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Perspectives of Special Education Teachers on Implementation of Inclusion in Four High
Schools in East Tennessee

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

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December 2011

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ABSTRACT

Perspectives of Special Education Teachers on Implementation of Inclusion in Four High Schools in East Tennessee

by

Lori Bellar Goodin

The terminology found in state educational policies coupled with congressional intent provides a supportive framework for integration of inclusion into public education (Duhaney, 1999; Heumann, 1994). The U.S. Department of Education declared that the required continuum of alternative placements reinforces the importance of the consideration of the individual versus programming for the masses in determining what placement is the LRE for each student with a disability (Heumann, 1994). This disagreement of what constitutes the best educational model affects political agendas and funding issues (Idol, 2006).

The purpose of this study was to examine special education teacher perceptions through a qualitative study of inclusion services in the four high schools of Happy Village School System. The special educator's attitude towards inclusion has not been documented as often as that of the regular education teacher (Burgin, 2003; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Tudor, 2004). In this phenomenological study, purposeful sampling techniques and multiple sources of data were necessary to conduct a thorough qualitative study of inclusion in Happy Village high schools. In-depth interviews with 11 participants using a combination of focus groups and one-to-one interviews were conducted using a semistructured format.

The findings from this study concerning special education teachers' perceptions of inclusion services in high school settings are presented here as they relate to the 4 main research questions. The 4 research questions focus on perception, efficacy, factors that facilitate successful incorporation of students with special needs in the regular education class in a high school setting, and barriers to successful incorporation. The findings revealed that all participants supported the concept of mainstreaming and/or progressive inclusion versus the full inclusion model. Participants' identified barriers including communication, attitude, knowledge, and environment. Recommendations are for further research at the secondary level on inclusion programming and for a functional, operational definition of inclusion for the county.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my mother Becky Bellar. When I said, “I can’t” she said, “Why not?” She has continually supported my studies and my career in every way she could. I dedicate this study to my father Charles Ronald Bellar. When my mother was in a coma and on life support he told me to go home and work on my doctorate because that’s what she would have wanted. My father has always supported me and encouraged me to do my best while allowing me to make the choice and choose the path. Because of him I believed that men and women were equal and that with effort and dedication I could be successful.

I dedicate this study to my daughter Savanna Jayne Goodin. It has been a sacrifice on her part to have her mother indulged in her doctorate as she exited her tweens and entered her teens. Savanna, I love you and I believe in you. You will be leaving your father and me very soon to pursue your own interests. It’s my hope that as you have seen me work, struggle, and persevere that it will somehow serve you.

This study is also dedicated to my husband Chris who continually told me he was proud of me. It has not been easy. My pursuit of this degree has affected you and Savanna the most. Thank you for being supportive and for believing in me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

They know that basic human problems can have no final solutions, that our freedom, justice, equality, etc. are far from absolute, and that the good life is compounded of half measures, compromises, lesser evils, and gropings toward the perfect. (Hoffer, 1967, p.103)

One of the most contentious aspects of special education is the extensive integration of the child with special needs into the regular education classroom (Peterson & Hittie, 2003). The legal origins for the movement of educating and assimilating the special needs child can be found in PL94-142 commonly referred to as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. This bill was later reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990-1991. The reauthorization of IDEA continues to present day as the needs and demands of our society shift and legal precedents are set for the student identified through special education. More recently the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA-IA) passed with an emphasis on transition services and continuum of service (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2004). There are states whose leaders have interpreted the law, sometimes as a result of outcomes in lawsuits, to mean more inclusion services for the identified student.

The Regular Education Initiative (REI) in the 1980s moved the responsibility of educating the child with special needs exclusively with the special educator to the arena of regular education (Farley, 2002). Previously special education and regular education operated as a dual system with respect to funding and services to children with disabilities. Regular education had little responsibility for the defined special needs

population (Osgood, 2005). The results of REI served as another springboard for the inclusion movement by advocating “that the general education system assumes primary responsibility for all students in public schools, including identified students with disabilities as those who have special needs” (Kritsonis, 2004, p.15). With a more unified system the regular educator experienced increased interaction with the special education population and more association with the special education teacher (Kritsonis, 2004; Osgood, 2005; Vaughn, 2004).

The reauthorization of IDEA in 1997 redistributed monies to ease financial burdens on impoverished school districts. This reauthorization of IDEA also brought about a change in students rights. The 1997 IDEA emphasized the rights of special needs students whose disabilities might manifest through violent, dangerous, or otherwise disruptive behaviors. Expulsion was no longer the option. Removing expulsion as a default option for administrators forced schools to develop behavior plans and other strategies to address the needs of these students (Osgood, 2005).

Parental involvement reached a new level through IDEA 1997. Legal requirements demanded more paperwork to reflect parental involvement including requiring schools systems to demonstrate multiple attempts to involve parents in the process. The emphasis on parental collaboration granted parents more power for input in their child’s educational plan.

The 1997 IDEA was a more results driven piece of legislation as compared to its predecessors. IDEA 1997 included expectations for more identified students to participate in state and district wide assessments. To accomplish this goal the personnel required in the development of the Individual Education Plan changed. It was now

necessary to include a regular education teacher as well as the already required special education teacher as part of the core IEP team (Kauffman, 1995; Osgood, 2005).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) is federally mandated legislation that provides a backdrop for the inclusion push by requiring highly qualified status for the teacher assigning the grade for a particular subject (Ed.gov, 2009). To be deemed highly qualified, teachers must have a bachelor's degree, full state certification or licensure, and prove that they know each subject they teach (U.S. Dept. of Ed, 2009). With this requirement, the public school had to restructure its organization to meet NCLB standards for grade and classroom assignments. This change was necessary to ensure each primary instructor of a subject possessed highly qualified status affording them and the school the legal right to assign student grades for academic core subjects. In the past the special education teacher was considered the best qualified personnel to instruct and evaluate mastery of subject matter for special needs students in all academic areas. This qualification status was acquired through the certificate of special education. Many special education teachers do not possess highly qualified status in all academic subjects (Cousar, 2007). The general education teacher remains the source of the highly qualified instruction model when special education services are delivered via a consultative basis or through inclusion services (IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2001). This apparent loophole has inadvertently encouraged more support for the inclusion push. Pursuing the coveted highly qualified status in each core subject area is time consuming and expensive (Cousar, 2007). Placing a special education teacher in the classroom for inclusion services allows special education services to be rendered without requiring special education teachers possess highly qualified status for each academic core subject (US.

Dept. of Ed., 2009). In some systems an extensive special education department staff has provided this while others have used inclusion to justify a smaller staff of special education instructors (Kauffman, 1995). The question is whether or not inclusion provides equal if not better outcomes for special education students.

While the terms *mainstreaming* and *inclusion* are not to be found in legislation, each term has been used to define philosophical frameworks for approaching education. Mainstreaming dictates more reliance on pull out programs where the child with special needs is segregated for instruction in a particular core area such as reading and math. In the past the special education teacher has typically been primarily responsible for instruction and for assigning grades. The identified child has often been mainstreamed into courses such as social studies or science with the expectation that with minimal modifications the student could adapt to the regular education class.

Inclusion is a move on a continuum (Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998). Inclusion practices dictate adjustments in the classroom environment to ensure participation and individual progress for the student with special needs. In mainstreaming the child leaves the regular education class and receives academic instruction in a separate class with a specially trained teacher for as much as half of the school day. Inclusion requires the classroom environment to adjust to the child. Mainstreaming requires the child adapt to the classroom environment (Wang & Birch, 1984a). Inclusion allows the child to be integrated into the regular education class with special education personnel available to assist. Instruction and grades are still provided by the highly qualified teacher. Mainstreaming allows the child to be instructed in core subjects by the special education teacher in a separate classroom. Prior to NCLB the special education teacher assigned the

grades through the special education class. The resulting effect of NCLB is a mandate whereby the special education teacher must satisfy highly qualified status for each core area in order to assign grades (Ed.gov, 2009; Kavale & Forness, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

Many factors, such as invested parents, changes in legislation, interpretation of legislation, and advocates have impacted the inclusion movement (Cronis & Ellis, 2000). The purpose of this research is to conduct a qualitative study of inclusion services to identify the components needed for a more effective inclusion program from the perspective of the front-line, the special education teacher in the four high schools of Happy Village School System.

Financial considerations have played a role in the implementation of inclusion programs in public education. Major shares of state and district budgets are allocated to services for students with special needs (Christie, 2008; Cooper, 2009, Green, 2007). According to the U.S Department of Education (2009), as indicated in Lips, Watkins and Fleming (2008), state and local governments provided the largest share of funding for public education in 2007 with 44% supplied by local government and 46.9% funded by the state. In contrast, the federal government supplied 9.2% (Lips et al., 2008; U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2007). Special Education has one of the largest budgets in elementary and secondary education with an allocation of 11.5 billion in 2004-2005 (Lips et al., 2008; U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2007). According to Cooper (2009) the principal expenditure for education is special education with approximately 14 % of students being identified for special services through IDEA. Services rendered through special education account for more than a quarter of all expenses by local districts (Cooper, 2009).

The U.S. Department of Education now estimates that as a nation, we are spending about 90 percent (1.9 times) more on the average eligible student for special education than we do on the average general education student with no special needs (i.e., a student who does not have a disability or who has no need for any type of compensatory education program). (President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002)

This present study examined inclusion and the broader issues surrounding this form of special education service delivery in a public high school setting. The investigation focused on the perspectives of licensed special education teachers and the implementation of the model.

Legislation, lawsuits, and allocation of funds have provided a forum for advocates of inclusion to push their agenda (Cronis & Ellis, 2000; Yell et al., 1998). Definitions and examples of implementation of inclusion programming vary greatly across programs. There are distinctions available for the various forms of inclusion including progressive inclusion, uncompromising inclusion, ideological inclusion, and full inclusion (Osgood, 2005). Full inclusion, ideological inclusion, and uncompromising inclusion refer to the practice of including children with disabilities in the regular classroom 100 % of the time regardless of the handicapping condition (Crockett & Kauffman, 1999; Friend & Bursuck, 1996). Progressive inclusion refers to concentrated emphasis on integrating children identified with special needs into all facets of life at school but recognizing a need for segregated options and therefore continuing to employ the *continuum of services* protocol (Osgood, 2005). This disagreement of what constitutes the best inclusion model affects political agendas and issues of funding (Idol, 2006). There are those who believe every student should completely participate in the regular education classroom regardless of the physical, intellectual, academic, behavioral, or emotional situation of the student (Gartner & Lipsky, 1989; Shanker, 1994; Stainback & Stainback, 1984).

It is in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that we find the root of the clause addressing equality versus segregation. This upheaval over civil liberties cases during the 1960s began with a focus on voting rights for minorities. It is in this social climate of the 1960s that Dunn (1968) wrote his famous article addressing concerns surrounding separate classes for the handicapped student. Dunn (1968) spoke to the justification and morality of a division among classes. This discussion served as the impetus for the inclusion movement in special education. Legislation focusing on educational rights and civil liberties for the person with special needs was a direct result of the initial seed in the 60s (Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993). The article by Dunn (1968) provided ideological momentum for inclusion of the person with special needs into regular classes and society at large but was criticized for its lack of empirical data regarding the benefits of integration (Dunn, 1968; Goldstein, 1967; Guskin & Spicker, 1968).

The cry for lack of empirical evidence is still heard today (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995; Klingner, Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, & Elbaum, 1998). The combination of history, mandates, and philosophies (Sowell, 1995) propels schools to move toward the popular notion of the day. Controversy abounds with special education placements (Block, 1999; Bouck, 2004a; Osgood, 1995; Kauffman, 1995). Governmental entities in a democratic society yield to the demands of the day with the force of the noisiest and most politically backed cultural group of the moment (Sowell, 1995). Public school policy and law are reflected in societal agendas (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Acknowledging the role society plays in school policy, we observe more and more school systems widening inclusive experiences (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Osgood, 2005).

It is with this type of societal upheaval that the Happy Village School system adopted models of inclusion for special education programming. The swift movement by Happy Village to adopt full and partial inclusion models lends credence to the question of Happy Village's preparedness for inclusion.

In 2006 Happy Village implemented inclusion practices. Data have been collected by the county and forwarded to the state educational comptrollers. These data allow a statistical glimpse into student outcomes with inclusion services in place. These data offered an opportunity to investigate the effectiveness of the inclusion model. The basic question is, does inclusion work?

With 66% of Happy Village's special education population being educated more than 80% of the day in the regular education environment it would seem this particular county fully supported the philosophy behind inclusion. Unfortunately, only 46.48%, or less than half, of these students graduated with a regular education diploma in 2007 (Tn. Dept. of Ed., 2009). Tennessee's target for students with disabilities is to decrease the number of dropouts by 1.5% annually. In 2007 Happy Village did not satisfy the state target of a 1.5% decrease in dropouts among special education students (Tn. Dept of Ed, 2009). The number of dropouts actually increased almost doubling 2006s rate of 15.66% to 28.17% (Tn.Dept of Ed, 2009). Information on the 2008 Tennessee Schools Report Card reveals a statewide average of 56.32% of students with disabilities participating in the general education environment for 80% or more of the school day. Of those 2008 special needs students participating in general curriculum 80% or more of the school day only 59.32% graduated with a regular education diploma.

So we have 40.68% of identified students who participate 80% or more of the school day finishing high school without a regular education diploma for the 2008 school year. This is to say that of those students identified with disabilities who participate in regular education most of the time, approximately 41% finished without a regular diploma.

The 2008 statewide dropout rate for students with disabilities is a reported 16.95%. Happy Village's 2008 dropout rate for identified students is slightly above the state average with a comparable 17.81%. As stated previously, the state of Tennessee sets forth an annual target to decrease the dropout rate for students with an Individual Education Plan by 1.5%. From 2007 to 2008 the statewide rates actually increased from 16.40% to 16.95%, causing the state of Tennessee to fall short of its goal. (Tn. Dept. of Ed, 2009).

Tennessee also sets forth a target graduation increase of 1.5% for students with IEPs. The 2008 statewide graduation rate 59.32% allowed the state to meet its target goal by an increase of 3.92%. Happy Village's 2008 graduation rate for students with IEPs was 54.79%. The Happy Village graduation rate for students with IEPs was 4.53% below the state average (Tn. Dept. of Ed., 2009).

Statistics are helpful devices but in this situation is the question of effectiveness as it relates to inclusion services in our high schools answered adequately? While scholars and advocates continue to debate the philosophical contentions, it does remain clear that Happy Village is poised in a unique position to investigate opportunities for improvement in their inclusion service delivery model program in the high schools and

thereby hopefully improve the graduation rate, decrease the dropout rate, and improve skills for the student identified with special needs.

Research Questions

Overarching question: What are the special education teachers' perceptions of inclusion services in the high schools of the county where they are employed?

1. What are the participants' perceptions regarding the practice of inclusion in a public high school setting?
2. What are the participants' perceptions regarding the efficacy of this practice?
3. What factors facilitate successful incorporation of students with special needs in the regular education class in a high school setting?
4. What factors are barriers to successful incorporation of students with special needs in the regular education class?

Significance of the Study

This is a qualitative study of inclusion services in the four high schools of the Happy Village School System. The purpose is to develop a better understanding of the dynamics of the inclusion program from the perspectives of special education teachers. Participants include licensed special education teachers who are currently or have recently been involved in this service delivery program. Through investigating the perceptions of the service delivery persons, information can be collected regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the programs as well as recommendations for service

delivery thereby forming the foundation of this qualitative study. The success of the study hinges on honest responses from the participants.

So often programs are unilaterally instituted without initial input from the service providers. Rowan (1993) takes this approach into account by defining the institutional perspective as being rooted in survivalism. It is necessary for the organization to mirror societal expectations to increase the likelihood of continued existence. Governmental and professional organizations invest in this method by developing complex rules and requirements that are bound to monies necessary for the defined entity to exist. With these complex bureaucracies local practitioners experience limited autonomy while simultaneously being rewarded for conformity (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). As inclusion is rooted in the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s it is understandably and justifiably encompassed in the institutional approach. Inclusion exists with the ideological momentum of the institutional approach but its origins lack the empirical data (Dunn, 1968; Goldstein, 1967; Guskin & Spicker, 1968). The implementation of inclusion in the Happy Village school system was also absent of empirical data to support the move to inclusion. While input was not initially sought for the implementation of inclusion it can be gathered to review inclusion, as it currently exists in the school system. Reviewing inclusion practices and taking into account the experiences of the special education teachers will allow for extraction of crucial input and provide the opportunity for adjustments to the inclusion model for a more effective program.

Per *No Child Left Behind* student success is tied to adequate yearly progress on standardized exams and graduation rates (U.S. Dept of Ed, 2009). Because the

graduation rates for the special education student in Happy Village schools did not satisfy Tennessee benchmarks (Tn. Dept. of Ed., 2009), the significance of this study can be tied to these mandated requirements and Happy Village's failure to satisfy them. Researching outcomes and special education teachers' responses, after the inclusion programs have been implemented in the high schools, provides the opportunity for the special education teacher to give valuable input. If this information is used to establish future goals, the school system can operate as a task oriented versus institutional environment. This will permit the schools to move actively toward specific goals with the necessary resources versus moving reactively to general societal and political trends without resources or evidence of effectiveness

Limitations

This study is limited to a specifically defined group and limits the generalization of findings. The participants are unique, as they must fit the narrow definition of a special education teacher in a high school setting who has worked in an inclusion program in a specified county. The research is based on information rich sources but has a limited number of participants and does not explore the perceptions of any other defined group.

