study is absolutely voluntary, and you may skip any question. Completion of this questionnaire implies consent. You cannot withdraw your consent after submitting the survey as your answers are anonymous, so no specific survey will be able to be attributed to you.

There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. If, within your survey, you happen to express any feelings or observations that could put your job or relationships at risk (for example, being critical of management or colleagues), they will not be reported on unless directly relevant to the research, and even then, only if your privacy can be absolutely guaranteed.

The potential benefit of this survey is that your answers will help to improve information management practices at the school. It is an opportunity for you to have your voices heard, and your concerns acted on.

If you have any questions or require any clarifications about this project, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at morgannis.graham@mail.mcgill.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca.

Thank you SO MUCH for your time!

Thank you so much for your time.

McGill University REB File #: 134-0818

Demographics

1. What age group(s) do you teach? (check all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Junior School
☐ Middle School
☐ Senior School
☐ Would prefer not to say

2. What field(s) of study do you teach? (check all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Languages (English, French, Spanish)
☐ Math or Sciences
☐ Social Sciences
☐ Art, Music or Physical Education
☐ Would prefer not to say

Other: ☐ _____

3. How long have you been teaching (whole career)?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ < 2 years
☐ 2-5 years
☐ 6-10 years
☐ > 10 years
☐ Would prefer not to say

4. How long have you been teaching at [THIS SCHOOL]?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ < 2 years
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ > 10 years
- ☐ Would prefer not to say

Technology and Records Management

5. What computer software or services do you use as part of your job? (check all that apply, and list as many more as you need next to the 'other' box)

Check all that apply.

- ☐ [THIS SCHOOL]'s Gmail
- ☐ Google Classroom
- ☐ Google Drive
- ☐ Google Docs
- ☐ Google Slides
- ☐ Google Sheets
- ☐ Dash
- ☐ E-space portal
- ☐ Microsoft Word
- ☐ Microsoft PowerPoint
- ☐ Microsoft Excel
- ☐ Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, Premiere Pro ...)
- ☐ Class Dojo
- ☐ Seesaw
- ☐ IXL
- ☐ Brain POP
- ☐ Math Help Services
- ☐ Gizmos
- ☐ Facile Learning
- ☐ Canva
- ☐ Duolingo
- ☐ Tinkercad
- ☐ Prezi
- ☐ Turnitin

Other: ☐ _____

6. How satisfied are you with the support that [THIS SCHOOL] provides for you in the following?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Training in software or services that are widely used at the school (Google suite, Dash...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training in software or services that are not widely used at the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommending new software or services to meet your needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Integrating new software or services into your classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ongoing support when you have questions or issues about technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Briefly list the types of records that you create and/or receive as part of your job.

8. Have you ever been given any direction or advice by the school on how and where to save your work records? (check all that apply)

Check all that apply.

☐ Yes - by school leadership (Head of School, Head of Junior/Middle/Senior schools, Academic Leads)

☐ Yes - by my lead teacher (junior) or department head (middle/senior)

☐ Yes - by another member of faculty

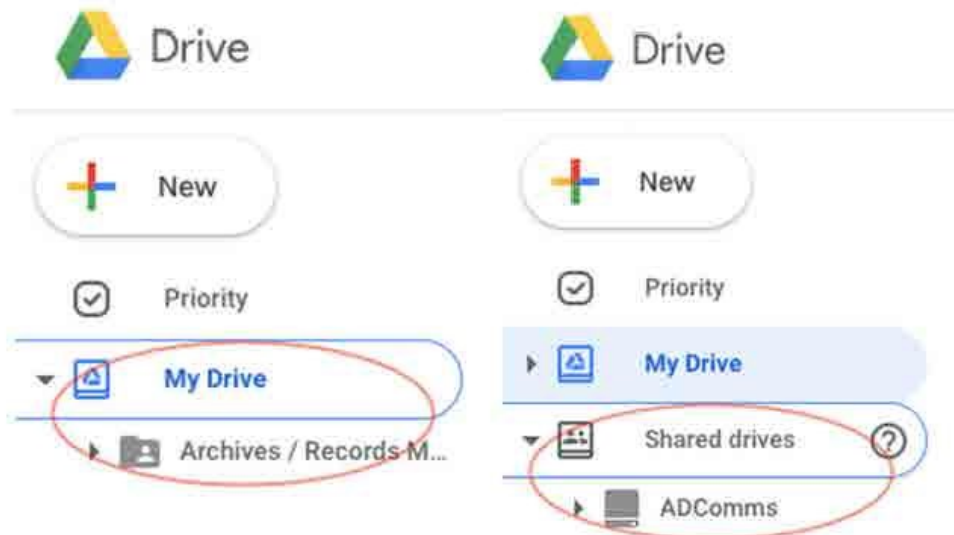
☐ Yes - by IT (Information Technology) staff

☐ Yes - by someone else in the school administration

☐ No

Other: ☐ _____

9. Where do you store your work records? (check all that apply)

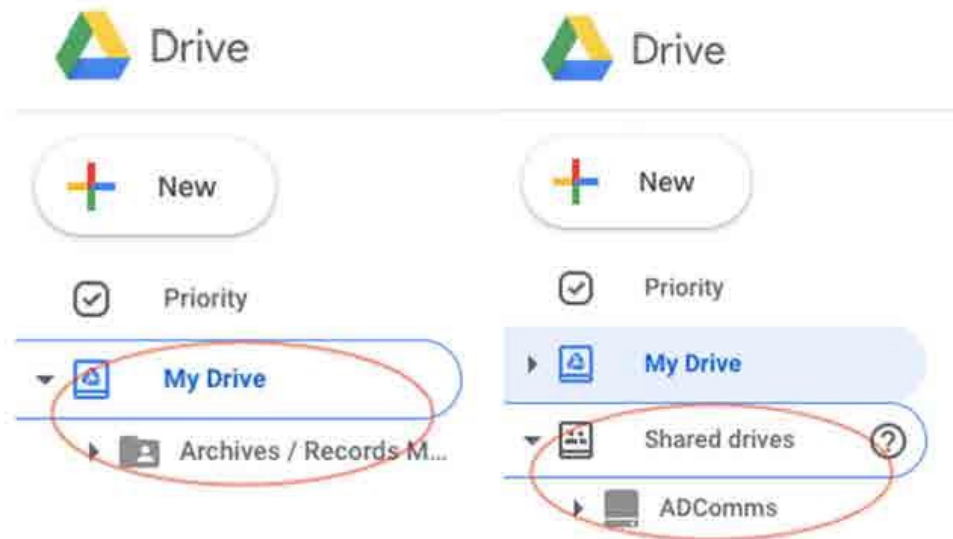


Check all that apply.

- ☐ Paper - at school
- ☐ Paper - at home
- ☐ Hard drive of school-owned computer
- ☐ Hard drive of personal computer
- ☐ Removable storage (USB stick, external hard drive)
- ☐ Cloud storage (Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive, iCloud...) - personal non-school account
- ☐ Google Drive - "My Drive" through [THIS SCHOOL] account (see left image - are your files nested under 'My Drive'?)
- ☐ Google Drive - Shared (team) Drive through [THIS SCHOOL] account (see right image - are your files nested under 'Shared drives'?)

Other: ☐ _____

10. Does your department use any shared Google Drive spaces?



Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes - We use it/them regularly	Yes - But I don't think that it is/they are used very often	No	I don't know
Shared 'My Drive' folder(s) (image on left)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
'Shared drives' (image on right)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. How easy do you think it would be for you to retrieve a specific lesson plan that you had designed in the past? (not necessarily from [THIS SCHOOL] if you had been teaching at another school)

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very easy	Easy	Not sure	Difficult	Very difficult	Not applicable (have not been teaching that long)
From 1 year ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 3 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 5 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 10 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Do you have any comments about any of the questions in this section?

Record Sharing

13. Do you ever take photographs and/or videos of your students?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other: _____

14. If yes, which device(s) do you use to record these photographs or videos? (check all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Cellular telephone (owned by you)
☐ Cellular telephone (owned by the school)
☐ Digital camera (still or video, not part of a telephone or computer, owned by you)
☐ Digital camera (still or video, not part of a telephone or computer, owned by the school)
☐ Computer (owned by you)
☐ Computer (owned by the school)

Other: ☐ _____

15. Do you ever share any of these photographs or videos with your students and/or their parents?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes - I do share
☐ No - I have not yet shared but I plan to
☐ No - I do not share, nor am I planning to
☐ Other: _____

16. If so, how? (Twitter, Facebook group, Seesaw, Class Dojo, email...)

17. Do you ever share any of these photographs or videos with the school communications team for inclusion on the school's social media accounts?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, I would like to share, but I don't know how
- ☐ No, but I know how and I mean to share, but I haven't yet
- ☐ No, it hadn't occurred to me
- ☐ No, I don't want to
- ☐ Other: _____

18. Do you ever save any of these photographs or videos on the Google [THIS SCHOOL] Archive Drive?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No - But I know about the [THIS SCHOOL] Archive Drive
- ☐ No - I don't know about the [THIS SCHOOL] Archive Drive

19. Do you have any comments about any of the questions in this section?

Onboarding and Information Sharing

20. Think back to when you first started working at [THIS SCHOOL]. How supported did you feel in the following areas?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very supported	Somewhat supported	Not sure	Somewhat unsupported	Very unsupported
Human Resources (general school policies and procedures, non-financial benefits...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finance (pay schedule, pension, reimbursement procedures, financial benefits...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Department (teaching support, department policies, curricular information...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social (getting to know colleagues, feeling welcomed...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. Very briefly describe your onboarding experience when you started at the school. What resources were you provided with to support you as a new faculty member?

22. When you first started working at the school, was there any information or resources that were NOT made available to you that would have helped if they had been?

23. The first time you teach a course at [THIS SCHOOL] that you have never taught before, what types of records (if any) are shared with you to help you plan your course? (For example, copies of lesson plans and assignments from the teacher who taught the course before you, course outlines, ministerial guidelines...) Who provides access to these records, and how?

24. The first time you teach a course at [THIS SCHOOL] that you have never taught before, what types of records are NOT shared with you that would help if they were?

25. What do you consider to be the role of a lead teacher (junior school) or department head (middle and senior schools)?

26. If you are or ever have been a lead teacher / department head, briefly describe the training or guidance that you received to take on that role.

27. Do you ever share records such as teaching notes / lesson plans / assignment ideas with your colleagues?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other: _____

28. If so, how? (email, Google Drive, paper copies...)

29. If you were to design a particularly successful lesson plan or assignment that you were very proud of, would you want to share your experience with your colleagues?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure
☐ Other: _____

30. If you were to try something new in one of your classes that failed spectacularly, would you want to share your experience with your colleagues?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure
☐ Other: _____

31. If you answered yes for either of the above two questions, how would you want to share your experience with your colleagues (informally in person, in a department meeting, as a formal presentation during a ped day, via email...)?

32. How do you feel about the following statements regarding your experience as a teacher at [THIS SCHOOL]?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
School leadership hears my voice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know where to go when I need information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am familiar with the school's policies and procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School leadership is receptive to criticism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm not always sure what's expected of me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish that I had more support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not feel heard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel appreciated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. *Mark only one oval per row.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I often feel like I'm one of the last people to find out about school news	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My efforts are taken for granted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I'm part of the [THIS SCHOOL]family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't have anyone to talk to about my concerns or ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am in the loop with what's going on at the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School leadership is receptive to suggestions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the power to implement improvements at [THIS SCHOOL]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel lost	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. Do you have any comments about any of the questions in this section?

