

PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL  
SUPPORTS FOR INCLUSION PROGRAMS IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOLS

by

Brian Moore  
B.S. University of Cincinnati, 1979  
M.Ed. Xavier University, 1991

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Major Professor: Dr. Jess House

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## ABSTRACT

The success of exceptional student education, although dependent upon the teachers involved, is largely made possible both by the role the school principal performs and the organizational support provided by the school district. The primary purpose of this study was to identify the sources and components of organizational support required to implement the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms. The provision of resources by administrators, particularly the building principal, is an example of an organizational support that helps students with disabilities learn successfully in this setting. These resources include funding, special curricula, adaptive technology, organizational resources such as time for training, and hiring of additional personnel to assist these students.

The role of educational leader in inclusive education has evolved beginning with changes in federal and state legislation that were initiated in the early 1970s. Administrators are legally responsible for the education of students with special needs in the least restrictive environment. This study identifies organizational supports as well as attitudes toward inclusion reported by teachers and principals in a medium sized southwest Florida school district.

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Anna Moore, and to my parents, Donald and Elizabeth Moore. These three dear people supplied prayers and encouragement for me throughout this endeavor.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH DISCUSSION

The challenge of attempting to comply with special education regulations established at the local, state, and federal level has grown in recent years and increased the need for organizational supports. Strict legal requirements affect the way students with disabilities receive their education. A movement to include more students with special needs within general education classes has caused some educators to question their ability to effectively serve students with various disabilities (Bruskewitz, 1998). Some critics argue that placing students with disabilities in a general education classroom consumes too much time from the workday of an already overworked teacher and reduces the actual time on task for all the students. Another argument against the inclusion movement is the belief that curriculum standards must be lowered to accommodate students with learning disabilities (Bolick, 2001; Hehir, 2003). The inclusion movement has also prompted many educators to seek and rely upon support from administrators both at the school and district level. American educators are legally required to follow the practice of inclusion, although some disagree with this educational strategy, (Smith, 2000) believing many students with special needs are better served in separate settings.

One of the most consistent beliefs relating to American educational practices of the past century is that all students are entitled to an equal educational opportunity (Smith, 2000). Parents, educators, and advocacy groups have contended that the educational services provided to students with disabilities are frequently less effective than the educational experiences that are offered to students without disabilities. Not all students respond positively to traditional educational programs of instruction. Some have social or emotional needs that require different

educational environments or strategies. Successful instruction requires careful inspection and consideration of the organizational supports that could be provided by principals to teachers. The responsibility of managing the changes necessitated both by law and popular opinion often rests on the shoulders of the building principal. It is more important than ever for principals to make the crucial decisions that affect their particular school population (Patterson, Marshall, & Bowling, 2000).

### Problem Statement

Educational leaders are involved in responding to the numerous challenges that are presented by students identified as requiring special educational services. As the inclusion reform movement continues to gain momentum, more students with disabilities will be educated within general education classrooms. Some teachers do not perceive principals as able to provide needed educational supports to the classroom. Carefully planned and implemented educational alternatives increase the probability of success for nontraditional students. Although there is a large amount of literature that explores effective inclusive practices, the supports that educators report as critical to the success of included students have not been sufficiently specified. Identification of these organizational supports may enhance the effectiveness of teachers in inclusive classrooms (Tanner, Linscott, & Galis, 1996).

### Definitions

1. Administrators - Elementary school principals grades kindergarten through sixth grade.
2. Student with a Disability - a student evaluated in accordance with 300.530-300.536 (IDEA-1997) as having mental retardation, a hearing impairment including deafness, a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment including blindness, serious emotional disturbance, an

orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services (United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2004).

3. Inclusive School Environment - An educational setting that involves membership in general education classrooms with chronological age appropriate classmates, having individualized and relevant learning objectives, and being provided with the support necessary to learn (Inzanno, 1999).

4. Least Restrictive Environment - The regular classroom, along with nondisabled peers, in the school that they would attend if they were not disabled, unless alternative placement is necessary, and specified in an individualized education plan. (IDEA, Sec. 300.550-300.552).

5. Supports - Organizational resources including, but not limited to, time, human resources, and material resources such as curricula, computers, and adaptive technology.

6. Teacher - Classroom instructor in kindergarten through sixth grade.

#### Limitations and Delimitations

The participants in the research survey were a sample of elementary teachers and elementary administrators employed by The School District of Lee County, in Florida, which may have limited the ability to generalize results to teachers working in other districts and states.

#### Assumptions

1. Individuals will respond honestly and accurately to the questionnaire.
2. Respondents are representative of teachers and principals in Southwest Florida.

### Significance of the Study

Historically, students in need of adjustments, modifications, or accommodations were segregated from other learners. Changes in the law, including most recently reauthorization of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) provide a directive that all students be educated in the least restrictive environment. This has been repeatedly mandated but not fully implemented since the passage of PL 94-142.

PL 94-142, or the Education For All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) was passed by Congress in 1975. The law stated that individuals, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, are entitled to receive services from the public school systems at no cost to the parents. This law has been amended several times. In 1986 PL 99-457 lowered the age at which children were allowed to receive school services to age three. Amendments in the early 1990s renamed the federal law from EHA to IDEA or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. IDEA was last passed in 2004. About every five years, parts of the IDEA must be reauthorized because sections of the law will no longer remain in force unless Congress passes them again.

Governmental requirements have changed as this particular legislative initiative has evolved.

Administrative support for teachers faced with the challenge of educating these exceptional students has been documented repeatedly as a crucial factor toward implementing a successful inclusive education system (Krajewski & Krajewski, 2000; Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999; and Tanner, Linscott, & Galis, 1996). The literature relating to inclusive education programs has emphasized the importance of positive educator attitudes as well as the need for organizational supports. Researchers on the management of inclusive educational programs have focused primarily upon the instructional leadership role behavior of school principals in relation

to the management of inclusive education programs. It is also important to identify organizational supports that administrators can provide for teachers. This study seeks to help to fill that void in the existing literature.

### Theoretical Framework

The literature relating to the implementation of special education policies has expanded every year, and theories and solutions revealed in the literature have often been in conflict. Even though IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and PL 94-142 mandated strict compliance, they were indistinct regarding specific implementation methods because of the uniqueness of individual student circumstances (Sewell, Kohler, Smith, & Chapman, 1994). Florida administrators, along with their counterparts around the country, have investigated ways to provide inclusive education to students within their school districts. A recent example of this was a statewide pilot program in which the Florida Department of Education encouraged district administrators to implement changes that would integrate students with disabilities and develop collaboration between special and general educators (Arguelles, 2000).

In 1996 a research team from the University of Georgia described examples of organizational support, including additional resources for supplemental material and equipment including assistive technology, reduced class sizes, assistance with behavioral issues including school-wide positive behavioral supports, additional and/or collaborative teacher planning time, and the identification and provision of the necessary staff development and training to operate an inclusive classroom (Tanner, Linscott, & Galis, 1996). Additionally the team sought to identify the sensitivity to special education issues of teachers that had taken coursework relating to school

law. Their survey was directed toward middle school teachers and principals regarding their perceptions of organizational support as well as their perceptions of barriers to inclusive education. In-class supports included peer supports, co-teaching, support facilitation, differentiated instruction, and cooperative learning.

The Georgia researchers questioned over 700 teachers and principals about their perceptions and concerns related to inclusion. Behavioral concerns and the degree of student disruption were two of the most significant concerns reported by these researchers. Their report called for further research in the areas of the cost of educating students with disabilities, use of collaborative teaching strategies and, most notably, the organizational patterns and supports that are provided to students with disabilities in separate settings that may not be available in the general education classrooms.

Recent reauthorization of IDEA and trends in judicial interpretation of least restrictive environment suggest that many judicial rulings have supported special education legislation. The first major piece of legislation that required an overhaul of the way students with disabilities received their education was PL 94-142. This law specified that the education of these students was an integral part of their civil rights. Furthermore, it mandated that students with a variety of disabilities be provided a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment available (Tompkins & Deloney, 1995).

Although school administrators have long realized that children with special needs may have unique ways of learning, they have recently intensified their efforts to develop strategies to offer to their faculties in order to accommodate these students with special challenges (Werts, Wolery, & Snyder, 1996). Inclusion goes beyond simply placing a child in a desk in a general

education classroom. Inclusion purists advocate automatic universal placement for all students in regular schools and classes regardless of the nature or severity of their disabilities. The philosophy of full inclusion encourages the elimination of the dual special and general education framework and the creation of a new system that is able to meet the needs of all students. Educators are not universally agreed that such a system is possible, yet governmental intervention has precipitated this change in the education of the children with disabilities (Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999).

Federal law is specific in requiring that each student be placed in the least restrictive environment possible, encompassing a continuum of alternative educational placement based on the individual needs of each child. If a child is placed in a more restrictive environment, it is the responsibility of the educators and, in some cases, school districts to justify why a less restrictive environment is not appropriate.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (also referred to as IDEA or PL105-17) does not specifically use the term inclusion, but the concept is implied when defining the least restrictive setting (Inzano, 1999). Many court decisions were based in part on this mandate and, to a lesser extent, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, that specifies the use of federal funds relating to persons with disabilities. These rulings have continued to provide guidance to the educational community. In a large number of cases, the courts have aligned themselves with the protection of rights of the students with disabilities.

Although legislative mandates and judicial rulings influence many of the principal's decisions related to the implementation of special education programs, some researchers focus primarily on leadership styles that a principal can display at the building level that influence both



the academic and social climate of the school. Two journal authors, parents of a son with autism and a daughter who is gifted, suggested that the main ingredient in the success or failure of any inclusion program is the principal (Krajewski & Krajewski, 2000). These authors contended that a principal must believe in the value and importance of inclusion and help staff members transform this idea into tangible teaching methods and practices. The article further explored ways that this could be accomplished on a practical scale within the classroom and in the milieu of the school at large.

Staff development is a support that districts have generally provided to their employees. Burrello (1992), a researcher who investigated the leadership role in special education programs offered a list of suggested topics for staff development. These included effectual principal behavior in leading inclusion efforts, methods of including special educators in school-centered decision making models, classroom management techniques that are effective with mainstreamed students, and improved effectiveness of general education teachers with students with special needs. Tomei, (2000) in his doctoral dissertation, discovered no significant positive correlation between teacher attitude toward inclusion and staff development training.

Educators in the inclusive classroom of today often must address behavior management. Researchers from The University of Florida suggested that the use of behavioral modification was necessary to manage a combined class of general and exceptional education students. Since the number of students who qualify for special education in the regular classroom has continued to rise due to inclusion practices, educators have had to develop more effective classroom management techniques. Reinforcement strategies are discussed and recommendations are made to implement and evaluate these strategies (Duncan, Kemple, & Smith, 2000).

Meeting the legal requirements, parental demands, and ethical considerations of the inclusion effort is a monumental undertaking for any principal but has become a component in many administrative job descriptions. The principal must have a knowledge base about teaching students with a variety of disabilities and be perceived as an effective leader; able to face the many challenges presented by the mandate to include students with special needs within the general education classrooms. In addition to an understanding of teaching methodology, it is also important that principals appreciate the challenges that classroom teachers face and provide them with needed support (Werts, Wolery, & Snyder, 1996).

The question of whether teacher attitude affects student achievement has been investigated repeatedly during the past four decades. The seminal Rosenthal and Jacobson study of 1966, also known as the Pygmalion study, focused on a teacher's beliefs that the students assigned to the classroom were talented and therefore likely to succeed. Rosenthal and Jacobson called for teachers to administer an IQ test. Afterwards, some students were chosen at random to be labeled as academic bloomers, and their names were then given to their teachers. When the students were retested, those students thought by teachers to be academic bloomers showed a higher score increase than the other group.

Rosenthal and Jacobson suggested that the expectations of classroom teachers could influence the intellectual abilities of their students (Rosenthal, 1987). This phenomenon became known as the self-fulfilling prophecy or Pygmalion Effect. The validity and tenability of the hypothesis have been scrutinized. Rosenthal concluded there was such a phenomenon and that it is quite applicable to teachers' expectations of students. Thus, questions investigating teacher

attitude toward students with special needs were included in the survey instrument and scrutinized in research subquestions five and seven.

#### Research Question

What are the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion?

#### Subquestions

1. What are the perceptions of principals of the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion?
2. What are the perceptions of teachers of the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion?
3. To what extent, if any, do principals and teachers differ in their perceptions of needed organizational supports?
4. To what extent, if any, do principals and teachers differ in their attitudes toward inclusion?
5. What is the relationship of perceptions of organizational support and attitudes toward inclusion?
6. Is gender, level of experience educating special needs students, or number of years in the education profession related to respondents' perceptions of organizational support?
7. Is gender, level of experience educating special needs students, or number of years in the education profession related to respondents' attitudes toward inclusion?

## Methodology

### Population

The participants for this research survey included elementary school teachers and administrators in The School District of Lee County. Educators in Lee County served students in a variety of settings including inner-city, suburban, and rural localities. This Southwest Florida district had a student enrollment of over 70,000, while over 14,000 students qualified for exceptional education services. The district was considered by the Florida Department of Education a medium sized district. However, the term medium as used in Florida may have been somewhat misleading. For purposes of comparison, the entire state of Wyoming had a student enrollment of 88,000 in its public school system (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Southwest Florida was chosen as the geographical setting of this study both for convenience and because of the absence of similar research in the area. Additionally, Stan Wesser, Florida Inclusion Network's representative in Southwest Florida, expressed interest in this project and offered to assist by supplying relevant data and written material (S. Wesser, personal communication, August 25, 2003). The Florida Inclusion Network was the state agency established to assure implementation of inclusion programs within Florida's 67 school districts. There were currently 29 medium sized Florida school districts ranging in student enrollment from Nassau County at 10,521 to Polk County at 82,148 (Florida Department of Education, 2002). Data gathered from this research endeavor may be useful to policy makers in these districts as well as similarly sized school districts in other states.

There were 1,252 elementary classroom teachers in The School District of Lee County. A random sample of elementary school teachers was chosen by listing all the teachers and

assigning each a number. Random selection was accomplished using a computer random number generator.

Determination of the sample size needed for these 1,252 teachers involves the question of how much sampling error can be tolerated. A sample size of 297 teachers was required to achieve a confidence interval of 5, and a confidence level of 95% (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The computer generated sample size calculator accessed on the internet website of Creative Research Systems indicated a similar sample size requirement (Creative Research Systems, 2003). At a confidence interval of 5 and a confidence level of 95%, this tool indicated a need for a sample of 294 respondents. Assuming a 60% return rate, it was necessary to survey 500 teachers in this study. Due to the relatively low population size of administrators, all 68 elementary school principals and assistant principals were asked to complete the survey.

#### Data Collection

Quantitative (survey) research data were gathered. The Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) was administered. Felicia Wilczenski, clinical psychologist, developed this instrument consisting of a survey with scores recorded in the Likert scale format. The instrument has been utilized by various researchers and tested for validity and reliability by the developer (Wilczenski, 1995). Additional questions focused on demographic data and the employees' perceptions of organizational support related to specific organizational supports that have been indicated in the literature. Space was provided on the survey instrument for the respondents to indicate organizational supports that they desired or have found helpful.