One of the characteristics of qualitative research data collection is the use of the researcher as a "...primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 1998, p.7). Because reality is based on perception, I recognize bias may have influenced interpretation of the interviews. Human instruments are fallible. Personal biases shape the way reality is interpreted. Individuals draw upon life experiences and organize and

accommodate information based on pre-existing schemas (Exner, 1993). Subjective perception is inherent in qualitative research as all observations and analysis are filtered through the individual's mental structures (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). My experiences as a school psychologist in public, private, and mental health settings create the script used to interpret the information conveyed during interviews and observations.

This study may have direct benefits for the inclusion program being examined. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) discuss partial coercion as an ethical consideration. The special education teachers may feel an obligation to participate in the study given the possible advantage for their special education program. This set of circumstances has the potential for impeding true free choice to participate or not participate (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Subjects were assured of confidentiality and the use of pseudo-names to protect their identity but this may not have been enough to free them of internal pressures for participation.

French and Raven's (1959) power bases are a classic study in social organization. My role as a school psychologist in the county where the research is being conducted meets the definition for expert power. Persons with expert power are perceived as having distinctive knowledge, expertise, or ability and skill (French & Raven, 1959). School psychologists function as specialists within the complex organization of school systems (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). When someone has the expertise in an organization people are more convinced to trust them and to respect what they stand for (French & Raven, 1959). It is important to recognize this potential convolution. Any perception of my opinion regarding inclusion could have an effect on the subjects' responses.

Definition of Terms

Within the scope of this study, unless otherwise clarified in reference to specific work, the following terms and acronyms will be used as follows:

Children with Disabilities or Students with Disabilities (SWD) – A child

with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as ‘emotional disturbance’), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services (IDEA, 2004, p. 6).

Highly Qualified - Special education teachers must demonstrate competence in the core academic subjects they are teaching. In the case that a special education teacher is providing instruction to a set of students who are assessed by alternative methods such as portfolio assessments typically used in place of standardized achievement tests for those students certified as mentally retarded, then the special education teacher must possess subject matter knowledge appropriate to the level of instruction being provided, as determined by the State, needed to effectively teach to those standards (IDEA, 2004, p. 8).

Full Inclusion, Ideological Inclusion, Uncompromising Inclusion - The practice of including children with disabilities in the regular classroom 100 % of the time, regardless of the handicapping condition (Crockett & Kauffman, 1999; Friend & Bursuck, 1996).

Progressive Inclusion - A concentrated emphasis on integrating children identified

with special needs into all facets of life at school but recognizing a need for segregated options and therefore continuing to employ the *continuum of services* protocol (Osgood, 2005).

Mainstreaming - The concerted effort to place students with disabilities in the regular education classroom with consideration given to the student's ability to function in that environment. Placements are selective and do not prohibit the identified student from participating part of the day in a pullout resource type setting (Ferguson, 2000).

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - To the maximum extent appropriate children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (IDEA, 2004, p. 31).

Individualized Education Program (IEP) - A written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with a statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance. The IEP includes a statement of measurable annual goals including academic and functional goals as well as a description of how the child's is progressing towards meeting the annual goals and a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services. A statement regarding the program modifications or supports for school

personnel will be provided for the child as well as an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class. The IEP will include a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on State and districtwide assessments consistent with section (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2009).

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) - A free appropriate public education is available to all children with disabilities residing in the State between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school (IDEA, 2004, p. 31).

Regular Education Initiative (REI) - Originating in the 1980s, REI is a federally initiated generalized vision of shared responsibility for children with disabilities between regular education and special education, with the latter becoming less visible (Jenkins, Pious, & Jewell, 1990; Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1987).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) - The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has been reauthorized as the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2002. *No Child Left Behind* focuses on accountability by data collection and implementation of adherence to standards set forth by the federal government. These standards are tied to financial inducements. NCLB includes more choices for parents in the form of student help, school choice, and charter schools. Greater local control and flexibility for states extend to requirements and definitions for annual yearly progress, graduation rates, and acceptable student

achievement levels. NCLB focuses on scientifically based research from fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, and neuroscience, and especially from research in educational settings (Ed.gov, 2009).

Overview of the Study

This qualitative study gives voice to special education teachers regarding their perceptions for inclusion in the high school setting. Chapter 1 included an introduction to the topic, statement of the problem, significance of the study, limitations of the study, research questions, definitions, and an overview. Chapter 2 consisted of a review of current literature involving the history of inclusion including significant legislation and key literature. Chapter 3 provided a description of methods and procedures. Chapter 4 comprised the analyses and interpretation of data collected through interviews. Conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations for practice and further research were presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The overall purpose of this qualitative study was to examine special education teacher perceptions of inclusion services in the four high schools of the Happy Village School System. According to Cook et al. (1999) positive attitudes of key school personnel are critical prerequisites for successful inclusion. The identification and incorporation of primary attitudes and techniques from the front-line perspective of the special educator is critical to the provision of special education programs with the most successful outcomes. Special educators are put in the unique position to sell inclusion to parents, administrators, and regular education teachers (Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). The special educator's attitude towards inclusion has not been documented as often as that of the regular education teacher (Burgin, 2003; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Tudor, 2004). Special education teachers who work with students through inclusion have specialized training and are frequently seen as knowledgeable advocates for children with disabilities (Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). The attitude of the special education teacher is pivotal in the success or failure of inclusion (Cook et al., 1999; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997).

Inclusion has evolved through a history of litigation, legislation, and research in special education (Duhaney, 1999; Kavale & Forness, 2000). Coupled with lawsuits and political correctness, inclusion has been ushered in despite the lack of empirical evidence for its formation and application (Baker & Zigmond, 1995; Dunn, 1968; Goldstein, 1967; Guskin & Spicker, 1968; Johnson, Pugach, & Hammitte, 1988; Wolfensberger, 1994; Zigmond et al., 1995). It is important to note that inclusion is not a federal mandate

(IDEA, 2004), yet many states have policy and position statements on inclusion services (Duhaney, 1999). Tennessee is one such state with a position statement on inclusion. Tennessee's position on inclusion has been categorized as enthusiastic and supportive (Duhaney, 1999; Fisher, 2006). Such policy statements have a trickle down effect on the local education agency's provision of services (Kauffman, 1989; Osgood, 2005). But even with policy statements the method of service provision varies from state to state, county to county, and school to school. What seem to be consistent are the continual references to IDEA (2004) and *least restrictive environment* and the terminology *maximum appropriate* and *free and appropriate education* or FAPE.

No state has put forth a position statement mandating inclusion for children with disabilities (Duhaney, 1999). State level educational policies include terminology directly from IDEA (2004). The terminology found in state educational policies coupled with congressional intent provides a supportive framework for integration of inclusion into public education (Duhaney, 1999; Heumann, 1994).

IDEA 2004 notes a continuum of placements including instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions while also allowing for provision of supplementary services or itinerant instruction that is to be provided in conjunction with regular class placements. In a memorandum addressing least restrictive environment and inclusion, the U.S. Department of Education stated that the required continuum of alternative placements "reinforces the importance of the individualized inquiry, not a 'one size fits all' approach in determining what placement is the LRE for each student with a disability" (Heumann, 1994, p. 5-6). With this clarification for a continuum of alternative placements, there

remains support for those who argue inclusion is not the right answer for all children with disabilities and cannot be required. Currently, the law still prevails requiring placement decisions be determined by the Individual Education Program teams, that these decisions be made on a case by case basis, and that the focus be on the needs of the student (IDEA, 2004). Nonetheless, the intent of Congress through the least restrictive environment clause and integration of the child with disabilities in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible requires the local education agency to always initially give consideration to the regular education class (Heumann, 1994).

There are fierce advocates for full inclusion including Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped Children (TEACHH, 2006) and The Association for Severely Handicapped Persons (TASH, 2009). Advocates claim many benefits for the special education student including positive effects from daily interaction with regular education students and exposure to a more diverse curriculum through general education (Harrower, 1999; TASH, 2009). Normalization of life for the family whose makeup consists of a child with disabilities is touted as a primary tenet for full inclusion (TASH, 2009; TEACHH, 2006; Turnbull, Summers, & Brotherson, 1986). Advocates promoting inclusion cite the opportunity for all siblings to attend the same school and for children with disabilities to have the same types of experiences as their nondisabled community based peers (TASH, 1999; TEACHH, 2006). Supposedly, full inclusion is a step in the goal towards independent functioning as an adult and broader acceptance of individuals with disabilities by society at large (An Inclusive Talkback: Critics Concerns and Advocates' Responses, 1996; Inclusion and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1996). It is the sociopolitical assertion and belief of full

inclusion advocates that all children, even those with disabilities, can learn. Furthermore, the format of the general curriculum is contended to be more enriching and socially appropriate for the child identified with special needs (McClesky & Waldron, 2007). Advocates of full inclusion assert it is the child with disabilities right to be educated alongside his or her same aged peers (Dunn 1968; Keogh, 1990; Kritsonis, 2004; Pugh, 1990; TASH, 2009; TEACHH, 2006).

From Segregation to Assimilation

The historical practice of segregating the physically impaired, mentally ill, or mentally disabled from mainstream society in the Western world is reported to have occurred as early as fourth century A.D. (Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993). Physically placing individuals who were blind, deaf, physically deformed, epileptic, insane, or retarded into hospitals and hospices was an accepted routine (Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993). Physicians, clergy, rabbis, and other religious figures were looked to for expertise in leading the practice of identification and treatment for those with obvious physical malformations and less obvious cognitive or mental impairments (Osgood, 2005). Disabled persons were ostracized out of fear and a lack of understanding (Deutsch, 1937; Osgood, 2005). It was not uncommon for these disabled individuals to be accused of being demonized, literally with possessions of spirits (Deutsch, 1937; Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993). At minimum the persons were considered dangerous and despicable. Families of the afflicted hid them from the view of others, trying to protect them and the integrity of their families (Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993).

The deaf and blind were among the first groups of disabled persons to receive purposeful intervention from society (Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993). Both occurrences

took place in Europe with individuals identified as deaf receiving intervention around the 1500s and persons identified blind receiving intervention around the 1700s (Osgood, 2005). In the 1700s North America experimented with organized care when the *mad ward* was established in the Pennsylvania Hospital. Similar settings began springing up in America with the typical treatment to include restraint in the form of shackling and isolation. Other medical interventions included bloodletting. During the 1800s private and public institutions began attempting formalized education of the deaf, the blind, and the *idiots* (Deutsch, 1937). Thomas Galludet and Samuel Howe are credited with the establishments of the first schools for the deaf and the blind (Lash, 1980). According to Lash (1980) Laura Bridgeman, a deaf, dumb, and blind child, was popularized as a successful experiment when she was able to demonstrate the efficacy of their methodologies in educating one previously seen as uneducable. Her successes were touted in high society. Marketing for financial support of these specialized schools occurred by appealing to wealthy Christians (Lash, 1980). Howe sold the idea of his schools being a part of the larger public school system in a speech delivered in 1853 when he claimed these institutions “were not properly asylums, but public schools; and the pupils have as much right to the benefits as such as ordinary children in the common school” (Osgood, 2005, p. 21). Howe did not describe inclusion as current society defines it but expressed there was a place for these students and these schools in the continuum of the public education structure.

The public school system developed in the United States of America in the early and late 1800s (Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Tudor, 2004). Urban centers experienced the quickest growth of these large, complex public systems. Larger cities

like Boston and New York had 80 to 90 students, all of various backgrounds, abilities, preparation, and interests, often together in one classroom under the instruction of a single teacher (Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Within this population were students with a myriad of hidden and apparent disabilities (Deutsch, 1937; Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Many of the children teachers described as academically weak and ill behaved were identified as immigrants (Deutsch, 1937; Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Winzner, 1993). These types of conditions led to the creation of separate schools to segregate the ill prepared, ill behaved, and academically less capable (Deutsch, 1937; Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Villa & Thousand, 1995; Winzer, 1993).

The establishment of a tax base to provide funding for public education won support when masses of immigrants crowding into cities and schools created problems in the classrooms (Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Winzer, 1993). Education for *Americanization* was touted as a must (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Tudor, 2004). There was a collective concern regarding maintenance of current standards of living and public education was seen as a means for acculturation of the masses (Villa & Thousand, 1995). While children who had never had the benefit of education before were now experiencing formalized instruction, the disabled child remained segregated (Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993; Yell et al., 1998). Strong sentiment ran in favor of this segregation (Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993; Yell et al., 1998). Segregation was expressed as the most humane and efficient means to educate the capable and to protect the vulnerable (Lash, 1980; Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993; Yell et al., 1998). J.E. Wallace Wallin, a psychologist and pioneer in special education in the early 1900s, pronounced the removal

of the mentally deficient and otherwise disabled benefited the normal students. He further declared that the *subnormal* student, “represents...an unassimilable accumulation of human clinkers, ballast driftwood, or derelicts which seriously retards the rate of progress of the entire class and which often constitutes a positive irritant to the teacher and other pupils” (Wallin, 1924, p.10). Wallin (1924) cited the behavior problems individuals dubbed *subnormal* would inevitably experience. Wallin (1924) claimed the disabled students would experience frustration when they were unable to maintain pace with their normal peers. He used depictions of student frustration as evidence for the need to segregate the disabled student from the nondisabled student (Wallin, 1924). The inordinate amount of time spent with the challenged child was believed to be time wasted when other children could more readily benefit from the energies of instruction (Palmaffy, 2001; Yell et al., 1998). Wallin justified the segregation by relieving the disabled child of feelings of deficiency and “...escape from the taunts, jeers, jokes, and gibes sometimes suffered at the hands of their normal playfellows...In the special class...they will encounter an atmosphere of mutual understanding, helpfulness, and sympathy...” (1924, p. 10). Conjecture among the leaders in science and education in the late 1800s and early 1900s mimicked the belief of separation for the good of society and for the benefit of the disabled. Those students who deviated from the mainstream of society found themselves further separated by being largely ignored, put in remote special classes, or institutionalized (Henley et al., 1996; Osgood, 2004 & Yell et al., 1998). Early public education tracked students by allowing them access to the regular curriculum or placing them in special classes (Henley et al., 1996). For those segregated students institutionalization was often the inevitable end (Henley et al., 1996; Osgood,

2004). In a presentation to the National Education Association in 1908, E.R. Johnstone surmised:

(The special education class) must become a clearinghouse. To it will be sent the slightly blind and partially deaf, but also incorrigibles, the mental deficient, and the cripples...the only thing to do is give the best of care and training possible. Keep them in the special classes until they become too old for further care in school, and then they must be sent to the institutions for safety. (Johnstone, 1908, 114-118)

By 1918 compulsory education laws were in place in every U.S. state (Burgin, 2003; Osgood, 2004; Villa & Thousand, 1995; Yell et al., 1998). With mandatory education polices, special classes in public schools became more commonplace (Osgood, 2005; Tudor, 2004). Nonetheless in 1919 in the case of *Beattie V. Board of Education* the Wisconsin State Supreme court supported the expulsion of a student diagnosed with cerebral palsy from public school. The student had a condition that caused him to drool, experience facial contortions, and demonstrate related speech problems. The Wisconsin State Supreme court ruled the child's condition nauseated teachers and other students, required too much teacher time, and negatively affected school discipline and progress (Yell et al., 1998). Despite compulsory education laws in the early 1900s, states could still exclude certain students, in particular the child who was disabled. This practice benefited from legal decisions lending full support for segregation from early 20th century through the 1960s (Pulliam & Patten, 2007; Osgood, 1995; Wizner, 1993). Burgin (1990) references specific examples such as Wizner's (1993) citation of the 1930s state mandate requiring general compulsory attendance with a provision that allowed systems the right to opt out of educating certain pupils. In *Department of Welfare v. Haas* (1958) the Supreme Court in Illinois ruled compulsory attendance laws did not extend to children with disabilities. Weber (1992) cites a 1963 general sessions statute in North

Carolina that made it a crime for a parent to try to enroll a child with a disability in public school after the child had been expelled due to a disability. The statute remained in place and was applied as late as 1969 (Weber, 1992).

The time period leading up to the 1960s has been called the Progressive Era in education with emphasis on concepts that stressed social objectives and individual development (Haring & McCormick, 1990). The struggles during that time period serve to illustrate the advancement of attitudes towards the child with disabilities. It was during this time that the first theories on learning processes and development were advanced (Haring & McCormick, 1990; Mercer, 1997; Pulliam & Patten, 2007). Exploration of learning disorders and interventions also occurred during this period (Mercer, 1997). The *life adjustment movement* is an example of the types of issues American education struggled with during the progressive era. This movement shifted the focus in education from purely academic pursuits to the industrial arts or what is commonly referred to as vocational development (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Vocational development was geared for students who would not be attending college but who could still benefit from alternative forms of education. The central tenet for the vocational movement was mass education. Those in favor of the movement declared the program offered an equalization of educational opportunity (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Critics asserted the program lowered academic standards in an effort to accommodate students who did not benefit from standard coursework (Hayes, 2006). The progressive era promoted differentiated instruction by identifying, monitoring, and addressing the needs of special populations (Richardson, 2006).