Meetings
and
Professional
Development

In the following section, "staff meeting" refers to the monthly meeting of all staff members led by the Head of School. "Departmental meeting" refers to the regular meetings of each department led by that department's head.

35. If you wanted to refer to the minutes from a specific staff meeting from the past (that you were told about or remembered), how easy do you think it would be for you to find a copy?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very easy	Easy	Not sure	Difficult	Very difficult
From 1 year ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 3 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 5 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 10 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 25 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36. How would you go about trying to find them?

37. If you needed to refer to the minutes from a specific departmental meeting from the past (that you were told about or remembered), how easy do you think it would be for you to find a copy?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very easy	Easy	Not sure	Difficult	Very difficult
From 1 year ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 3 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 5 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 10 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 25 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. How would you go about trying to find them?

39. JUNIOR SCHOOL ONLY: If you needed to refer to the minutes from a specific cycle meeting from the past (that you were told about or remembered), how easy do you think it would be for you to find a copy?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very easy	Easy	Not sure	Difficult	Very difficult
From 1 year ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 3 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 5 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 10 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 25 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. How would you go about trying to find them?

41. If you wanted to refer to the notes or handouts from a specific professional development course that took place at [THIS SCHOOL] (ped day training) from the past (that you were told about or remembered), how easy do you think it would be for you to find them?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Very easy	Easy	Not sure	Difficult	Very difficult
From 1 year ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 3 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 5 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 10 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From 25 years ago	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

42. How would you go about trying to find them?

43. The following questions are related to professional development training that takes place outside of the school, such as conferences, training courses, and webinars.

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	Sometimes	No
Do you participate in any professional development activities outside of the school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you keep your notes and/or handouts?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you share those notes and/or handouts with your colleagues?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. If you do share your notes and/or handouts with your colleagues, how do you do so? (email, shared folder...)

45. When you discover links to useful professional resources online, do you ever share them with your colleagues?

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other: _____

46. If so, how?

47. Do you have any comments about any of the questions in this section?

Historical
Archives

In the following section, primary-source records refer to original archival items or their surrogates (paper copies or digital versions). They can be photographs, textual records (letters, business records, newspapers...), or audio-visual materials (not modern-produced documentaries, but original newsreels, raw footage, home movies, advertisements ...).

48. How familiar do you consider yourself to be with the school's history and traditions?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Familiar
- ☐ Neither familiar nor unfamiliar
- ☐ Unfamiliar
- ☐ Very unfamiliar

49. The [THIS SCHOOL] archive collects, preserves and disseminates the historical records of the school. Have you ever submitted anything (either physical or digital) to the [THIS SCHOOL] archive for safekeeping?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure

50. If yes, which types of records? If not, why not?

51. Have you ever used primary-source records in any of your classes?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure

52. If so, where did you get them from, and how did you use them?

53. Would you be interested in integrating items from the [THIS SCHOOL] archive in one or more of your classes?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

If you answered yes or maybe to the above question, when you have finished this survey (you're almost done!), please send me an email at graham@THIS SCHOOL.ca - I would love to be able to write about a few examples of integrating our archives into a classroom setting for my dissertation, so you would be helping me out immensely. Plus it might really help to engage your students.

54. Do you have any comments about any of the questions in this section?

[THIS SCHOOL]

55. Imagine an archetypical student who attended [THIS SCHOOL] from Kindergarten to Grade 11. What words would you use to describe them on their graduation day?

56. Can you think of any specific things that [THIS SCHOOL] might have done to help them to become the graduate that you just described?

57. What, if anything, makes [THIS SCHOOL] different from other schools?

58. Do you have any comments about any of the questions in this section?

Conclusion

You're almost done! THANK YOU SO MUCH for sticking with it for this long!

59. Do you have any thoughts or comments about anything that has been covered in this survey?

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Google Forms

I. Case Study: Functional Analysis

This functional analysis has been designed for a single, specific K-12 school. It can also, however, be used as a guide for the development of any school's (or any institution's) own functional analysis, tailored to their specific situation. All recommendations herein are based on a study of the archival literature (both academic and professional), observations made during a 14 month-long doctoral research project and over 20 years of professional information management experience. A pragmatic, MPLP-like (M. Greene & Meissner, 2005) approach was taken to increase the likelihood of staff adoption and to make the best use of available resources. As such, some archivists might disagree with some of the guidelines proposed within this document—please be encouraged to adapt them to match your and your institution's own values. And please keep in mind that there is no such thing as a finished, perfect functional analysis. They should be reevaluated and updated regularly over time. Priorities change, schools evolve, and how our documentary evidence is viewed and managed should always reflect that evolution.

Helen Samuels' *Varsity Letters* (1992) provided the vision for this functional analysis: It was used to determine how an educational institution might identify its primary functions, which activities make up those functions, the record types that best document those functions, where gaps in the records could exist, and how one could attempt to fill in those gaps.¹⁶

After 14 months of data collection within a K-12 school in Quebec, Canada (which included 13 interviews with administrative staff, a faculty survey, a document analysis, and an internship), its primary functions and activities were identified:

1. Confer Credentials

- a. Recruiting, selecting, and admitting students
- b. Financial aid
- c. Graduation

2. Convey Knowledge

- a. Curriculum
- b. Teaching
- c. Learning
- d. Evaluation

3. Student Experience

- a. School regulations and policies
- b. Co-curriculars
- c. Assemblies, events, and trips

¹⁶ Please note that in Quebec (and other jurisdictions), independent schools must have a current records retention schedule. This must be approved by their board of directors and the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) [Quebec National Library and Archives] (Fédération des établissements d'enseignement privés & Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2016). **This document is not intended to be a substitute for a legal records retention schedule**, but as an additional tool to help archivists and their schools to think about the records that they create and collect, and to ensure that they are representative of all their institution's functions from differing viewpoints.

- d. Library
- e. Well-being and counselling
- f. Food services

4. Sustain the Institution

- a. Governance
- b. Finances
- c. Operations
- d. Infrastructure
- e. Personnel
- f. Fundraising
- g. Foundation

5. Community Relations

- a. Student relations
- b. Parent and guardian relations
- c. Alumni relations
- d. Volunteerism and activism

Different schools have different priorities, so the functions and activities listed above should be adapted for one's own institution. For example, if a school were a boarding school, the activity "Housing" could be added under "Student Experience". If the school placed a high value on religious education, that should be included as well. There is no single right answer. Spend time talking to staff and observing the school as it operates—the functions that best reflect your institution's spirit will emerge naturally.

The different types of records that are created or acquired that document each activity have been listed within the functional analysis. To make this document into a practical manual to guide staff, archival management guidelines were added:

- **Appraisal and Accession:** Identifying and acquiring records or other materials for archival preservation. Includes pre-accession planning.
- **Use and Access:** Making archival records or other materials readily available to those who would benefit from accessing them while also ensuring that sensitive records are adequately protected.
- **Management and Preservation:** Ensuring that archival records or other materials are safely kept and preserved.

Some guidelines are more general in nature and should be considered regardless of the record group or type in question. Rather than repeating them throughout this document, they have been summarized below:

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

School records are generally created or acquired by school staff. All too often, staff must be chased down to ensure that they deposit their records within the school's archive. This makes for overworked archivists as well as record gaps, since there will inevitably be documents that are missed. Since the same (or similar) types of records are generally created cyclically every school year, it makes sense for there to be guidelines made available to administrative staff

detailing how to manage all their important records **prior to their creation**. If staff are given clear instructions and school leadership actively promotes an organizational culture that values information management, then archivists can move beyond frantically collecting disparate documents to orchestrating a well-oiled machine. **It is vital, however, that any policies and workflows are not onerous for school staff**. Time is a precious commodity, so whatever record management systems are established must be well planned and streamlined. This may mean that some records aren't archived, or that some descriptions are kept to a minimum—a pragmatic, MPLP approach to information management may need to be adopted to ensure that most important records are preserved.

There will inevitably be record gaps. This can be due to loss, or because certain viewpoints are underrepresented by existing documentary evidence. This functional analysis highlights some of these more obvious problem areas and has made recommendations on how to address these types of situations. It is important to note that an organization's administrative records can—and should, in following the *Total Archives* strategy¹⁷—be supplemented by archival material (originals if possible, surrogates if not) acquired from other sources, including board members, parents, students, former staff, alumni, other schools, historical societies, government archives, photographic studios, and media outlets.

Student files are a vital record, but the decision on which documents should be retained after the child graduates is not always clearcut. The school registrar will usually maintain the student file throughout the child's time at the school. When the student leaves or graduates, the file could be pared down to only include the student's report cards and transcripts, lists of activities and leadership positions, birth and eligibility certificates, and merit-based award information. For privacy purposes, the BAnQ guidelines state that all other documents therein, especially subjective notes, personal correspondence, and medical/psychological information should be destroyed three years after the student leaves the school, but there are valid arguments to be made about keeping these types of documents for historical and accountability reasons. I would encourage individual schools to decide what to keep only after very careful consideration, but remember that once a document is destroyed, it's gone forever. Once they have decided, **it must be detailed in the school's record retention schedule and approved by the BAnQ**.

USE AND ACCESS

Institutions keep records for three main reasons: **administrative** to support the day-to-day functions of the organization, **legal/fiscal** to ensure compliance with relevant laws, and **historical** for posterity. These records should be kept in such a way so that they can be easily retrieved and used by interested parties, but **access to many of them must be restricted for privacy reasons**. In a spirit of openness and transparency within a school's community, access to records should not be unduly restricted unless there is good reason to do so, but when in doubt, privacy must trump access.

Access to a student's file should be restricted to admissions, the registrar, school leadership, and the archivist. After graduation, the student involved should also be able to have access to at least most of the contents of their own file. If a descendent requires proof of attendance to fulfill

¹⁷ A Canadian-born archival strategy where an institution collects different types of records from alternate sources, including personal papers. The purpose is to develop a comprehensive archival collection that reflects many viewpoints from different communities (L. Millar, 1998, 1999).

a legal obligation, such as applying for a *certificate of eligibility for instruction in English* in Quebec, that should be provided. After the student has passed away and a certain amount of time has elapsed (refer to local legislation for details), their file could possibly be made available to the student's family and historical researchers.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

In an ideal situation where resources are bountiful, all archival records would be processed and catalogued by a dedicated archivist to ensure their retrievability over time. As many schools do not have archivists on staff, and those that do have limited time available to them, most records will not be able to be given the attention they deserve.

That said, through the development of clear procedures (such as for where and how to save electronic records), leveraging automated metadata (dates, email senders and recipients, subject lines, etc), and regularly training record creators, schools should be able to achieve some semblance of control over their archival holdings.

The management of **all school records and other archival materials regardless of their format** should be guided by the school's retention schedule and this document.

Paper records should be retained in the creating office (or other appropriate on-site storage area) while in their active stage (still being used for administrative purposes). Then, if desired, they can be moved to archival storage (either on or offsite) for the duration of their semi-active stage. Once they reach their inactive stage, if their final disposition has been determined to be destruction, they should be shredded securely. If they are to be kept, the school's archive should assume custody of those records at this time.