Prior to the implementation of this project, a pilot group of elementary teachers from a neighboring county was selected to test the survey instrument. Feedback from these participants indicated that no revisions in the data collection procedures were necessary.

Questionnaires were delivered to the random participants using Dillman's Tailored Design Method (Dillman, 2000). This technique used a maximum of five opportunities to contact each potential respondent.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted using the statistical analysis software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 11.0 for Windows. Data were analyzed using a T-Test. A second statistical procedure known as the Pearson Correlation was used to cross-tabulate scores indicating the respondents' attitudes toward inclusion with scores representing their perceptions of organizational supports. These have been cross-tabulated in a matrix. The null hypothesis in the procedure was that the variables were independent. Additional analysis regarding demographics was also conducted.

### Organization of the Study

This research project examined teacher and administrator perceptions of organizational support. It also explored their attitudes toward educating students with various disabilities. Data have been gathered and analyzed, and implications for staff development and other organizational responses have been explored.

Chapter One introduces the problem and outlines the limitations of the study. Chapter Two presents a review of related literature relevant to the study. Chapter Three describes the context for the study and the methodology used for data collection and analysis. Chapter Four

presents the data and analysis. Chapter Five discusses the results, implications, recommendations, and suggestions for further research as indicated by this study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This chapter examines the literature related to organizational supports that can be provided to the teachers who are responsible for educating students with special needs in inclusive classrooms. Additional material exploring the theoretical and experimental connections between teacher attitudes and student achievement has been incorporated into this section. The topics of governmental intervention, court litigation, and administrative responses to these issues are included as well. They provide illumination of possible solutions to the many complex challenges involved in the inclusion of students with special needs into regular educational settings.

The issue of providing organizational supports to teachers is important for several reasons. First, all local school districts across the country are required by The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (PL 105-17), to provide a free and appropriate education to students with various disabilities in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual circumstances. Second, many divergent educational theories and methods are being investigated and used across the country. An understanding of these is needed for educational leaders to make wise policy decisions. Finally, awareness of the apparent link between the attitudes of teachers and the performance of their students may further improve educational results.

In order to locate material relating to this topic, computerized database searches of ERIC, PSYCHINFO, Dissertation Abstracts International, and the Networked Digital Library of Theses



and Dissertations were performed. In conducting these reviews, search descriptors, including but not limited to: inclusion, elementary school, principal, advocacy, administrator, supports, IDEA, special education, teacher attitudes, student performance, and professional development were employed. Content is included in this review that explores the following topics: (a) historical treatment of students with disabilities; (b) federal legislation and related litigation; (c) competing approaches to inclusion; (d) administrative responses and supports; and (e) relationships of teacher attitude and student performance.

## Historical Treatment of Students With Disabilities

### Exclusion and Institutionalization

The education of students with disabilities is a relatively new historical development. In the distant past, cultures such as the Spartans actually exterminated deviant or malformed infants (Kirk, 1972). Exploitation of individuals with special needs in roles such as court jesters or circus freak-show participants was practiced well into the past century. Prior to the 1800s there were few educational provisions for children with disabilities. Most individuals who were in this category faced complete exclusion from formal education and joined other disqualified groups such as the rural poor, minorities, immigrants, and criminals. The situation was similar for all but the wealthiest female students (Kaestle, 1992).

A physician named Benjamin Rush in the late 1700s introduced the concept of educating disabled children as a form of social control (Davies, 1930). It was a common belief of the time that disabled individuals were inherently dangerous and needed to be restricted. Followers of a popular movement known as eugenics promoted this view.

This perception influenced policy makers of the day to recommend segregation of the disabled from the general population, and in some cases, prescribe forced sterilization (Davies, 1930). Amidst this negative public sentiment Thomas Galluadet initiated one of the first American attempts to formally train people with disabilities. An educational component for residents of Connecticut's American Asylum of the Deaf and Dumb was implemented in 1817. Other institutional facilities opened in various states with similar missions throughout that century. These rehabilitative and training institutions did not begin as publicly supported entities. They were funded by philanthropic societies, formed by affluent individuals, who were concerned about the potential menace of the poor, indigent, and disabled (Hawes, 1971). The prevalent trend of the time was toward controlling the disabled as a way to protect society (Bookhart, 1999). Yet, amidst this environment of negative attitudes toward disabled individuals of the 1870s, Samuel Howe, a teacher of visually impaired students, correctly predicted a future time when exceptional children would be taught within the general education system (Kirk, 1972). Howe felt that his institutionalized students could be better educated outside the walls of the institution.

### Deinstitutionalization

The belief that it is the right of an individual with a disability to live and be educated in the community is a relatively recent development. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was no unified organizational movement to improve the welfare of children with disabilities. It was still the custom to segregate disabled children in asylums and similar institutions. In 1933 The Council for the Retarded Child in Akron, Ohio, was founded. Initially it was a small group of parents who desired to improve the welfare of their family members with

disabilities. More than ten other organizations with similar missions were established in the 1930s and one in 1942 (Hay, 1952). These groups were composed primarily of parents whose children were in state residential centers. The parent leaders recognized that there was a lot to be gained if they were to unify into a national organization. In 1951 the National Association of Parents and Friends of Retarded Children came into being with the expressed goal of helping retarded children and their parents. The newly created advocacy group formed a strong legislative lobby and eventually was renamed the Association for Retarded Children or the ARC. This group called for better conditions at the state-run institutions while questioning the necessity for these facilities. Responding to the political pressure, both public opinion and federal policies began to change (Hay, 1952).

Laws concerning general education were also changing. The United States Supreme Court on *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 ruled that students could not be excluded based on race. This case struck down the doctrine of separate but equal established in another United States Supreme Court case regarding segregated passenger train compartments from 1896 named *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The justices in *Brown v. Board of Education* stated that separate is inherently unequal. Disability advocacy groups also viewed *Brown v. Board of Education* as a boost to their cause.

In the 1960s these advocates and other organizations with similar missions sought governmental support for the principle that individuals with disabilities had a right to live and receive their education in the community, rather than an institution. The term deinstitutionalization was coined to describe this belief. Laws and public policies were developed and community integration eventually became a generally accepted policy often

mandated by law. Educational practices, particularly within the nation's public school system, had to change to accommodate an influx of students who had traditionally been educated in other facilities. A special education system became an important and seemingly indispensable component of public schools.

### Special Education System

For many years school districts around the country have been restructuring their educational programs to accommodate special learners with increasingly complex needs. The response of educational policy makers was to create a separate system of special education to serve these students (Winzer, 1993). States responded by creating special curricula, training different teachers from those in general education; and a two tiered system of special and general education became firmly entrenched.

Some efforts to send disabled students into the mainstream general education system were made but proved largely unsuccessful (Smith, 2000). This practice was called mainstreaming. The gap between special education and general education was wide. Legislators in the 1970s began to recognize this fact and enacted a series of laws that still influence education today.

### Mandates, Legislation, and Litigation Leading to Inclusion

There are numerous instances of legislation which eventually led to conversion from the dual educational systems to the current movement toward inclusion. An initial federal response was the Training of Professional Personnel Act of 1959 (PL 86-158). By 1960 over 30,000 special education teachers and related specialists had entered the public schools. In 1963 President Kennedy signed the Mental Retardation Facilities Construction Act/Community

Mental Health Centers Act (PL 88-164) which expanded the definition of disabled. This effectively added millions of additional students with disabilities other than mental retardation to the public school rosters. Deaf, speech impaired, visually challenged, and children with other health impairments became responsibilities of America's public school system. Additionally, students with severe psychological and behavioral challenges also became eligible to receive educational services.

Although American public school districts responded to the federal mandate and developed programs to accommodate these students with special needs, there were only limited interactions between students with disabilities and the general education population (Winzer, 1993). Regular education teachers rarely saw the students with disabilities. A common practice was for children with disabilities to receive their education in special centers which were very different from the regular schools and often located on separate sites.

Federal legislators began to recognize this disparity and emerged with a significant piece of legislation which influences educational policies to the present day. A court decision in Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1971) established the rights of children with disabilities to a free and appropriate education. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112) stated that individuals with disabilities would not be discriminated against by reason of disability by any program or activity receiving federal funds. The implication that financial resources would be withheld if school districts did not comply with this regulation hastened efforts across the country to implement changes. Section 503 of this law required prioritized affirmative action in hiring persons with disabilities.

Section 504 required due process procedural safeguards, which enabled parents to challenge the educational decisions that were made on behalf of their children (Wright, 2004).

Another case went to court in 1972 that led to the federal legislation called The Education of the Handicapped Law (PL 94-142). *Mills et al. v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* was a class action civil rights suit filed on behalf of seven children with various disabilities who were denied educational services in Washington DC due to the severity of their disabilities. *Mills et al. v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* was remarkably similar to *PARC v. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* where 13 mentally retarded children were excluded from their public school system. In both cases the school districts were told that they were not permitted by law to exclude children based on their handicapping condition. Several of the children in the *Mills* case had severe behavioral problems while the youngsters in the *PARC* case were severely mentally retarded. These rulings supported the belief that each of the disabled children was entitled to a free and appropriate education and emphasized that provision of such educational services was a protected civil right.

In 1975 The Education of the Handicapped Law (PL 94-142) required that a free and appropriate education must be provided for all children with disabilities ages 5 and above (Brookhart, 1999). It also required Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) for all special education students. The law required the school systems to include parents when meeting about the child or making decisions regarding future educational services. One of the components of this law stated that students with disabilities must be placed in the least restrictive environment possible. Although the term inclusion was not used in PL 94-142 or successive IDEA legislation, the requirement of placement in the most normal environment possible became the central

legislative mandate cited by proponents of a movement toward including all students, regardless of their disabilities, within the general education system (Brookhart, 1999).

The regulations included in The Education of the Handicapped Law (PL 94-142) were challenged in the courtroom numerous times in the years that followed. In 1978 *Stuart v. Napi* drew national attention when the court decided that a district was unable to expel a student from their school who had a diagnosed emotional disability. The student was an instigator of several disruptions, which occurred on the school campus. The court ruled that the expulsion of a student with disabilities not only jeopardizes the right to an education in the least restrictive environment, but also is inconsistent with the procedures established by the The Education of the Handicapped Law (PL 94-142) for changing the placement of disruptive children. This particular ruling is often cited in discipline cases involving students with severe behavioral issues and has led to the creation of alternative learning programs in many school districts (Wright, 2004).

A different type of challenge came in *Armstrong v. Kline* in 1979 in Philadelphia. A judge ruled that even the standard school year, a mandated 180-day session, violated a disabled child's right to a free appropriate public education. The court required school districts to provide an education to students with disabilities in excess of 180 days, as determined by the individual student's needs. This case was upheld on appeal by the circuit court, which agreed that detrimental breaks in the educational programs were created by the traditional 180 day school year. The additional educational session is called an extended school year. In a 1993 Virginia case, *Daniel Lawyer v. Chesterfield County School Board*, Judge James Spencer provided a list of factors that IEP committee members should consider when determining placement in extended

year sessions. Additionally, in the 2003 case of *JH v. Henrico County School Board*, the court provided a formula for determining the scope of extended year sessions.

In the 1980s legislative amendments to disability law tremendously expanded the federal funding of programs provided for persons with disabilities including school-age individuals. Similarly, The Rehabilitation Act of 1986 (PL 99-506) enabled adults with special needs to receive a service called supported employment where they were eligible for assistance in obtaining and holding positions of employment in the community (Hanson, 1998).

In 1983 the meaning of free and appropriate education was once again argued in the court. In the case of *Abrahamson v. Hershman*, the court was asked to consider that due to the lack of adequate services within the public school system, families were often forced to find appropriate educational programs outside the public school system, at their own expense. In its decision The United States Supreme Court ruled that the definition of free and appropriate emphasizes the requirement that services must be delivered at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge. This ruling allowed parents who claimed that their children required extensive medical, psychiatric, or even residential treatment to request these services from their local school districts at public expense. While educational spending is normally discretionary, in cases of related special educational services the resources become mandatory and open-ended, providing private schooling for 100,000 American youngsters at public expense of over \$2 billion (Bolick, 2001).

In 1986 a discussion stimulated by staff members in the Reagan administration who were concerned about the increasing number of students served by schools under PL 94-142, the National Academy of Sciences, and several groups of university professors produced a report



(Nussbaum, 2004). This group expressed the opinion that the separate special education components of most school districts in America were ineffective and discriminatory. Within months, Madeleine Will, the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, (under the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education) issued a document titled The Regular Education Initiative of 1986. It was an annual report regarding the status of special education programs. The report concluded that regular educational services demonstrated superior results compared to student achievement in separate settings. The U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education urged policy makers to merge special education and general education into one regular education system (Bookhart, 1999).

In response to the federal condemnation of existing special education systems, many students with disabilities were moved into the general education system, at least on a part time basis. Even students with severe disabilities, who had never received services in regular educational classrooms, were moved in an attempt to improve their experiences (Bookhart, 1999). Although support for this radical change was not universal, the supporters of inclusion began lobbying efforts to request future federal laws that would further regulate the education of students with special needs. The legal preference for placement in general education classes, coupled with the actions of disability lobbyists, provided momentum to the inclusion movement (Hehir, 2003).

In 1988 another court challenge came in *Honig v. Doe*. William Honig was the California state superintendent of public instruction. He filed a petition with the United States Supreme Court appealing a decision relating to a 24 day suspension and proposed expulsion of two students, classified as emotionally disturbed, following behavior described as dangerous by

several school district administrators. The defendants argued that the The Education of the Handicapped Law (PL 94-142) stipulated a student's right to free and appropriate education. The Supreme Court upheld that a school district could reassign a child to a more restrictive setting as a response to safety or behavioral concerns. It specified that this right is limited to 10 days. After that, reassignment is considered a change of placement and subject to full procedural safeguards afforded students with disabilities.

The trend toward full inclusion slowed however when a court ruling in the case of Daniel R. R. v. State Board of Education in 1989 indicated a limitation of including students with disabilities in general education classes. The court ruled that although The Education of the Handicapped Law (PL 94-142) required children with disabilities to be educated with children who were not disabled to the maximum extent appropriate, districts were not required to move a student from a special education classroom to the less restrictive general education environment if the regular education classroom setting was inappropriate to meet the educational needs of the child. Another development from this case was a legal standard called the Daniel R.R. test for determining when placement in a special education classroom is warranted (Inzano, 1999).

Many advocates for the rights of children with disabilities recognized the legal limitations of The Education of the Handicapped Law (PL 94-142). They lobbied vigorously for legislation with more specific language and stipulations. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 101-476) was enacted into law on July 26, 1990. This legislation reaffirmed requirements of a free and appropriate public education through the use of individualized education plans. The act expanded eligibility to all persons ages 3 through 21.

One of the first cases to test this new law was *Oberti v. Board of Education, Clementon School District*. Parents of a child with Down's Syndrome and the district were in disagreement whether or not to include him in general education classes as the parents had requested. The district claimed that a combination of intellectual limitations and behavioral outbursts made the general education classroom an inappropriate setting. The federal court rejected the district's argument that the child was so disruptive that his outbursts impaired the education of the other students in the classroom (Rogers, 1993). The ruling against the district further stated that educating the child in the regular classroom, with supplementary aids and support services, is a legal requirement. Furthermore, they held the school district with the burden of proving compliance with The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 101-476), even though the parents filed the original court case (Inzano, 1999).