Even with special education classes in place in many school districts segregation was still the expectation (Kavale & Forness, 2000). These special nongraded classes allowed the child with a disability to attend school while remaining separated from other students (Lipsky & Garner, 1998). It would not be unusual for one to observe the children placed in these classes engaged in menial types of activities. Academic tasks and the development of adaptive skills were out of the question because these students were not believed capable of more (Friend & Bursuck, 1996; Tudor, 2004).

In the 1960s special education saw an increased focus on subsidies by the federal government. Developmental and learning theories were expanded (Mercer, 1997). Advocacy groups became more organized and assessment of special needs students increased. This created an opportunity for the child with disabilities to become more involved in the public domain, including public schools and regular education classes (Mercer, 1997; Osgood, 2004; Tudor, 2004). Legislation, programming, and research that happened in the 60s created the opportunity for inclusion to be brought to the forefront. As societal shifts in thinking addressed issues of segregation at large, the door was opened to the discussion of segregation and inadequate education of students with disabilities.

Changes in perception and treatment of individuals with disabilities occurred from the 4th century A.D. to the 1960s (Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Winzer, 1993). Initially ostracized from society, it was not until the 1500s that the first identifiable groups of disabled persons experienced purposeful intervention (Osgood, 2005). Mass immigration in the United States during the late 1800s created unique difficulties and opportunities in the American educational system (Osgood, 2005; Pulliam

& Van Patten, 2007; Tudor, 2004). Establishing a tax base helped with funding for education and acculturation of recently immigrated students and their families but did not provide for education of the disabled (Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993; Yell et al., 1998). Public sentiment remained strong for continued segregation of the disabled child (Lash, 1980; Osgood, 2005; Weber, 1992; Winzer, 1993; Yell et al., 1998). Compulsory education laws in place by the early 1900s made special classes in schools more prevalent, but the courts and society continued to favor segregated classes and exclusion of the disabled student from public education (Burgin, 2003; Osgood, 2005; Tudor, 2004; Villa & Thousand, 1995; Winzer, 1993; Yell et al., 1998). The Progressive Era in education that lead up to the 1960s saw an emphasis on social objectives and individual development (Haring & McCormick, 1990). Vocational programming emerged from the stress on educational opportunity and advancement (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Nonetheless, the child with disabilities remained largely segregated in society and in public education (Friends & Bursuck, 1996; Hayes, 2006; Richardson. 2006; Tudor, 2004).

Increased funding for special education occurred in the 1960s (Mercer, 1997; Osgood, 2004; Tudor, 2004). Along with the funding came a focus on assessment of children with special needs and better-organized advocacy groups (Mercer, 1997; Yell et al., 1998). These changes in funding and interest created the opportunity to move towards desegregation for the student with special needs.

Civil Rights and Finances

A policy basis for the evolution of the inclusion model is substantiated in the Civil Rights movement. In *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) in *separate is equal* by declaring the practice of segregating schools on the basis of race to be unconstitutional. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) is considered a landmark case for the court systems to apply the separate is not equal clause and "... paved the way for blacks to be integrated into American public schools" (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007, p. 180). This new concern for civil rights and efforts to meet the needs of students eventually encompassed the child with disabilities (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Osgood, 2005; Tudor, 2004; Winzer, 1993). Segregation in public schools was determined to be a denial of equal protection of laws and made it unfeasible to defend segregation for other groups of minorities including the child with special needs (Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007).

The Civil Rights Act (1964) is another example of precedent-setting legislation. Signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on July 2, 1964, this act prohibited discrimination in public places, provided for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and made employment discrimination illegal (Civil Rights Act, 1964; Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005). Financial incentives were tied to the implementation of this act by specifying that no person could be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, or national origin in any program that received federal assistance (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). By including clauses tied to monies and means of integration, federal funding could be withheld from schools districts or states that failed to integrate (Pulliam & Van Patten,

2007). The Civil Rights Act was considered the most inclusive piece of legislation for civil rights since Reconstruction (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005). The 1964 passage of this piece of federal legislation laid the groundwork for future civil rights cases. An example of one such suit is the Pennsylvania Association of Retarded Citizens (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1971). The outcome of this lawsuit was pivotal for mainstreaming students with disabilities. The ruling for this case was based on the Fourteenth Amendment and the notion of separate facilities being unequal. As a result the Philadelphia public schools were court ordered to place disabled students in the least restrictive environment and to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) suited for the students' ability (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1971). Placement in a regular public school class was deemed preferential to placing the child with disabilities in a separate facility (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005). If the student could not be placed in a regular school class, the alternative was to place the student with special needs a special public school class for the disabled (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005).

Mills v. Board of Education (1972) was a federal court case addressing mainstreaming and funding. The findings resulted in legalizing segregation of the disabled student. The court case stipulated that segregated classes must guarantee educational benefits that were measurable in educational terms (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Mills v. Board of Education, 1972). More importantly, the issue of how to pay for expensive specialized services for the child with a disability was addressed. It was the contention of the defense that services were cost prohibitive. The court rendered a decision directing the district to provide for the students needs regardless

of cost and to factor financial needs for educating the disabled into budgets. Essentially, FAPE was defended with the public school shouldering the cost. The financial burden was directly removed from the families. Additionally, the court found that equitable spending among disabled and nondisabled students was not sufficient as the practice could be considered discriminatory because the needs of the disabled student could be greater (Osgood, 2005).

Civil Rights legislation provided us with legal precedents and terminology binding the public school system to services for the student with special needs (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Mercer, 1997; Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Tudor, 2004). Rights rendered through changes in civil policy and law affected services and funding for disabled students' (Civil Rights Act, 1964; Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Mercer, 1997; Mills v. Board of Education, 1972; Osgood, 2005; PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1971; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Tudor, 2004). These changes in funding and civil rights set precedents that remain in effect today (Civil Rights Act, 1964; Mills v. Board of Education, 1972; Osgood, 2005; PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1971; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act

The Elementary Education and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) inadvertently provided another financial channel for fiscally supporting special education. ESEA emphasized giving money to provide services for children in need (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Osgood, 2005; Tudor, 2004; Yell et al., 1998). The amount of money to be secured through grants provided by ESEA was so great that many school districts went through reorganization to qualify (Federal Education Policy

and the States, 2005). One hundred million dollars was included in ESEA (1965) for research in the educational field of education with the United States Office of Education being charged with distributing the funds (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). ESEA was extended for 4 more years in 1966, costing approximately \$12 billion (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). States and school systems developed bureaucratic structures aimed at procuring as much of the monies from ESEA as possible (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005). Congress's intent with ESEA was to target economically disadvantaged children but with the reorganization and development of new bureaucracies even wealthy school systems took advantage of the opportunity. An example of this can be found in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1967, where \$25,000 in ESEA monies was accepted by a district situated in affluent White Fish bay. The \$25,000 was used to organize a new program in special education for children identified as learning disabled (Federal Educational Policy and the States, 2005). ESEA money was not intended to be distributed to wealthy districts. When news of the money being awarded to an affluent suburb instead of the intended poor children was publicized, there were critics who accused White Fish bay of stealing (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005). In response to the accusation, the city's Congressional representative replied, "If they [his fellow members of Congress] write stupid laws, well, that's their problem" (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005, p. 17).

Publications of abuse and manipulation along with frustration in procuring funds caused the effectiveness of ESEA to be called into question. Policy analysts Phyllis McClure of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund and Ruby Martin of the Southern Center for Studies in Public Policy released a study of Title I (Federal

Education Policy and the States, 2005). Title I is a subsidy of ESEA and focuses on the needs of the poorest students (Winzer, 1993). The study questioned whether the program was helping the economically disadvantaged child and alleged that a number of states had misused funds and as a result had undermined the integrity of the program (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005). An audit of the program revealed inequitable distribution of funds to suburban schools over economically depressed urban schools (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Yell et al., 1998). A review of records from two scholars, Chris Cohen and Tyll van Geel, exposed poor accountability practices and data collection (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Murphy, 1971). The audit uncovered problems with unremitted unused funds, documentation of overtime for teachers providing services, insufficient time and attendance records, as well as a lack controls for equipment and accounting procedures (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005).

Title I was one of VII titles issued under ESEA (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). By 1975 the government had boosted federal aid to special education to \$660 million (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005). These grants, like all grants to the disabled, flowed to school districts regardless of their wealth. Every title under ESEA provided huge amounts of money to the schools to address issues of poverty, segregation, and equal educational opportunity (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). In return schools were expected to generate academic gains. The chief provision underlying the ESEA was that schools receiving federal grants had to help children overcome the effects that poverty had on learning (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Pulliam & Van

Patten, 2007; Yell et al., 1998; Winzer, 1993). The audit by McClure and Martin put the federally subsidized ESEA program under scrutiny (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005). Revelations of misappropriations, poor accounting practices, and failure to link the outpouring of money to academic gains prompted an overhaul of management practices from the government (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005).

Government officials proposed the development of the National Institute of Education (NIE) to analyze programs to study the correlation between federal aid and academic performance of students in inner city schools. This was the beginning of accountability measures and federal funds in education (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005).

As the years progressed amendments were forthcoming to ESEA. The amended Title VI and Title VII of ESEA focused on a nonpoverty clause, allowing states to receive large sums of monies for programs such as dropout prevention, programs for the gifted, equity programs for women and Native Americans, and programs for the arts, math, and others (Federal Education and Policy of the States, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). These programs were considered compensatory and fit the logic of the nonpoverty related to poverty related thinking. That is, there are other dynamics besides being born into poverty that can lead to a poverty stricken life (Federal Education and Policy of the States, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Yell et al., 1998; Winzer, 1993). The disabled student was included in the conception of the nonpoverty clause. With these amendments to ESEA in 1974-1975 more money meant an expansion of special education programming for the mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, and physically handicapped (Federal Education Policy of the States, 2005; Osgood, 2004; Yell et al., 1998). More money for programs meant more attention was paid to special education.

Problems with funding and accountability for special education and Title I continue today. Interestingly, the areas of concern are the same as reported in the audit by McClure and Martin in 1969. These areas include improving low performing schools, data systems, academic standards, and teacher effectiveness. These four areas are the expected assurances states must make to qualify for stimulus funds, now commonly referred to as the Race to the Top reform in education (McNeil, 2010).

Race to the Top

The Race to the Top reform is a grant based program described as fiscal stabilizing funding and, according to current Education Secretary Arne Duncan, likely to form the basis for the reauthorization of ESEA (Klein, 2010). The Race to the Top campaign includes \$3 billion in grant funding. States must compete for the funding and agree to the four assurances as a condition (Klein, 2010). According to Chris Sciarra, the executive director of the Education Law Center, a Newark, N.J. based law firm, “A lot of states used [stimulus funds] to make the distribution of money to their high poverty districts worse” (as cited in McNeil, 2010, p. 1). Reasons for questioning the distribution of monies lie in the states’ funding formulas. Less than 60 % of state funding is determined through the *primary* formula. States avoided cuts to the primary formulas but significantly reduced monies for other programs targeting disadvantaged children (Sciarra, Farrie, & Baker, 2010). Financial distribution of funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 also affected disbursement of funds to programs serving needy children (Sciarra, Farrie, & Baker, 2010). “Since roughly \$40 billion in the stimulus program’s State Fiscal Stabilization Fund was distributed through

each state's primary funding formula, any existing flaws in those formulas were only exacerbated once more money poured in" (McNeil, 2010, p.1).

Long-term consequences may be expected with stimulus funding opportunities, including \$12 billion earmarked for special education (McNeil, 2010). States have searched for and found loopholes built into stimulus laws and flexibility in distribution rules of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. IDEA is the federal special education mandate dictating services and monies for states and schools in the public education system (Burgin, 2003; Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Winzer, 1993; Yell, 1998). These loopholes allow states and school districts to lower their contribution levels to special education. States and districts impacted by the struggling economy and realizing less money through tax appropriations used these provisions and other laws to maintain current funding levels by taking the new stimulus money, decreasing their contributions to special education and then taking the money previously identified for special education and applying it to other areas of need (McNeil, 2010; Sciarra et al., 2010). Financial problems are likely to occur when the stimulus money runs out and states and districts can no longer afford to fund their programs (McNeil, 2010; Sciarra et al., 2010).

Other cases impacting the method for identification and ultimately funding originate out of California. The *Diana v. State Board of Education* (1970) and *Larry P. v. Riles* (1972) impacted the use of standardized tests and identification of minorities. In both cases minority students were identified for special education using what was ultimately considered culturally and linguistically biased tests. At issue was the application of the mental retardation certification. The courts opined there was

overrepresentation of minorities in special education and directed the schools to address the process of certification and to provide compensatory education (Osgood, 2005). This affected the finances of the public by forcing them to invest more monies into the certification process and by impacting the dollars for disability categories on the census.

ESEA significantly impacted services for the underprivileged, including children with handicapping conditions. Congress extended millions of dollars to be released through ESEA for programs to help disadvantaged children (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Yell et al., 1998). Congress intended the monies to go to economically depressed communities, but loopholes in regulations allowed wealthy districts to take advantage of the economic opportunity. Studies conducted by scholars revealed abuse and misappropriation of funds (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005). The NIE was instituted as a result of findings of fiscal abuses and thus began accountability measures for federal funds in education (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005). Problems with fiscal accountability practices for special education and federal funds continue in the modern educational climate (McNeil, 2010). One of the federal initiatives currently under scrutiny is the Race to the Top grant based program (Klein, 2010). McNeil (2010) and Sciara et al. (2010) report manipulation of state funding formulas in order to allow local programs to usurp more federal dollars. This realignment of financial distribution is expected to negatively impact programs when the federal stimulus money is no longer available and states and districts lack the monies to support areas of need. Other historical events affecting funding and special education include court cases finding overrepresentation of minorities as mentally retarded. Courts reacted by forcing schools to provide more financing to support the

certification process and to tie monies to disability categories on the census (Osgood, 2005).

Vocational Rehabilitation Act

Continual issues with segregation, discrimination, and distribution of funds from the federal government have resulted in litigation that affects the organization and structure of special education. An example of this is found in the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This act served to extend civil rights to the child with disabilities but did not increase financial contributions to school systems. This act also rendered a working definition of what constitutes a qualified handicapped individual (Fisher & Wilson, 2009). A handicapped individual was defined as a person that had a mental or physical impairment that resulted in the likelihood of substantially limiting gainful employment and one who could realistically profit from services through vocational rehabilitation (Rehabilitation Act, 1973). This piece of legislation aimed to prevent discrimination against the disabled in programs that accepted funding from the federal government. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act assured children with disabilities would be able to participate in a multitude of activities that were school related or school based (Friend & Bursuck, 1996, Tudor, 2004). While the bill provided legal language guaranteeing protection from discrimination to individuals with disabilities, it was largely ignored by many schools due to the lack of funding and monitoring by the federal government (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996). The Vocational Rehabilitation Act contained some of the same language found in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 specifically pertaining to discrimination based on race and national origin (Yell, 1998). Language from Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972

addressing discrimination based on gender could also be found in the Vocational Rehabilitation Act (Yell et al., 1998). Though language from previous pieces of civil rights legislation was used in the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, the public was left confused about types of protections offered by this act and available recourse should their rights be violated (Yell et al., 1998). Special education advocates continued to push for reform with a focus on more appropriate educational settings and legislation that would provide the mechanism for that agenda (Jarrow, 1999).

Education for All Handicapped Children Act

With the landmark Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975, otherwise known as P.L. 94-142, federal mandates were put into place to ensure children with disabilities would receive a free appropriate public education or FAPE (Federal Education and Policy of the States, 2005; Mercer, 1997; Osgood, 2004, Tudor, 2004; Winzer, 1993; Yell et al., 1998). With this provision came certain rights protected by law, assistance by the Federal government to the states and local school systems, and the requirement for assessment to assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate all children with disabilities (EAHCA, 1975; Yell et al., 1998). Prior to 1975 children with disabilities and their families had few rights as related to education in the public school domain with educational opportunities and settings for delivery of service being severely limited (Burgin, 2003; Palmaffy, 2001; Osgood, 2004; Yell et al., 1998). EAHCA was a Congressional response after learning that more than 1 million children with disabilities were entirely excluded from the educational system and that those children with disabilities who had only limited access to the education system were subsequently denied the full educational opportunity (EAHCA, 1975; Osgood, 2005; Yell et al., 1998).