Any paper record can be digitized for ease of access and use. If the original paper copy needs to be kept for legal or fiscal reasons, or is deemed to be historically significant, once it has been scanned, it can be stored within an archival repository immediately, either on or off-site. This is the recommended procedure for the permanent preservation of student and HR files.

In an ideal world, **digital records** would be managed within a **document management system (DMS)**, guided by established policies and procedures, however these systems are costly and staff buy-in is notoriously low. Digital assets still can still be proactively identified and preserved without the use of a DMS.

Unstructured digital records¹⁸ should be saved within the school's cloud storage or local server where the location and structure of the files will be determined collaboratively by both the creating department and the archivist (instructions for which will be placed in a procedural manual). The archivist will have access to all the school's shared drives, from which they will regularly extract copies of important records (as determined by the school's retention schedule and this document), ensure that they are saved in appropriate file formats¹⁹ within a digital

¹⁸ Individual files not within a database, such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDF, and JPG. This also includes cloud-based files, such as Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides.

¹⁹ Non-proprietary and, where appropriate, high-resolution uncompressed or lossless (or minimally lossy) compression. For more information about file formats for preservation, please refer to the Library of

repository (which, in its simplest form, could simply be a restricted area of the school's cloud storage or local server), create and maintain backups, and record checksums²⁰ to ensure the files' continued integrity.

Ideally, **photographs and other audio-visual material** would be catalogued within a database with all subjects identified. It is understood, however, that this is probably not possible due to the enormous quantity of digital media that is being created by schools every day. At minimum, however, they should all be saved on a centralized shared drive within folders that identify the date and event (for example, *2019-09-03 Back to School Fun Day*).

Before investing in any **structured database**, the school should ensure that their data can easily be extracted and moved to another database if ever required. All databases should be configured consistently and strategically where possible: For example, data from multiple databases could be extracted and compared if there is a strictly imposed primary key²¹ that is consistent between them. Newer data should use the same controlled vocabularies as older data (or older data should be updated to the standards of newer data) so that they can be compared against each other. When migrating to a new database, a cost/benefit analysis should take place to determine whether the legacy data should be migrated to the new system. If it is determined that the data should not be migrated, it should be captured as thoroughly as possible, and those extracted files should be preserved within a digital repository.

As this school uses the Google for Education platform, Gmail is its **email** provider. While an employee is working for the school, they should ensure that vitally important emails and their attachments (as guided by this document and the school's records retention schedule) are downloaded and added to the appropriate folder on the school's shared drive. This is not to say that all emails should be preserved in this way—only very significant ones that are specifically earmarked for permanent preservation. If other emails need to be accessed for administrative purposes while the employee is still working for the school, it is presumed that they will be able to find them themselves within their own email accounts. How they decide to organize their emails is up to them, but important work emails should not be deleted. It should be made abundantly clear to all staff that their work email accounts belong to the school, and that **the archivist will have full access to their emails after they leave the school's employ**. Personal correspondence does not belong on a work email account. Google has an integrated service called "Takeout" that will export a Gmail user's emails as an MBOX file. When an employee leaves the school, the archivist could export all their emails (with attachments) as an MBOX file, which could be preserved (along with its checksum) within a digital repository. They could also import a copy of the MBOX file to a centralized secure local email client (on a password-protected computer) along with the accounts for all other administrative staff who have left the school, so that if there ever is a request for information, there is an authorized individual (the archivist) who can quickly and easily search through the email accounts of all former administrative staff without having to log into numerous different accounts.

Congress (Library of Congress, n.d.), the Smithsonian Museum (Smithsonian Institution Archives, n.d.), and the United Kingdom's National Archives' file format registry, PRONOM (The National Archives, n.d.).

²⁰ A string of characters produced based on the contents of a digital file that can later be compared against to ensure that the file has not been altered or corrupted. A digital fingerprint.

²¹ A unique identifier. For example, a student ID number in the registration database could be carried over to the alumni database to be able to pull activity information for targeted giving appeals.

School websites should be regularly backed up, but also publicly archived by submitting it to the Internet Archive's Wayback machine whenever there is a major change made to the site. There are several different services that can be used to archive websites locally, choose the one that best suits your institution's needs.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

For each identified school **function**, there are **activities**. For each activity, this document provides a **brief description**, a **selected records list**, guidelines for **appraisal and accession, use and access**, and **management and preservation**, as well as a short **notes and recommendations** section to address any additional concerns or comments.

NAME OF FUNCTION

Description of the function

NAME OF ACTIVITY

Description of the activity

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- List of records that are created that should be considered for permanent preservation (at least in some form)
- This list will not necessarily be comprehensive (see your records retention schedule for a complete list of records), and will vary by institution

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Who is creating or collecting the records? Where are they coming from?

USE AND ACCESS

What designated communities would benefit from having access to these records? Are they of a sensitive nature and should be protected?

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

How and where could these records be managed and preserved? How can they be made findable and future-proof (or at least future-resistant)?

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Are there any gaps in the institutional knowledge that are not covered by the records that are being created? Should the school seek out supplemental information from elsewhere? Are there any special issues surrounding the documentation of this function that should be considered?

CONFER CREDENTIALS

The primary function of all K-12 schools is to educate students. In independent schools, this process begins when a child's family decides to apply for admittance, and, if all goes to plan, culminates with the presentation of a diploma at graduation.

RECRUITING, SELECTING, AND ADMITTING STUDENTS

The admissions process for independent schools encompasses many different tasks—they market the school to prospective families, conduct open houses, test and interview children, and make decisions regarding acceptance.

In Quebec, there are governmentally mandated restrictions on who is eligible to attend some English-language schools. Part of an independent English-language school's role is to confirm a family's eligibility, and if required, to help them through the application process to obtain an eligibility certificate. They must also keep detailed statistics as to the eligibility status of all their students, as the Quebec government places independent schools into different categories depending on the aggregate eligibility numbers of their student body.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Promotional material (advertising, social media posts)
- School website
- Statistics (inquiry, admission, refusal, eligibility...)
- Student lists
- Admissions tests (blank samples)
- Student applications (including documentation test results)
- Information packages (including fee schedules)

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Most promotional material, information packages and website design records will be created and/or held by the communications department. If any marketing or branding work is outsourced to an external company, all the final records surrounding those activities should be acquired and retained by the communications team.

All social media posts should be regularly archived. Each service (such as Facebook, X, and Instagram) offers a limited way to download one's own posts, but there are also external services who provide more thorough ways of archiving one's content.

Student lists can be produced by the registrar. This shows all students that were accepted, those who remained, and by omission, those who left.

All testing material and statistics will be created and managed by the admissions team. They will also receive and process student applications.

USE AND ACCESS

Read-only access to promotional material, information packages and anonymized statistics should be made readily available to any staff or board member who might want to refer to them.

Any information about an individual child should be placed in their student file (or destroyed where appropriate), and access must be heavily restricted.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Final versions of all promotional material should be retained permanently. Information regarding the date(s) and location(s) of publication/dissemination should be documented. If possible, statistical analytics (page views, etc) should also be documented in a consistent manner to allow for comparisons over time.

When making any major changes to the school's website, the entire site should be archived.

Examples of information packages (including fee schedules) and admission tests should be dated and retained.

Aggregate, anonymized statistics should be saved.

Any personal information about a child (such as application forms, test scores, and supplementary documentation such as birth certificates and eligibility information) should be placed within their student file which will be created once they are accepted and decide to attend the school. Any applications for students who will not be attending the school should be destroyed when the retention schedule dictates.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Board members and management are tasked with developing strategic plans for the school. It would be valuable to them to be able to easily access past marketing material and statistics to inform their decisions. If these materials must be requested and chased down, they are much less likely to be referred to than if they are stored in a secure, organized repository that they can access at their leisure.

FINANCIAL AID

Unlike most public schools, independent schools charge tuition and other fees. Knowing that this puts their schools out of the reach of many desired applicants, financial aid programs are integral. They can take the form of bursaries (usually means-based) and scholarships (usually merit-based).

Some means-based bursaries are administered through a third-party (such as Apple Financial Services or FAST) which limits the amount of personal financial information that goes through the school.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Bursary and scholarship information files (dispersal criteria, donor agreements)
- Bursary and scholarship funds' financial reports
- Lists of bursary and scholarship recipients
- Statistics
- Documents regarding individual recipients

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

The processing of applications for and awarding of scholarships and bursaries (regardless of whether an external company is used) will go through the admissions team. They will keep records of who is receiving what, as well as aggregate statistics.

The development of scholarship and bursary funds are generally established through the advancement team in collaboration with the finance department and major donors. Once the funds are established, the parameters for how the fund will be managed and dispersed are clearly documented in a legal agreement between the school and the establishing donor(s).

The financial management and investment of the funds will either be handled by the school itself or through a foundation.

The dispersal of the funds is managed by the finance team.

Documents regarding individual recipients should be placed in their student file.

USE AND ACCESS

Lists of merit-based scholarship winners may be publicly disseminated but means-based bursary recipients should be kept confidential to all but admissions, billing, and management.

Bursary and scholarship criteria should be made publicly available to potential applicants on the school's website, as well as to the admissions team and faculty who will likely be choosing the recipients.

The finance team must have access to details of who is receiving which awards and for how long (as they can span multiple years). The lists of recipients should be kept permanently for archival purposes, but with restricted access.

The legal documents that establish the parameters for the scholarships and bursaries should be made available to the administrative team for reference purposes.

Statistics regarding how many applicants applied for awards versus how many were distributed could be very valuable to the advancement team, leadership, and the Board of Directors when developing fundraising plans.

The advancement team, finance, leadership, the Board of Directors, and the Foundation Board should have access to the funds' financial statements and reports.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

All records about individual applicants and recipients must be stored securely in the student's file. A complete list of all awards given out each year should be sent to the finance team so that they can produce accurate statements.

Aggregate, anonymized statistics should be saved.

Legal contracts establishing bursary and scholarship funds should be printed on archival paper and signed by the establishing donors and the school at the time of creation. They should be scanned for reference and the originals kept in a secure location.

All financial reports for the funds should be archived.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is very important that the privacy of means-based award recipients is protected, but it is also important that school leadership is aware of which students might need financial help with extra expenses (such as school trips or other special events) so they can act proactively rather than creating a situation where parents are forced to ask for subsidies, hat in hands, when these situations occur.

GRADUATION

A student's time at a school should ideally culminate in graduation. Schools will generally mark the occasion with celebrations. There will certainly be a ceremony where the student will be given their diploma, but there will also often be a more informal, celebratory event (or series of events) such as a dance, a barbeque, or some other social activities for the graduates and their families.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- List of graduates (including if and where they are going to post-secondary school)
- List of award recipients
- Graduation ceremony program
- Graduation ceremony pictures/videos
- Texts of graduation ceremony speeches
- Graduation event(s) details
- Graduation event(s) pictures/videos
- Sample diplomas

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Someone on staff (or multiple staff members) will be charged with the organization of the graduation ceremony. They should be sure to retain their planning documents, a list of the graduates along with where they will be attending school the following year (if applicable), a list of all award recipients, and physical and digital copies of the official program. All photographs and videos of the event taken by the school should be deposited with the archive. All speakers (such as the Head of School and Valedictorian) should ensure that a copy of their speech is given to the archive.