Parents have been at the center of the advocacy movement since its inception in the mid-1930s. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 101-476), recognized this involvement by specifically delineating the legal requirements for parental involvement in educational decisions. However, judicial rulings have not always gone in favor of the parents. In some cases the court has recognized that school districts have followed the law and involved parents in all necessary elements of the decision making process. The case of *Buser by Burser v. Corpus Christi Independent School District* in 1995 was based on allegations of the district's failure to permit parental participation in the educational decision making development. In the ruling, the court found that the parents had been involved in creating the individual education plan, and that the procedural safeguards requirements under the IDEA had been met.

In 1997 The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments (PL 105-17) also became law. The legislation described many technical changes in word definitions, age limitations, and eligibility for educational services requirements. Most relevant to this review is the section regulating supplemental aids and supports. A definition of supplemental aids and supports was provided and included aids, services, and other supports. They were to be provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable students with disabilities to be educated with general education students to the maximum extent appropriate. These services and supports were based on a child's presumptive right to education. Even when a student was placed in a restrictive setting outside of the general education system, the school district has a responsibility to provide services such as lunch, gym class, and electives where the student would be integrated into the general education population (Inzano, 1999).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires reauthorization from Congress on a regular basis. The most recent vote was in the United States Senate on May 13, 2004, when the senators passed the bill to reauthorize by a 95-3 vote (Wright, 2004). The Senate bill was significantly different from the bill passed by the House of Representatives. Most special education advocacy organizations opposed the House bill because it weakened protections for students with disabilities. Even though 2004 was an election year, the House and Senate were able to pass a compromise bill, which the president signed into law on December 3, 2004.

Special education legislation and litigation are closely monitored by a large network of federally and privately funded family advocacy groups (Wright, 2004). Each state has one or more federally funded parent centers. Their purpose was to represent families of children and young adults from birth to age 22 with physical, cognitive, emotional, and learning disabilities.

They work to improve academic results for all children, train and inform parents on current legal issues, and refer individuals with disabilities to various local resources that address their needs.

## Competing Approaches to Inclusion

### Introduction

The current movement to educate children with disabilities in their neighborhood schools creates a new school environment for all involved. The amount of integration has increased dramatically in recent years. Many experts agree though, that full acceptance of students with disabilities will only happen after a change of attitudes of teachers, administrators, and students occurs (Beattie, Anderson, & Antonak, 1997).

There are three competing approaches to inclusion. The Parallel Systems of general and special education once was the most popular but has faced challenges in recent years due to changes in federal special education mandates. A Partial Inclusion system is now in place in many of America's school districts, where students with mild disabilities attend general education classes while the students with severe disabilities spend at least part of their school day in segregated classroom situations. Full Inclusion is the approach that suggests a merger of special and general education into one system which endeavors to teach all students in an integrated environment despite their handicapping conditions or challenges.

### The Parallel Systems of General and Special Education

America's special education system has been in place since the mid 1940s. It was created primarily to respond to the deinstitutionalization of mentally retarded students and school aged children with other disabilities (Kirk, 1972). As the number of students served under the autonomous umbrella of special education has increased, the system evolved to include its own

classrooms, curricula, teachers, administrators, and funding sources (Inzano, 1999). School districts across the country added these new classrooms for the purposes of educating and, in some cases, training their students with special needs.

Although much of the former segregation of students with disabilities has been eliminated with the passing of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (PL 105-17), certain vestiges of the dual systems of special and general education remain. With the advent of high stakes educational testing, some general education teachers were unprepared to also include children with special needs who were functioning at a level below that of their peers without disabilities (Olson, 2003). Additionally, teacher preparatory programs have special education majors and many states certify their teaching personnel based on special or general education criteria. Olson also reported that many teachers, from special and general education, believed students with disabilities would not receive an appropriate education in the general education classroom. An example of this would be a high school student with poor reading skills who would benefit more from individual comprehension instruction in a resource room than from being included in a high school literature class.

Although recent popular opinion and certain parental advocacy groups call for the end of the dual systems of general and special education, their continued existence is evident. Safety and behavioral concerns as well as medical issues are often the rationale for these separate programs. Some students need life-sustaining medical equipment and procedures such as suctioning or catheterization which might be a distraction or difficult to implement in an inclusive classroom. Another common belief among the teachers that Olson surveyed was that the students with severe and profound disabilities, with a need to learn basic life skills, such as

dressings, toileting, or personal hygiene would be better educated outside the general education classroom. Rogers explained this phenomenon by suggesting that teachers who have not witnessed students with various disabilities successfully included in public school classrooms sometimes create barriers because they fear what they do not understand (1993).

It is unmistakable that the education of students with disabilities is in a state of change. There continue to be many divergent beliefs regarding the movement to include a greater number of students with various disabilities into the general education classroom. It is necessary to examine two other educational approaches, partial inclusion and full inclusion, to gain a better understanding of the current state of this field.

#### Partial Inclusion

Recent federal laws and court rulings have prompted school districts to explore approaches to teach each exceptional student in the classroom that they would attend if they were not disabled. Two different arguments converge and point to the merits of this particular approach. Justices in *Brown v. Board of Education* determined that separate was inherently unequal, and that equal education was a civil rights issue. The second line of reasoning, known as the Regular Education Initiative, is related to empirical analysis which showed academic gains in special educational settings to be less than the gains in the regular classroom (Rogers, 1993). Many districts provide a continuum of classroom settings ranging from a non-restrictive regular classroom through a very restrictive hospital-homebound setting. Districts that practice partial inclusion strive to be in compliance with The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (PL 105-17), while contending that some students are best educated outside the general education classrooms. The student's placement into a classroom somewhere

within this continuum is based on the educational, social, and psychological needs of the student and is arrived at during the IEP meeting.

The integration of students with disabilities into the general education classrooms, at the onset of the present century, had yet to incorporate half of the eligible students. In 2001 the United States Department of Education reported that 47.4 percent of students with disabilities were being educated in general education classrooms. However, this figure indicates a 25 percent increase in the integration of students with disabilities since 1980 (Olson, 2003). Despite the federal mandates, there continues to be debate among educators regarding the specific methodology of the inclusion efforts. The most commonly voiced teacher objection is that instructional and curricular adaptations are unfeasible in the inclusive classroom (Kampwirth, 1999). Apprehension about teaching such a varied set of learners in the same classroom environment is another common concern. Additionally, some educators question the ability of the general education programs to accommodate children with severe and profound disabilities. Some skeptical educators describe recent developments as a one-size model, which is not appropriate for many students with special needs (Hehir, 2003).

#### Full Inclusion

Full inclusion is an approach based upon the belief that students, regardless of the nature of their abilities, should be educated exclusively in general education classrooms. This educational policy is not required by The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (PL 105-17) which does mandate a least restrictive environment but allows for placement outside the general education classroom if such an assignment is needed.



Proponents of full inclusion report that school communities grow to value diversity and students are active and participatory (Igafo-Te'o, 2002).

The District of Columbia Public Schools is an example of a school district implementing the full inclusion approach. Students with disabilities are placed in general education classrooms and there receive the individualized services and supports that enable them to learn with peers without disabilities (District of Columbia Public Schools, 1996). Effective inclusion is characterized by being virtually invisible. Classroom teachers instruct both students with disabilities and students without disabilities together, recognizing that due to the complexity of social problems, all students now require special attention regardless of educational classification (Rogers, 1993). Regular education teachers report that working with exceptional education students has boosted their morale because they feel more effective in their classrooms (Bookhart, 1999). School district administrators explained that due to the full inclusion system, they are now in a better position to utilize resources and programs. All support staff including social workers, psychologists, speech therapists, and physical therapists provide services within the general education classrooms.

There is disagreement among disability advocacy groups and many do not endorse the full inclusion movement. The National Association of the Deaf does not sanction placement of every student with a hearing impairment in regular classrooms. They suggest that the general education environment is appropriate for some of these special learners and not so for others. The Council for Exceptional Children, a large international organization of parents, special educators, and other advocates of the disabled, issued a policy statement with an endorsement of a continuum of services, including services provided outside the general education classroom.

One of the common complaints of full inclusion is that it takes most of the decision making power away from the individual parent. Just as parents of excluded students objected when a school district systemically determined placement, some parents resent any reform that takes away their right to be involved in placement decisions. The Council for Learning Disabilities released a proclamation that expressed grave concerns that any placement policy which arbitrarily assigned all students with disabilities to the general education classroom is not appropriate. On the other side of the debate, The Association for Severely Handicapped Persons has actively promoted full inclusion for even students with the most profound mental and physical challenges. The association views this integration as a moral imperative (Igafo-Te'o, 2002).

This divergence of opinion is not limited to parent advocacy groups. Associations representing educators are also involved. In 1996 members of The American Federation of Teachers called for a moratorium on full inclusion. Members expressed concern that some students with disabilities were so violent and disruptive that education for all students in the classroom would likely cease if they were integrated with general education students (Igafo-Te'o, 2002). The Council of Administrators of Special Education expressed support for the inclusion movement yet declared that placements must be determined on an individual basis in order to assure the appropriate educational services will be provided to the students with disabilities (Council of Administrators of Special Education, 1997).

### Models of Inclusive Systems

The policy of inclusion is approached in a variety of ways by different school districts around the country. The following models are employed to help facilitate the delivery of

education and services to the students with disabilities within the general education classrooms. Each has its own unique characteristics, but the common element among them all is a deliberate collaboration between special education teachers and their general education counterparts. Both reported effectiveness and limitations mentioned in the literature are presented.

The developer of Wang's Adaptive Learning Environments Model describes the model as a multifaceted program designed to create a classroom environment to enable all students to cope with the educational and social demands of school. Tasks are broken down into small incremental objectives and teachers circulate among the general and special populations of the classroom to facilitate learning. Students are taught to plan and monitor their own learning to whatever degree their abilities allow. Instruction is individually planned, and students are encouraged to travel through the curriculum at their own speed. A large amount of record keeping is required by teachers using this individualized instruction procedure, and even the creators of the program reported that many teachers were unwilling to commit the time and attention required to make it a viable alternative to whole class instruction (Wang, Rubenstein, & Reynolds, 1985).

The Consultant Teacher Model is used in many school districts across the country. This model provides ongoing technical support to general education staff by special education and related services professionals to include students with disabilities. It is comparable to the systems-consultative model used by school psychologists (Woody, LaVoie, & Epps, 1992). This model has evolved from the resource room special education design of the past. Formerly, teachers would keep students with special needs separate from their general education peers in a place called a resource room.

With the mandate of IDEA to educate students with disabilities in the general education classroom, the special educator has in some cases assumed a role of consultant to the classroom teacher. The responsibilities of this individual are two-fold. The first is to identify and develop support services for students with disabilities. The second role is to assist teachers and staff members in providing these students with an appropriate education (Bruskewitz, 1998).

The state of Michigan has implemented this particular strategy state wide, with the consultant's qualifications higher than those required to be a classroom teacher. Their consultants are all former teachers with special education experience and a minimum of an earned Masters degree (Michigan Department of Education, 2004). Responsibilities include team planning and implementation processes, diagnostic and assessment skills, and interpersonal relations. The consultative teacher provides information, strategies, and support to the general education teacher concerning instructional techniques specific to the needs of students with disabilities enrolled in their general education classrooms. However, a Florida researcher describing a limitation of this system reported that the consultant occasionally exhibited a position of superiority in the relationship over the classroom teacher (Freytag, 2003).

Other districts have implemented a delivery system based on the Team Teaching Model. Another description of the process is co-teaching. These terms indicate that both the special and general education teachers are equal partners in the classroom. The two teachers share the responsibility for planning and delivering lessons to meet the needs of each learner in the classroom. Team teaching has been reported to renew the enthusiasm of the teachers who are involved in the practice (Arguelles, Hughes, & Schumm, 2000). It has also been found to be beneficial when both teachers work with all of the students. By doing this, the children with

special needs do not necessarily seem singled out by the other children (Stanovich, 1999).

Successful team teaching must be effectively planned and supported by administrators (Elliot & McKenney, 1998).

Researchers from the University of Kansas observed team teaching in practice and reported that students with disabilities had improved self-esteem and motivation with enhanced performance (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, & McLaughlin, 1999). The observers cautioned, however, that prospective team teachers must explore their own willingness to collaborate with another teacher since traditionally much teaching has been accomplished on an individual basis. Failure to consistently involve highly skilled, committed teachers though, has limited this technique. Co-teaching also requires the support of administrators to overcome obstacles such as class size, scheduling, and the need for common teacher planning time (Arguelles, Hughes, & Schumm, 2000).

One of the approaches used most successfully in the inclusive classroom is the Cooperative Learning Model. In this approach both the special and general education teachers become facilitators for their students. Most of the classroom activities are accomplished in small groups. This approach is advocated by Dr. Spencer Kagan, a proponent of Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory. Students of differing academic abilities are assembled into small heterogeneous groups to help themselves and their classmates learn together (Kagan, 2000). Group members work together on projects and learning activities and demonstrate positive behaviors to complete their tasks. Students are taught to be interdependent rather than independent.

Transition to the cooperative learning system of education is sometimes met with resistance from the general education population. Some regular education students express concern that their classmates with disabilities will require excessive teacher attention and jeopardize their educational opportunities (Salend, 2000). Coursework is structured so that students need each other to achieve their goals. The general and special educators ultimately employ individualized assessment. Although group assignments are the primary emphasis, students are individually responsible for providing evidence of their own learning accomplishments.

The Strategies Intervention Model is a model that was developed at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning. An initial task of breaking down learning objectives and identifying teacher roles, student roles, and external support services must be accomplished prior to instruction. Teacher actions were also observed to attempt to enhance the teaching routine specifically by using graphic organizers and previewing content before instruction.

Academic challenges are presented within the structure of unique problems. Adolescents with varying exceptionalities joined their general education classmates in developing unique tactics to meet these challenges. Factors precipitating failure are contrasted with successful learning strategies. The program was initially implemented at Clayton High School in Missouri and the instructional strategy was reported to increase the students with disabilities', chances of success in the general education classroom (Lerner, 1997). Although initial results were positive for all the students, teachers reported a need for sustained instruction in both academics and social skills for the children with disabilities in their classroom.

## Administrative Responses and Supports

Although there is still debate as to the merits of inclusive classrooms, administrators have been charged with implementing approaches to provide special education and related services in the general education environment. As reorganization progresses, it is necessary to provide responses to actual needs for supports and services that exist in schools. The following are examples of organizational supports for those charged with the implementation of these reforms.

### Staff Development

Upgrading the skills and practices of educators is important. Many changes relating to the education of children with disabilities have occurred in recent years. The approach in the past has been to provide sporadic staff development training sessions on topics determined by school administrators (Tanner, Linscott, & Galis, 1996). Districts recently have been required to comply with the accountability provisions of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (PL 105-17) that mandate that continuing professional development opportunities be offered to all personnel who work with the students including administrators, teachers, and support staff. In order for states to remain eligible for federal funding this training component must be provided. For districts with limited resources, the federal government offers state improvement grants to help fund this endeavor (Bays, 2001).