EAHCA was a sweeping event for special education with huge increases in funding for the states (Burgin, 2003; Palmaffy, 2001). After President Ford signed EAHCA into law in 1975, the federal government committed 3 to 5 billion dollars in reimbursements to states and school systems, providing fiscal support for increasing financial burdens that would come with compliance to EAHCA. According to the plan reimbursements were to increase in a step-by-step fashion every year for the following 5 years (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005). The initial funding increase was set at 5% with increases of 10% for the 2nd year, 20% for the 3rd year, 30% for 4th year and 40% for the 5th year (Federal Education and Policy of the states, 2005; Palmaffy, 2001). President Ford expressed concern that PL 94-142 would be a largely unfunded mandate tying systems to legal requirements but without enough financial appropriations (Federal Education and Policy of the states, 2005). He speculated monies provided would be used for administrative services versus educational services and that expectations for the children with disabilities were being falsely raised. The complexity of EAHCA and the anticipated costs prompted President Ford to caution Congress to reduce financial obligation requirements for adherence to mandated regulations. If Congress did not make what President Ford felt to be necessary changes to the funding promises and regulatory requirements of EAHCA, he warned that, “good intentions could be thwarted by the many unwise provisions it contains” (Federal Education and Policy of the States, 2005, p.38). President Ford can be credited with some insight in his warnings as EAHCA has never been fully funded. “Congress has promised for 25 years to fully fund IDEA, yet funding is at 14.8% to 19%” (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007, p. 282.) That’s a significant deviation from the purported 40% of appropriation per pupil

expenditure originally authorized by Congress. Federal funding has never matched the recommendation from Congress, but the provisions and regulatory requirements in EAHCA incited a barrage of identified students and special education programming (Martin et al., 1996; Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Yell et al., 1998). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2009), there has been a continual increase in the percentage of students receiving special education services since the enactment of PL94-142 in 1975 until the academic year 2004-2005. Curiously, the number of children identified with disabilities actually declined through 2006-2007. In 1975 children receiving services numbered 3.7 million or around 5%. NCES (2009) reported an increase of 3 million students to a total of 6.7 million or 9% by 2006-2007. The increase in identified students and special education services made it necessary to add more special education personnel to meet the demands. According to the US Department of Education (2000) there were 331,453 special education teachers and related service providers in 1976. Statistics collected by the US Department of Education in a study completed in 2006 estimated the number of special education teachers providing services to children ages 3 through 21 in the fall of 2003 to number approximately 439,000. In comparison, special education teachers held a total of about 473,000 jobs in 2008 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). The total number of special education teachers and related service providers working with students ages 3 through 21 in 2003 was documented at over 1,000,000 (US Department of Education, 2006), tripling from 1976 to 2003 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009).

The NCES expects special education teachers to increase by 15% between the years 2006 and 2016 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). This rise outpaces

the average increase for all other occupations (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Student enrollment is expected to rise slowly with continued increases in the number of students being identified for special education and accompanying services producing a demand for more special education personnel (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Increased identification is likely due to improved assessment techniques, earlier diagnosis, and increased survival rates of children with serious medical problems (Presidents Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002).

Standards for training and requirements for viable employment in the field of special education along with emphasis on vocational preparation, transition plans for special education students, renewed emphasis on graduation rates, and requirements for children with disabilities have contributed to the need for more special education personnel (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). There is an expectation that foreign born students will be more readily identified for special education as teachers become more experienced and skilled at distinguishing disabilities in that population. With more difficult demands being legislated with regards to student achievement in the classroom, parents will be more likely to seek assistance through special education services (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009).

EAHCA was passed to extend and enforce laws governing educational rights and schools responsibilities for disabled students' (Burgin, 2003; Palmaffy, 2001). The federal government released billions of dollars into education in an effort to monetarily boost the school systems in their financial obligations for special education services (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005). Federal reimbursements were initially set to increase in a systematic fashion to support the EAHCA initiatives (Federal

Education Policy and the States, 2005, Palmaffy, 2001). EAHCA has yet to be fully funded despite increases in mandates for special education services (Martin et al., 1996; Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Yell et al., 1998). Increased service demands forced the labor market for special education teachers to triple from 1973 to 2006 (Bureaus of Labor Statistics, 2009) and NCES expects the labor force in special education to increase by 15% between 2006 and 2016 (NCES, 2009).

Regular Education Initiative

As parents seek assistance for their children through special education, the inclusion model, with the regular education teacher as the highly qualified professional in the lead, will likely be the placement where the services are delivered. The Regular Education Initiative (REI) of the Reagan administration in the 1980s is a federal initiative that encourages inclusion services. Proponents of REI postulated all children were on a continuum of physical, intellectual, and emotional development and the categorizing of subgroups of children into learning disabled and mentally retarded served no real purpose other than to further segregate and isolate students (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Will, 1986).

Advocates of REI urged for a discontinuance of the dual system of regular education and encouraged the development of a unified special education for all students (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Will, 1986). They claimed every student deserved an individualized education and the regular education teacher should be the professional providing the service (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). The REI was based on a number of assumptions. First, students are more alike than different making special education services unnecessary. Second, good teachers are capable of

teaching any and all students. Third, certification of students for special education categorization is not needed in order for students to be provided with a quality education. Fourth, segregation is not necessary for general education classroom management. Finally, the segregation of students according to handicapping conditions is discriminatory and does not provide for equitable educational opportunities (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Osgood, 2005). Biklen (1985) was a fierce supporter for full inclusion and referred to the move for total integration of all students as a moral imperative. Defending his advocacy of including all students throughout public schools, he remarked, as indicated in Thomas and Vaughan (2004):

Asking the question: 'Is mainstreaming a good idea?' is a bit like asking: 'Is Tuesday a good idea?' Both are wrong questions. It's not so much whether mainstreaming and Tuesday are good ideas as what we make of them... Just as we can look back on all the Tuesdays in our lives and say, "There have been good ones and bad ones," we can also see that mainstreaming can succeed or fail. Therefore, to ask, "Does it work?" is also to ask the wrong question. (p. 72)

Not everyone embraced the REI (Davis, 1989; Heller & Schilit, 1987; Kauffman, Gerber, & Semmel, 1988; Lieberman, 1985). More a philosophy than a plan, REI lacked a blueprint for implementation. Jenkins, Pious, and Jewell (1990) described REI as "an impressionistic sketch, drawing in broad strokes both the nature of the problems requiring attention and possible solutions. It is not an architectural blueprint... we are a long way from even laying the foundations for this effort" (p. 2). Disagreement prevailed regarding the specifics of REI with some proponents supporting continued exclusion of students with severe, low incidence impairments while others insisted upon full inclusion for all. The lack of clarity surrounding the REI contributed to the ambivalence of opinion

concerning partial and full inclusion (Jenkins et al., 1990; Kauffman et al., 1988; Osgood 2005).

A central tenet surrounding the REI debate was the aggregate categorization of identification of students for special education. Proponents of REI such as the Stainbacks (1984), Gartner and Lipsky (1987), Wang (1986), and Will (1984) advised forgoing labeling students for specific disabilities and merging the dual system into a unified system. This would ultimately bring forth the dissolution of special education as it existed. Kavale and Forness (2000) as well as Kauffman, Gerber, and Semmel (1988) disputed REI by stating that students were not over identified for special education. They declared student failure should not be attributed solely to perceived shortcomings of teachers. In addition, they found that more competent teachers did not necessarily possess more positive attitudes toward students with disabilities. They asserted that when effective, individualized instruction is provided to every student, variability in student performance increases. Because the ability level of each student varies greatly, students cannot be forced into a homogenous group that excels at the same rate. The philosophy of REI places teachers in the dilemma of maximizing the performance of all students while minimizing group variance (Kauffman, Gerber, & Semmel, 1988). These two tenets seem to be in direct opposition.

REI has been debated for a number of years (Biklen, 1985; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Kauffman, Gerber, & Semmel, 1985; Leiberman, 1985; Vaughn, 2004; Will, 1986). The crux of REI is advocacy for student placement in regular education classrooms, streamlining the road to services and reducing the cost for service delivery by unifying the current dual system. Those in opposition to the REI contend it

has not had a major impact on inclusion but has served more as intellectual debate and a contested theoretical topic among university professors and special education professionals (Price, Mayfield, McFadden, & Marsh, 2000). Yet inclusion itself remains hotly debated (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995; Kavale & Forness, 2000; Keefe & Davis, 1998). Which students should participate in inclusion and to what extent inclusion services should be implemented are not clearly defined. While the inclusion debate continues there does appear to be a consensus among educators that inclusion has a place in today's education system (Farley, 2002; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Keefe & Davis, 1998; Osgood, 2005; President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Public law 94-142, better known as Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) was reauthorized in 1990 as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Federal Education Policy and the States 2005; Martin et al., 1996; Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Winzer; 1993; Yell, 1998) In addition to changing terminology from handicap to disability, IDEA mandated transition services and added Autism and Traumatic Brain Injury to the eligibility list of disability categories (Osgood, 2005). Each change in IDEA was touted as a victory by advocates, yet the essence of the 1990 reauthorization remained the same as its 1975 predecessor, EAHCA (Burgin, 2003; Palmaffy, 2001)

Not until the 1997 reauthorization were there significant alterations to IDEA (Martin et al., 1996; Osgood, 2005; Palmaffy, 2001). Included in the new provisions was the challenge of dealing with children whose disability included violent, dangerous, or otherwise disruptive behavior. The changes removed expulsion as an option for school

systems dealing with special needs students whose disabilities might manifest through violent behavior. Now schools would have to develop behavior plans and other strategies to address behaviors and emotional problems (Osgood, 2005; Palmaffy, 2001).

Parental involvement achieved a new level through IDEA 1997. States were required to increase collaboration with parents and to provide education regarding provisions and protections of the statute (Martin et al., 1996; Palmaffy, 2001). More paperwork was demanded from schools to reflect parental involvement or at least the multiple attempts to involve them. Parents were granted more power for input in their child's educational plan. The intention was to increase parental participation in their child's education and to improve school-parent relationships on behalf of the child with special needs (Osgood, 2005).

The 1997 IDEA was a more results driven piece of legislation with expectations for more identified students to participate in state and district wide assessments. This required changing the structure of personnel involved in the development of the Individual Education Plan. The regular education teacher, in addition to the already necessary special education teacher, was now required as part of the core IEP team (Kauffman, 1995). This level of involvement made it possible to immediately address student placement in the general curriculum through the IEP team (Katsiyannis, Yell, & Bradley, 2001; Kauffman, 1995; Osgood, 2005). Congress emphasized least restrictive environment (LRE) in the new amendments (US Department of Education, 2000). A full continuum of services and placements was included in the language with the option for various combinations of services including consultation, full inclusion, and partial inclusion in regular education classes, pull-out into special classes like resource rooms,

alternative settings, and hospitals or other residential settings if necessary (Katsiyannis et al., 2001). Martin et al., (1996) contended the least restrictive environment was defined through Local Education Agencies (LEA), advocates, and court decisions. Osgood (2005) said, “ Legislation and court action for the most part underscored the assumption that the regular classroom was essentially the default least restrictive environment for all children, and that schools were expected to do more to keep it that way” (p. 181).

According to the US Department of Education (2000) the expansion of IDEA rights to infants, toddlers, and preschool children was one of the most important amendments to EAHCA. Katsiyannis et al. (2001) noted the amendments had been added in 1986, but the 1997 reauthorization allowed Congress to formally recognize the importance of early intervention for children with special needs. IDEA (2004) requires school systems to identify children with special needs and provide FAPE. Child find activities included coordinating early intervention programs and services for children in minority groups. This targeted population of minorities was considered to be subjected to over identification and misidentification (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Samuels, 2004). IDEA 97 required early intervention services be provided but allowed agencies other than public schools to participate in the process. It was believed other agencies might be better positioned to address early intervention services for this demographic (Burgin, 2003).

Other changes in IDEA 1997 include the redistribution of monies to ease the financial impact of special education on impoverished school districts (Burgin, 2003; Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Federal dollars were allotted to school systems based on the number of students served through special education in each district

versus the number of students identified within each system (Burgin, 2003; Martin et al., 1996). This method was designed for accountability purposes. The ESEA (1965), EAHCA (1975), and IDEA (1990) funding systems were designed as block grants allowing schools to allocate funds at their discretion. Tying federal dollars to services forced school systems to bind the money to categorical disabilities. This meant monies were more likely to benefit special education programs instead of allowing school personnel the option of shifting finances to offset expenses in other nonrelated areas of need (Burgin, 2003; Katsiyannis et al., 2001).

IDEA has seen many changes since its inception in 1975 (EAHCA, 1975). More mandates have meant more services for children with special needs and more involvement from parents, regular education teachers, and administrators in the public school setting (Burgin, 2003; IDEA, 1996; IDEA, 2004; Katsiyannis et al., 2001; Martin et al., 1996; USDOE, 2000). The increased involvement from the school system required hiring additional special education personnel to meet the demands of the IEP (Osgood, 2005; Palmaffy, 2001). Language was added to the law mandating a full continuum of services for children with special needs (Katsiyannis, 2001; USDOE, 2000). Congress emphasized FAPE and LRE through special education legislation and made the regular classroom the default least restrictive environment for all children (Katsiyannis et al., 2001; Martin et al., 1996). Greater involvement in the regular education classroom led to the expectation of increased participation in state and district wide assessments for children with disabilities (IDEA, 1996; IDEA, 2004). Additionally, Congress saw fit to expand special education rights to preschool aged children (Katsiyannis et al., 2001; IDEA, 2006; USDOE, 2000). The restructuring of special education requirements

through legislation caused Congress to rethink distribution of monies for special education (Burgin, 2003; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Osgood, 2005). The government's system for financial allotment was revamped to ensure schools tied federal dollars to special education services for identified students (Burgin, 2003; Katsiyannis et al., 2001).

No Child Left Behind

ESEA was reauthorized as the federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act of 2001 (Ed.gov, 2009). This act stressed accountability, teacher quality, adequate yearly progress, and assessment. Student achievement is measured through assessment with accountability by the states and school systems being a primary focus (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). NCLB received bipartisan support in 2001 with the president and Congress supporting this bill in hopes its guidelines and regulations would facilitate closing the achievement gap for at risk, minority, and English as Second Language students (Ed.gov, 2009; Pulliam & Van Patten). Guidelines require all students to be proficient on state tests by the 2013-2014 school year.

Adequate Yearly Progress

States and school districts are held accountable to students' performances on state tests through adequate yearly progress (AYP). Districts receiving Title I funds are expected to meet AYP standards for all students but particular attention is given to targeted demographic groups including ethnic or racial groups, economically disadvantaged students, English Language Learners (ELL), and students with disabilities.

Schools failing to satisfy AYP objectives for more than 2 years are classified as *in need of improvement*. If a school fails to meet AYP goals for 2 or more consecutive

years, then parents are given the option of transferring their child to a school in good standing. If the entire school system has failed to meet AYP goals for 2 years, it is recommended the failing district develop an agreement with other districts to allow for parental school choice. A school is no longer considered *in need of improvement* when it meets AYP for 2 consecutive years (Ed.gov, 2009).

Schools failing to meet adequate yearly progress for 3 or more consecutive years must incorporate state approved supplemental educational services. These services include tutoring and other educational supports geared to provide academic assistance to pupils. The federal government places priority on low achieving students with economically depressed families (Ed.gov., 2009).

Failing to meet AYP goals for 4 consecutive years warrants more corrective actions (Ed.gov., 2009). School districts are given a choice of reforms but must choose to either replace the school staff, implement a new curriculum, decrease the authority of school-level administration, appoint outside experts to advise the school, extend the school year or school day, and/or restructure the internal organization of the school (Ed.gov, 2009).

Preparation for restructuring the school occurs when schools fail to meet AYP for 5 consecutive years. As part of the restructuring process, schools are required to submit a plan that must include replacing all or most of the school staff (including the principal), reopening as a public charter school and contracting with an outside agent to manage the school, or allow the state to assume school operations. Other major restructuring of the school's governance arrangement may be submitted for consideration. The restructuring

plan is implemented if the school fails to meet AYP goals for 6 consecutive years (Ed.gov, 2009).

Besides satisfying AYP goals, states must publish annual report cards for each school and district and hire teachers who satisfy the highly qualified status to teach core subjects. To be deemed highly qualified, teachers must have a bachelor's degree, full state certification or licensure, and prove that they know each subject they teach (U.S. Dept. of Ed, 2009).

The most recent reauthorization of IDEA (2004) attempts to align with NCLB through its focus on access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities and participation in general large scale assessments. Both pieces of legislation are outcome focused and both address curriculum and instructional environment as a matter of procedure (Bouck, 2009; Ed.gov, 2009; IDEA, 2004). IDEA 2004 emphasizes transition services and continuum of service with Congress expecting students in special education to reach the same academic goals and meet the same academic standards as regular education students of the same age (Baird, 2006; U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2004).

Functional Curriculum

Increasing numbers of educators and researchers have called for a renewed emphasis on a functional curriculum (Bouck, 2009). Billingsley and Albertson (1999) suggested the quality of life for students with disabilities is determined by the students' acquisition of functional skills. Edgar and Polloway (1994) contend a rigorous academic model may not best serve students who are not likely to enroll in postsecondary training. This belief is particularly poignant when recognizing secondary students with disabilities

are not well prepared for adult life (Bouck, 2009; Patton, Polloway, & Smith, 2000). Smith and Puccini (1995) recommend focusing on development of life skills and vocational skills to help prepare the student with disabilities for adulthood versus investing in curriculum models focusing solely on academic advancement (Smith & Puccini, 1995). Clark (1994) and Patton (1990) have argued that all students with a disability need a functional curriculum. What constitutes free and appropriate public education as well as the least restrictive environment and access to the general curriculum remains controversial (Bouck, 2009). This controversy has impacted functional curricula through the interpretation, implementation, and focus on inclusion (Billingsly & Albertson, 1999). Bouck (2009) questions the place of a functional curriculum in the lives of children with special needs and the agreement between current curriculum standards, educational policies, and intent of special education.

IDEA emphasizes access to the general curriculum and least restrictive environment (IDEA, 2004). The parameters of access and LRE remain controversial (Bouck, 2009). For the student with special abilities access to the general curriculum does not necessarily equate with the content and focus of a functional curriculum (Bouck, 2004; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). According to Bouck (2004), a functional curriculum differs from typical inclusion practice by gearing the instruction to the adaptive needs of the student versus the standardized curriculum proposed by NCLB. Instead of studying advanced algebra in a high school level math class, the student engaged in a functional math curriculum would focus on learning how to budget and other real life math management skills. Functional curriculums typically occur through a pullout program. Proponents of full inclusion insist on including children with disabilities in the regular

classroom 100 % of the time regardless of the handicapping condition (Crockett & Kauffman, 1999; Friend & Bursuck, 1996). A pullout functional curriculum is in conflict with the rhetoric of full inclusion but does seem to meet the requirements of the continuum of service clause in IDEA (2004). But, as Bouck (2004a, 2004b) observes, Congress's intent is for the regular education classroom to serve as the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities. This policy creates a misalignment between current interpretation of the LRE in IDEA (2004) and the recommended programming format via an alternative setting for a functional curriculum (Bouck, 2004; Dorn & Fuchs, 2004).