Details about any supplemental events surrounding graduation should also be documented and submitted to the archive along with any photographs and videos.

USE AND ACCESS

The school guidance counsellor should have access to the lists of post-secondary schools that alumni have chosen to attend. This would help to connect past and current students to discuss school options for after graduation as well as to compile statistics.

Advancement staff should be given access to lists of all award recipients and post-secondary school choices to add to their alumni database. They should also be given access to all photographs and videos to enrich future alumni communications and events.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

All graduation documentation, photographs, and videos should be catalogued and preserved in the archive.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There will certainly be celebratory events where school officials will not be in attendance (such as at graduation dance after-parties). Students should be actively encouraged to donate copies of their photographs and videos of those events to the archive—if not immediately after graduation, then perhaps at a future reunion when some time has passed.

CONVEY KNOWLEDGE

For a school to justify any conveyed credentials, teaching and learning must take place. A curriculum is developed, educators interpret said curriculum, and students participate in those teaching activities. Each of these activities produce distinct, significant records.

CURRICULUM

To be recognized as an educational institution, schools must ensure and prove that they are addressing all required components of the curriculum within their educational district. In Quebec, this is regulated by the Quebec Ministry of Education. Many schools however choose to go above and beyond the required minimum, so in addition to teaching the mandated curriculum, they may offer enrichment programs, additional support, and specialized in-depth teaching in specific areas such as religion, science and technology, arts, sports, and entrepreneurship. Each independent school tailors their curricular offerings to support their own values, so the records showing the design, development and implementation of these distinct curriculums are incredibly valuable as they are at the core of what makes each school unique.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Committee membership lists
- Committee meeting minutes
- Board meeting minutes
- Government permit application reports
- Accreditation inspection reports
- Accreditation reports sent to independent school organizations such as CAIS (Canadian Accredited Independent Schools)

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Since board and committee membership is often quite transitory, it is important that their records are deposited with the archive regularly. There should be written policy to that effect that is strictly enforced, or record gaps are inevitable.

A copy of all school permit applications submitted to the government or accreditation reports submitted to independent school organizations (such as CAIS) should also be deposited with the archive. These final reports are often incredibly exhaustive and offer enormous insight into the inner workings of a school, including detailed information about the school's curriculum.

USE AND ACCESS

Final reports should be made available to all who might want to read them. Meeting minutes could either be shared or remain confidential for some time depending on the decision of the school's leadership team.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

All board and committee minutes should be archived permanently. If a digital board management system is used, static signed copies of minutes should be exported regularly and preserved independently of the system.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the case of major past curricular decisions where there are no existing records, it could be beneficial to interview some of the key players, if they are available and willing. A school's curricular direction forms the basis of their *raison-d'être*, and so the discussions leading to those decisions are an important record of the school's very soul.

TEACHING

Faculty members are tasked with interpreting the mandated curriculum and creating lesson plans and educational activities to engage with their students in such a way so that they learn. Each teacher is unique, and their teaching methods not only could be kept as evidence of how the school operated, but also could be disseminated to other teachers as inspirational resources.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Course lists with teacher names
- Course syllabuses
- Lesson plans
- Department meeting minutes
- Learning support program details
- Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Course lists that include the names of the teachers could be easily produced by the school's registrar and should be saved as static files on an annual basis. When course syllabuses are distributed to students and their parents at the beginning of the academic year, they should also be archived immediately.

Lesson plans are produced by individual teachers and are not usually archived. This is a real missed opportunity, as what happens every day in the classrooms is arguably the most important activity that takes place in a school. This must however be handled delicately.

In addition to regular classroom work, supplemental learning support is often offered in the form of academic tutoring, language support, executive functioning skill development, and learning disability support. General details about the different programs offered as well as anonymized statistics should be archived. Personal details about individual children should be documented within an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and securely placed within their student file. Any other identifying information should be destroyed after the student leaves the school.

USE AND ACCESS

Course lists and syllabuses should be made openly available to staff.

To facilitate the sharing of records and other information amongst the teaching staff, the establishment of a centralized, formal intranet or shared drive that they could contribute to independently could be considered.

Details about an individual student's IEP should only be shared with that student's teachers, learning support staff, and when required, school leadership.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Depending on their agreement with their particular school, teachers may own the intellectual property rights over their own lesson plans, or they may belong to the school. Regardless, no teacher would enjoy to be put into a position where they felt obligated to share their personal lesson plans with the archive or their colleagues. It would rightfully be seen as an obtrusive invasion of their well-earned autonomy and could be resented. Teachers are the masters of

their classrooms, they deal with a lot of pressure, and must be treated with the utmost respect.

They should however be encouraged to do so as a matter of pride: Their successes should be noticed, acknowledged, celebrated, and offered to be preserved for posterity as a shining example of what the school has to offer. It would be balanced to also archive less-than-stellar lesson plans, but realistically, it is unlikely that teachers would readily offer those up. It is understood that the school is more likely to keep records of this type that they are proud of rather than an impartial sampling.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite being surrounded by people all day long, teaching can feel very isolating if regular networking and socializing is not built into the schedule and prioritized by management. Purposeful, structured engagement activities could be a great way to not only help teachers feel like they are valued members of the school community but could also lead to great archiving opportunities. Upper management and department heads could provide regular forums where teachers would be encouraged to share their success stories (or even painful lessons learned) with each other. This could be regular in-person presentations during staff meetings or professional development days, or it could be online through an intranet or email distribution. These presentations could then easily be retained by the archive.

It might also be worthwhile to talk to former teachers about their experiences teaching at the school. Retired teachers are more likely to be forthright than current staff and would make great subjects for oral history interviews.

LEARNING

Learning is the students' perspective of the Convey Knowledge function. This could include examples of students' work, photographs or videos of lessons taking place, or even testimony by students or former students about their learning experiences at the school.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Examples of student work
- Photographs and videos of lessons
- Literary magazines
- Written or recorded reflections by students

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Most assignments, tests and projects are returned to students after they have been evaluated. Without explicit permission from a student, it would be questionable morally to archive examples of their work. Perhaps, however, teachers could be informed that the archive is always looking for examples of student work, and if they come across anything that a student is particularly proud of, they could let them know that the archive would welcome the donation.

Some work will already be shared publicly, such as public speaking competitions, science fair presentations, drama class productions, music concerts, etc. These should be photographed and/or videorecorded, and any supplemental documentary evidence (such as copies of speeches and programs) should be actively collected for the archive.

USE AND ACCESS

When academic works are donated to the archive, it should be made clear through a simple donor's agreement between the school, the student, and their guardian (if the student is still a minor when the donation is made) when and how such works can be shared. The school might want to use them in the short-term for promotional activities, they may want to be looked at decades later by historical researchers, or they may be requested by a student's future progeny after they have passed on. These eventualities must be made clear to the donor and their wishes must be respected.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

It would probably not normally occur to a student to donate examples of their work to the school's archive. If there is an obvious process in place for this type of donation, however, some things might trickle through. Having one's work be recommended for inclusion in the archive by one's teacher (with parental permission) could, for example, be seen as an honour.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reunions and direct alumni appeals are both good opportunities to ask for donations of materials for eras where there are gaps in the accumulated records. Oral histories and written testimonies where former students reminisce about their experiences at the school can not only elicit some incredible stories but are also very effective engagement strategies to enrich the relationship between alumni, the school, and—if the stories are shared with them—the current student body.

There are ethical considerations that must be addressed when appraising any documents that are created by children, as they themselves cannot give consent. While legally speaking, the consent of their parents is probably adequate for a donor agreement, it is still ethically questionable to accept these types of records without the creator's blessing. One idea of how to manage this would be to offer to hold the works of children for them until they turn 18 years old, at which point they would be approached, and their formal consent would be requested. If they cannot be reached (say, after 25 years), or if they want their works returned to them, then they would not be added to the archive. This would require some extra effort, but if organized properly should be manageable.

EVALUATION

After teaching has taken place, students must undergo evaluation to ensure that learning has occurred.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Examples of assignments, tests, and exams
- Report cards

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Teachers could be encouraged to deposit assignment instructions, blank tests and exams with the archive as evidence of how their courses were evaluated.

Student report cards will be placed in their student files by the registrar.

USE AND ACCESS

Access to a student's grades should be restricted to admissions, the registrar, school leadership, and the archivist. After the student has passed away and a certain amount of time has elapsed (refer to local legislation for details), their file could possibly be made available to the student's family and historical researchers.

Access to examples of tests and exams should be restricted for some time in case teachers re-use content.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

The school registrar will usually maintain the student file throughout the child's time at the school. After the student leaves, it should fall under the custody of the archivist and, after triage, be retained permanently as a vital record.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that after the child leaves the school that student files be digitized for ease of reference, but they would have to be kept very securely. Maintaining paper copies in an offsite secure location is also recommended due to the vital nature of these records.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

There is significantly more to the educational experience for students than simply attending classes. This includes innumerable extra-curricular activities, special events, and psycho-social support. There are also school rules that form the framework of every student's scholastic experience.

SCHOOL REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

All school rules are generally documented in at least two places: in a way that will be communicated with students and their parents, and another, more detailed internal document for staff members so that they can best interpret the rules. As society moves forward, so must schools and their regulations. From dress codes to LGBTQ+ rights, schools must address the issues of the day, and the way that they do so should be documented and preserved.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Parent/Student Handbooks
- School policy and procedures manuals
- Parent correspondence
- Board of Directors meeting minutes
- Committee meeting minutes
- School bylaws
- Incident registers

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Every new version of handbooks and policy manuals should be archived, as should all Board of Directors and Committee meeting minutes. Sometimes there will be special rules issued for exceptional circumstances, such as during a global pandemic. These should be thoroughly archived as they will inevitably be the subject of great scrutiny both contemporarily by critics, and in the future by historians.

All schools have regular communications with their students' parents through email newsletters, mailbags, flyers, etc. All of these should be systematically archived.

USE AND ACCESS

All handbooks and manuals should be made available to anyone. Meeting minutes could either be shared or remain confidential for some time depending on the decision of the school's leadership team.

Parent correspondence shows a complete record of the information about the school that has been shared with the parents and as such can be incredibly useful: knowing what was distributed during prior years can help to inform present and future mailings. They should be readily available to all staff (and perhaps even parents) electronically in such a way so that they can be full-text searched.

Incident registers should remain confidential.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Meeting minutes should—if possible—be indexed when archived, and any discussions or decisions regarding school regulations should be somehow linked to their respective rule so

that all rules can be easily justified in case of future disputes or revisions. At the very least they should be made available for full-text searching by those with access.

Parent correspondence should be either digital or, if need be, digitized (with OCR), and kept in such a way so that they can be full-text searched (as it is unlikely that anyone will have the time or inclination to catalog them).

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As Board and Committee memberships are transitory, and leadership roles change with some regularity, it might be a good idea to proactively keep easily accessible records of the evolution of school regulations and policies, such as within an informational database (or at minimum a spreadsheet) that links to prior drafts and documented discussions. This would help future decision-makers to understand the work that went on before them.