Targeted staff development activities can be provided to initiate school change. Attitudes and teaching practices are two topics which have been identified that lead to increased performance of students with disabilities (Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999). The researchers also noted that improved student accomplishments can lead to changes in

teacher attitudes. Also, systematic staff development for special education and general education teachers contributes to successful inclusive educational practices. Different types of educators can benefit from staff development opportunities.

The beginning teacher faces many challenges the first year in the classroom. These challenges are compounded for those who teach students from low socioeconomic areas or students with varying exceptionalities. One aspect of the school reform era of the 1980s was the provision of beginning-teacher programs. A researcher from Wichita State University reported that most districts currently provide both optional and mandatory training opportunities for the new teacher as well as mentoring programs which team experienced teachers with their new colleagues (Furtwengler, 1995). Classroom management and behavior modification training were found to be particularly valued by the new teachers.

Even experienced teachers can benefit from staff development. One of the most common reasons that general education teachers report opposition to inclusion is that they feel untrained to deal with that particular population of students (Swoboda, 2000). Many teachers were educated at a time when the college level teacher preparation programs did not even include an introductory course in Special Education methodology. Swoboda recommended behavior management, collaboration with parents, and managing educational support staff as initial professional development topics for the general education teachers.

The unprecedented shortage of qualified special education personnel has resulted in a growing need for on-the job staff development. In Florida, 30% of first-year teachers of children



with disabilities were teaching out of field (Miller, 2003). Workshops and consultation were commonly provided to improve the skills of practicing special education staff. Trained special educators were necessary to assist students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom and, if necessary, outside this setting (Hehir, 2003).

Paraprofessionals entered the classroom with the least amount of formal training of any of the personnel employed to work with students with disabilities. Many states only required a high school education or a GED to obtain this level position, yet these employees dealt with the students in a variety of positions such as teacher assistants, self-care aides, hallway monitors, bus attendants, and time-out personnel (Mueller, 1997). Paraprofessionals are provided as a support for students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Only a few states required training or certification of paraprofessionals. Paraprofessionals needed an understanding of classroom instruction and instructional modifications (Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999).

The importance of a highly trained effective educational leader was increasingly important as America moved toward a more inclusive school environment for students with special needs. However, in the year 2000 only five states had special education requirements for administrator certificates (Patterson, Marshall, & Bowling, 2000). The National Association of Secondary School Principals, an organization representing secondary school principals, communicated their members' lack of appropriate training in special education areas by requesting new training relating to assessment and effective policies for incorporating special education students into their middle and high schools (United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2004).

### Peer Tutoring

Student peer tutoring is an organizational support which is often successfully employed within inclusive classrooms (Wesser, 2003). The literature distinguishes between peer and cross-age tutoring in the following way. Peer tutoring occurs when the tutor and the learner are the same age, and cross-age tutoring involves tutors and learners of differing ages (Wagner, 1982).

Peer tutoring has been both praised and criticized. Academic and social gains are the desired outcomes of peer tutoring. This practice is inherent to the cooperative learning environment which exists in many classrooms. If inclusion is to be successful, non-disabled students must be trained to help their classmates with special needs. Critics of peer tutoring explained that cooperative groups and peer tutoring are necessary because students with average abilities must perform the functions of the teacher. If peer tutoring becomes the principal method of instruction, then neither student has received appropriate services (Rogers, 1993).

### Behavior Intervention

Support for teachers may include resource supports which include tangibles such as instructional material (e.g., books, videos, and computers). Technical support is another way in which administrators enable the classroom teachers to implement inclusion within their classroom (Burrello & Cole, 1992). This sort of support is especially necessary in the area of classroom management and behavioral control. Teachers are offered strategies, methods, and ideas to use as behavioral interventions. Examples of such strategies include behavior intervention plans, time out areas, Saturday school, mental health services, peer mediation, after school programs, and medication.

### Behavior Intervention Plans

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 requires that the relationship between learning and behavior must be recognized when creating the individualized education plan for students with disabilities. The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), recognized teacher concerns that inappropriate behaviors demonstrated by some students with emotional disabilities interfere with the learning of both the students exhibiting the behavior problem and the other children in the classroom. Consequently, individuals who attend IEP meetings must develop behavioral strategies as well as learning goals and objectives. School districts are required to conduct functional behavioral assessment and create behavior intervention plans that include both interventions and supports.

### Time Out Rooms

Time-out was once a commonly used practice for decreasing undesirable behavior in children with emotional problems. In 1982 researchers for The Council for Exceptional Children reviewed numerous studies of time-out practices for students with emotional disabilities. They identified six functions of this procedure: planned ignoring, planned ignoring plus restraint, contingent observation, reduction of response maintenance stimuli, exclusion, and seclusion (Rutherford & Nelson, 1982). The technique has become less popular due to criticisms voiced by this and other child advocacy groups. Rutherford and Nelson reported that time-out is an abused form of intervention and questioned the strategy of isolating persons with disabilities for extended periods of time. Time-out rooms still exist in some schools, but the practice has become less prevalent than in the past.

### Saturday Classes

District policies of suspending and expelling students with severe behavior problems have been criticized and challenged in court. Following the 1988 decision of *Honig v. Doe*, which limited the time a student with disabilities could be suspended from school to ten days, districts hastened their efforts to develop alternative consequences for this population. One solution, which was piloted in Indiana, was to assign students with behavioral problems to supplemental classes on Saturday mornings (Killion, 1992). Instead of an out of school suspension, students were able to obtain assignments from their regular teacher and work on these activities for four hours each Saturday morning. This alternative is provided as both a disciplinary and an educational program. Killion ranked alternative educational programs and found Saturday school programs in Indiana to be highly effective compared with other strategies in dealing with behavioral problems. Similar Saturday school alternative to suspension programs were operated in Ohio, Virginia, and Arkansas.

### Mental Health Services

School-based mental health was designed for students who had, or were at risk of, emotional and behavioral problems. Researchers estimated about 13% of the school-aged population would be members of this group although the number of students who were formally diagnosed and received special education services was far lower (Edmands, et al, 1999). The requirements for delivery of mental health services within the school setting was not specified in The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 101-476), although wording such as psychological services and counseling services were interspersed in this legislation. Regardless, IDEA clearly placed the responsibility on school districts regarding the provision of mental

health services, when it significantly impacts educational, emotional, and social development. The legislation does have a requirement, known as Child Find in Section 300.125, that all children with disabilities who are in need of educational services be identified. This particular provision mandated early assessment and intervention as well as screening, diagnosis, and treatment. Section 300.235 allows government funding to be used to provide mental health services within a classroom that has both students with and students without disabilities (Wrobel, 2001).

### Peer Mediation

Peer Mediation is an approach which is used to manage student conflict without resorting to the traditional behavioral consequences of suspension or expulsion. Students who are involved in this practice, either as mediators or disputants, discover new ways of handling disputes. In peer mediation, trained students help their classmates with behavior problems to identify the trouble behind the conflicts and to ultimately reach a resolution. Students are encouraged to explore appropriate alternative behaviors and attitudes. The student mediators help identify peaceful ways to solve the conflict.

In 2001, The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, became interested in peer mediation as a possible way to reduce the level of chronic disruptive and aggressive behavior in the classroom. A four-year grant was awarded to the University of Florida to examine the potential benefits of peer mediation programs. The Florida researchers reported in over 95% of the referred conflicts that disputants reached agreement. Teachers, students, administrators, parents, and community members worked collaboratively in the implementation of this project.

Two criticisms of the technique included difficulty in scheduling a conflict resolution session during the school day and academic work which was missed by participants in the peer mediation meetings (Araki & Takeshita, 1991).

### After-School Programs

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, a federally funded initiative of the United States Department of Education, enabled school districts to fund public schools as community education centers. Programs provided with public funds must be open to students, regardless of their special education status. The purpose of the program is to provide students with disabilities further opportunities to interact with children in a general education setting. Success of after-school programs produced long waiting lists for openings in these sessions and requests for federal resources were at unprecedented levels (Halpern, Deich, & Cohen, 2000).

After-school programs were also being provided by school districts and agencies across the country in order to help families and communities keep their children safe and under adult supervision through the afternoon hours. This after-school resource promotes goals of character building, academic growth, and personal fitness development. These were sharply contrasted with the risky behaviors such as drug experimentation, alcohol use, violence, sexual activity, and vandalism which many children face during the late afternoon hours (Miller, 2003).

### Medication

Administering medication to control the behavior of students with disabilities is a controversial topic. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, about 3 to 5 percent of the general population had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which is distinguished by restless behavior and an inability to concentrate on tasks. Ritalin, a stimulant medication, was

ingested one or more times a day as a common form of treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. However, medication was only effective in approximately 70% of those children so identified (Barkley, 1990).

In cases of more severe mental illnesses such as bi-polar disorder or schizophrenia, psychotropic medicines were prescribed. Clinicians and researchers have experimented with a wide variety of psychopharmacological treatments for students who exhibited mental disorders. Despite the benefits, manifested in calmer students, it is recognized that medication also has the potential to deliver serious side-effects such as blurred vision, dry mouth, irritability, depression, weight gain, slower reaction time, and impaired memory (Rizzo & Zabel, 1988).

#### Provision of Paraprofessional Staff

Paraeducator, paraprofessional, teacher aide, teacher assistant, education technician, transition trainer, job coach, home visitor, and helping teacher are just a few of the titles that school districts have assigned paraprofessional personnel who provide services to students with disabilities. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) addressed issues concerning the increased dependence on paraprofessional helpers in the inclusive classroom. These regulations required school districts to develop standards to ensure that paraprofessionals are adequately prepared, trained, and supervised.

Certain researchers have challenged the policy of providing marginally trained, uncertified, paraprofessionals to assure delivery of intricate or complex educational services to students with disabilities. Some claimed the benefits that college educated and certified special education teachers gave students could not be duplicated by paraprofessionals (Rodriguez &

Romaneck, 2002). These authors also questioned whether a less educated aide was able to demonstrate the judgment of a certified classroom teacher.

Many California schools have a different perspective on the use of paraprofessionals in their inclusive schools. For example, the paraprofessional's job in San Francisco's inclusive classroom has changed from the traditional concept of a teacher's aide to an expansive array of varying responsibilities (Lee, 2004). Given the diverse educational, emotional, physical, and medical needs of San Francisco's exceptional student population, paraprofessionals have assumed new roles and fulfilled a multitude of tasks. There were ten job categories for the 1,640 paraprofessionals in this school district. In addition to being classroom helpers for students with disabilities they are translators, operate libraries, and supervise computer labs.

#### Flexibility in Student Evaluation Standards

When students with disabilities are included in general education classrooms the question of assessment needs to be addressed. Some students with severe or profound impairments such as brain damage or Down's Syndrome have not been able to compete at the same academic level as their classmates without disabilities. Harvard Graduate School's director Thomas Hehir described the mandatory involvement of students in high stakes testing as equivalent to asking students with disabilities to become non-disabled (Hehir, 2003). Flexibility in student evaluation standards for children with disabilities has been proposed and, in some cases, implemented.

Both general and special education teachers should be included in designing and implementing an alternative assessment program. Ambiguity exists regarding how many allowances should be provided within a standardized evaluation procedure. Criticism included



lower reliability and validity, lack of relevance to actual student education program, and discrimination against minority groups (Rizzo & Zabel, 1988).

Accommodations are modifications in testing materials or procedures that enable students to be involved in assessments in a way that allows the assessor to fairly determine their abilities. Without such allowances, the test may not correctly assess their knowledge or skills. Examples of flexible assessment strategies include portfolio submission, additional test taking time, provision for breaks, oral reading of instructions, and multiple testing sessions. Laws, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 called for accommodations to be arranged if necessary to allow students with disabilities to participate in assessments (McLaughlin & Warren, 1995).

#### Parental Support

Many parents have been actively involved in the inclusion debate and have acted as a catalyst for change. Parents have represented the rights of both students with disabilities and students in the general education population. The research team of Bob and Lynn Krajewski, themselves parents of two children with special needs, intensely criticized the existing special education system, claiming that students with developmental disabilities are sheltered from the general education students in an environment where they develop abnormal behaviors and attitudes (Krajewski & Krajewski, 2000). The authors encouraged parents and educators to commit to involving all students, regardless of strengths or limitations into a single learning environment.

A study conducted by researchers at California State University reported that an array of both pro- and anti-inclusion attitudes were expressed by the 140 parents who were involved in their study (Palmer, Fuller, Arora, & Nelson, 2001). The researchers examined written comments from the respondents and isolated statements reflecting these sentiments. In support, parents viewed inclusion as a way to raise the stimulation level of their children as well as to provide an environment of higher teacher expectations.

Parent comments that reflected disagreement with the concept of inclusion generally referred to the needs of students with disabilities not being met by the standard curriculum or in the general education classroom. The California researchers also reported a second common parent criticism of the inclusive environment. Many of the parents involved in the study were concerned that the general education students would not treat their child with a disability in a kind manner. The Palmer study revealed a common parent fear that their children would be harmed or ridiculed in the general education environment.

Regardless of placement, a need for communication between the parents and the teachers is a major area that is reported by parents and educators alike (Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999). Special and regular educators should work as a team, both taking responsibility for communicating progress and challenges to the parents. Mayrowetz reported that, in some instances, paraprofessionals were assigned the important responsibility of communicating with parents. The parents should also feel comfortable contacting the school, if they have comments or concerns. Goals 2000: The Educate America Act, Section 401, enabled local educational agencies to establish parental information and resource centers that provide training, information, and support to involve parents or guardians in their children's education.

### Class Size Reduction

There has been much interest regarding the relationship between class size and student achievement. Researchers in Tennessee's Student Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) program reported that small classes are particularly important for students in the primary grades, for children with special learning needs, and for disadvantaged children, with the strongest effects being seen for Kindergarten and grade one (Folger & Breda, 1989). The STAR project researchers also reported that gains for minority children were larger than those of white students when instructed within classrooms with lower student to teacher ratios. Researchers have also studied class size reduction as a possible strategy to reduce the levels of violence in the schools. The 1978 Violent Schools-Safe Schools: The Safe School Study Report to the Congress, found that larger schools experience higher frequencies of violence and that there is a relationship between smaller class size and lower levels of violence (Friedfel, 1998).

The need for class size reduction for either students with special needs or their general education counterparts has not been universally endorsed. The practice of class size reduction requires the employment of a larger number of teachers at an additional expenditure of financial resources. Although school districts received billions of dollars in federal funds to recruit, hire, and train new teachers for the 2001-2002 school year federal resources were not guaranteed. On January 8, 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 introduced a federal funding source called Smaller Learning Communities Grant Competition. Florida voters recently endorsed a class size reduction referendum and have run into funding challenges at both state and local levels.

### Provision of Duty Free Planning Time

A support that teachers in inclusive classrooms have requested is an increase in the amount of duty free planning time for collaboration and strategy development that was built into their workday (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, & McLaughlin, 1999). This support, although beneficial for co-teaching in inclusive classrooms, presented the challenge of providing student supervision during the planning session. This was often accomplished by scheduling teacher planning time while the students were at lunch or special classes, such as music and art. Other districts provided paraprofessional supervision or scheduled the planning time prior to student arrival. The school level administrators essentially provided these scheduling and time management supports. A University of Miami (Florida) researcher explained that such support from school principals was essential throughout the inclusion process (Arguelles, Hughes, & Schumm, 2000).