High Stakes Testing

High stakes testing has gained momentum through the NCLB mandate (NCLB, 2002; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Accountability and assessment are tied to finances forcing school systems to pay attention and put great stock into students' test scores (Bouck, 2009; NCLB, 2002; Tienken, 2010). Recently Tennessee Education Association board of directors authorized a requirement mandating 35% of a teacher's job evaluations be based on student standardized test scores (Roberts, 2010). This reform is linked to the 4.35 billion dollar Race to the Top grants incentive program provided by the federal government (Roberts, 2010). These inducements are part of a stimulus package for education and touted as the most generous ever issued by the U.S. Department of Education (Roberts, 2010; Tienken, 2010). These large financial incentives are being compared to NCLB in scope and vision for educational reform (Roberts, 2010). In the Memphis based newspaper *The Commercial Appeal*, the head of the New Teacher Project in Memphis Victoria Van Cleef states "Student test scores should not be the only measure

by which we assess teacher performance, but they should be the most important measure, because they are a reliable and objective measure of student growth" (Roberts, 2010, para. 6). Governor Phil Bredesen had initially requested 51 % of student test scores be used in teacher evaluations. TEA negotiated 35% from the originally requested 51% but nonetheless professed the inclusion of students' standardized test scores in teacher observations was a significant compromise on their behalf (Knoxnews, 2010). This compromise remains controversial in the view of some members. Earl Wiman, president of TEA, said, "We agree the test data is important. But for us, the data is very dirty" (Roberts, 2010, para. 27).

Standardized testing is a tool for measurement (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). There is a concern with unrealistic expectations regarding NCLB assessment mandates given that student performances on normed test tend to adhere to the bell shaped curve (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, Tienken, 2010). Tienken (2010) states, "Clearly, the current state of standardization in U.S. education is nothing short of regressive" (p. 105). Students' performances on standardized tests are expected to adhere to standards set forth by the federal government (NCLB, 2002). Students' failure to hit predetermined marks on standardized tests in a specifically defined time line result in punitive sanctions for school systems (Ed.gov, 2009, Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007).

Tienken (2010) argues standardized testing paradigms sanctioned by the government ignores well researched and accepted developmental theories including Piaget's theory of cognitive development, Erikson's theory of social development, and Kohlberg's theory of moral development (2010). All of these theories purport stages of development that each person must pass through before moving onto the next. There are

age approximations for each stage of development with the understanding that the individual will advance at his or her own rate. NCLB does not allow for individual development but rather provides inflexible expectations for each student to conform to a homogenous group in his or her academic growth (Tienken, 2010).

Tennessee is one of the first recipients of the monies awarded by the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top Grant. Tennessee was awarded \$500 million dollars in funding for education (Knoxnews, 2010). Katie Haycock, president of the Education Trust out of Washington, D.C., credits Governor Bredesen's emphasis on student's standardized test scores in teacher evaluations as a critical element in the decision to award Tennessee the grant (Knoxnews, 2010).

The issue of assessment, accountability, and high stakes testing includes the problem of which students should take what test? *No Child Left Behind* (2002) allows for 1% of students identified with disabilities to participate in alternative assessments. This 1% typically involves the most severely involved child (Allbritten et al., 2004; Bouck, 2009). Alternative assessments include development of a portfolio to reflect the child's participation in the curriculum (Baird, 2006). There is an assumption of validity and reliability regarding the structure of assessment currently in place (Allbritten et al., 2004; Tienken, 2010). Allbritten et al. (2004) refers to the 1% of students identified by the federal government for alternative assessment as arbitrary and claims the true number of children with disabilities needing alternative assessment cannot be known.

Other modifications can be provided through the IEP for the student with disabilities who must take the standardized test. These modifications may include a proctor to read test items aloud, small groups, extended time, and others similar types of

modifications (Baird, 2006). Gaona (2004) notes that altering the format in which the test is delivered impacts standardization and therefore may skew results. Recently the federal government decided to allow an additional 2% of students identified with disabilities to use modified achievement standards when participating in mandated standardized testing (Bouck, 2009). The concern remains regarding the participation of students with disabilities performance on standardized tests and the impact on AYP (Allbritten et al., 2004; Bouck, 2009; Gaona, 2004, Tienken, 2010). According to Allbritten et al. (2004), “NCLB virtually guarantees that the presence of special education students in a school will contribute to the school’s failure to make AYP” (157). Bouck (2009) notes a disadvantage to students and teachers alike to allow a child with disabilities to participate in any alternative school format instead of regular education if the child, teacher, and school are to be judged by performance on a single standardized test that is designed for the general education student. There is also a philosophical debate regarding the polarization of NCLB and IDEA.

The very thesis of NCLB—that all students must reach a given level of learning in reading and math as measured by a standardized test—is antithetical to the thesis of special education that students with disabilities must be the center of the learning focus and instruction must be individualized according to each student’s unique needs. (Allbritten et al., 2004, p. 160)

A guiding principle of IDEA is equitable education for the special needs child (Allbritten et al., 2004; Bouck, 2009; IDEA, 2004; Osgood, 2005). This is not interpreted to mean the same education but an equitable education based on the child’s needs. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) (2000) questions NCLB’s intentions and adherence to IDEA standards. NCTM scrutinizes the integration of standardized assessments and expectation of uniform developmental rates and academic

progress against IDEA's demands for individual development as demonstrated through Individualized Education Plans (IEP). NCTM (2000) contends NCLB is a move toward uniformity and away from IDEA's philosophy of individuation.

Proponents of the accountability system in NCLB argue that these assessment requirements are necessary to ensure that school systems are held accountable for the academic performance of all students, including children with disabilities (National Center on Educational Outcomes, 2003; Trybus, 2004). "*No Child Left Behind* is good for students with disabilities because it ensures that schools are held accountable for their educational results, just as the schools are held accountable for the educational results of students without disabilities" (NCEO, 2003, para. 4). Prior to NCLB students identified through special education could be excluded from state mandated assessments if the documentation was provided through the IEP process (Yell & Shriner, 1997). NCLB (2002) requires all students to participate in some form of assessment for accountability purposes. The NCEO (2003), TASH (2009), and TEACCH (2006) contend exempting students with disabilities from standardized assessments provided by the state, like the Tennessee Children's Assessment Program, is exclusionary and creates a situation where these students are overlooked (NCEO, 2003). The National Center on Educational Outcomes (2003) speaks to a lack of participation in the general curriculum for the child with disabilities and ties that to a lack of measurement and monitoring of academic performance for students in special education. NCEO (2003), Russo (2010), Sailor and Rogers (2005), and Ysseldyke, Dennison, and Nelson (2003) allege exclusionary assessment practices negatively affect the child with disabilities skill level and potential

success in postsecondary training or job assignments (NCEO, 2003; Russo, 2010; Sailor & Rogers, 2005).

Highly Qualified Teachers

Highly qualified teacher status is required by both NCLB (2002) and IDEA (2004) and includes special education teachers. The emphasis in high schools for highly qualified teachers is in the core academic areas. This means a special education teacher must be highly qualified in a particular subject area such as English and/or mathematics to teach her students as a lead teacher or she must work as an inclusion teacher in a classroom where the lead teacher or teacher assigning the grades possesses the highly qualified status (Bouck, 2009; Ed.gov, 2009; US. Dept. of Ed., 2009). According to NCLB (2002) guidelines high school special education teachers teaching alternative achievement standards in an alternative setting also satisfy highly qualified status. (Ed.gov., 2009). An example of this setting would be a self-contained Comprehensive Development Class (CDC) where a large percentage of the students are significantly impaired both cognitively and adaptively.

Bouck (2009) takes issue with the highly qualified status and the teacher providing instruction through a functional curriculum. It is not uncommon for CDC classrooms to be reserved for the more severely disabled, whereas functional curriculums may be more aligned with elementary education than that typically experienced in the high schools. The question remains as to whether or not special education teachers providing instruction through a functional curriculum must be highly qualified. Research by Allbritten et al. (2004), Bouck (2009), Hanushek (1992), and Sanders and Rivers (1996) indicates students make the most educational gains with a teacher who is well

qualified, caring, and competent. Bouck (2009) contends all students should have teachers who are highly qualified be it a vocational setting or a setting where the focus is on a functional curriculum.

Allbritten et al. (2009) express concern with the current and projected shortage of special education teachers in our nation and the impact NCLB may have in exacerbating the problem. Experts project special education teachers to increase by 15 % between 2006 and 2016 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). This is the fastest growing occupational area in the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Increases in student population, identification of children with disabilities, and mandated services will necessitate more special education staff (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Frustrations including required paperwork and large caseloads might be contributing to the aggravation these teachers experience. “Good teachers leave special education at almost twice the rate that other educators leave teaching in general” (Allbritten et al., 2004, p. 158). Concerns with AYP and special education students are believed to be a force contributing to teacher frustration and the departure from special education (Allbritten et al., 2004). NCLB definitions of highly qualified status for high school special education teachers have also been cited as a contributing factor (Allbritten et al., 2004; Bouck, 2009; Gaona, 2004). A current shortage of no less than 40,000 special education teachers in the nation existed as of 2004 (Allbritten et al., 2004). As the poverty rate for a school district increases so does the shortage of qualified special education personnel. A higher poverty rate correlates with poorer performance on standardized assessments (Allbritten et al., 2004, Sattler, 1992). Poor performance on

standardized tests directly contributes to problems with school districts satisfying AYP requirements as required by NCLB (2002).

Scientifically Based Research

The term *scientifically based research* (SBR) is referenced more than 100 times in *No Child Left Behind* (Bouck, 2009; Browder & Cooper-Duffy, 2003; NCLB, 2002; Trybus, 2004). SBR, as it is incorporated in NCLB (2002), is competency-based education that is product versus process oriented, behaviorist in nature with criterion referenced evaluations (Gaona, 2004). But with NCLB's requirement that "100 percent of the children achieve proficiency" (Sclafani, 2002, p. 46) is it attainable? SBR emphasizes evidenced based standards with a focus on statistics used in research settings to ascertain the effectiveness of teaching methods and the correlation with students' performance (Trybus, 2004). NCLB stresses using only those teaching strategies proven effective through scientifically based research (SBR) to be used in the classroom (Bouck, 2009; NCLB, 2002). A number of concerns have been voiced regarding reliance on SBR. Trybus (2004) cites an apprehension that SBR studies uses language that is not part of teachers' everyday repertoire making it difficult to integrate the information into practical, everyday usage. Viadero (2003) mimics these concerns with the following, "A scholarly study, for instance, may be fine for publishing in a journal, but chances are few teachers or principals will ever use it for guidance" (para. 2). Some say SBR is exclusionary in practice, focusing only on research based evidence and ignoring personal experiences and anecdotal evidences, instead examining only statistics while disregarding the human element of teaching and the relationships between teachers and students (Bouck, 2009; Gersten et al., 2005). Reyna (2002), former deputy of the

Office of Educational Research and Improvement, does not regard science and the human element of emotions and relationships as mutually exclusive.

Evidence does not determine our decision solely. It is not just the facts. It's the facts plus values. But without the facts, we might make the wrong decision, even based on our values. Because we don't know what's true and what's not true. The facts, the evidence is necessary to make decisions that affect students' lives, but it's not sufficient. But it is necessary. That is what we're promulgating, that, at least, it be part of the discussion so that we can base practice on it. So, we're talking about science with a human face, and that's a person. (Reyna, 2002, p. 10)

It will be critical for those providing educational policy and educational practitioners to strike a balance between research and wisdom when making decisions about our children's education (Feur, 2002; Shavelson & Towne, 2002). There has been criticism aimed at educational research over the years for the lack of empirical evidence provided for educational reforms tied to federal monies (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Kaestle, 1993).

Amendments included in the reauthorization of ESEA to NCLB affected to the organization and accountability systems of public schools across the nation (Ed.gov, 2009; NCLB, 2002; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Changes in assessment practices were acclaimed by NCEO (2003), TASH (2009), and TEACCH (2006) for having positive effects for children with disabilities. Members of TEA questioned the practice of including students' performance on standardized tests as part of the teacher evaluation method (Roberts, 2010). Students' performances on standardized tests have serious consequences for local schools (Ed.gov, 2009; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Allbritten et al. (2009) asserts NCLB's insistence on special education students' participation in standardized assessments negatively impacts a schools ability to satisfy AYP. Allbritten et al. (2004), Bouck (2009), Gaona (2004), NCTM (2000), and Tienken (2010) question

the alignment of NCLB's philosophy of uniform academic development for all students with IDEA's mandates for individually centered educationally programming for the disabled student. Both NCLB and IDEA require highly qualified status for any teacher of a core subject charged with assigning student grades (Ed.gov, 2009; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). Bouck (2009) argues disabled and nondisabled students alike should have highly qualified teachers in all settings. Nationwide shortages of special education teachers have been cited (Allbritten, 2004). There is a concern regarding the change in requirements and the recruitment and retention of special education teachers (Allbritten et al., 2004; Bouck, 2009; Gaona, 2004, Tienken, 2010). SBR is emphasized with over 100 references in NCLB (Bouck, 2009; Browder & Cooper-Duffy, 2003; NCLB, 2002; Trybus, 2004). Feur (2002) and Shavelson and Towne (2002) recommend tempering research with wisdom when making educational decisions on behalf of children.

Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004

President George W. Bush signed the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA-IA) into law in 2004 (U.S. Dept. of Ed, 2009). This new IDEA was developed to align with many facets of NCLB. The chairman for the President's Commission on Excellence in Education, Terry Branstad (2002), states in the report from the commission, "Overall, federal, state and local education reform efforts *must* extend to special education classrooms. What we discovered was that the central themes of the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 must become the driving force behind IDEA reauthorization. (p.8)

We believe and we know we can do better by applying many of the same principles of *No Child Left Behind* to IDEA: accountability for results; flexibility;

local solutions for local challenges; scientifically based programs and teaching methods; and full information and options for parents. (Branstad, 2002, p.5)

IDEA-IA's alignment with NCLB came with executive support as indicated by President Bush's quote cited in the report from the President's Commission on Excellence in Education (2002).

One of the most important goals of my Administration is to support states and local communities in creating and maintaining a system of public education where no child is left behind. Unfortunately, among those at greatest risk of being left behind are children with disabilities. (p. 7)

IDEA-IA became operative on July 1, 2005 (Families and Advocates Partnership for Education, 2004). Specific details written into IDEA-IA parallel with NCLB. Language used in both laws includes definitions for core academic subjects and highly qualified teachers. Core academic subjects in IDEA-IA refer to "...English, reading or language arts, math, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography (Baird, 2006, p.3). NCLB (2002) includes the same terminology and requirements with respect to core academic subjects. Limited English proficiency is also seen in both IDEA-IA and NCLB (FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). Highly qualified teachers' definitions in both laws mirror one another in expectations making a teacher who is qualified under the new IDEA also qualified under NCLB (Baird, 2006; FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). The definition for scientifically based research in IDEA-IA is reflective of the definition of the same terms in NCLB (Baird, 2006). Funding is addressed in both federal mandates with similarities in requirements observed in funding to carry out state level activities, to allow funding to be used in school wide programs, and to allow funding to perform actions under ESEA (FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). Performance goals and indicators are language seen in both laws.

Each mandate addresses progress either through AYP or states objectives for progress for children identified through special education (FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). Graduation and dropout rates as well as monitoring progress towards ascribed goals are seen in both laws (Baird, 2006; FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). NCLB uses established performance indicators for progress monitoring, while IDEA-IA uses measurable annual objectives (FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). Accountability is addressed in each law through reports describing findings on progress that are mailed to the Secretary of Education and made available to the public for review (FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). The use of alternative assessments and alternative achievement standards for children with disabilities are addressed in each federal law. The alignment of language between the laws is important and has garnered much attention across the nation (Allbritten et al., 2004; Bouck, 2009; Gaona, 2004; NCEO, 2003; Russo, 2010; Sailor & Rogers, 2005; Trybus, 2004; Tienken, 2010). Additional accountability and reporting issues common to both laws include linking records of migratory children with disabilities across state boundaries (FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). Exclusionary factors for identifying children as disabled are cited in passages in IDEA-IA (2004) and NCLB (2002) (FAPE, 2004). An attempt to parallel language for training and professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals is attempted through IDEA-IA (2004) (FAPE, 2004). Documentation of alignment among certain provisions in both laws as well as the President's support and the support of specialists through the President's Commission indicate IDEA-IA was developed specifically with NCLB in mind (President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002).