CO-CURRICULARS

In addition to classroom work, schools provide opportunity for supplemental co-curricular activities to enrich the educational experience. This can include academic clubs, advocacy groups, and team sports. Older students are often leaders of clubs and organizers of activities.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Yearbooks
- Photographs and videos of activities
- Activity administrative records
- Alumni newsletters
- Student publications
- Participant lists
- Schedules
- Game scores
- Travel details
- Awards, banners, and trophies
- Extended day care records

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

The yearbook committee, the communications department, and individual students take and collect photographs and other visual material of club activities all year long. All these materials should be archived.

Any administrative records that are produced by the groups themselves (such as Google Classrooms, meeting minutes, competition details, etc) should be archived. This includes any student leadership groups, including Prefects and House Officials.

All student-produced publications (yearbooks, newspapers, blogs, vlogs, etc) should be archived.

If the advancement department creates alumni newsletters (either in print or digital) which include summaries of the goings-on at the school during the year, these should be archived.

The registrar should be keeping lists of which students are participating in and leading each club and team—those lists should be archived and noted in each student's individual file by the registrar.

Coaches or other involved staff members should ensure that they are recording and archiving the details of all sporting events: games, practices, and team trips. Game scores specifically should all be documented in a standardized, structured format and location.

Extended day care program records that relate to participation lists, activities, schedules, and photographs and videos of the students should be archived.

USE AND ACCESS

The advancement team should be given access to lists of club and team members for inclusion within the alumni database.

Access to each club and team's shared drive should be given to all student club leadership, staff advisors, and the school's archivist. When new student leadership takes over at the end

of the school year, they will immediately have access to all the past years' records for reference.

All game scores should be published on the school's website or intranet and archived annually.

The decision might be made to digitize yearbooks to make available online. Keep in mind that while most former students will be delighted to see these books, some alumni might be upset by having photographs and information about their high school-selves open to the public. Perhaps consider keeping these books off search engines such as Google, and instead making them available on a secure site that only alumni can access.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Important administrative records for clubs should be placed within a shared drive with new sub-folders added for each new school year. Any important records that are created on paper will be digitized and added to the drive.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Become involved with the yearbook committee and communications department to streamline the acquisition of media from those sources. Also, consider meeting up with all student club leaders at the beginning of the year to show them how to manage their records and to convey the importance of doing so.

Banners and trophies should, where possible, be displayed within the school. After some time, however, some less significant awards could be photographed and destroyed (or gifted) depending on the school's available storage space.

Encourage the creation of a student reporters club (or something similar), where participating students would create a newspaper, blog, vlog, or podcast that discusses the events that are going on in the school as they are happening. They could write or speak about the details, post photographs, create game reports, etc. What they produce could be archived as a student perspective of what is happening at the school.

This is also a good area to ask alumni about in oral history interviews, as clubs and other groups tend to be under-documented, and the behind-the-scenes shenanigans that inevitably occur amongst students are almost never discussed openly at the time—but make great stories 30 years (and a glass of wine) later!

ASSEMBLIES, EVENTS, AND TRIPS

The school community will sometimes gather to make announcements, celebrate special days, perform musical or dramatic productions, or simply to foster a sense of togetherness. Class and club trips are a special way to encourage community and to experience other places in the world.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- School calendars
- Recordings and photographs
- Speeches
- Slideshow presentations
- Programs and promotional materials
- Trip itineraries

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

School calendars show what happened at the school each day. For example, open houses, special assemblies, sports tournaments, holidays, concerts... it is a very good record of all the various events that happen within the school. These might be published on a school's webpage or parent portal—they should be exported at the end of each school year and archived.

Regular assemblies are generally organized by school leadership (either staff or student, depending on the assembly). The organizer(s) should always deposit their presentations and speeches in a defined shared drive folder for archiving.

Any audio or video recordings and photographs of assemblies should be archived by the communications or IT teams.

All programs and promotional materials for musical and dramatic productions should be archived—especially if the materials themselves are student-produced, such as through an art class or poster club.

The organisers of any class, club or other trips should ensure that a copy of the itinerary as well as any photographs and videos are archived.

USE AND ACCESS

All staff and students should be able to access materials about past assemblies. Musical and theatre productions should be made accessible to alumni.

The communications and admissions teams could use clips from these assemblies and special events to create promotional material for the school and to engage with current parents. Advancement could use footage to engage with alumni.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Ideally, assemblies would be indexed by topic. Since this is unlikely to occur, having the presentations and speeches organized by date and available for full-text searching is recommended.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Assemblies and other gatherings address a myriad of topics that reflect the school's values. They are worth preserving.

LIBRARY

A school's library is not only a repository for books and other educational resources but is also a quiet workspace and a pleasant area for students to relax.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Catalogs
- Online resources
- Records and audiovisual material about library events and programs
- Photographs

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

The school's librarian(s) will likely be charged with the management of the library. There will be a cataloguing software containing all the books and other materials that the library holds.

If the library organizes any special events, workshops, or other programs for students or staff, promotional material, any resources (if applicable), and any photographs or video of the event should be archived.

If the library has a presence on the web or through a student portal, that should be archived regularly to show what online resources have been made available to students and staff (such as research databases or e-book aggregators).

The communications department should ensure that photographs of the library, its displays, and students in situ are taken regularly and archived.

USE AND ACCESS

All staff, students and parents should have access to the current library catalog and online resources.

Materials and resources about past special events should be made available to all staff. If also made available on the library's online portal, it might be of interest to students, parents, and prospective parents.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

If possible, the collection list should be exported annually as a spreadsheet and archived. This will show not only which materials have been acquired each year, but also which have been weeded.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One should not archive the contents of the library's online resources but keeping a record of what services were subscribed to can help to paint a fuller picture of what materials were made available to the school community.

WELL-BEING AND COUNSELLING

Childhood and adolescence are often fraught times of life, full of emotion and pressure. Schools have systems set up to aid their students through these trying times: there will often be professionals on staff such as a psychological counsellor, but the administration and faculty are also tasked with the physical and mental well-being of the children in their care.

Since the process of bringing a new student into the school is long and rigorous, the school will often manage student retention through regular check-ins and troubleshooting with parents and teaching staff to ensure that all current students remain happy with their school experience.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Counselor records | • Check-in notes |
| • Workshop and presentation details | • Resources for students and staff |
| • Medical information | • Statistics |

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

If the school has an on-site counselor, they likely take notes about each student who they see. These notes should not be deposited with the archive and should be destroyed after the student leaves the school. Aggregate, anonymized statistics on how many children they see and what types of issues they are experiencing could however be valuable to keep track of.

Any significant medical issues that a student experiences should be noted in their student file, but not archived.

If students are experiencing interpersonal conflicts, profound academic difficulties, or other in-school issues where the administration is required to intervene, there could be a formal tracking system in place to ensure that all who should be helping (such as teachers, administration, or counsellors) are regularly following-up on their stated responsibilities and that no child falls through the cracks. These records should not be archived and should be destroyed once the child in question has left the school. Aggregate statistics should however be retained, and anonymized case studies could be created, retained, and used to educate staff on how to deal with these types of issues in the future. Any significant incidents should be noted in the student's file.

If the school organizes any workshops or presentations for their students, their parents, or their staff to support their psychological well-being, any supplemental materials and resources should be saved and made available for future reference, but not archived. A record of what workshops or presentations that were offered should however be archived. Any other supplemental resources that have been identified as potentially helpful to students, their parents, and staff should be made available for ease of reference but should not be archived.

USE AND ACCESS

Any records regarding the psychological well-being of an individual student should be kept securely by the school counsellor and not shared with anyone (unless required by law).

Any internal or external resources that could help students, their parents, and staff—either curated by the school's counsellor or as part of a school-organized workshop or

presentation—should be made readily available to students, parents, and staff within an online intranet. These should be verified and updated annually.

Access to students' medical information should be heavily restricted except for in cases where it is necessary to keep them safe, such as allergy lists.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

It is worth reiterating that any counseling records that discuss an individual student's situation must be kept very securely. Nobody other than the counselor should have access to any of the counselor's notes: not IT, not the archivist, not school leadership, nobody. They should not be kept on the school's shared drive unless the individual files are password protected. When the student leaves the school, those files must be destroyed.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It might be a good idea for the school to establish infrastructure where a student, their parents, or a staff member can communicate easily and perhaps anonymously with the school's administration or councillor about psychological and emotional issues that arise. Facilitating free-flowing communication is vital, and if someone is in distress (or witnesses someone else in distress), that communication needs to be made as easy and painless as possible. Of course, none of these communications should ever be archived.

FOOD SERVICES

Sometimes students bring their own meals to school with them, but some schools offer regular food to their students—snacks, lunches, and sometimes breakfasts.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Catering contracts
- Menus
- Price lists
- Photographs of food
- Surveys and other feedback

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

If the food is provided by an external catering company, all contracts should be retained by the finance and operations department.

Price lists, photographs, and information about the food that is sent to parents and students (including menu samples) should be archived by the communications team.

Anonymized, aggregate results of any surveys that are sent out to the school community asking for feedback about food services should be archived.

USE AND ACCESS

There is no reason not to allow access by all staff to past menus, price lists, and pictures of food, so they should be saved chronologically and made available.

Anonymized, aggregate survey results could be shared openly to all stakeholders—staff, students, and parents.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Signed contracts with food service companies should be scanned and the originals archived.

Examples of past menus, price lists and photographs should be saved and searchable.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Food services might seem inconsequential, but the food that is served to students at school plays a significant part of their experience. Students tend to have very strong opinions about the food that they are served, so not only will these records help to inform future catering choices, but they can also be used as fun reminders for alumni or valuable information to historians.

UNIFORMS

Some schools require that their students wear a uniform.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Uniform rules
- Examples of uniforms
- Uniform shop website
- Board of directors meeting minutes
- Correspondence

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

School uniform rules will be communicated to parents each year, and that document should be archived at the same time.

The uniform shop website should be archived every year.

Any correspondence or board of directors meeting minutes regarding changes to the uniform should be archived.

Every few years, the archive should be given examples of current uniform pieces from the uniform shop. These can be new items or lightly used if there is a second-hand shop. The archive should keep a few examples of each item in a variety of sizes.

USE AND ACCESS

The evolution of uniforms over time is a fascinating, important part of a school's history. Keeping examples of past uniforms is recommended as they can invoke very strong memories among alumni and make history physically tangible for current students. Let them be touched, and if you have multiple samples, even tried on.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Some uniform pieces should be kept on site and used in displays to engage with current students and alumni. Other pieces should be carefully packaged and stored in a climate-controlled environment.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some uniform pieces might require special treatment—for example, elasticised pieces of clothing (such as sweatpants and socks) will lose their elasticity over time and might become brittle. For precious pieces, it could be worth speaking with a clothing conservator at a local museum for advice.

SUSTAIN THE INSTITUTION

Schools require finances, personnel, a building within which to function, and management to make decisions and oversee all operations.

GOVERNANCE

Governance records document how the school was founded and how it is managed.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Founding and incorporation documents
- Meeting agendas and minutes
 - Board of Directors
 - Leadership
 - Sub-committees
 - Student council
- Ministry of Education correspondence
- Press releases
- Press clippings
- School policy and procedures manual
- Board of Directors policy manual
- Legal files and advice
- Accreditation reports, correspondence, and meeting minutes
- School bylaws
- Head of School emails
- School histories, information files

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Any founding or incorporation documents should be digitized, and the originals stored within the archive.