### Assistive Technology

In 1990 the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was amended to require educators to consider the need for assistive technology devices and services during the IEP meeting (Lance, 1999). The installation, training, and provision of technical assistance must also be delivered to these individuals and their family members as indicated by the IEP team. Technology has become a common support for children with disabilities. Amendments to IDEA in 1997 required that devices be considered for students identified as having a need. These supports for students need not always be high tech.

Solutions in the form of graphic organizers or tape recorded books greatly improved learning for students with disabilities. Speech synthesizers, optical scanners, and a large variety

of computerized learning programs were also in use in classrooms across the country. Computer assisted instruction was particularly helpful for students with developmental challenges who required repeated drill and practice or simulation activities as supplements to traditional instruction (Cotton, 1998).

### Teacher Retention

Attrition rates for teachers of children with disabilities were higher than those of a regular classroom teacher (Rizzo & Zabel, 1988). The term burnout has been used to describe teachers who are distressed in a psychological or physiological manner by their position of employment. Symptoms of teacher burnout included depression, disinterest in students, inability to interact with school colleagues, as well as physical conditions such as headaches and muscle aches. An administrative support for preventing this phenomenon was known as teacher retention. Lack of administrative support was a frequent reason given by teachers leaving the profession.

A Wake Forest University researcher conducted a qualitative research project in an attempt to identify the needs of these individuals (McCoy, 2003). She interviewed over 50 teachers who had daily contact with students with disabilities and asked them open-ended questions relating to challenges that they associated with the job that might cause them not to stay in the profession. Responses ranged from low compensation to lack of respect. A lack of autonomy and tough workload were other responses. Teachers also reported ineffective mentoring programs, inaccessible administrators, and inadequate supplies as causes for turnover. Innovative strategies need to be implemented to help struggling teachers deal with the challenges faced in and out of the classroom. Suggestions included the need to recognize the value of

faculty members, administrative support for teacher decisions, and provision of opportunities for teachers to collaborate (Carter, 1994).

### Financial Resources

The provision of financial resources to support inclusive classrooms was an administrative response both to gain compliance with mandated reform and to provide support to the individual classroom teachers. Much of this spending was mandatory rather than discretionary. The federal government provided some of the resources required but the remainder must be generated and supplied by both local and state entities.

As with many issues surrounding the inclusion movement, there was disagreement regarding the expenses involved with providing an inclusive educational environment. The following two examples represent both ends of the continuum of this debate. A Virginia researcher recently reported that the trend toward including children with disabilities into general education settings has created an improved consolidated delivery system resulting in a reduction of transportation, remedial services, and instructional material costs (Bookhart, 1999). Another researcher reported financial inequalities in the new delivery system, suggesting discrimination against students in general education classes. Pawlowicz described a notable change in educational spending emphasis by reporting that 80% of educational expenditures were devoted to general education in 1967, while this number declined to 59% in 1996 (Pawlowicz, 2001). The researcher questioned whether policy-makers were neglecting students who were not identified as requiring special services.

The National Association of State Boards of Education conducted a two-year investigation of the status of special education funding in the context of the inclusion movement.

A policy group known as Center for Special Education Finance, funded by the United States Department of Education, studied the investigation and formulated practical advice for front line administrators charged with obtaining resources to fund these reform programs. Suggestions included seeking nontraditional sources of federal funding such as Medicaid reimbursement, Chapter One Funding, Head Start, and Social Services Block Grants. Bolick has been critical of this practice describing it as an incentive for states to over-identify poor children in order to access the additional federal funding (2001). Another controversial suggestion from the study was to shift from being a provider of educational and support services to becoming a broker of private services, also called out-sourcing, which may prove to be more cost effective.

#### Provision of Special Curricula

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments (PL 105-17) required the states to provide students with disabilities access to the general curriculum. With the growing practice of placing children with various exceptionalities in the general education classroom, it became necessary to find ways for these students to participate in the general curriculum. A multi-level approach required all students to be taught the state-mandated curriculum while different levels of achievement are expected depending on the cognitive abilities of each learner. This practice can however, be misused. A Chicago researcher described a classroom observation in which 44 second graders were watching a science film. The class included a group of students with special needs and a group of students with limited English proficiency, while two teachers assigned to instruct the group were absent from the classroom (Rogers, 1993). Such arrangements were not beneficial to any of the students within the classroom even though the standard state curriculum was being utilized.

Browder describes, within the context of the current general education practices of accountability and standardized testing, a movement to a new curriculum model that emphasizes the daily living skills needed by students with moderate and severe disabilities to function in the community (Browder, 2004). An example of this alternative functional curriculum is Donn Brolin's Life Centered Career Education, which focuses on social skills, daily living skills, and vocational endeavors.

#### Summer school-Extended school year

Summer school has been an organizational support traditionally provided to many students in school systems. The provision of educational facilities and the delivery of related services in the summer has, until recently, been a matter left to the discretion of individual school districts. In 1979 parents who did not want the educational and social progress their children made during the school year to regress requested services during non-school times. This matter was decided in a Philadelphia courtroom in the case of *Armstrong v. Kline*. The court determined that withholding educational and related services during the summer months violated a disabled child's right to a free appropriate public education. This extra service delivery period became known as an extended school year.

In 1993 Judge James Spencer was involved in *Daniel Lawyer v. Chesterfield School Board*, a similar case in Virginia. At this point the court specified a detailed list of factors that needed to be considered by an IEP team when deciding whether to include a student with disabilities in the extended school year sessions. This list included the student's rate of progress, behavioral and physical limitations, availability of alternative resources, and the child's vocational aspirations. After this ruling and the passing of The Individuals with Disabilities



Education Act Amendments (PL 105-17) in 1997, the regulations that cover the extended school year were delineated and became legally enforceable. Section 300.309 of the IDEA regulations stipulated that all districts must provide extended school year services available to students who have this recommendation written in their individualized education plan.

#### Relationship of Teacher Attitude and Student Performance

A final element of this literature review is an investigation of the possible link between teacher attitude and student performance as indicated in the seminal investigations of Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson. The authors concluded that teacher expectations could influence a student's performance on standardized tests. This finding drew national attention after these conclusions were published in psychology texts, journals, and discussed within academic circles. The findings were also shared with a wider audience of American readers in the popular press with articles appearing in *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* magazine (Bruns, McFall, McFall, Persinger, & Vostal, 2000).

Columbia University sociology researcher Robert Merton coined the term self-fulfilling prophecy in 1948. He described the phenomenon as a false characterization of the situation evoking a new behavior which causes the originally fictitious concept to come true (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). At approximately the same period, psychologist Fritz Heider developed a set of ideas about how people make causal inferences, called Attribution Theory. Heider observed that many actions are based upon an individual's belief, either true or untrue. He distinguished between internal and external attributions arguing that a balance of both operated on an individual's actions.

These early studies interested Rosenthal and fellow researcher Lawson, whose 1964 research initially involved animals. The professor designed an experiment to test the hypothesis that performance results would be high if researcher expectations were high and performance results would be low if expectations were low. College students were randomly assigned laboratory rats. The students were incorrectly informed that some of the rats were bred to be bright when performing in a maze while other rats had a genetic inclination to be dull in the performance of maze skills. After working with the animals for a period of time the maze-bright animals performed better than their maze-dull counterparts. Additionally, the students rated their expectations of the rats they believed to be superior higher than the supposedly inferior animals. Rosenthal explained that the students assigned the maze-bright animals spent more time with them and therefore influenced their performance (Rosenthal & Lawson, 1964).

In 1966, Rosenthal teamed with San Francisco educator Lenore Jacobson to attempt to generalize these results to children. An experiment was designed to determine whether the academic advancement of students was affected by their teachers' expectations and beliefs concerning their academic abilities. The experiment became known as The Oak School Experiment, a fictitious name for the California school where the study was conducted.

Oak School served students from a low socio-economic area. 17% of the children were Hispanic students and there was approximately a 30% turnover of students during each school year. There were 20 teachers involved in the study. 18 of these educators were female. The teachers were falsely informed that certain children in each of their classes had been identified as latent achievers or late bloomers, and could be expected to show huge gains in their academic achievement during the upcoming school year. In actuality the experimental group of students

had been selected by stratified random sampling, a way to assure that they were extremely similar to the control group. At the end of the school year many of the targeted students had indeed demonstrated gains that the researchers had forecasted and the teachers had expected. The most noteworthy results came in the lower elementary grades as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean Gain in Total IQ for Students in Grades 1 through 6

Grade	Control Group Gain	Experimental Group Gain
1	+12.0	+ 27.4
2	+ 7.0	+ 16.5
3	+ 5.0	+ 5.0
4	+ 2.2	+ 5.6
5	+17.5	+ 17.4
6	+10.7	+ 10.0

The difference in gains between the control and experimental groups could be ascribed to chance about 2 times out of 100. Rosenthal determined the expectancy advantage to be significant at the .05 level in a one-tail statistical design. He also described the gains as dramatic. Rosenthal and Jacobson concluded that the evidence gathered in the Oak School experiment suggested that students who are expected by their teachers to produce intellectual gains do produce higher gains than students who are not expected to do so.

Not all scholars fully agreed with Rosenthal and Jacobson's study concerning the self-fulfilling prophecy at Oak School. Baron, Tom, and Cooper (1985) suggested that because a large number of Oak School's students were Hispanic, that ethnicity determined the overall theme of teacher expectancy, as cited in (Bruns, McFall, McFall, Persinger, & Vostal, 2000). Rosenthal and Jacobson were also criticized for technical defects in their research design. Two

teachers left Oak School during the study, and data from their classrooms were not included in the study. Psychologists, most notably Thorndike and Wineburg, claimed to have found technical flaws in the study, serious enough to cast doubt upon the accuracy of Rosenthal's findings, while Grant and Rothenberg linked the teacher expectancy to the reading level of the students (Grant & Rothenberg, 1986, Cotton, 1991). In 1987 an educational psychology journal, *Educational Researcher*, devoted an entire issue to the raging debate. Wineburg wrote an article critical of the study while Rosenthal responded by admitting to some shortcomings in research methodology but at the same time suggesting that his data remained accurate, reliable, and valid (Wineburg, 1987, Rosenthal, 1987).

Despite the criticism many other studies supported Rosenthal's findings. In 1974 researchers Chaiken, Sigler, & Derlega, attempted to conduct research similar to the Oak School Experiment. They videotaped teacher-student interactions and found that teachers treated the students that they had been told were academic bloomers differently. The teachers smiled at them more often, made frequent eye contact, and responded more favorably to student interactions than with the students who were not identified as bloomers. As a consequence these students enjoyed school more, received more constructive comments from teachers, and tried to work harder to improve their academic performance (Sisson, 2004).

The subsequent controversy concerning the legitimacy of self-fulfilling prophecy, also called The Pygmalion Effect, inspired an impressive amount of research. In 1983 Brophy prepared an exhaustive review of teacher expectation research in which he estimated that five to ten percent of variance in student performance is attributed to the differential treatment based on teacher expectations. Additionally, the researcher determined that certain variables such as socio-

economic status, gender, race, and various special education diagnostic labels greatly affected teacher expectation (Brophy, 1983).

Although the validity of Rosenthal's self-fulfilling prophecy has not been determined to the satisfaction of all, it is indeed evident that educators and the general public are very interested in the power of teacher expectations and its possible ability to affect student outcomes (Cotton, 1991). Administrators, teachers, and support staff in Los Angeles are currently provided with training in a staff awareness program called Teacher Awareness and Student Achievement. The program, based on Rosenthal's self-fulfilling prophecy theory, is designed to modify the way teachers interact with children through a heightened awareness of how perceptions affect their expectations. The California district has reported results from classroom research indicating improved student performance and a reduction in discipline referrals.

Rosenthal's theory has been employed both by coaches, who tend to form expectations about potential levels of achievement, as well as music educators charged with evaluating the performances of student musicians (Cavitt, 2002). Experiments conducted at the United States Air Force Academy further indicated a link between teacher expectation and student achievement (Rhem, 1998). In this interview, Robert Rosenthal affirmed that the self-fulfilling prophecy applied to all teacher interactions from the primary school through graduate school. His statements and many of the studies point to a need to examine teacher attitudes toward all students regardless of disability label.

## Summary

The inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education system has required a major reconfiguration of American schools. Many factors, both positive and negative, have been noted in the professional literature related to this topic. The theoretical connections between teacher attitudes and student achievement have also been explored and likely will be a topic of research studies in the future. Governmental intervention and court litigation have and are continuing to influence the planning and implementation of educational policy. It is apparent that many teachers benefit from organizational supports and administrative responses in order to successfully include students with varying exceptionalities into their classrooms.

A variety of administrative responses have been investigated. In order to achieve integration of students with disabilities, it is necessary to facilitate successful movements of these students to less restrictive environments (Rizzo & Zabel, 1988). It is critical to recognize supports, interventions, and modifications that can be offered to classroom teachers in order to accomplish this objective.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

#### Introduction

This chapter describes the methods and procedures used in the study and has been arranged into the following sections: Setting and Population, Data Collection Procedures, Instrumentation, Reliability of the Survey Instrument, Factor Analysis, Analytical Procedures, and Ethics. Local school districts across the country are required by The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (PL 105-17), to provide a free and appropriate public education to elementary and secondary students with disabilities. Such an education may include provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the individual educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities are met. This study was designed to investigate the organizational supports that administrators could provide to implement these legal mandates. The primary research question is: What are the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion? A secondary area of interest was educators' attitude toward the inclusion of students with special needs into general education classrooms. Survey research was chosen to investigate this topic, principally because it would generate quantitative data that could be examined using scientific statistical analysis.

#### Setting and Population

This investigator identified 68 elementary school administrators and 1,252 elementary classroom teachers in The School District of Lee County who met the qualifications for participation in the study. A random sample of 500 elementary school teachers was chosen by

listing all the teachers and assigning each a number. Random selection was accomplished using the computer random number generator provided in the SPSS software package. The district's 68 elementary school administrators were all included in the survey due to the relatively small number of this specific population.

The survey was completed by 321 of the educators, yielding an overall response rate of 56.5%. Participants included 270 of the 500 teachers (54.0%) and 51 of the 68 administrators (75.0%). Demographic information was collected for the specific purpose of investigating whether gender, years experience in the education profession, or years of experience teaching students with special needs had influenced responses. Two of the items in the demographic section of the survey were included to ascertain the respondents' level of experience both in the education profession and more specifically dealing with students who have special needs. 42% of total survey participants had been in the education profession for less than 10 years while 58% of the total survey participants had less than 10 years experience educating students with special needs. At the other end of the continuum, 12% of those surveyed had over 30 years of experience in the education profession while 7% reported over 30 years educating students with special needs.

Table 2 provides an overview of the educators who replied to the survey. Respondents included 35 males (10.9%), 281 females (87.5%) while 5 (1.6%) of the respondents elected not to reveal their gender. This group included 51 administrators and 270 elementary school teachers. Table 3 and Table 4 provide this descriptive information relating to gender, years of experience educating students with special needs, and total years in the education profession separated into the respondents' specific role as either a teacher or an administrator.