The passage of the 2004 IDEA includes an emphasis on transition services and the continuum of service (U.S. Dept. of Ed, 2004). The new IDEA 2004 law requires schools to address transition by the time the identified student reaches the age of 16 or earlier if the IEP Team deems appropriate (IDEA, 2004). Tennessee rules require transition planning begin no later than age 14 and to include multiple components: employment, postsecondary education or training, and independent living (Baird, 2006; O’Leary & Winstead, 2009). Measurable postsecondary goals and a course of study that reasonably enable students with disabilities to meet their goals after high school are part of the requirements for transition services under the state of Tennessee’s application of IDEA (2004) (Baird, 2006). Per congressional intent, the continuum of service clause requires full service options starting with the general education classroom. The continuum includes instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions while also allowing for provision of supplementary services or itinerant instruction that is to be provided in conjunction with regular class placements (Heumann, 1994; President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002).

Other changes in the new IDEA include a section allowing members of the IEP team to be excused from attending provided their area of instruction is not being modified or discussed (Baird, 2006; IDEA, 2004). The parent of the child with disabilities must be in agreement with the members’ absence and the agreement must be in writing (Baird, 2006). Members of the team may also be excused even if their area of interest is being modified or discussed if they submit a written report providing input to the new IEP and if the parent of the child with a disability and the school agree to the

absence. The term parent has been modified to mean "...a natural, adoptive, or foster parent...a guardian...an individual acting in the place of a natural or adoptive parent including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare..." (Baird, 2006, p. 3).

Revolutionary changes to the way IEP teams have been conducted in the past include allowing alternate means of meeting participation like conference calls. In an attempt to streamline time and energy the law allows for consolidation of reevaluation meetings and other IEP meetings. (Baird, 2006; FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004). There is even a pilot program authorizing up to 15 states to use multiyear IEPs (Ed.gov, 2009). Although Tennessee is not participating in the pilot program, it is worthy to note the attempt to ease paperwork (Baird, 2006, IDEA, 2004). The procedural safeguards notices may be distributed only once a year after a student has been identified for special services (Baird, 2006; IDEA, 2004). Before the changes to the new IDEA(2004) safeguard notices were automatically provided to parents at every meeting regardless of how many meetings might occur in a given year. Per the changes in regulations, a copy is now distributed no less than once a year with stipulations it be distributed upon initial referral, when a parent makes a request for an evaluation, when a due process complaint has been filed, or if a parent requests a copy (Baird, 2006; IDEA, 2004, Sevier County School System, 2004). Another procedural change involves payment of attorney's fees. Parent's may be responsible for paying fees for the school system's attorney if a cause of action in a due process hearing is determined to be "...frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation" (Baird, 2006, p.42). Parents may also be responsible for fees for the school system's attorney if a cause of action was presented "...for any improper purpose, such

as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or needless increase in the cost of litigation” (Baird, 2004, p.42).

Other changes in IDEA (2004) include the use of short-term objectives. Previously incorporated in IEPs, short-term objectives are now eliminated except for those students with significantly delayed cognitive abilities. Measurable annual goals that align with state standards and NCLB (2002) replace the old language in the 1997 IDEA (IDEA, 2004). Progress reports are provided to parents in keeping with the IEP (Baird, 2006; FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004). IDEA 2004 permits a parent and district to agree to change an IEP after the annual meeting has been held without reconvening provided the parent is in agreement. Of course, the changes must be documented and the school must provide a copy of the new IEP with the changes at the parent’s request (Baird, 2006; FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004).

Federal law prohibits school systems “...from requiring a child to obtain a prescription as a condition of attending school, receiving an evaluation... or receiving services...” (Baird, 2006, p. 16). In the case of a student transferring from another district or another state, the Local Education Agency must conduct an immediate review of the evaluation information and IEP. If the information is not available, the new school district must take reasonable steps to promptly obtain the student’s records from the previous district. The new school district must either adopt the previous IEP as written or conduct all necessary assessments and develop a new IEP. In the interim, the student must be provided with a program comparable to his or her current IEP (FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004).

In regards to discipline parents and school districts now have 2 years in which to exercise their due process rights for alleged violations occurring during that time frame that they knew or should have known about. The burden of proof will lie in the clause *should have known* (Baird, 2006; IDEA, 2004). Per the changes in IDEA (2004) manifestation determinations may be approached with the burden of proof charged to the parents versus the school system as it had prior to IDEA's reauthorization (Baird, 2006; IDEA, 2004; Weatherly & Smith, 2006). Manifestation determinations had required a rule out approach necessitating the school district provide evidence that the behavior exhibited resulting in a disciplinary action was not a manifestation of the disability. These procedures had to be adhered to before disciplinary actions reserved for the nondisabled child could be applied to the child with a disability (Ed.gov., 1997). Parents of the child with a disability are responsible for proving the child's behavior had either a substantial relationship to the disability or was directly caused by the disability (IDEA, 2004). Terminology has been changed from requiring the IEP team to consider whether or not the IEP was appropriate to whether or not the Local Education Agency (LEA) implemented the IEP and if the failure to implement directly resulted in the misconduct (Baird, 2006, Ed.gov, 1997; IDEA, 2004). The IEP team is no longer required to consider if the disability affects the student's ability to control the behavior or whether or not the student possesses the capacity to understand the impact and consequences of that behavior (Baird, 2006; Ed.gov, 1997; IDEA, 2004).

New provisions for due process complaints are provided and address specific procedures for filing and response time from school systems and the state hearing officer (Baird, 2006; IDEA, 2004; Weatherly & Smith, 2006). A resolution session is required

before parents can move to due process (Weatherly & Smith, 2006). Qualifications for serving as a Hearing Officer are now explicit (Weatherly & Smith, 2006). The *stay put* provision has been changed from allowing a student with disabilities to remain in his current education placement pending an appeal (IDEA, 1997) to placement in an interim alternative educational setting for alleged violations that may result in removal from the current placement for more than 10 days (Weatherly & Smith, 2006). The student is entitled to a Free and Appropriate Public Education during the interim placement (IDEA, 2004; Weatherly & Smith, 2006). The 45 calendar day limit on the removal for offenses has been changed to 45 school days. This results in an interim alternative placement of 9 calendar weeks versus 6 calendar weeks (Baird, 2006; IDEA, 2004; Weatherly & Smith, 2006).

The term *scientifically based research* takes on the same meaning in IDEA-IA (2004) as it does in NCLB (Baird, 2006). “In determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a school district may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research based interventions as part of the evaluation procedures” (Baird, 2006, p. 23). The language of the law is also inverted to stipulate a district isn’t required to use a discrepancy formula for determining the certification for a specific learning disability (Happy Village School System, 2004).

To meet the letter of the law, the school district must either employ Responsiveness To Intervention (RTI) or progress monitoring (Parker, Strunk, & Sanders-Eakes, 2008). RTI is a lengthy process involving a team of personnel and the student’s parents. The team must form hypotheses, provide research based interventions for each area of suspected disability, monitor the student’s progress, reconvene and

review data then repeat this process. In RTI educators are required to carry out three tiers of instruction. Tiers are implemented in an effort to intervene with students struggling in different academic areas. Philosophically, the tiered interventions are focused on prevention and remediation in attempts to avoid referrals to special education (Zehr, 2010). The tiers increase in intensity with each subsequent level. Tier 1 equals general instruction, tier 2 includes supplemental interventions for struggling students, and tier 3 refers to instruction at a very intense level (Parker et al., 2008)

Comprehensive psychological evaluations are not required with RTI (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2007). Doug and Lynn Fuchs (2005) developed an operational RTI method recommending evaluation with brief standardized assessments like the Wechsler Abbreviated Intelligence Scale to rule out other possible certifications including mental retardation. These evaluations using abbreviated forms of assessment typically don't occur until each tier has been methodically addressed. The law continues to allow comprehensive evaluations per parent request but parents are encouraged to allow the RTI process to exhaust itself (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2005). Each school district is required to submit a plan and must receive state approval before implementing the RTI method of evaluation (Parker et al., 2008).

Progress monitoring requires development of a hypothesis, provision of intervention with scientifically researched methods, and monitoring the student's progress with data collection occurring at regular intervals. Tennessee state rules and regulations requires "...a minimum of one data point per week in each area of academic concern" (TSBE, 2007, p.2). A data point is a measurement of the child's performance on a screening instrument like the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills

(Good, Gruba, & Kaminski, 2002). The educator shares the results of the data collection with the parent no less than once every 4.5 weeks (TSBE, 2007). If the student has not made adequate progress at the end of the data collection process, a referral for a comprehensive psychological evaluation using the prescribed IQ/Achievement discrepancy method of identification is conducted (TDOE, 2007).

IDEA-IA (2004) purposefully coordinates with many aspects of NCLB (President's Commission on Excellence in Education, 2002). Both laws use the same terminology with regards to core academic subjects and share diction in the definitions for highly qualified teachers and scientifically based research (Baird, 2006; FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). Funding requirements are similar for both laws with AYP specifically addressed in each (FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). The focus on accountability and assessment is documented in both federal mandates (IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2002). IDEA-IA (2004) stresses transition services and continuum of services (U.S. Dept. of Ed, 2004). Other changes in the new IDEA (2004) include members' attendance to IEP meetings, pilot programs for reducing paperwork, provision of procedural safeguards to parents, due process rights stipulations, payment of attorney's fees for frivolous lawsuits, short term objectives, and provision of services in the case of student transfers (Baird, 2006; FAPE, 2004; IDEA, 2004). In IDEA-IA (2004) SBR is required in the assessment and identification processes for certifying students with learning disabilities (Baird, 2006; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2005; Parker et al., 2008; TSBE, 2007). Public school systems are required to comply with these policies to receive the full benefits of federal funding (Baird, 2006; IDEA-IA, 2004; NCLB, 2002).

Inclusion

Controversy and confusion surrounds the philosophy and application of inclusion in special education (Block, 1999). Different visions of what inclusion is and what it should be contribute to the misunderstanding. Full inclusionists advocate full-time placement in regular education for all children regardless of handicapping conditions or general skill development (Block, 1999; Crockett & Kauffman, 1999; Friend & Bursuck, 1996; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; MacMillan, Semmel, & Gerber, 1994; Sherril, 1994; Stein, 1994). Full inclusion is a philosophy not a legal mandate (Block, 1999; Kauffman, Lloyd & Baker, 1995; Osgood, 2005). Kauffman et al. (1995) surmised this philosophy seemed to apply to children certified as emotionally disturbed that had spent extended periods of time in strictly segregated population due to their own violent behaviors. This philosophy seemed to apply to medically fragile children as well, many of whom had complicated medical issues requiring around the clock care (Kauffman et al., 1995). The focus for the full inclusionist is placement. This focus endures despite extenuating circumstances involving children with extreme medical conditions or aggression towards others (Bricker, 1995; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Kauffman et al., 1995; Stein, 1994).

Progressive inclusion refers to concentrated emphasis on integrating children identified with special needs into all facets of life at school but recognizing a need for segregated options and therefore continuing to employ the *continuum of services* protocol (Osgood, 2005). This approach satisfies legal requirements for least restrictive environment and Congressional intent for consideration to be given to the regular education classroom first, prior to alternative placements where children are segregated

from their nondisabled peers (Heumann, 1994; President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002).

Benefits

Proponents of inclusion cite numerous benefits for children with disabilities and their nondisabled peers (Block, 1999; Hines, 2001; Kochhar, West, & Taymans, 2000).

Block (1999), Kochhar et al. (2000), and the National Study of Inclusive Education (1995) tout benefits of inclusion for children with disabilities including:

- facilitation of more appropriate behavior;
- opportunities for more friendships and friendships with nondisabled peers;
- membership in a regular education class;
- a more stimulating environment that facilitates development of language and adaptive skills;
- higher academic expectations and improvement in the ability to acclimate to different teaching and learning styles;

Helmstetter, Peck, and Giangreco (1994), Hines (2001), and Kochhar, West, and

Taymans (2000) cite benefits for the nondisabled child including:

- access to additional school personnel available to help all children with skill development;
- greater acceptance of individual differences;
- greater acceptance of children with disabilities;
- development of altruistic behaviors;

- acquisition of leadership skills and greater understanding of the similarities among all types of students;

Block (1999), Hines (2001), and Hunt (2000) cite benefits of inclusion for teachers too.

These benefits include:

- further developing understanding and consideration of differences among their students;
- additional assistance in the classroom with help provided through special education personnel and their resources;
- another pair of hands in the classroom is helpful but the knowledge and experience special education personnel can provide brings additional insights in planning and delivering curriculum;

The notion of inclusion was initially brought forth as a moral imperative that stemmed from the civil rights revolution of the 1960s (Bricker, 1995; Dunn, 1968; Goldstein, 1967; Guskin & Spicker, 1968; Sowell, 1995; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). According to Hines (2001), “Proponents insist that the integration of students with disabilities is inherently right, compared often to the same right to racial integration” (p.1). For some parents of special needs students, the prospect of their child being a part of a group of nondisabled children is exciting and offers a sense of normalization (Block, 1999). Normalization includes an opportunity for all children in the family to enroll in the same public school in the local community and to share some of the same experiences (TASH, 1999; TEACHH, 2006). This is an opportunity for the whole family to be socially engaged in the community school where friends and neighbors attend and carry out the routine functions of life. According to Ferguson (1995) everyday activities like

playing at recess, chatting with friends, sharing in the excitement over upcoming holidays, and even winding up the school day are harder to arrange when children with special needs are segregated. Any attempt at standardizing family functions can be especially important for families whose make up includes children with disabilities, particularly when so much of the family life can seem so far from routine (TASH, 1999, TEACHH, 2006). This typical family experience or normalization is recognized as a key precept for full inclusion (Block, 1999; TASH, 2009; TEACHH, 2006; Turnbull, Summers, & Brotherson, 1986).

Wang and Baker (1986) and Madden and Slavin (1983) conducted research that provides a second rationale for inclusion. Their findings indicated well executed integrated settings were more beneficial for children with disabilities in making both academic and social gains (Madden & Slavin, 1983; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Peterson & Hittie, 2003; Wang & Baker, 1986). These academic and social gains occurred concurrently with reductions in negative consequences such as poor self-esteem, a lack in confidence, and decreased drive typically associated with segregated educational placements (Madden & Slavin, 1983; Wang & Baker, 1986).

Walterly-Thomas, Bryant, and Land (1996) investigated social skill development for special education students and low achieving general education students in middle school inclusive settings. Their findings indicated improvements for both groups of students in social skill development, awareness and improved confidence in their individual accomplishments, and appreciation of themselves and others as unique persons (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Murray-Seegert, 1989; Peck, Carlson, & Helmstetter, 1992; Peterson & Hittie, 2003; Walterly-Thomas et al., 1996). Teachers in several

investigations noted the benefit of exposure to peer models for appropriate behavior (Carlson, 1996; Vessay, 2004; Ward, 2003; Yoder, 2000). Students in elementary inclusive settings are reported to demonstrate improved awareness of individual differences among peers and improved metacognition (Hines, 2000; Peck et al., 1992).

Ritter, Michel, and Irby (1999) completed a study on middle school students with mild disabilities participating in inclusion settings. In their findings they report improved self-confidence as well as increased camaraderie, additional support from teachers, and higher academic expectations. Concurrent findings indicated avoidance of negative feelings like low self-esteem often associated with placement in segregated special education classrooms (Evans, Salisbury, Palombaro, Berryman, & Hollywood, 1992; Ritter et al., 1999). In a study of middle school students, Rea, McLaughlin and Walther-Thomas (2002) found students with disabilities educated in inclusive classrooms had better attendance, earned higher grades, and had no more behavior violations than their counterparts participating in segregated special education classes. A study by Bear and Proctor (1990) provided evidence of students with disabilities acquiring larger gains in math and equal gains in reading in inclusive classes when compared to students receiving pullout special education services (Bear & Proctor, 1990). In addition to academic and social benefits, Salend and Duhaney (1999) concluded possible lifetime returns including better salaries and independent living for those special needs students participating in inclusion classes.

Many researchers delineate studies between students with mild disabilities and students with severe disabilities. Much of the research cited above is specific to students categorized with milder handicapping conditions such as specific learning disabilities. It

has been traditionally assumed that severely impaired students could not benefit from inclusion because of their extreme aberrant behaviors and needs (Burton & Hirshoren, 1979). There is evidence indicating that students with severe disabilities such as mental retardation benefit socially from participation in inclusion classes. Research by Frexyl and Kennedy (1995) yielded results demonstrating severely disabled students placed in inclusion classes had more frequent social interactions and richer social networks that included nondisabled as well as other disabled students. Additionally, students with more severe disabilities were found to receive and provide more social support as compared to peers in segregated special education classes (Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995; Hunt, Staub, Alwell, & Goetz, 1994; Kennedy, Shukla, & Fryxell, 1997). Cole and Meyer (1991) conducted a 2-year study measuring social competence for children certified with severe developmental disabilities. The research documented progress in social competence for the disabled students placed in inclusion classes. Social regression was reported for their matched counterparts placed in segregated programs (Cole & Meyer, 1991).

Peer acceptance is an integral issue for parents of disabled children (Block, 1999; TASH, 1999; TEACHH, 2006; Turnbull, Summers, & Brotherson, 1986). Nondisabled students demonstrated greater peer acceptance of severely disabled students in inclusion classes (Evans, Salisbury, Palombaro, Berryman, & Hollowood, 1992; Kennedy, Shukla, & Fryxell, 1997) with a tendency toward more tolerance amid increased contact (Esposito & Reed, 1986; Towfighy-Hooshyar & Zingle, 1984; Voeltz, 1980). A study by McDonnell et al. (2003) measured adaptive levels of developmentally disabled students in inclusive classroom with results indicating gains in adaptive skill level for all students participating in the study.