All meeting agendas (including supplemental documentation) and minutes for the Board of Directors, the school's leadership team, all sub-committees, and the student council should be deposited with the archive when they are produced for the members. An official copy of all Board of Directors meeting minutes should be signed after they have been approved; they could then be digitized, and the originals archived.

The communications department should retain copies of all outgoing press releases as well as any mentions of the school in external media such as newspaper clippings, magazine articles and news reports.

Policy manuals and school bylaws should be archived every time they are updated.

Copies of all records relating to legal issues (both criminal and civil) should be retained permanently. This includes legal briefs and advice.

All reports and any significant correspondence between the school and its accreditation association should be archived. Association meeting minutes could also be archived, even though the school is not the record creator, as many of the decisions made at the association level will impact the governance of individual schools, and evidence of those decisions could be valuable to have on hand in the future.

All significant correspondence between the school and the government's Ministry of Education should be archived.

The email account for the Head of School should be archived in its entirety after they have left the school's employ. They should be counseled not to use their school account for personal matters, and not to delete any correspondence that they send or receive (other than junk or spam).

Any records about the history of the school should be collected. These can take the form of primary source documents, such as oral history interviews, photographs, videos, audio recordings, journals, historical correspondence, etc. They can also be secondary-source documents, such as history books, online resources, media clippings and information files.

USE AND ACCESS

Final reports should be made available to all who might want to read them. Meeting minutes could either be shared or remain confidential for some time depending on the decision of the school's leadership team.

Access to legal files should be assessed on a case-by-case basis but would normally be restricted. Most legal briefs and advice should be made readily available (securely) to school leadership and board members as situations can often drag on for years and can sometimes recur.

The email accounts of former Heads of School should be restricted to all but the current head of school, their assistant, and the archivist, who can search within them for specific information when required. After some time has passed, some select correspondence could be made available to historical researchers.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Since board and committee membership is often quite transitory, it is important that their records are deposited with the school administration regularly. There should be written policy to that effect that is strictly enforced, or record gaps are inevitable.

All archival finding aids and databases should be maintained and migrated to newer technologies as required.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Records that deal with the school's governance are created by the decision-makers and are arguably some of the most important to preserve, as they detail the process that guides how and why the school functions as it does.

FINANCES

A school requires money to operate—it must be collected, spent, and tracked. Payroll records can be found in the ‘Personnel’ activity.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- General ledger
- Budgets
- Accounts payable files
- Grant and subsidy records
- Investment records
- Taxation records
- Liability insurance records
- Student accounts
- Accounting records
- Bank records
- Auditor’s reports
- Non-profit/charity status records
- Uniform shop records

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Most financial records are created or received by the finance department.

Departmental budgets are created collaboratively by department heads, school leadership, and the finance team. All final, approved budgets should be archived.

If the school has a uniform shop, its inventory and transaction records should be held by the finance department for as long as required by law but will not need to be archived. There should be an entry in the school’s general ledger with a transaction summary for the shop, that should be archived.

USE AND ACCESS

Department heads should have access to the status of their own budgets (such as how much has been spent in each category to date) without having to ask someone in finance. The school leadership team should also have access to that information.

Student account information should be kept securely with only the finance team having access.

If the school is a non-profit organization with charity status, audited financial statements should be made publicly available.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Much financial information will be found within the school’s accounting software. Certain executive-level information, such as the general ledger, should be exported from this software annually and preserved in an independent, non-proprietary file format.

Important records that are received by the school, such as auditor’s reports and financial statements should be scanned (if the originals are paper based) and archived.

Any important correspondence with the government or other agencies about subsidies, taxation, and charity status should be archived.

Liability insurance records should be retained permanently.

Accounts payable records could be retained digitally (scanned if necessary) for ease of access and destroyed at the end of their retention period.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are strict rules for how long certain financial records must be retained for legal or fiscal purposes—these should be detailed in a records retention schedule. It is also important to consider, however, which individual records might be interesting to retain permanently for historical reasons. Use your judgment.

OPERATIONS

The day-to-day running of the school and its facilities.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Cleaning contracts
- Maintenance contracts
- Bus schedules, maps, and prices
- Special situations (such as pandemic preparedness)

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Most contracts and other operational records will be managed by a director of operations or finance.

If the school has a contract with a transport company to provide bus service to students who live a distance from the school, those schedules, maps, and price lists should be retained.

USE AND ACCESS

Contracts should be kept securely with limited access.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

A signed copy of all significant (facilities-related, not necessarily something like cleaning) contracts should be digitized to create access copies while the originals are stored away for safekeeping. Depending on their importance, they may be retained permanently.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During special situations, such as during a global pandemic, records created by and for different groups of people should be proactively collected to ensure a well-rounded picture of the situation from as many different viewpoints as possible: Online teaching schedules, cleaning protocols, building access restrictions, correspondence sent to parents, notices sent to students, memos sent to staff, pandemic journals written by the children, adapted activities organized by the advancement team ... everything that can be collected should be.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Includes building facilities and information technology (IT) hardware and software.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Blueprints and floorplans
- Construction and renovation plans
- Warranties
- Property and contents insurance records
- Inspection reports
- Physical assets list
- IT software and subscription lists
- IT infrastructure details
- IT accounts information
- Photographs
- List of artworks

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

The director of operations or finance will probably be charged with the safekeeping of all blueprints, plans, inspection reports, warranties, insurance, and physical assets lists for the school and its buildings. These should all be archived.

A database listing all the school's moveable physical assets (chairs, tables, smartboards, computers, etc) along with any relevant warranty information should be maintained and regularly updated by the facilities manager and IT department.

Records relating to IT will be managed by the IT department. The archivist should be aware of the different types of records that are being kept and in what format, and work alongside the IT department to ensure that important records are properly archived.

A comprehensive list of all artworks that are donated to, purchased by, and displayed at the school should be created and updated frequently. This should include date, creator, provenance information, and photographs.

At least every few years (and just before and after any significant building works projects), the communications department should purposefully ensure that photographs are taken of all the school facilities—the classrooms, gymnasium, hallways, locker rooms, library, building frontage, yard, etc. This can be used to show how things looked in the case of any insurance claims, but will also provide historical evidence of how the building(s) evolved over the years.

USE AND ACCESS

For security reasons, blueprints and plans should have restricted access.

A list of all current IT subscriptions should be made openly available to all staff so that they know what is available for them to use.

Photographs of the facilities could be made available through an archival photographic database (which could have restricted access for privacy concerns, depending on what the school decides).

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

All blueprints, plans and photographs should be digitized, and the originals placed somewhere safe.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Blueprints tend to be quite large and difficult to store. Ideally, they would be kept flat in a large drawer, but if space is at a premium that could be difficult. All blueprints (especially the older ones) should be carefully unrolled (with the advice and help of a conservator if necessary) and digitized to limit future physical handling of the originals.

PERSONNEL

There are many different people who work for a school, including faculty, administrators, and management. There are also temporary workers, such as interns, student teachers, and volunteers.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Organization charts and staff lists
- Staff council minutes and correspondence
- Job descriptions
- Recruiting advertisements
- Employee handbooks
- Staff correspondence
- Benefits information
- Union records
- Payroll records
- Pension records
- HR records
- Volunteer records
- Professional development material

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Most records involving personnel will be created and retained by either the HR or finance departments.

If any staff members are unionized, all correspondence between the school and the unions (including all collective agreements and negotiations) should be collected and retained.

All staff and volunteers who work in a school are subject to a police background check. These reports should be included in staff members' HR files. As volunteers may not be given individual files, their reports can be filed by date and should be retained at least for as long as the individual volunteers for the school (or is likely to volunteer—in the case of a parent, until their child leaves the school).

All general correspondence will be sent to all staff by email. An archive email address should be created that subscribes to the staff email distribution group to collect all electronic mailings that are sent to staff.

Personal correspondence between staff/faculty and management should only be retained if significant (such as in the case of a grievance), and in those cases, they should be placed within the staff member's HR file. Note that certain teacher unions may have clauses in their collective agreements on how long grievances may remain in an employee's file. This is something that the archivist should be aware of, but as per the recommendations of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, this type of policy should be revisited. This is worth a discussion with school leadership before any decision is made.

Material to support teacher professional development activities that take place in the school should be retained for its informational value.

USE AND ACCESS

Organization charts, job descriptions, employee handbooks, benefits information, and professional development material should all be made readily available to all employees on a staff intranet.

Individual payroll, pension, and HR records, including any information about specific salaries, must be kept private.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

HR records for staff that have left the school's employ should be archived and retained permanently—with very restricted access.

All obsolete organization charts, job descriptions, employee handbooks and benefits information should be archived and retained permanently.

General correspondence to all staff should be retained permanently. If possible, when they are created, any email attachments should be attached to the email, not simply sent as a link. Otherwise, the attachments will not be automatically archived with the emails and would entail an extra level of work on the archivist's part. This will still be necessary for large files that cannot be attached, such as links to videos.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It might be a conflict of interest for the school's archive to be keeping the records from the staff council meetings (where staff discuss their concerns amongst themselves). If they are not comfortable giving their meeting minutes to the school, they should be counseled by the archivist on how to properly care for their records, and reminded regularly (perhaps at the end of each school year) to pass them all on to the next group of council members.

HR files will not necessarily be created for temporary, short-term employees such as student teachers, interns, and volunteers—especially if they are not paid. Their relationship to the school however should still be officially documented and archived.

One of the most significant elements of a small school is the family-like community that develops between all those who learn and work there. That magical feeling is next to impossible to document, so it could be valuable to organize oral history interviews with staff, both current and former.

FUNDRAISING

Independent schools must raise supplemental income to provide services that are not possible to fund with tuition fees and subsidies alone.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Campaign and appeal administrative records
- Campaign and appeal marketing materials
- Fund descriptions
- Fund establishment agreements/contracts
- Donation lists
- Donor records
- Event records
- Event photographs
- Prospective donor reports
- Executive fundraising reports

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Most fundraising records will be created by the advancement department, but some marketing materials and photographs could come from communications, and some fund establishment agreements or contracts could have been created by the finance department.

USE AND ACCESS

It is valuable for the current advancement team to see what fundraising efforts worked (or didn't) before, as well as details about past events, so they should have complete access to related older records. It is also very valuable for them to be able to see which constituents donated money or time so that they can target future appeals more specifically.

Except for the advancement, finance and management teams, access to donor and prospective donor information should be restricted (except for what has been authorized to publish in donor reports).

Event photographs and donor reports should be widely shared with the school community to raise awareness and encourage participation in future events and appeals.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Most schools will use an advancement database to track prospects, donors, donations, and sometimes even event participation. If the school ever switches from one database to a new one, if possible, the legacy data should be transferred over so that statistics can be easily compared over time. If that is not possible or decided against, as much data as possible should be exported as structured spreadsheets.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reports on prospective donors should be retained for as long as the prospect remains of interest to the school, but do not need to be archived beyond that time (and for privacy reasons, should not).