Table 2

Descriptive Profile of Respondents (Combined)

Descriptor	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	35	10.9
Female	281	87.6
No Response	5	1.5
<b>Years in the Education Profession</b>		
0-10	135	42.1
11-20	89	27.7
21-30	55	17.1
Over 30	37	11.6
No response	5	1.5
<b>Years educating students with special needs</b>		
0-10	185	57.6
11-20	65	20.2
21-30	41	12.8
Over 30	23	7.2
No response	7	2.2
<b>Educational Role</b>		
Administrator	51	15.9
Teacher	270	84.1

Table 3

Descriptive Profile of Respondents (Administrators)

Descriptor		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	15	29.4
	Female	36	70.6
Years in the Education Profession			
	0-10	6	11.8
	11-20	18	35.3
	21-30	13	25.4
	Over 30	14	27.5
Years educating students with special needs			
	0-10	16	31.4
	11-20	14	27.5
	21-30	12	23.5
	Over 30	9	17.6

Table 4

Descriptive Profile of Respondents (Teachers)

Descriptor		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	20	7.4
	Female	245	90.7
	No Response	5	1.9
Years in the Education Profession			
	0-10	129	47.8
	11-20	71	26.3
	21-30	42	15.6
	Over 30	23	8.5
	No Response	5	1.8
Years educating students with special needs			
	0-10	169	62.6
	11-20	51	18.9
	21-30	29	10.7
	Over 30	14	5.2
	No Response	7	2.6

## Data Collection Procedures

This study was conducted during the spring semester of the 2004-2005 school year. Dr. Richard Itzen, representing the Research Request Committee for the School District of Lee County, agreed to this research venture and granted permission to use the district's intra-office mail system to disseminate the survey material. After receiving permission to proceed from the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A) this investigator sent a pre-letter explaining the study to each potential respondent. A week later the survey, along with a letter of Informed Consent, was sent to each of the research participants. A cover letter also accompanied the survey instrument, which explained the research endeavor and the participants' rights not to participate in the study. Using Dillman's Tailored Design Method (Dillman, 2000) a total of four contacts, sent every other week, were made in attempts to gather research data (see Appendix B).

## Instrumentation

The survey instrument itself was a combination of Wilczenski's Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) along with additional items which focused on demographic data and the employees' perceptions of organizational support. Specific information was accumulated regarding gender and years of experience. As illustrated in Table 5 and Table 6 the respondents were given 26 total statements regarding either their attitude toward inclusion or their perceptions of organizational support. They were asked to respond by registering their opinions using a 6-point scale with the following possible responses: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), somewhat disagree (3), somewhat agree (4), agree (5), and strongly agree (6).

Table 5

Survey Items Relating to Attitude Toward Inclusion

Item	Statement
1	Students who cannot move without the help should be in regular classes.
2	Students who cannot control their behavior and disrupt activities should be in regular classes.
3	Students who cannot hear conversational speech should be in regular classes.
4	Students whose academic achievement is one year below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.
5	Students whose academic achievement is two or more years below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.
6	Students who have trouble expressing their thoughts verbally should be in regular classes.
7	Students who are verbally aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.
8	Students who need an individualized functional academic program in everyday reading and math skills should be in regular classes.
9	Students who need training in self-help and daily living should be in regular classes.
10	Students who do not follow school rules should be in regular classes.
11	Students who use sign language or communication boards should be in regular classes.
12	Students who cannot read standard print and need to use Braille should be in regular classes.
13	Students whose speech is difficult to understand should be in regular classes.
14	Students who are physically aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.
15	Students who are shy and withdrawn should be in regular classes.
16	Students who are frequently absent from school should be in regular classes.

Table 6

Survey Items Relating to Perceptions of Organizational Support

Item	Statement
17	Provision of a classroom paraprofessional is needed in an inclusive classroom.
18	Assistance with behavioral issues is needed in an inclusive classroom.
19	Additional time to plan lessons is needed in an inclusive classroom.
20	Provision of special curricula is needed in an inclusive classroom.
21	Paid teacher release time to attend training sessions is needed in an inclusive classroom.
22	Provision of technology is needed in an inclusive classroom.
23	Extended school year (summer school) is needed in an inclusive classroom.
24	Reduced class size is needed in an inclusive classroom.
25	Coteaching is needed in an inclusive classroom.

The examples of potential organizational supports, included in the research instrument, represented the supports most commonly referred to in the literature reviewed prior to the implementation of the study. For item 30 an open-ended question was devised to collect information about organizational supports that might be desired by educators but not mentioned in the existing literature.

#### Reliability of the Survey Instrument

The Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES), which constituted the initial 16 items in the questionnaire, has been utilized by various researchers and was developed and tested for reliability and validity by its author Felicia Wilczenski (Wilczenski, 1995). Additional

items which focused on educators' perceptions of organizational support related to specific organizational supports that have been indicated in the literature, had not been formally scrutinized for reliability.

Prior to the implementation of this project, a small research endeavor involving a pilot group of elementary teachers from a neighboring county was conducted to test these additional items on the survey instrument. The reliability measures were produced using SPSS Analysis indicated an Alpha of .7982. A covariance matrix for all survey questions except demographic items reflected an Alpha of .8245. This was an indication that the additional items on the questionnaire did not detract from the initial reliability of Wilczenski's original ATIES instrument.

#### Factor Analysis

Data from the 321 returned surveys were entered into SPSS program and subjected to factor analytic procedures with Varimax Rotation and Kaiser Normalization. This was done in an attempt to identify underlying variables that might help explain some of the variance noted in the survey responses. Factor analysis indicated three main factors. Table 7 reflects the way this analysis clustered many of the survey questions into primary factors which this researcher labeled Classroom Management, Student Communications, and Behavioral Challenges.

Table 7

## Factor Analysis

Factor	Value	Item	Descriptor
1. Classroom Management	.768	17	Provision of Paraprofessional
	.731	18	Administrative Assistance
	.747	19	Additional Planning Time
	.680	20	Special Curricula
	.774	21	Release time for Training
	.721	22	Provision of Technology
2. Student Communications	.663	24	Reduced Class Size
	.797	3	Hearing Challenge
	.879	11	Use Sign Language
3. Behavioral Challenges	.824	12	Use Braille
	.791	7	Verbally Aggressive
	.729	10	Doesn't Follow School Rules
	.797	14	Physically Aggressive

Analytical Procedures

The statistical procedures which were used to analyze the data derived from the survey respondents were each selected due to the nature of the data and the structure of the research questions and subquestions. For example the Likert-scale items on the questionnaire were considered parametric data. It was further assumed that the respondents' ratings of individual items represented equal measurements on a scale of 1 through 6 demonstrating normal distribution which put the responses into the category called interval-ratio or numeric data. The second consideration was whether the research subquestion was seeking a difference or seeking to establish a relationship. In the case of a difference the t-test or an Analysis of Variance would be appropriate. If a relationship was being sought Pearson's Correlation would be used to determine either a negative or positive connection.

As depicted in Table 8, responses to each of the subquestions were studied using accepted statistical procedures.

Table 8

Statistical Procedures Selected for Analysis

<u>Research Subquestion</u>	<u>Statistical Procedure</u>
1. What are the perceptions of principals of the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion?	determine mean scores of principals on items 17-25 using descriptive statistics
2. What are the perceptions of teachers of the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion?	determine mean scores of teachers on items 17-25 using descriptive statistics
3. To what extent, if any, do principals and teachers differ in their perceptions of needed organizational supports?	compare responses of principals and teachers on items 17-25 using a t-test
4. To what extent, if any, do principals and teachers differ in their attitudes toward inclusion?	compare responses of principals and teachers on items 17-25 using a t-test
5. What is the relationship of perceptions of organizational support and attitudes toward inclusion?	determine relationship between items 1-16 and items 17-25 using Pearson Correlation
6. Is gender, level of experience educating special needs students, or number of years in the education profession related to respondents' perceptions of organizational support?	determine influence of demographics on items 17-25 using multiple regression
7. Is gender, level of experience educating special needs students, or number of years in the education profession related to respondents' attitudes toward inclusion?	determine influence of demographics on items 1-16 using multiple regression



## Ethics

Several precautions were taken to assure both the confidentiality of individual responses on the surveys and to protect the research participants' anonymity. An identification number was printed on the questionnaire so their name could be checked off of the mailing list when it was returned. The list of names was safeguarded in a locked file to prevent individual names from being connected to the results in any way. The coding numbers written on each survey were provided solely for the purpose of determining the number of surveys that were distributed and subsequently returned.

Respondents were repeatedly instructed in writing that participation in the research endeavor was their decision. Seven of the educators who were included in the sample asked not to be involved in the study. Their names were deleted from the mailing list. A return rate of 75% among administrators and 54% among teachers suggested that anonymity or other ethical issues were not of substantial concern among the majority of research participants. All ethical requirements created by both the University of Central Florida and the School District of Lee County were also followed during the course of this research project.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Nature of the Data

The purpose of this study was to identify organizational supports administrators could provide to teachers that would be useful for including students with special needs into general education elementary school classrooms. A survey of 568 elementary school teachers and administrators was conducted to study this as well as their attitudes toward inclusion. Quantitative research data were collected. Wilczenski's Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) was administered. The survey items labeled 1-16 reflected these reported attitudes. Survey items 17-25 investigated perceptions of organizational support while survey items 27 through 29 were included to collect demographic data regarding respondents.

The Likert-scale survey items 1-25 represented interval-ratio data and were determined to be parametric in nature. Statistical procedures included factor analysis, comparison of means, the Independent T-Test, multiple regression, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance), and the Pearson Correlation. SPSS Version 11.0 was the statistical software which was utilized in this analysis of data.

#### Relationship Between Survey Items and Research Subquestions

Survey items 1-16 and item 26 all explored attitudes toward inclusion. The first 16 items investigated attitudes toward students with specific exceptionalities, while item 26 asked if the respondents agreed with the concept of inclusion. A Pearson correlation of .419 between item 26 and the earlier questions was weaker than expected. Therefore, item 26 was omitted from further

data analysis regarding attitudes toward inclusion. The correlation may have been weaker than anticipated due to item placement on the questionnaire.

Due to the specific nature of the research question and subquestions, it was necessary to consider them in their original forms rather than their factors to generate the data analysis. It was further hypothesized that attempting to answer these questions would prepare the researcher to better answer the primary research question: What are the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion? A discussion of the primary research question can be found in Chapter Five. Table 9 illustrates the connections between research subquestions 1-7 and the various items on the research survey.

Table 9

Survey Items Intended to Investigate Each Subquestion

Subquestion	Survey Items
1. What are the perceptions of principals of the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion?	17-25, 30
2. What are the perceptions of teachers of the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion?	17-25, 30
3. To what extent, if any, do principals and teachers differ in their perceptions of needed organizational supports?	17-25, 30
4. To what extent, if any, do principals and teachers differ in their attitudes toward inclusion?	1-16, 26
5. What is the relationship of perceptions of organizational support and attitudes toward inclusion?	1- 26
6. Is gender, level of experience educating special needs students, or number of years in the education profession related to respondents' perceptions of organizational support?	17-25, 27-30
7. Is gender, level of experience educating special needs students, or number of years in the education profession related to respondents' attitudes toward inclusion?	1-16, 26-29

Statistical Analysis of Survey Responses

Subquestion 1 asks what are the perceptions of principals of the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion? The supports delineated in the survey instrument were provision of a paraprofessional (item 17), assistance with behavioral issues (item 18), additional planning time (item 19), provision of special curricula (item 20), paid teacher release time for training (item 21), provision of technology (item 22), extended school year (item 23), reduced class size (item 24), and co-teaching (item 25). When asked to respond regarding the perceived value of

the organizational supports represented in survey questions 17 through 25, the 51 elementary school administrators produced an overall mean of 4.7 with a standard deviation of .65. This falls between the Likert scale labels of somewhat agree and agree. Table 10 displays each item, beginning with the organizational support rated most necessary by the administrators to the least favored.

Table 10

Preferred Organizational Supports as Rated by Administrators

Item	Descriptor	Mean	St. Deviation
22	Provision of Technology	5.12	.87
24	Reduced Class Size	5.04	.92
18	Assistance with Behavioral Issues	5.00	.96
17	Provision of Paraprofessional	4.80	1.07
25	Co-teaching	4.76	1.09
21	Paid Release Time for Training	4.73	1.19
20	Special Curricula	4.37	1.23
19	Additional Lesson Planning Time	4.33	1.29
23	Extended School Year	4.02	1.35

Subquestion 2 asks what are the perceptions of teachers of the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion? Teachers produced an overall mean score of 5.28 with a standard deviation of 1.02 which fell between the Likert scale responses of agree and strongly agree. The teachers mean response generally fell between agree and strongly agree on each item with the

exception of a lower rating on the need for an extended school year. These high scores indicated a strong endorsement for these organizational supports. Table 11 illustrates the teachers' perceptions of preferred organizational supports.

Table 11  
Preferred Organizational Supports as Rated by Teachers

Item	Descriptor	Mean	St. Deviation
24	Reduced Class Size	5.46	1.07
17	Provision of Paraprofessional	5.46	1.07
18	Assistance with Behavioral Issues	5.42	1.07
22	Provision of Technology	5.41	.96
21	Paid Release Time for Training	5.37	1.07
19	Additional Lesson Planning Time	5.20	1.14
20	Special Curricula	5.14	1.18
25	Co-teaching	5.07	1.37
23	Extended School Year	4.83	1.49

Subquestion 3 examines to what extent principals and teachers differ in their purported need for these organizational supports. As was discovered by comparing the means between the administrators and the teachers, it was the teachers who expressed greater value for the organizational supports. In order to discover if the difference between the teacher's responses and those of the administrators was significant, a T-test for equality of means was performed.

This procedure produced a t score of -459, with 319 degrees of freedom, and a significance level of  $<.001$ . It is further noted that the teachers produced a higher overall mean score than did the administrators regarding their perceptions of organizational supports. The discrepancy may be explained by the fact that administrators are more involved in budgetary issues than teachers and perhaps more aware of the resources required to supply the suggested organizational supports. Table 12 provides a comparison in mean scores between teachers and administrators regarding their perceptions of these supports.

Table 12

## Comparison of Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of Organizational Supports

Item	Descriptor	Administrator Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Teacher Mean Score	Standard Deviation
17	Provision of Paraprofessional	4.80	1.07	5.46	1.07
18	Assistance with Behavioral Issues	5.00	.96	5.42	1.07
19	Additional Lesson Planning Time	4.33	1.29	5.20	1.14
20	Provision of Special Curricula	4.37	1.23	5.14	1.18
21	Paid Release Time For Training	4.73	1.19	5.37	1.07
22	Provision of Technology	5.12	.87	5.41	.96
23	Extended School Year	4.02	1.35	4.83	1.49
24	Reduced Class Size	5.04	.92	5.46	1.07
25	Coteaching	4.76	1.09	5.07	1.37



Subquestion 4 asks to what extent do principals and teachers differ in their attitudes toward inclusion. These survey questions were numbers 1 through 16, Wilczenski's Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES), and reflected attitudes toward including students with a variety of special needs including physical, developmental, and behavioral challenges. The group of administrators produced an overall mean score of 3.94 with a standard deviation of .65 while the teachers produced a slightly lower mean score of 3.53 with a standard deviation of .72. In this case the administrators agreed to a greater extent than the teachers that students with various disabilities belonged in the general education classroom.