Scholastics

McDonnell et al. (2003) also compared achievement levels of students without disabilities in inclusive programs to students without disabilities not enrolled in inclusive classes. As no statistically different academic performances were demonstrated between the two groups, it would seem the placement of developmentally disabled students in regular education classes bears no negative academic effects on the nondisabled child (McDonnell et al., 2003; Salend & Duhaney, 1999).

A growing body of research suggests inclusive settings may produce promising academic and behavioral gains for the disabled student (Frederickson, Dunsmuir, Lang & Monsen, 2004; Madden & Slavin, 1983; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Peterson & Hittie, 2003; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002; Wang & Baker, 1986). Yet, a number of studies would contradict those findings and suggest students with learning disabilities perform no better in inclusion classes than they do in segregated resource settings (Carlberg & Kavale, 1980; Klingner, Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, & Elbaum, 1998; Manset & Semmel, 1997; Zigmond, 1995). Furthermore, there is research concluding that certain features of inclusive classes are less advantageous than segregated resource models (Carlberg & Kavale, 1980; Fore III, Hagan-Burke, Burke, Boon, & Smith, 2008; Holloway, 2001; Ochoa & Olivarez, 1995; Praisner, 2003; Ross & Stevens, 2003; VanHover & Yeager, 2003; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003).

Manset and Semmel (1997) examined 11 different studies that investigated multiple interventions implemented at a school wide level. These interventions were designed to benefit students categorized as having mild disabilities who participated in inclusion programs. According to Manset and Semmel,

...the evidence presented does suggest that inclusive programs for some students with mild disabilities can be an effective means of providing services, but the evidence clearly indicates that a model of wholesale inclusive programming that is superior to more traditional special education service delivery models does not exist at present. (1997, p. 178)

Carlberg and Kavale (1980) examined 50 studies comparing educational outcomes of special needs students in segregated versus regular class placements. They determined that students with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and behavioral disorders demonstrated more academic gains in pullout resource settings. Similarly, after examining multiple studies from the late 90s on class placement, Holloway (2001) reported that students with learning disabilities did not fare better academically in inclusion classes. He concluded that often times students made more academic progress in segregated special education programs as opposed to inclusive settings. Zigmond et al. (1995) conducted a review of three different inclusion programs. After reviewing the data it was determined that 50% of the children with disabilities in the programs examined did not demonstrate academic progress. Klingner et al. (1998) conducted a 4-year study of students identified with learning disabilities and placed in inclusion classes that received considerable support from administrators, general education teachers, and special education teachers. It was concluded, "...that full time placement in general education classes with in class support from special education teachers is not sufficient to meet the needs of these students" (Klingner et al., 1998, p.159). These conclusions were drawn after the findings revealed no improvement for 20% of the students in reading over a full school year and no statistically significant gains in math over the same time period.

Social Impediments

Much has been said concerning the positive effects inclusion has on social outcomes for special needs students. The research is rich with studies documenting increases in self-esteem, improved peer relations, greater acceptance by others, and deeper and more meaningful relationships for the mildly disabled and the severely disabled alike

(Cole & Meyer, 1991; Evans et al., 1992; Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995; Hunt et al., 1994; Kennedy et al., 1997; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Peck et al., 1992; Peterson & Hittie, 2003; Ritter et al., 1999; Murray-Seegert, 1989; Waltherly-Thomas et al., 1996). Still, research exists that provides evidence to the contrary. Research by Evans et al. (1992) provided some evidence of positive social outcomes but noted students with severe disabilities may be judged differently than nondisabled students. Staub, Schwartz, Gallucci, and Peck (1994) observed nondisabled students in inclusion classes assuming the role of caretaker of the disabled students. Furthermore, adult personnel in the classroom encouraged the role of caretaker (Staub et al., 1994) versus promoting friendships of equality. Some nondisabled students reported difficulties communicating with their disabled peers, especially the moderately and severely disabled, that created a barrier in their relationships (Helmstetter, Peck, & Giagreco, 1994). The lack of social skills displayed by some students with moderate and severe disabilities led to feelings of discomfort by nondisabled students. Nondisabled students also reported feelings of uneasiness with physical characteristics and behaviors of some of their disabled peers (Peck, Donaldson, & Pezzoli, 1990). Despite encouraging research on social interactions for disabled students studies exist suggesting something less than full acceptance and

interaction by nondisabled students. According to Ochoa and Olivarez (1995) and Swanson and Malone (1992) students identified with learning disabilities are not well accepted by regular education students. Cook and Semmel (1999) found that students with learning disabilities "...do not typically appear to engender peer acceptance" (p. 57). Research on children's play groups revealed less social integration by children with developmental delays as compared to their normally developing peers (Guralnick, Connor, Hammond, Gottman, & Kinnish, 1996). In other research children with severe disabilities placed in inclusive classrooms without extensive supports were not afforded the opportunities to facilitate social interaction with their nondisabled peers nor were they determined to be making progress in acquisition of adaptive skills needed for advancement toward independent living (Hilton & Liberty, 1992). MacMillan, Gresham, and Forness (1996) suggested that simply placing disabled students in inclusion classes does not create positive feelings or improved acceptance of the disabled. It is their contention that the quality and nature of interactions make the biggest impact on general attitudes toward students with disabilities. In addition, they postulated nondisabled students developed negative attitudes towards the disabled when disabled students displayed objectionable behaviors (MacMillan et al., 1996).

High School

The inclusion debate rages on with proponents and critics providing a plethora of research to support their agendas. Still, holes remain in the bodies of research. For example, Fore (2008) notes a paucity of research at the secondary level. According to the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC),

There are no comparative data available on special education students' academic gains, graduation rates, preparation for postsecondary schooling, work, or

involvement in community living based on their placement in inclusive vs. non-inclusive settings. Therefore, an accurate comparison between separate programming and inclusive programming cannot be done. (2007, p.3)

Still, studies on disabled students in high schools do exist and are available for review and interpretation. For example, a National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) on over 8,000 disabled students whose ages range from 13 to 21 addresses impact of inclusion on students in grades 7 through 12 (SRI International, 1993; U.S. Dept. of Ed., 1995). Results indicated many secondary students identified with special needs experienced high rates of failure. The rate of failure was particularly apparent for those students in 9th and 10th grades (SRI International, 1993; U.S. Dept. of Ed., 1995). These same data revealed other interesting trends. Secondary students with disabilities enrolled in a larger number of regular education classes were more likely to register for a form of postsecondary training, acquire jobs, gross higher wages, and live autonomously. In addition, these students developed larger social networks in their communities and seemed more likely to marry or become engaged. This seemed particularly pertinent for those students with physical disabilities (SRI International, 1993; U.S. Dept. of Ed., 1995). On a cautionary note, the researchers remarked that these students enrolled in more regular education courses may have already possessed additional academic and social skills enabling them to enroll in more general education classes; therefore, their successes may not be entirely attributed to their involvement in inclusion classes (Salend & Duhaney, 1999). In a study by Salend and Duhaney (1999) disabled students in high school reported negative experiences in pullout special education and inclusion classes. Negative experiences reported in the segregated pullout programs included lower level academic work that was described as monotonous and failed to challenge the students.

Socially the students perceived a negative public status exacerbated by isolation from friends not enrolled in their resource program. The students also described a general stigma associated with attending pullout special education classes (Salend & Duhaney, 1999). Negative experiences reported in inclusion classes were attributed to the general education teacher's failure to adapt instruction to accommodate the student's needs and feeling branded as a result of special accommodations being delivered in front of the student's nondisabled peers (Salend & Duhaney, 1999).

Dieker and Murawski (2003) focused on teaching in high school. Specific challenges to teachers in the secondary education include large class sizes and high stakes testing. Successful inclusion practices dictate a need for emphasis on teacher preparation, adequate time for planning, and content mastery by the special education teacher (Dieker & Murawski, 2003). Findings from Keefe, Moore, and Duff (2004) indicate a lack of training and skills as well as evidence of negative attitudes towards coteaching situations. Common coteaching issues that may contribute to negative attitudes about inclusion include perceptions of student ownership, classroom management, space, communication, and planning time (Vaughn, Schumm, & Arguelles, 1997). To avoid potential conflict Keefe et al. (2004) suggest general education high school teachers be attuned to themselves, their inclusion teacher, and their students. Knowing relevant content strategies (Keefe et al., 2004), establishing teacher roles within the classroom, sharing classroom management, and using appropriate assessment methods (Murawski & Dieker, 2004) are all tactics suggested for a harmonious classroom setting in secondary education. Some speculate that the weightiness of curriculum coverage necessary in high schools does not lend itself to the development of positive attitudes about inclusion by the

general education teachers who must alter instructions and interrupt their pace to accommodate disabled students (Vaughn & Schumm, 1994; Zigmond, Levin, & Laurie, 1985).

Confounding Factors

There are a number of studies examining confounding factors to successful inclusion programs. Baker and Zigmond (1995) completed five case studies to determine effects of inclusion placements on children identified with learning disabilities. Their results suggest placement in inclusion classes provides the opportunity to benefit from general education but that disabled students do not receive the “specially designed instruction” (p.178) as defined in their Individual Education Plans. Fox and Ysseldyke (1997) conducted research on an unsuccessful inclusion program and determined that inadequate training, poor administrative leadership, and failure on the general education teachers’ behalf to significantly modify teaching strategies for the disabled students contributed to the poor outcome of the program. In a survey by Salend, Brooks, and Salend (1987) it was determined that few school districts engaged systematic and practical procedures based on indicators assigned to successful inclusion programs. Semmel and Gerber (1999) hypothesized that “...the significant attitudinal discrepancies of principals and special education teachers may pose a possible explanation for inclusion policies being increasingly implemented and not generally producing improved outcomes” (p. 206).

Kauffman, Gerber, and Semmel (1988) suggested there was a lack of support among those persons assigned with the task of implementing school reform with inclusion. Researchers speculate that attitudes toward inclusion differ with proximity to

the execution of inclusion (Jamieson, 1984; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991) Principals are relatively distant from day to day operations of implementation unlike special education teachers who are charged with making the philosophy of inclusion a reality (Cook, et al., 1999; Jamieson, 1984; Semmel et al., 1991). As such, principals have held generally positive attitudes regarding the adoption of inclusion practices (Cook, et al., 1999). Unenthusiastic attitudes by special educators may be partly based on negative experience with inclusion and student outcomes or the belief that inclusion is not the right method for enabling disabled students to succeed in a public school setting (Cook et al., 1999). The direct role special education teachers play in implementation of inclusion policy is significant and affected by a skeptical position on the effectiveness of inclusion (Cook et al., 1999; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). It has been hypothesized that the top-down hierarchy in public schools bureaucracy may partially account for special education teachers' reported unenthusiastic attitudes towards inclusion, particularly as many have been unconvinced of the efficacy of inclusion practices but are expected to execute the shift in policy at the most fundamental level (Cook et al., 1999; Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

Many researchers identify the general educator's attitude toward inclusion as a major facet for the success or failure of the program (Farrell, 2004; Horne, 1985; Idol, Nevin & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1994; Martinez, 2004; Villa, Thousand, Meyers and Nevin, 1996). Positive attitudes regarding inclusion and the integration of disabled students in the classroom can be found (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996) but many educators experience the practice of inclusion far different from its nebulous concept (Anderson, Klassen, & Gerogiou, 2007; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Other research suggests it is

not teacher attitudes about inclusion that impacts teacher student interactions or student outcomes but the general education teachers' thoughts and feelings about their students (Cook, Tankersley, Cook, & Landrum, 2000). According to Tolerance theory (Cook, Gerber, & Semmel, 1997; Cook & Semmel, 1999; Cook & Semmel, 2000; Gerber, 1988; Gerber & Semmel, 1985) instruction can only be matched to a finite number of learning characteristics. Limited resources and students' wide combination of learning characteristics curtail the teachers' ability to address all student needs at any given moment (Cook, 2001). "By virtue of their referral and identification for special services, it appears logical to assume that students with disabilities are at the limits or outside of the instructional tolerance of most teachers" (Cook, 2001, p. 205).

Current Barriers

Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000) assert current barriers to inclusion can be arranged into three categories: attitudinal, organizational, and knowledge. Attitudinal barriers include research on efficacy studies. Teacher efficacy has been defined as the "teacher's belief or conviction that they can influence how well students learn, even those who may be difficult or unmotivated" (Guskey & Passaro, 1994, p.4). Bandura (1997) postulates on efficacy as it relates to student achievement. He contends teachers' beliefs about their effectiveness impacts young children's self-perception about their abilities, with low achieving students being especially sensitive to teacher's feelings (Bandura, 1997). According to Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk-Hoy (2004) teachers' collective beliefs regarding their efficacy have a greater impact on students' academic outcomes as opposed to the students' economic class, gender, race, or ethnicity. The relevance of teacher efficacy on student outcomes has been summarized as follows:

[teacher efficacy] has been related to teachers' classroom behaviors, their openness to new ideas, and their attitudes toward teaching. In addition, teacher efficacy appears to influence student achievement, attitude, and affective growth. (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p. 215)

In a study on efficacy and inclusion of students with different types of disabilities, Soodak, Podell, and Lehman (1998) discovered teachers with lower levels of personal efficacy experienced higher feelings of anxiety with the integration of a child with disabilities into their classroom. Furthermore, levels of anxiety increased with the presence of students with mental retardation and/or physical impairments as compared to students with learning disabilities or emotional disturbances (Soodak et al., 1998). This same study found that the more inexperienced teachers presented as less hostile toward students with disabilities compared to their more experienced colleagues (Soodak et al., 1998). Bandura (1998) speculates teachers with low efficacy are more apt to conclude that a child's difficulty equates to the child's inability to be taught. According to Soodak and Podell (1993) teachers with low personal efficacy are more apt to advocate referring students to other environments such as segregated classroom settings. These findings seem to support the notion of teachers' positive attitudes being instrumental in the shift from segregation models for special education to inclusion models (Farrell, 2004; Martinez, 2004).

Feeling prepared to work with the student with disabilities in an inclusive setting presents as another important attitudinal barrier for the regular education teacher (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2000). One of the chief complaints from regular education concerning the implementation of integration strategies is the lack of support offered to local education agencies and the classroom teacher (Anderson et al., 2007). "Without teacher buy in and involvement, and without adequate support, the necessary

restructuring of general education will not take place” (Paige, 2004, p.5). Many teachers believe the success of inclusion hinges on proper and adequate support from well resourced programs (Anderson et al., 2007). There are those teachers who still feel that the needs of children with disabilities can be better served in segregated classes with personnel who have the background and unique training typically provided through special education programs (Anderson et al., 2007; Kauffman, 1995; Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995). “Teachers are not superhuman - teachers in specialized centres are trained to enhance learning in small groups, where the disabled child would surely benefit more than being lost in mainstream” (Anderson et al., 2007, p.143). With that being said, Hodkinson (2005) determined that successful integration of inclusion into the school setting was dependent upon teachers’ definition of inclusion, training to improve efficacy of including disabled students in their classrooms, and a philosophy whereby the individual educator either believes or can accept that all students are capable of being educated within the general education classroom.

Organizational barriers persist interfering with the successful integration of inclusion into public schools (Kochhar et al., 2000). In 2001 Mastropierie and Scruggs specifically addressed challenges that prevented the successful integration of inclusion in high school. The identified barriers included the level of material being taught, the pace of instruction, expectations of independent study skills for the disabled student, the ever increasing number of classes required, and satisfying high stakes testing requirements (Mastropierie & Scruggs, 2001). The National Education Association (NEA) (as cited in Hines, 2001, p.2) recommends inclusive programs limit the total number of students in the class to 28 and also capping the number of students with learning disabilities at 25%

per classroom. This strategy is suggested to ease the management of inclusion classes and ensure true integration. A class may be referred to as an inclusive classroom but could still represent a segregated placement if students with disabilities are disproportionately clustered into that class. For example, if all children with disabilities are clustered into two out of four 4th grade classrooms then the percentage of students with disabilities in those classes is higher than the collective average for the school (Frattura & Cappa, 2006). Principals and special educators typically coordinate this form of tracking to satisfy students' hours and defined services in their IEPs with the limited number of personnel and available space (Frattura & Cappa, 2006). To do otherwise would require hiring additional staff and providing more space to ensure ratios of students with disabilities and nondisabled students are equitable (Frattura & Cappa, 2006). One of the professed barriers to inclusion is the shortage of finances allocated for support personnel and instructional needs including space and materials for students with disabilities (Anderson et al., 2007; Salend & Duhaney, 1999). In studies by Anderson et al. (2007) and Cook et al. (1999) educators expressed great concerns that decisions to shift to inclusion programs had less to do with philosophical and ethical quandaries regarding segregation and were instead more indicative of politicians and administrators hiding behind doctrine with the ultimate goal being a bottom line cost cutting measure. "I believe that in part the inclusive schooling program is a cynical cost saving exercise politically motivated rather than in the genuine interests of each disabled/challenged person" (Anderson et al., 2007, p.142). Frattura and Capper (2006) cite the high cost of special education during tough economic times as one reason to move towards inclusion. Cook et al. (1999) suggests that focusing on inclusion as a means to save money may

partially account for disappointing outcomes associated with inclusion reform. Duhaney (1999) addresses this issue in the following recommendation:

Along with the push for greater inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms should be the recognition by policymakers that existing funding structures still continue to promote a dual system of education. Statements that emphasize the redeployment of educational resources to create greater support in the inclusive classroom should be incorporated in future policy statements by SEAs. (p. 376)

Collaboration and communication among staff is imperative for an effective inclusion program (McClesky & Waldron, 2002). This can be especially difficult in high schools as many educators are accustomed to working more independently or at least only within their department (Worrell, 2008). According to Buckley (2005) regular education teachers take the lead role in inclusion classes and tend to perceive their position in the classroom as being the primary instructor. Research indicates special education teachers are implicitly subordinate in inclusion classes (Buckley, 2005; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Rice & Zigmond, 2000). Mastropieri et al. (2005) state, "It was rare to observe special educators delivering instruction to the entire class" (p.265). It's speculated that the assumed roles, with the general education teacher taking the lead position and the special education teacher assuming the subordinate position, may be related to the general education teacher's greater content knowledge (Mastropieri et al., 2005; Rice & Zigmond, 2000). Rice and Zigmond share observations substantiating these claims:

The two teachers described their practice as "an enmeshing of our abilities"... but they were clearly not equal partners in the instruction. In most cases, this disparity in roles was explained as necessary because the special education teacher lacked content knowledge. (p. 195)

Special educators' subordinate roles are not limited to high school. However, subordinate roles for special education teachers seem to occur more frequently in high school environments as high school courses tend to be more content specific (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). The specificity in the coursework requires specialized training, as for say in Geometry or Biology II courses (Scruggs et al., 2007).