FOUNDATION

In some schools, a separate foundation manages the investments from fundraising. The money is then given back to the school for approved expenses, scholarships, and bursaries.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Foundation board meeting agendas (including supplemental documentation) and minutes
- Foundation bylaws
- Investment reports
- Auditor's reports

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

Since foundation board membership is often quite transitory, it is important that their records are deposited with the school administration regularly. There should be written policy to that effect that is strictly enforced, or record gaps are inevitable.

All investment and auditor's reports should be submitted to the school's finance department for safekeeping.

USE AND ACCESS

The foundation's bylaws should be made publicly available to all who would like to see them.

Meeting agendas and minutes could either be shared or remain confidential for some time depending on the decision of the school's leadership team.

If the school is a non-profit organization with charity status, audited financial statements should be made publicly available.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

All board minutes should be printed, signed, and archived permanently. If a digital board management system is used, static copies of minutes should be exported regularly and preserved independently of the system.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If there is a foundation board, it is likely made up of volunteer non-staff members (usually parents and alumni) with perhaps the Director of Finance and the Head of School as either members or attendees. It is very important that the board records are managed and preserved with the same scrupulousness as other financial records, even though most of the members will not be school staff. This may entail a more proactive role on the archivist's part than for most records.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Schools are part of a large community comprised of students, parents and guardians, alumni, and the world at large. Please note that staff relations are covered by the 'personnel' activity within 'sustain the institution'.

STUDENT RELATIONS

Relationship between the school and its students.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Daily bulletins
- General correspondence
- Personal correspondence
- Commendations and disciplinary notes

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

All general correspondence and daily bulletins will be sent to the students by email. An archive email address should be created that subscribes to the student email distribution group to collect all electronic mailings that are sent to students.

Personal correspondence between students and staff/faculty should only be retained if significant, and in those cases, they should be placed within the student's file.

Any commendations or disciplinary notes should be placed within the student's file.

USE AND ACCESS

The archivist would have access to the archive email account that collects all the regular correspondence and would be able to search it for content on request.

Access to student files should be restricted to the registrar, management, and the archivist.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Personal correspondence, commendations and disciplinary notes that have been placed within a student's file will be triaged when the student leaves the school—it will be up to the school to decide what types of non-official records should be retained permanently.

General correspondence and daily bulletins should be retained permanently. If possible, when they are created, any email attachments should be attached to the email, not simply sent as a link. Otherwise, the attachments will not be automatically archived with the emails and would entail an extra level of work on the archivist's part. This will still be necessary for large files that cannot be attached, such as links to videos.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some general correspondence may seem ephemeral and not worth preserving—such as announcements for pizza lunch fundraisers or reminders to ensure that uniforms are worn appropriately. However, I would argue that the collection of these small events and issues all together can show an incredibly clear picture of the day-to-day life of a school's student body.

Given how relatively straightforward emails can be to archive, this is a big win for a comparatively small effort.

One of the most significant elements of a small school is the family-like community that develops between all those who learn and work there. That magical feeling is next to impossible to document, so it could be valuable to organize oral history interviews with students, both current and former.

PARENT AND GUARDIAN RELATIONS

Relationship between the school and its students' parents and/or guardians.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Parents association records
- Newsletters and general correspondence
- Personal correspondence
- Social media posts
- Surveys

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

The parent association is a collection of volunteer parents who support school activities and endeavours. They have regular meetings that often include school administration. These meeting minutes should be archived along with membership lists and any significant correspondence.

All e-newsletters and general correspondence will be sent to parents by email. An archive email address should be created that subscribes to the parent email distribution group to collect all emails that are sent to parents.

Personal correspondence between parents and staff/faculty should only be retained if significant, and in those cases, they should be placed within the student's file.

All social media posts should be regularly archived. Each service (such as Facebook, X, and Instagram) offers a limited way to download one's own posts, but there are also external services who provide more thorough ways of archiving one's content.

All surveys that are sent to parents should be archived, along with the responses (aggregated and anonymized, especially if at all sensitive in nature).

USE AND ACCESS

Current parent association members as well as the advancement team should have access to a shared drive space to store their files that includes records from past years.

The archivist would have access to the archive email account that collects all the regular correspondence and would be able to search it for content on request.

Access to student files should be restricted to the registrar, management, and the archivist.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Personal correspondence that has been placed within a student's file will be triaged when the student leaves the school—it will be up to the school to decide what types of non-official records should be retained permanently (see the **Student Records** activity).

General correspondence and newsletters should be retained permanently. If possible, when they are created, any email attachments should be attached to the email, not simply sent as a link. Otherwise, the attachments will not be automatically archived with the emails and would entail an extra level of work on the archivist's part. This will still be necessary for large files that cannot be attached, such as links to videos.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One should consider keeping all correspondence from parents or guardians where the tenor is fraught as sometimes disputes re-emerge years later. A copy of all significant correspondence should be placed in the student's file, but perhaps they could also all be forwarded by email to the Head of School—this way they will not only be made aware of what is happening, but also because their email account will certainly be archived in its entirety when they leave the school, this will leave a permanent record of any dispute even after the student's file has been pared down after graduation.

ALUMNI RELATIONS

Relationship between the school and its alumni.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Alumni association records
- Newsletters and general correspondence
- Personal correspondence
- Photographs and videos
- Social media posts
- Event details
- Alumni/fundraising database
- Mentorship opportunities

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

The student files will contain information of value to the advancement team, but as it contains private information about individuals, access should be as limited as possible. The advancement team could be given access after graduation, or they could create a separate alumni file that would not contain any transcripts or other sensitive information but would contain details about the activities that the student was involved in as well as any prizes or scholarships awarded—a redacted student file that the advancement team can continue to add to as the alumni's relationship with the school evolves over time. This can often take the form of a constituent record within a fundraising database.

An alumni association is normally run and managed by alumni members but can also often have a close association with the school through the advancement team. They have regular meetings, and those meeting minutes should be recorded and archived along with their bylaws, membership lists, and any significant correspondence.

Any personal correspondence between alumni and school staff should be noted in their constituent record within the advancement database.

All newsletters and general correspondence will be sent to alumni by email. An archive email address should be created that subscribes to the alumni email distribution group to collect all emails that are sent to alumni.

All social media posts should be regularly archived. Each service (such as Facebook, X, and Instagram) offers a limited way to download one's own posts, but there are also external services who provide more thorough ways of archiving one's content.

A selection of records relating to all alumni events should be archived, including attendee lists, budgets, and promotional materials. Events should be widely photographed and recorded.

If any alumni volunteers to mentor any current students or recent graduates, this should be publicized and recorded within the alumni database.

USE AND ACCESS

Current alumni association members as well as the advancement team should have access to a shared drive space with records from past years.

Alumni could have access to digitized versions of old yearbooks, alumni newsletters, and archival photographs. For privacy reasons, these documents could be situated on a secure, password-protected site.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

If the advancement database is designed with care and regularly updated, it could be used to create statistics and target fundraising and engagement appeals.

General correspondence and newsletters should be retained permanently. If possible, when they are created, any email attachments should be attached to the email, not simply sent as a link. Otherwise, the attachments will not be automatically archived with the emails and would entail an extra level of work on the archivist's part. This will still be necessary for large files that cannot be attached, such as links to videos.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some schools have begun to establish private social media sites to engage with their alumni. The information that alumni provide on these platforms should regularly be extracted and added to the alumni database. Posts made by alumni as well as email newsletters that are created by the school should all be archived.

VOLUNTEERISM AND ACTIVISM

When students volunteer their time or use their voices to try to make the world a better place, this is worth documenting and archiving.

SELECTED RECORDS LIST

- Volunteering activity records
- Fundraising records
- Activism records
- Trip records
- Photographs and videos

APPRAISAL AND ACCESSION

There will be one or more staff members who are charged with organizing volunteering activities. How are the opportunities presented to the students? Are they emailed to them? Is there a webpage with a regularly updated list? These opportunities should somehow be captured and archived along with details of who did the volunteering and what types of tasks that they did.

There may be student committees that run fundraising or activist activities—such as bake sales, bazaars, raffles, marches, walk-a-thons, protests, pizza lunches etc. There could be a standard report created after each of these activities that details what went on, how much money was raised (if applicable), and includes pictures and videos. These should be archived.

If any students go on volunteerism trips, such as to build schools in a developing country, there should be a report created with details, including pictures and videos. These should be archived.

Any volunteer work done by students should be noted in their student file.

USE AND ACCESS

Lists of students detailing hours spent volunteering should remain confidential, but if individuals agree, trip and event reports could be distributed to parents, alumni, and potential donors to showcase the good work that the students are doing.

MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION

Reports can be saved in a static format such as a PDF, but statistical data about volunteering practices should be put in a format that allows for data analysis, such as a spreadsheet or a database.

Volunteering and activism records for individual students should be placed within their student files and preserved permanently.

NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It might be worthwhile to speak with students about their volunteering and activist experiences and record these conversations. Ask them about what they did, why they did it, how it made them feel, and what impact it had on their lives, etc. These feelings and emotions may not be documented anywhere else.

J. External Schools: Archivist Interview Participant Recruitment Letter

Hello [Name],

I am a PhD candidate in the Information Studies program at McGill and was hoping you'd be willing to meet with me briefly next week for a short research interview about how you manage and use your archival material at [YOUR SCHOOL]. At the same time, I'd be delighted to offer any advice or answer any of your questions about archives—I did a lot of work at [OTHER SCHOOL] over the past few years and have learned a lot in the process. I'd be happy to share any of that with you.

I really hope to chat with you soon,

Morgannis Graham

K. External Schools: Archivist Interview Participant Consent Form



Participant Consent Form

Researcher

Morgannis Graham, Ph.D. Candidate
McGill University School of Information Studies
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Supervisor

Eun G. Park, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
McGill University School of Information Studies
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(514) 398-3364

Title of Project

The Power of Archival Records in Independent Schools

Purpose of the Study

You have been invited to participate in a research study to explore the creation, management, preservation, use, and re-use of the archival records in QAIS schools. Independent schools have unique challenges that differ from those faced by public schools. This study will examine whether an independent school's archival records could help to support some of those challenges.

For the purpose of this research, archival records refer to all of the records that are produced or collected by your school with the intent to retain permanently for legal, administrative, or historical purposes. This includes photographs, publications, student records, alumni dossiers, financial records, personal papers, and curriculum-related records. They could be analog or digital, and could even refer to entire databases (financial, academic, advancement...).

Study Procedures

The researcher is hoping to speak with individuals who manage their schools' archival records. This individual could be an archivist, registrar, database administrator, advancement professional, librarian, teacher, other staff, or even a volunteer. If there is more than one person at a school who manages the archival records, the researcher would happily meet with them all, either together or separately.

These discussions will be exploratory in nature, and will take the form of semi-structured interviews. The interviews shouldn't take longer than an hour, but could vary in duration depending on how the conversation flows. The interview will be scheduled at a time and location most convenient for you.

Confidentiality

Interviews will be audio recorded unless you ask for them not to be, in which case detailed notes will be taken during your interview(s). The audio recordings will only be heard by the researcher, and only for the purpose of transcription. These audio recordings will not be shared with anyone. Once the recordings have been transcribed and the transcriptions verified by you, they will only be accessible by the researcher and the supervisor, and the original audio files will be destroyed after the required retention period (7 years following the end of the research project). All transcripts and research notes will be anonymized: you will be assigned an ID code (with the key kept in a password-protected separate file) and never referred to by your real name. The only people who will know your identity are the researcher and supervisor.