Again a t-test was performed to see if this difference was significant. This procedure yielded a t score of 3.71 with 319 degrees of freedom and was significant at a level  $<.001$ . It is possible that the teachers are more aware of the daily challenges of including these individuals in their classrooms than their respective administrators. Table 13 and Table 14 compare the difference between the mean scores of the teachers and the mean scores of the administrators who responded to the survey items regarding attitudes toward inclusion.

Table 13

## Principal Attitude Toward Inclusion Mean Score Comparison

Item	Descriptor	Mean	Standard Deviation
15	Shy and Withdrawn	5.16	.61
16	Frequently Absent	5.12	.65
4	One Year Below	4.71	1.05
6	Verbal Expression	4.51	.86
13	Speech Difficult to Understand	4.51	1.03
12	Braille Users	4.34	1.14
11	Sign or Board Users	4.27	1.19
1	Cannot Move on Own	4.11	1.30
8	Individual Functional Academics	3.94	1.16
3	Deaf	3.86	1.31
10	Don't Follow Rules	3.59	1.34
5	Two or More Below	3.45	1.45
7	Verbally Aggressive	3.20	1.25
9	Self Help Trainable	2.96	1.29
14	Physically Aggressive	2.47	1.22
2	Disruptive	2.16	1.24

Table 14

## Teacher Attitude Toward Inclusion Mean Score Comparison

Item	Descriptor	Mean	Standard Deviation
15	Shy and Withdrawn	5.23	.75
16	Frequently Absent	4.71	1.14
6	Verbal Expression	4.49	1.13
13	Speech Difficult to Understand	4.40	1.29
4	One Year Below	3.97	1.32
11	Sign or Board Users	3.90	1.29
12	Braille Users	3.73	1.41
1	Cannot Move on Own	3.57	1.55
8	Individual Functional Academics	3.53	1.61
3	Deaf	3.51	1.49
10	Don't Follow Rules	3.08	1.31
9	Self Help Trainable	2.80	1.38
7	Verbally Aggressive	2.70	1.21
5	Two or More Below	2.69	1.46
2	Disruptive	2.21	1.78
14	Physically Aggressive	2.07	1.21

Subquestion 5 seeks to find a relationship between the respondents' perceptions of organizational supports and their attitudes toward inclusion. In this case a Pearson Correlation

indicated a negative correlation between two. The correlation of  $-.211$  was found to be significant at  $<0.01$  level, 2-tailed. This would indicate that respondents with lower scores relating to attitudes toward inclusion had a high need for greater organizational supports in the classroom.

Subquestion 6 explored the possible relationship between the demographic data (level of experience educating special needs students, or number of years in the education profession) and perceptions of organizational support. Multiple Regression and an ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) indicated an  $R = .278$  and  $R^2 = .077$ . An  $F$  of  $8.87$ , with 3 degrees of freedom indicated significance  $<.05$  level. An equation reflecting the demographic data or coefficient values was found to be  $\text{Support} = 5.17 + .23 (\text{gender}) + .02 (\text{years in special education}) - .02 (\text{years in education profession})$ . The effect size was relatively small even though the calculations indicated statistical significance. The  $R^2 = .077$  indicated that less than 8% of the variation in responses could be attributed to gender, experience in special education, and years in the education profession.

Subquestion 7 investigated the possibility of a similar relationship between these demographic variables and the participants' responses regarding their attitude toward inclusion. In this case an  $R = .142$  and an  $R^2 = .02$  along with an  $F$  of  $2.17$  with 3 degrees of freedom did not indicate significance at a value of less than  $.05$ . An equation reflecting the demographic data or coefficient values was found to be  $\text{Attitude} = 3.78 + .05 (\text{gender}) + .01 (\text{years in special education}) - .10 (\text{years in education profession})$ . Gender, experience in special education, and years in the education profession did not affect the responses relating to attitude toward inclusion.

### Other Organizational Supports Reported by Respondents

Although survey research and quantitative analysis were the two primary investigative methods employed in this research study, a certain amount of supplemental information was supplied by the respondents for item 29. The survey instrument listed the following nine organizational supports: Provision of Technology, Reduced Class Size, Assistance with Behavioral Issues, Provision of a Paraprofessional, Co-teaching, Paid Release Time for Training, Special Curricula, Addition Lesson Planning Time, and Extended School Year. Survey participants were asked on item 29 to list other organizational supports that might also benefit inclusion efforts in elementary schools. Table 15 summarizes these responses.

Table 15

## Additional Organizational Supports Supplied by Research Participants

Number of Responses	Support Suggested	Percentage Specified
16	Principal Support and Understanding	17.2
15	Parent, Grandparent, and Caregiver Support	16.1
9	Provide Materials (supplies, tapes, furniture, manipulatives)	9.6
5	Reduction in Paperwork	5.3
4	Strategies not to Jeopardize General Education Students	4.3
4	Guidance Counselor	4.3
4	Additional Teacher Compensation	4.3
4	Consultative Teachers	4.3
4	Shared Planning Time	4.3
3	Time Out Room Personnel	3.2
3	Central Office Assistance (budgeting and operations)	3.2
3	Support Groups	3.2
3	Individual Tutoring	3.2
3	Behavior Specialist	3.2
2	Paperwork Assistance	2.2
2	Volunteers in the Classroom	2.2
2	Psychologist	2.2
1	Occupational Therapist	1.1
1	Nurse	1.1
1	Tangible Rewards for Good Student Behavior	1.1
1	Speech Pathologist	1.1
1	Social Worker	1.1
1	After-Care	1.1
1	Student Role Models	1.1

This list of organizational supports was generated by the research respondents. Among the more frequently cited supports, Principal Support and Understanding was the most commonly reported. Similarly, cooperation of parents, grandparents, and caregivers was also often listed. The provision of support staff members such as consultative teacher, guidance

counselor, and behavior specialist was called for by the respondents. The teachers and administrators also asked for medical staff members such as a nurse, occupational specialist, speech pathologist, and guidance counselor. Financial resources for supplies, equipment, staff supplements, and student rewards were also mentioned. Additionally, several of the respondents mentioned their desire to receive training in strategies which could be used to avoid jeopardizing the education of their students without disabilities. These requests for organizational support suggested possible challenges to be overcome with the present system of inclusion.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Survey participants involved in this study revealed their perceptions of the organizational supports that could be provided to the educators responsible for inclusion. They also responded to survey items relating to their attitudes toward including students with various disabilities. The respondents also generated 24 additional organizational supports that were not included in the survey. This information was gathered in an effort to investigate ways that administrators could help their faculty members. The study was conducted to fill a void in the existing literature regarding the provision of organizational supports to elementary school teachers working in inclusive classrooms.

Wilczenski's Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) along with several items relating to organizational supports and demographics were administered to determine the perceptions of educators both at the administrator and classroom teacher levels. This survey was distributed to 500 randomly selected elementary teachers and 68 administrators. A return rate of 75% among administrators and 54% among teachers yielded a total of 321 completed surveys. The researcher developed seven subquestions that were used to guide the study in an attempt to better identify organizational supports and explore attitudes toward inclusion. These questions were intended to help answer the primary research question: What are the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion?

#### Implications of Research Findings

Both the group of teachers and the group of administrators shared many similar attitudes toward inclusion and perceptions of organizational support that could be provided to teachers in



an inclusive classroom. Perhaps the strongest similarity was the fact that both groups listed item 24, reduced class size, item 17, provision of a paraprofessional in the classroom, item 18, assistance with behavioral issues, and item 22, provision of technology as their top four responses. These items also aligned with the findings of the Georgia researchers who investigated this topic at the middle school level. Most of the organizational supports which were described by these researchers, related to classroom management issues which were reviewed in more detail in Chapter Two (Tanner, Linscott, & Galis, 1996). The matter of classroom management, specifically behavioral issues, also held primary importance in the replies of the respondents.

#### Behavioral Supports and Training

The provision of a safe and orderly classroom setting was also evident in the survey participants' responses regarding their attitude toward inclusion. The attitudes of teachers and administrators who participated in the survey were extremely low regarding including students with behavioral challenges into general elementary classrooms. For example, mean attitudes toward students who were physically aggressive averaged 2.47 among administrators and 2.07 among teachers; both indicated disagreement with the concept. Additionally both the teachers and administrators agreed that administrative assistance with behavioral concerns, item 18, was crucial. Researchers Burrello and Cole, who investigated the roles of the principal relating to implementation of inclusion programs, pointed to the need for administrative support in the areas of both behavioral controls and classroom management, as critical in order to implement inclusion (1992).

Increased training opportunities to combat negative attitudes regarding students with various disabilities may be a solution that needs to be considered. Negative teacher attitudes toward children with severe behavioral challenges were reported at the national level by researcher Igafo-Te'o who described the American Federation of Teachers' 1996 call for an inclusion moratorium due to rampant classroom violence and disruptions (Igafo-Te'o, 2002). The State Department of Education in California has responded to the issue of teacher attitude by requiring teachers to participate in a program known as Teacher Awareness and Student Achievement to improve negative teacher attitudes (Cotton 1991).

The issue of creating a heightened awareness of teacher attitude may need to be addressed in the pre-service education of teaching candidates as well as staff development sessions for in-service educators. Swoboda, in an investigation of comfort levels of general education teachers determined that one of the main reasons these educators reported an opposition to inclusion was that they felt untrained to attempt to teach children with behavioral disorders (2000). The organizational support of paid teacher release time to attend training sessions (item 21) generated a mean score 5.37 among the teachers and a mean score of 4.73 by the administrators participating in this survey. Again the lower mean produced by the administrators may have been due to their keener awareness of budgetary constraints than the group of teachers. If a teacher is released from duty to attend training it would likely involve both compensating the teacher as well as hiring a substitute to provide coverage in the classroom.

The indication of negative teacher and administrator attitudes regarding behaviorally challenged students, may lead educational leaders to return to the practice of educating these students who represent a danger to themselves and others in separate classrooms rather than

combining them with the general education population. If Rosenthal and Jacobson's link between teacher attitude and student achievement, which has been called the self-fulfilling prophecy, is valid, a large number of students will be negatively affected by teacher and administrator attitude relating to behavioral issues (Rosenthal, 1987). It may be that instead of improving the educational opportunities for students with behavioral deficiencies when they are taken from special education classrooms and moved to the general education class, the promoters of inclusion are actually reducing this population's ability to receive educational services. In this case an appropriate organizational support may be to provide the financial resources needed to separate such students from the general education population.

#### Provision of Paraprofessionals and Reduction in Class Size

Survey participants also had strong opinions regarding providing paraprofessionals in the inclusion classrooms (item 17). Teachers' mean score was 5.46 while administrators produced a mean score of 4.80. Both groups demonstrated agreement regarding this particular organizational support. These results indicate a similar value of paraprofessionals as did researcher Lee, who reported the effectiveness of paraprofessionals in the San Francisco school system (2004). These paraprofessionals were described as being able to perform a multitude of support tasks with little or no post-secondary education. Educational leaders will ultimately have to weigh both the costs and benefits of adding paraprofessionals to the inclusive classrooms.

Another organizational support which was indicated as desired by both the teachers and the administrators who responded to the survey was reduced class size (item 24). Administrators' mean score was 5.04 while teachers rated this support as important with a mean score of 5.46. These results align with the intensive research that has been conducted in Tennessee regarding

the state's class size reduction experiment. Researchers Folger and Breda noted that although all students benefited from smaller class sizes, the strategy was particularly beneficial in improving the academic performance of students from low socio-economic families (1989). Similar benefits were noted in Tennessee for learners with special needs and minority students, when they were enrolled in small classes. Voters in Florida have called for a similar program of class-size reduction although financial resources needed to pay for the reform proved to be limited.

#### Provision of Technology

Provision of technology, item 22, was the survey statement with the highest mean score among all the organizational supports by administrators at 5.12. Technology also was reported by the teachers as a desired organizational support at the mean score level of 5.41. Both groups agreed that students in an inclusive classroom would benefit from technology. This endorsement aligns with what was revealed in the literature. Cotton reported that computer assisted instruction was particularly beneficial for students with developmental challenges (1998).

A variety of computer software have been developed for drill and practice types of computer tutorials. As was the case with reduced class size and provision of paraprofessionals, considerable financial expenditures are involved in order for administrators to be able to provide adequate instructional technology. Federal and state funding sources to promote school improvement have been made available for the use of technology in the classroom.

#### Provision of an Extended School Year

The organizational supports that were listed on the survey instrument were generally well accepted by both teachers and administrators. The organizational support which was least favored by both teachers and administrators was the provision of an extended school year (item

23). This organizational support has traditionally been called summer school. Teachers' mean score was 4.83 while administrators rated this support with an even lower mean score of 4.02. Those figures represented only partial agreement that this support would benefit students in an inclusive setting. Paradoxically this is one of the supports that is legally required by The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments (PL 105-17). In 1997, provision of the extended school year was mandated in Section 300.309 of the regulation.

Much of local school district expenditures, in general, is at the discretion of the local school board. In the case of the extended school year, provision of resources became mandatory. Students with special needs were not obligated to attend these additional classes, but school districts were required to make them available. Again, budget conscious administrators sought sources of revenue in order to fund the organizational support of the extended school year.

#### Perceptions of Co-teaching, Increased Planning time, and Special Curricula

The organizational support of co-teaching (item 25), which researchers Walther-Thomas, Korinek, & McLaughlin (1999) described as possibly controversial due to the fact that historically much teaching has been accomplished on an individual basis, was agreed to be a needed support by some administrators and most teachers who responded to the survey. The teachers generated a mean score of 5.07 while the administrators indicated partial agreement with a mean score of 4.76. Co-teaching does not necessarily cost school districts more financially but does require a restructuring of classrooms to include a team of both general and special educators in the inclusive classroom.

Subquestion 3 examines to what extent principals and teachers differ in their reported need for these organizational supports. Principals and teachers had differing perceptions

regarding both the provision of additional planning time (item 19) and the provision of special curricula (item 20). Principals were only somewhat in agreement that additional planning time was needed and produced a mean score of only 4.33 while teachers generally agree, producing a mean score of 5.20. Similarly administrators only partially agreed that provision of special curricula was an important organizational support with responses generating a mean score of 4.37. Teachers were in general agreement that the provision of special curricula would be a necessary support and generated a mean score of 5.14. It should be noted however that in Florida, issues of curriculum have generally aligned with the state mandated Sunshine State Standards since their inception in the early 1990s. This may have lowered the perceptions of both the administrators and teacher regarding separate courses of study.

#### Recommendations for Future Study

Even though the data that were collected and analyzed in this research study provided valuable information regarding perceptions of organizational supports, there are inherent limitations and omissions in all research endeavors. This study was limited to exploring the perceptions of organizational supports reported by teachers and administrators in a Southwest Florida school district. These results do not necessarily reflect the perceptions of educators living in other geographical areas. Replications of this study by future researchers in various geographical locations may be warranted. Similarly, the present study was conducted in a medium sized school district. It may prove useful to examine educators' perceptions of organizational supports within a large urban school district or in a small rural school district. Experiences among educators, who attempt to include students with various disabilities in general education classes, may vary from site to site based on the variable of urbanicity.

The teachers and administrators indicated a need for provision of technology in the classroom. The term technology could refer to a wide variety of educational supports such as computer simulations, drill and practice, web-based applications, or assistive technology. Future research studies might be designed to investigate the specific types of technology that provide benefits to the learners in an inclusive classroom.

Additionally, since the focus of this study was to identify the sources and components of organizational support required to implement the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms, the research question and subquestions were written to more closely examine perceptions of organizational support than to identify the attitudes toward inclusion. Studies specific to the subject of teacher attitudes might prove to shed more light on the topic.

### Conclusions

The topics of organizational supports and attitudes toward inclusion were investigated by asking seven research subquestions. The purpose of answering the subquestions was to prepare to answer the primary research question regarding the organizational supports that could be provided to elementary school teachers responsible for implementing the inclusion of students with various disabilities into the general education classrooms at the elementary level. The survey was conducted and results were compiled and subjected to the statistical analytical procedures.

Subquestions 1 and 2 explored the respondents' perceptions of necessary organizational supports for students and teachers in inclusive classrooms. Both teachers and administrators reported the need for reduced class sizes, assistance with behavioral issues, the increased

technology, and provision of paraprofessionals. Subquestion 3 investigated the extent to which principals and teachers differed in these perceptions. It was noted that the teachers' responses were generally higher than administrators' responses. Another difference was that the administrators indicated that provision of technology was their most necessary support. The teachers reported that reduced class size and provision of paraprofessionals were of chief importance.

Differences between teachers and administrators, regarding their attitude toward inclusion, were revealed in responses to subquestion 4. Principals reported higher ratings regarding including students with various disabilities than did the teachers. However, both groups indicated that they did not favor including students with behavior challenges in these classes. This finding might suggest a further need to explore educator attitudes in order to determine appropriate placements for students with behavioral disorders.

Subquestion 5 explored the relationship between perceptions of organizational supports and attitudes toward inclusion. The Pearson correlation indicated a slight negative correlation. Educators with lower attitudes toward inclusion reported a stronger need for organizational supports. These educators may need help in order to effectively integrate students with special needs into their schools and classrooms.

Subquestions 6 and 7 investigated a possible relationship between the demographic data of the survey participants and their responses regarding perceptions of organizational supports and attitudes toward inclusion. The demographics studied were gender, level of experience educating students with special needs, and number of years in the education profession. Even though a statistically significant result was indicated for subquestion 6, only a very small



proportion of variance was explained by these demographics. There was no meaningful statistical relationship indicated between the demographic factors and the respondents' attitudes toward inclusion studied in subquestion 7.

### Perceptions of Organizational Supports

The final task of this research endeavor was to provide an answer to the primary research question: What are the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the organizational supports that are needed for inclusion? This researcher is prepared to respond to the question in hopes that parents, teachers, administrators, advocates, and other individuals related to the topic of inclusion might better the classroom experience of both the students with disabilities and their general education classmates. The teachers and administrators who participated in the research survey have indicated the extent to which they agree with the organizational supports which were included in the survey as well as providing a list of additional supports that they would like to receive.

The principals and teachers agreed that reduced class size, provision of classroom paraprofessionals, provision of technology, and assistance with behavioral issues were crucial to the success of an inclusive classroom program. Teachers indicated paid teacher release time to attend additional trainings as necessary while the administrators specified the increased use of technology as a valuable organizational support. Provision of these organizational supports requires the allocation of financial resources. Financial challenges will have to be overcome in order to implement these reforms.

The survey respondents also generated a list of additional supports. They emphasized the importance of assistance from the building principal, parent cooperation, and financial resources

for instructional materials as three primary organizational supports that were not specified in the survey questionnaire. The importance of the leadership abilities possessed by the building principal to the success of inclusive classrooms was also indicated in the literature by researchers Krajewski and Krajewski (2000). They suggested that the main factor in the success or failure of any inclusion program was the building principal. The replies from the research participants in the present study supported their observation. The respondents indicated that administrative support was critical to the success of students in the inclusive classroom.

This research project has examined rationales for inclusive education. The strategy of providing organizational supports to the classroom teacher has also been explored. School administrators across the country are challenged on a daily basis to implement solutions such as reduced class size, behavior management, access to technology, increased planning time, staff development, and family support. School leaders who routinely employ these strategies are likely to help teachers create a positive learning environment. Future researchers should continue to investigate the apparently powerful roles of educators' attitudes toward inclusion and perceptions of organizational supports. School leaders should make every effort to provide the resources and supports that extend teachers' capabilities to serve all of the students in their inclusive classrooms.

APPENDIX A. PERMISSION DOCUMENTS  
WILCZENSKI'S PERMISSION TO USE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT,  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER, AND  
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LEE COUNTY'S APPROVAL LETTER GRANTING  
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

From: Felicia L Wilczenski  
Sent: Monday, May 12, 2003 4:52 PM  
To: Moore, Brian  
Subject: RE: ATIES Survey Instrument

Hello Brian,

Thank you for your interest in my work. You may copy and adapt the ATIES as needed for your work. If you need a copy of the scale, please let me know. I do not have an electronic version so include a mailing address.

Best wishes with your graduate work.  
Felicia Wilczenski



Office of Research and Commercialization

December 3, 2004

Brian Moore  
1317 Skyline Blvd.  
Cape Coral, FL 33991

Dear Mr. Moore:

With reference to your protocol entitled, "Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators of the Organizational Supports for Inclusion Programs and their Attitude Toward Inclusion in Southwest Florida Elementary Schools" I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office.

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur. Further, should there be a need to extend this protocol, a renewal form must be submitted for approval at least one month prior to the anniversary date of the most recent approval and is the responsibility of the investigator (UCF).

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

*Barbara Ward*

Barbara Ward, CIM  
IRB Coordinator

Copies: IRB File

12443 Research Parkway • Suite 302 • Orlando, FL 32826-3252 • 407-823-3778 • Fax 407-823-3299

An Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Institution



## THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LEE COUNTY

2055 CENTRAL AVENUE • FORT MYERS, FLORIDA 33901 • (239) 334-1102 • TTY/TDD (239) 335-1512

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DISTRICT 4

JAMES W. BROWER, Ed.D.  
SUPERINTENDENT

KEITH B. MARTIN  
BOARD ATTORNEY

Brian Moore  
Royal Palm Except. Center  
Lee County Public Schools

Nov. 30, 2004

Dear Mr. Moore:

The Research Request Committee has completed its review and approved your research project, "Perceptions of Teachers and administrators of the Organizational Supports for Inclusion Programs and their Attitudes Toward Inclusion in Southwest Florida Elementary Schools" in which you plan to survey 500 elementary teachers and 36 elementary principals.

Please let me know prior to sending out your surveys so that I can inform elementary principals.

Thank you for your interest in doing research in Lee County Schools and good luck with your project. We will look forward to reviewing your results.

Sincerely,

Richard Itzen, Ph. D.  
Dept. of Evaluation, Testing, and Research  
335-1448

### DISTRICT VISION

TO BE A WORLD-CLASS SCHOOL SYSTEM

### DISTRICT MISSION

TO PROVIDE A QUALITY EDUCATION IN A SAFE AND WELL-MANAGED ENVIRONMENT

APPENDIX B. RESEARCH DOCUMENTS

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

RESEARCH SURVEY

FOUR CONTACT LETTERS

September 15, 2004

Dear Educator:

I am a graduate student at the University of Central Florida. As part of my dissertation project, I am conducting a survey, the purpose of which is to learn about the attitudes of educators regarding the inclusion of students with special needs in general education classes. I am asking you to participate in this survey because of your experience as an educator in the School District of Lee County. This survey should take no longer than ten minutes to complete. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary and you will not have to respond to any question that you do not wish to answer. Your identity will be kept confidential and will not be revealed in any future report or manuscript.

There are no anticipated risks, compensation or other direct benefits to you as a participant in this survey. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate and may discontinue your participation in the survey without consequence.

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me at (239) 337-3511. My faculty supervisor is Dr. Jess House. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCFIRB office, University of Central Florida Office of Research, Orlando Tech Center 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 207, Orlando, Florida 32826. The phone number is (407) 823-2901.

Please return the signed copy of the letter along with the completed survey in the enclosed envelope. A second copy is provided for your records. By signing this letter, you give me permission to report your responses anonymously in the final manuscript to be submitted to my faculty supervisor as part of my coursework.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Moore

I have read the procedure described above and voluntarily agree to participate in the research survey. I voluntarily agree to participate in this procedure and have received a copy of this description.

\_\_\_\_\_/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant Date



START HERE

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Place an X in the square.

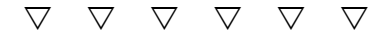


Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Somewhat Disagree  
Somewhat Agree  
Agree  
Strongly Agree



Continue:

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Somewhat Disagree  
Somewhat Agree  
Agree  
Strongly Agree



- 1. Students who cannot move without the help from others should be in regular classes.
- 2. Students who cannot control their behavior and disrupt activities should be in regular classes.
- 3. Students who cannot hear conversational speech should be in regular classes.
- 4. Students whose academic achievement is one year below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.
- 5. Students whose academic achievement is two or more years below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.
- 6. Students who have trouble expressing their thoughts verbally should be in regular classes.
- 7. Students who are verbally aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.
- 8. Students who need an individualized functional academic program in everyday reading and math skills should be in regular classes.

- 9. Students who need training in self-help skills and activities of daily living should be in regular classes.
- 10. Students who do not follow school rules for conduct should be in regular classes.
- 11. Students who use sign language or communication boards should be in regular classes.
- 12. Students who cannot read standard print and need to use Braille should be in regular classes.
- 13. Students whose speech is difficult to understand should be in regular classes.
- 14. Students who are physically aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.
- 15. Students who are shy and withdrawn should be in regular classes.
- 16. Students who are frequently absent from school should be in regular classes.

**Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
▽	▽	▽	▽	▽	▽

17. Provision of a classroom paraprofessional is needed in an inclusive classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Assistance with behavioral issues is needed in an inclusive classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Additional time to plan lessons is needed in an inclusive classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Provision of special curricula is needed in an inclusive classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Paid teacher release time to attend training sessions is needed in an inclusive classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Provision of technology is needed in an inclusive classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Extended school year (summer school) for students is needed in an inclusive classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Reduced class size is needed in an inclusive classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Coteaching is needed in an Inclusive classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. I agree with the concept of inclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Continue:**

27. What is your gender? (check one)      \_\_\_\_ male      \_\_\_\_ female

28. How many years have you been educating students with special needs? (check one)

\_\_\_\_ 0-10      \_\_\_\_ 11-20      \_\_\_\_ 21-30      \_\_\_\_ over 30

29. How many years have you been in the education profession? (check one)

\_\_\_\_ 0-10      \_\_\_\_ 11-20      \_\_\_\_ 21-30      \_\_\_\_ over 30

30. Please list other organizational supports needed by elementary school inclusion educators. (answer using the lines below)

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**End of Survey**

**Thank you for completing this research instrument. Please return this document using the enclosed envelope.**

**Royal Palm Exceptional School**

3050 Indian Street, Ft. Myers, FL 33916    phone: (239) 337-3511,

e-mail: [BrianM3@lee.k12.fl.us](mailto:BrianM3@lee.k12.fl.us)

Dear Educator,

A few days from now you will receive a request to fill out a brief questionnaire for an important research project. I am a graduate student at the University of Central Florida and also a teacher at Royal Palm Exceptional Center here in Ft. Myers. As part of my doctoral dissertation project, I am conducting a survey to learn about the attitudes of educators regarding the inclusion of students with special needs in general education classes. I am asking you to participate in this survey because of your “front line” experience in the schools.

I am writing in advance because many people like to know ahead of time that they will be contacted. The study is an important one that will help educational leaders make decisions in the future. Thank you for your time and consideration. It’s only with the generous help of people like you that this research can be successful.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Moore  
Teacher on Assignment  
Royal Palm Exceptional Center

Royal Palm Exceptional School  
3050 Indian Street, Ft. Myers, FL 33916      phone: (239) 337-3511,      e-mail:  
[BrianM3@lee.k12.fl.us](mailto:BrianM3@lee.k12.fl.us)

Dear Educator,

I am writing to ask for your help in a study of teacher attitudes that is being conducted in our school district, as part of my doctoral dissertation project for the University of Central Florida. This study will contribute to the existing research in this particular area. I am contacting a random sample of teachers and administrators to ask their opinions regarding including students with various exceptionalities in elementary classrooms. By understanding the existing opinions and attitudes, leaders will be better prepared to provide supports to the classroom teachers.

Your answers are completely confidential and will be released only as summaries in which no individual's answers can be identified. When you return your completed questionnaire via the PONY (Inner Office Mail), your name will be deleted from the mailing list and never connected to your answers in any way. This survey is voluntary. However, you can help very much by taking a few moments and sharing your responses.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, I will be happy to talk with you. Please call (239) 337-3511.

Thank you very much for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Moore, M.Ed.  
Teacher on Assignment  
Royal Palm Exceptional School

Recently, a questionnaire seeking your opinions about the inclusion of disabled students in general education classes was mailed to you. Your name was selected from a list of elementary school educators.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. I am especially grateful for your help because it is only by asking people like you to share your attitudes and opinions that educational leaders can properly design administrative supports for classroom teachers.

If you did not receive a questionnaire, or it was misplaced, please call or e-mail me and I will get another one to you today.

Thank you, Brian Moore  
Royal Palm, Teacher on Assignment, [BrianM3@lee.k12.fl.us](mailto:BrianM3@lee.k12.fl.us) (239) 337-3511

## Royal Palm Exceptional School

3050 Indian Street, Ft. Myers, FL 33916 phone: (239) 337-3511, e-mail: [BrianM3@lee.k12.fl.us](mailto:BrianM3@lee.k12.fl.us)

Dear Educator,

About four weeks ago I sent a questionnaire to you that asked about your attitudes and opinions regarding teaching children with disabilities. To the best of my knowledge, it has not been returned. The comments of people who have already responded include a wide variety of beliefs and opinions. Many have described the challenges of including disabled children in the same classrooms with their general education peers. The results of this study will be very useful to the educational leaders who provide supports for classroom teachers.

I am writing again because of the importance that your questionnaire has for helping me to get accurate results for my dissertation research project. A replacement questionnaire is enclosed. Receiving information from nearly everyone in the sample will help me be sure that the information is truly representative of the opinions shared by the educators questioned in the survey.

An identification number is printed on the questionnaire so I can check you name off of the mailing list when it is returned. The list of names will then be destroyed so that individual names cannot be connected to the results in any way. Protecting the confidentiality of respondents is very important to me, to the School District of Lee County, and to the University of Central Florida.

I hope that you fill out and return the questionnaire soon. Thank you for participating in this important study.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Moore  
Doctoral Candidate, University of Central Florida  
Teacher On Assignment, Royal Palm Exceptional Center, [BrianM3@lee.k12.fl.us](mailto:BrianM3@lee.k12.fl.us)

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