Any summaries of your statements or direct quotes that may appear in publications will not be attributable to you or your institution, either directly or indirectly.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you may refuse to answer any question or withdraw your consent at any time, for any reason. The researcher will not be reporting to your school's management whether or not you have participated, so there will be no impact on your employment status. To ensure that there are no misunderstandings, after any information about you has been gathered (following an interview or informal discussion), the researcher will present to you a transcript of the conversation, and you will have the opportunity to confirm, clarify, or refute your statements.

Potential Risks

There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this research. If, during your interview(s), you happen to express any feelings or observations which could put your job or relationships at risk (for example, being critical of management or colleagues), they will not be reported on unless directly relevant to the research, and even then, only if your privacy can be absolutely guaranteed.

Potential Benefits

This study will be exploring how independent school archival records can help to support their administrative and curricular challenges. Once the study has been completed, you will receive a copy of the published research which should provide insight into the management of independent school archival records. In addition, you will be given a \$25 gift card (you will be able to choose from a selection of vendors) to thank you for your participation.

Questions

If you have any questions or require any clarifications about this project, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at morgannis.graham@mail.mcgill.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca.

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

I consent to be audio recorded (circle one): Yes No

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

REB File # 134-0818

This research has been funded by Mitacs

L. External Schools: Archivist Interview Question Guide

- Name, title
- How long worked at this school?
- Have always had this role?
- Describe what you do
- What is your archival education?
- How many hours a week do you work for the school? Doing archival work?
- Do you have any help?
- How does your budget work?

- When was the school founded?
- Approximately how many teachers?
- Approximately how many admin?
- Tell me about your school
- What makes your school special?
- How would you describe one of your students on graduation?

- Do you have a records retention schedule? How old is it? Do people follow it?
- What types of records do you collect?
- How do you go about acquiring records? Internally? Externally?
- How do you manage your physical collection - physical storage?
 - Off-site repository? What do you store? Extent?
- Tell me about your digitization projects
- How do you deal with born-digital/digitized records?
- How do you keep track of your holdings?

- How do you manage your digital business files? Server? On a local machine?
- Does your school use Google for Education?

- Does your archive have an online presence?
- What is done to disseminate the archives to the school community?
- What is done to disseminate the archives outside the school community?
- Do you ever get research requests from external researchers?
- Have you reached out to your community for help to manage the collection - volunteers, crowdsourcing, etc. ?

- If resources were limitless, what would be your top recommendations to improve your school's archives program?

M. External Schools: Archivist Interview Codebook

Code	Description	Representative quotes from interviews
Role-Archival tasks	Participant speaks of tasks that they complete as part of their role	"Oh, so with the, the Remembrance Day thing I was responsible for getting our war memorials which date back to the end of the First World War, completely restored and it was a huge undertaking..."
Role-Keeper of knowledge	Participant talks about the institutional and related knowledge that they hold, and when people call on them for that knowledge	"I'm gathering a lot of information right now. And not just about the school, but the city, the town and even the region, as well. And eventually, yeah, eventually my goal is to start writing more papers to share the knowledge."
Role-Non-archival tasks	Participant details tasks that they are asked to do by their school that are non-archival in nature	"...sometimes, you know, I'm at the front desk, you know, emergency, I have to be there."
Situation-Education / training	Participant talks about their educational background or archival training	"I did a minor at [university], in gestion des documents et archives [records management and archives]...I didn't have so much experience when you know, I just had university."
Situation-Enjoying work	Participant mentions that they enjoy their work	"I just was passionate about [archives] and just started getting involved with [former archivist] and there was no official position at the time, they were doing it too because they liked it."
Situation-Enthusiasm	Participant told me they were enthusiastic about talking about their work	"So nice to have somebody that is in my world too! You know what I mean?"
Situation-Help	Participant discusses any help they may have received in processing the archive	"I had a partner helping working with me for the first year and we worked together. She was a retired—newly retired library technician, she had no archival knowledge, but she was, you know, keen to help out."
Situation-Other archivists	Participant talks about their relationship (if any) with other archivists	"Do I know any other school archivists? Honestly, I don't. I have had exchanges of information over the years with the archivist at [other school]. They have a name something like [name]."
Situation-Overwhelmed	Participant talks about a situation that they feel is overwhelming	"The digital photos we haven't done a lot of work on. So we quite literally have tens of thousands of photos and it's just it's not something we can even begin to think about going."

Situation-Physical working conditions	Participant describes their physical working conditions	"I must tell you that [a storeroom] has open drains because they used to flood the floor to wash it, and there's certain times of year when the drains dry out and I have to go pour buckets of water down there because they start to smell of dead fish."
Situation-Salary / schedule / benefits	Participant discusses anything about their salary, schedule, or HR-related benefits	"Most of my work is done around certain periods around the twice a year when the magazine comes out...[and] our reunion time. So now honestly, maybe one afternoon a week."
Organization-School activities	Participant talks about things happening in the school that they either are or are not aware of	"The relationships [with other departments] are very close. We're one of the few schools, I think that that has this. Certainly one of the few schools that works hand in hand with the business office."
Organization-Not understood / respected	Participant mentions a situation where they did not feel as though they had the support or respect of school management	"[Archivist is] not really recognised as a fully professional position at the school. It's more recognised as ... something helpful to have around if you need it."
Organization-Organizational structure	Participant detailed how they were situated within their organizational structure	"Sometimes I run through [the director of advancement], sometimes I run through the head of communication at the school, who's also like, who kind of was involved with the history of the school before, you know, I came in and he's still doing stuff on that as well. So, um, yeah, we kind of work as a team, I guess."
Organization-Positive recognition	Participant talks about a situation where their work received positive recognition	"I was really providing a service that they'd never had before and the people who benefited from it were very appreciative."
Organization-Apathy	Participant mentions that their organization shows apathy in complying with or prioritizing archives	"I always wanted to have the on the alumni section a lot more or information, galleries of photos, reproductions of important documents or whatever fun things. And they just never wanted to do that."
Organization-Budget	Participant talks about the budget or other resources available to them for their archives	"My Director of Development at the time was championing funding for the squash court [...] And at that point, my little compact storage was \$10,000. And they said one beam—one beam in that squash court cost us \$10,000! Are you aware? [...] I try to look after your heritage, you are an alumni, this is your heritage. I'm trying to look out for it then. All you see is a squash court. Please,

		do you have a part of that squash court that we can donate to archives?"
Organization-Policies/procedures	Participant discusses archives-related policies and procedures, or lack thereof	"You know, you put in place a system and your successor doesn't follow the system or they ignore the system or whatever. Yeah, so so much of it is based on just human competence... And cooperation! Cooperation and knowledge of what has gone before."
Organization-Records management	Participant mentions contemporary records management	"They were looking for minutes, not of the corporation, the board but something else. And I was just shocked that they didn't have everything in one place. They asked me if I had any of them. No. I think they've been very sloppy with that over the years. Maybe they're tightening up now. I don't know. I just I just steer clear of it. Yeah. And like I tried initially when I said, you really should have everything together saved. And I guess I was pretty naive to even think that was a possibility at the time."
Organization-Storage facilities	Participant talks about where and/or how the school physically stores their records	"Staff records are all done by HR, which is next door and I think they keep ... they probably have an electronic file of some, but they have files that are in their office. And then I think if people die or whatever else they archive them and put them into Iron Mountain."
School-Description / values	Participant describes their school and/or its values	"A teacher came up with an idea to try something. Now we've had a lot of teachers come up with ideas to try things and some of them failed. It didn't matter. [The head teacher] would say, it's okay, we tried it. Yeah, I just couldn't get yeah, no problem. [At a different school] it's like God I had to spend all this money, they're gonna be mad at me and it will be hard and you know, none of that is none of that. It's a faculty culture. You know, the school is what it is because of the faculty."
Archival management-Acquisition	Participant talks about acquiring records for the archive or any difficulties they may have experienced in attempting to do so	"So admissions. Finance, it's a big—how can I say, department for me? So they do transfer every year. Well, communications transfers as well. Maybe not every year."
Archival management-	Participant discusses the arrangement or	"Not everything is org... Like it's not organized. So it's tough, when it's organised

Arrangement / description	description of their holdings	and I have cataloguers they say yeah, I have this and if not, it's aaah!"
Archival management- Digital records	Participant mentions the management of digital records	"Yeah, they teachers add to a media drive [...] And they choose what they need for the yearbook. And then they're put so the yearbook will have a copy those photos. And then they have a place in the media drive they put for all the photos that are that are checked in. But they're just it's, it's an immense amount of just data data data."
Archival management- Digitization	Participant talks about digitization instances or larger projects	"Okay, so anytime I come across photos, for example in one of the old magazines, I think oh, we should have a digitised copy of that photo, I digitise it, and I put it in this folder, and I always annotate it where it's from, the year if I know it. I never just put it in without some identification."
Archival management- Loss	Participant describes a situation where records were lost or they did something to try to prevent loss	"I had a flood here one year and I lost everything that was on my window sill. So you know, so it's kind of working in a difficult physical environment."
Archival management- Oral histories	Participant talks about oral history projects	"I'm trying to reach as many alums as possible, ask them about their memories of the school. I've started doing that too."
Archival management- State of archives	Participant describes the state of their archives, either at the time of the interview or when they first began working at their school	"I have boxes and boxes of slides that have no ID things on them and said I as I don't know what's there, I'm not going to triage and say you know, throw things out. So until they can be properly examined one at a time. These will be kept until such time that they can be treated."
Archival management- Technology	Participant mentions technology and how it has or could impact them	"They now have a program wherein they can apply facial recognition to photographs from very recent years. I don't have any confidence that that's ever going to work successfully."
Archival management- Wishlist	Participant speaks of their wishes for their archive should resources not be an issue	"I would really focus on [digitizing] the photos. The DVD like, they would love to have like even a film festival [...] So I would really focus on photos and the moving images."
Use of archives- Engagement	Participant talks about using their archives to engage with community members	"The kids eat it up. Love it. I said this is more entertaining than any game they can hold in their hands. Believe me, I said it's really cool to see how they get all caught up in the you know, the moment in the oh my gosh, that

		hockey puck is that old? [...] They're just fascinated and they really do get roped in."
Use of archives- Privacy	Participant addresses the issue of privacy concerns	"I can't give up confidential information. But as far as yes, they were here in 1972 and they were in this class, because there's the picture. Yeah. I can't argue with that."
Use of archives- Sensitive records	Participant mentions access to or protection of sensitive records	"One thing I have a little difficulty with is people accessing their own files. We get board members that come to visit the school when the archivist isn't here and convince others to take their keys and open doors and, you know, that's still a bit of a sticking issue of training everyone, you know, that I don't, you know, the King of England could arrive and say please give me my file and you can just shake your head and say I'm sorry, I have to use protocol is in place for accessing this information."
Use of archives- Dissemination	Participant talks about different ways that they have disseminated their collections	"We have Memorial Remembrance Day. [...] I said hey, [...] like how about we put the pictures somewhere? Like I'm the one who's always constantly thinking of ways to promote archives."