Turf wars and personality conflicts can also contribute to collaborative disparities (Buckley, 2005; Yoder, 2000). Buckley (2005) noted general educators value special education teachers, but the regular education teachers nonetheless want full discretion on how *their* classrooms are run. Many special education teachers recognize the issue of class ownership (Morocco & Aguilar, 2002; Salend & Duhaney, 1999). Yoder (2000) shares the observations of a high school special education teacher in the following passage,

“ ‘Anytime you walk into another teacher’s classroom there’s going to be some type of negotiation that needs to occur for both of you in terms of just territory and what’s asked of you. And that a tough thing to negotiate.’” (p. 150)

Turf wars and issues with class ownership may contribute to special educators subordinate roles as they work to get along and to serve the students (Buckley, 2005; Scruggs et al., 2007; Yoder, 2000). General educators proclaiming a true collaborative relationship with special education teachers in the classroom still tended to refer to class lessons as *my lessons* demonstrating, perhaps unintentionally, a sense of ownership and control of the class (Frisk, 2004).

Compatibility between general education teachers and special educators is described as a critical element for successful inclusive programs (Rice & Zigmond, 2000). The collaboration and compatibility required between educators participating in

coteaching has been described as being akin to marriage (Buckley, 2005; Frisk, 2004; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Morocco & Aguilar, 2002; Rice & Zigmond, 2000). In a study by Carlson (1996) teacher's shared the need to bend, compromise, recognize the other person's perspective, and work at the relationship when depicting the analogy of marriage and coteaching. In addressing unsuccessful coteaching relationships, Mastropieri et al. (2005) did not define any single factor but shared the observations of an assistant principal participating in the study whom said, " 'Forced marriages often fail'" (p. 265).

Time for more planning is a common need reported by many teachers (Scruggs et al., 2007; Yoder, 2000). The lack of time for collaboration is often cited as an impediment to successful implementation of inclusion practices (Anderson, et al., 2007; Busch, Pederson, Espin, & Weissenburger, 2001). Administrators are held accountable for providing training and necessary support at the building level (Buckley, 2005; deBettencourt, 1999; Scruggs et al., 2007; Yoder, 2000). In a study by Vessay (2004) participants cited planning time as a critical element for successful collaboration saying, " 'For us it's sacred planning time which we haven't had for two year[s]'" (p. 112). Many educators involved in coteaching echoed satisfaction with their assignments but expressed frustration with their administrators' efforts to afford them adequate planning time (Buckley, 2005; Scruggs et al., 2007; Ward, 2003; Yoder, 2000).

Clough and Garner argued (as cited in Hodkinson, 2005) full implementation of inclusion is mired in barriers that continue to impede its successful adaptation into schools due to a, "...lack of knowledge, lack of will, lack of vision, lack of resources and lack of morality" (p. 44). Part of the difficulty may lie in the need for more training in

collaborative consultation skills (Anderson et al., 2007; Rice & Zigmond, 2000).

Principals and special educators alike depict regular education teachers as lacking in the necessary instructional skills to work confidently and effectively with students with disabilities in the regular classroom (Cook et al., 1999). Vessay (2004) documented teachers' responses to questions concerning preparation for working with more involved students, " '...I was frightened. I had no background. A trach [ostomy] scared me. A feeding tube frightened me, I was afraid I'd hurt somebody. I was!'" (p. 112).

Interviews conducted by Busch et al. (2001) revealed teachers' thoughts regarding integration of students with milder disabilities in the following statement,

...general education teachers wanted to include students with disabilities in their classrooms but did not know how to do so. That is, they did not know how to effectively integrate a student with disabilities into a classroom of 26 to 28 other students without disabilities. (Busch et al., 2001, p.96)

Even where there is a willingness on the regular education teachers' behalf to work with students with disabilities, problems with a lack of training and classroom management skills for exceptional students persists (Silverman, 2007). Teachers' leading request has been for additional training and professional development activities geared towards inclusive classrooms (Anderson et al., 2007). Specific requests include more information and stratagems for working with students with a wide variety of disabilities (Anderson et al., 2007). Enhanced knowledge and experience have been shown to improve general education teachers' attitudes towards placing students with significant disabilities into classrooms (Anderson et al., 2007; Salend & Duhaney, 1999). Positive experiences with students with exceptionalities, including solid preparation for integration, are necessary components for developing and maintaining inclusive environments (Praisner, 2003; Riehl, 2000).

Still, there are those among us insisting we are asking the wrong question. Zigmond (2003) proposes class placement is the wrong question to consider. Harrower (1999) and Zigmond (2003) surmise that focusing on placement deters from the more important issues of FAPE where the concentration should be on the most effective interventions for students. Harrower (1999) further contends that allowing placement to take priority sets a dangerous precedent allowing schools to move toward "...the practice of 'dumping' " (i.e., placing students with disabilities in general education classrooms without support)" (p. 226). After extensively reviewing research, Horcutt (1996) determined numerous program models can have moderate positive academic and social effects regardless of students' placement in general education or segregated classrooms. Fore et al. (2008) assert that emphasis should be placed on the how, rather than the where, by asking how will students meet requirements set forth by the IEP in general education classrooms, how will the student with disabilities access the general education curriculum, and how are IEP teams making placement decisions.

Much debate surrounds the pedagogy and employment of inclusion in special education (Block, 1999). Grounded in the civil rights movement of the 60s, inclusion has been touted as a moral imperative (Bricker, 1995; Dunn, 1968; Goldstein, 1967; Guskin & Spicker, 1968; Sowell, 1995; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). Inclusion advocates have compared segregated classes for children with disabilities to racial segregation (Hines, 2001). Proponents of full inclusion insist it is the inherent right of children with special needs to be educated alongside their nondisabled peers 100% of the time (Block, 1999; Crockett & Kauffman, 1999; Friend & Bursuck, 1996; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; MacMillan, Semmel, & Gerber, 1994; Sherril, 1994; Stein, 1994). Full inclusion advocates assert this

philosophy should be applied regardless of extenuating circumstances including situations where the child is medically fragile or emotionally disturbed (Bricker, 1995; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Kauffman et al., 1995; Stein, 1994).

Full inclusion is a philosophy and is not legally mandated (Block, 1999; Kauffman et al., 1995; Osgood, 2005). The legal requirement for special education services rests in the *continuum of services* clause found in IDEA (IDEA, 2004; IDEA-IA, 2005; Osgood, 2005). Congress is explicit in its intent for first consideration to be given to the regular classroom when considering programming and placement options in special education (Heumann, 1994; President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002; U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2009). Progressive inclusion emphasizes integrating children with special needs into the school environment while endorsing the need for segregated settings per the individual needs of the student (Osgood, 2005). This philosophy seems to satisfy the continuum of services requirement (Heumann, 1994; President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002).

Inclusion advocates cite numerous academic and social benefits for the child with disabilities, nondisabled students, and teachers who participate in well executed integrated settings (Bear & Proctor, 1990; Block, 1999; Frexyl & Kennedy, 1995; Hines, 2001; Kochhar et al., 2000; McDonnell et al., 2003; National Study of Inclusive Education, 1995; Peterson & Hittie, 2003; Rea et al., 2002; Wang & Baker, 2000). There are reports of academic and social impediments in inclusive settings as well (Calberg & Kavale, 1980; Cook & Semmel, 1999; Evans et al., 1992; Guralnick et al., 1996; Helmstetter et al., 1994; Holloway, 2001; Klingner et al., 1980; MacMillan et al., 1996; Ochoa & Olivarez, 1995; Peck et al., 1990; Swanson & Malone, 1992). A review of

literature reveals a lack of data on the effects of inclusion at the high school level (Fore, 2008). The studies that have been conducted are inconclusive regarding postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities placed in inclusive versus segregated settings (Salend & Duhaney, 1999; WEAC, 2007). Specific challenges to teachers in high schools working with inclusion include large class sizes, high stakes testing, teacher preparation, adequate time for planning, perceptions of student ownership, space, communication, and content mastery by the special education teacher (Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Keefe et al., 2004; Vaughn & Arguelles, 1997). Confounding factors for inclusion classes at large include complications with coteaching, attitudinal discrepancies between administrators and special education teachers, regular educators' attitudes towards inclusion, general education teachers' attitudes towards students with special needs, and the delivery of services as dictated through the IEP (Baker & Zigmond, 1995; Cook et al., 1999; Cook et al., 2000; Cook, 2001; Gerber, 1988; Gerber & Semmel, 1985; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Farrell, 2004; Horne, 1985; Hoy & Mickel, 2008; Idol et al., 1994; Kauffman et al., 1998; Keefe et al., 2004; Martinez, 2004; Nevin & Paolucci-Whitcom, 1994; Semmel & Gerber, 1999; Vaughn & Schumm, 1994; Villa et al., 1996; Zigmond et al., 1985).

Kochhar et al., (2000) reported the three current barriers to inclusion to be attitudinal, organizational, and knowledge. Teacher efficacy has been discussed as a pivotal element in successful inclusion programs (Anderson et al., 2007; Bandura, 1997; Bandura, 1998; Goddard et al., 2004; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Soodak et al., 1998). Organizational issues include the level of material being taught, the pace of instruction, expectations for independent study skills, increased

coursework, high stakes testing, staffing, space, and distribution of special education students (Cook et al., 1999; Fraturra & Cappa, 2006; Hines, 2001; Kochar et al., 2000; Mastropierie & Scruggs, 2001). Financial impediments include monies for space, materials, training, and personnel (Anderson et al., 2007; Duhaney, 1999; Fattura & Cappa, 2006). Collaboration and communication among staff, turf wars, compatibility among teachers, time for planning, and subordination among teachers are reported as important aspects as well (Anderson et al., 2007; Buckley, 2005; Busch et al., 2001; Carlson, 1996; deBettencort, 1999; Duhaney, 1999; Fisk, 2004; Fraturra & Cappa, 2006; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Morocco & Aguilar, 2002; Rice & Zigmond; Salend & Duhaney, 1999; Scruggs et al., 2007; Vessay, 2004; Ward, 2003; Worrell, 2008; Yoder, 2000). Clough and Garner (as cited in Hodkinson, 2005) refer to the lack of knowledge, will, vision, resources, and morality as impediments to the full implementation of inclusion. Anderson (2007), Busch et al. (2001), Cook et al. (1999), Vessay (2004), and Silverman (2007) documented the lack of training in instructional skills and collaboration as notable problems among staff charged with delivering services through inclusion classes.

Others insist than the issue of where services will be delivered is the wrong question to be asking (Zigmond, 2003). Harrower (1999) and Zigmond (2003) contend focusing on placement deters from the more serious questions of FAPE. Fore et al. (2008) emphasizes the *how* of programming virus the *where* and insists focusing on delivery of service instead of placement issues will be more beneficial for the student with special needs.

Summary

The move on the on the continuum, from the 4th century A.D when the segregation of the individual with special needs is first documented in the Western world (Osgood, 2005; Winzner, 1993) to current trends where large amounts of monies, legal precedents, and visions of the anointed (Sowell, 1995) demand equal access, equal rights, and equal opportunities for the individual with disabilities has been monumental. From religious groups touting the education of the deaf, dumb, and blind as a moral imperative and backing these inclinations with the resources to form schools (Lash, 1980), to the establishment of tax bases formed to educate and acculturate the masses of immigrant children (Osgood, 2005; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007; Winzer, 1993), American society has attempted to help those in need when called upon, albeit in a segregated setting. “Give me your tired, your poor your huddled masses...” (Emma Lazarus, 1883), your infirmed, your disabled, your ill prepared, ill behaved, and academically less capable, and we, as America, will welcome them. They just have to stay over there, in that room, with a special teacher, and special financing, or so said the government until the 1960s. It is in the civil rights movement of the 1960s with Dunn’s famous article (Dunn, 1968; Osgood, 2005) providing the written word reflecting the notion of the nation, the governmental financial backing through ESEA and the plethora of lawsuits addressing issues on segregation and education (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954; Osgood, 2005; Tudor, 2004; Yell et al., 1998) that the opportunity ripened for the discussion and inclusion of children with special needs into the public school domain (Federal Education Policy and the States, 2005; Osgood, 2005; Tudor, 2004; Yell et al., 1998). Until that

time, segregation was believed to be a more humane and efficient way to educate the capable and protect the vulnerable (Lash, 1980; Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993; Yell et al., 1998).

The 1970s ushered in a new era of forced compliance with the regulated Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975, otherwise known as P.L. 94-142, (Federal Education and Policy of the States, 2005; Mercer, 1997; Osgood, 2004, Tudor, 2004; Winzer, 1993; Yell et al., 1998). This new piece of legislation brought much change in the public school system along with promises for funding that have yet to be completely fulfilled (Burgin, 2003; Federal Education and Policy of the states, 2005; Lips et al., 2008; Palmaffy, 2001; U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2007). Prior to EAHCA (1975) educational opportunities and legal recourse was limited for children with disabilities and their families (Burgin, 2003; Osgood, 2005; Palmaffy, 2001; Yell et al., 1998).

Pushes to unify regular and special education funding systems have been unsuccessful. This was the case in the 1980s with the Regular Education Initiative (REI) (Federal Education and Policy of the states, 2005; Osgood, 2005). Proponents of REI advocated discontinuing the dual system of regular education and special education and instead moving towards full inclusion for all students (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Will, 1984; Yell, 1998). Considered an architectural blue print largely debated by intellectuals but lacking in any legal sanctions or financial incentives, the move to a unified, inclusive system, for all students fell to the wayside (Osgood, 2005; Price et al., 2000). The hotly debated REI did prove to bring the concept of inclusion to the forefront of the education forum (Farley, 2002; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Keefe & Davis, 1998).

The Education of All Handicapped Children Act (1975) has been reauthorized many times to satisfy the shifting needs and demands of our society. The name has changed to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), with subsequent reauthorizations up to the current IDEA-IA (2004), but the focus of providing a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities remains steadfast. At issue is the degree and breadth of including students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Likewise, ESEA has been reauthorized and rebranded as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB, 2002). Like ESEA before, the focus of NCLB (2002) is the educational needs of the disadvantaged, minority, and disabled and the corresponding federal fiscal initiative (NCLB, 2002). Extremely divisive, this NCLB demanded accountability with high stakes testing and punitive measures for those systems repeatedly failing to meet targeted expectations (Bouck, 2009; NCLB, 2002; Tienken, 2010). Concerns remain regarding students with disabilities performance impact on Annual Yearly Progress (Allbritten et al., 2004; Bouck, 2009; Gaona, 2004; Tienken, 2010).

There has been much written concerning the condition of inclusion in our schools (Kauffman 1995; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Lipsky & Gartner, 1998; Osgood, 2005; President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002). Research abounds touting the advantages and disadvantages, the moral imperatives and ethical constraints, as well as the financial benefits, and costly burden of inclusion. Perspectives of national leaders and local leaders, national forums, and recognizable organizations, county and school based administrators, and general education teachers flourish. The inclusion debate rages on with proponents and critics providing an accumulation of research to support their agendas. Still, holes remain in the bodies of research. For example, Fore

(2008) notes a scarceness of research at the secondary level. According to the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC),

There are no comparative data available on special education students' academic gains, graduation rates, preparation for postsecondary schooling, work, or involvement in community living based on their placement in inclusive vs. non-inclusive settings. Therefore, an accurate comparison between separate programming and inclusive programming cannot be done. (2007, p.3)

Comparatively speaking, little information regarding the outcome of inclusion after high school (WEAC, 2007) and the perspective of the service delivery providers, the special education teachers, exists (Burgin, 2003; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Tudor, 2004). Special educators are the front line for special education in its many forms. As such, they have unique knowledge regarding effective practices for students with special needs (Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). Their positions in the school community and relationship with the families they serve create a key situation for selling the idea of inclusion on a philosophical and practical level (Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). This pivotal position propels special educators' attitude as critical in the success or failure of inclusion (Cook et al., 1999; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). Yet inclusion has been instituted with a top down authority like so many strategies in education (Rowan, 1993). Historically, the momentum for inclusion originates with no empirical data but with a philosophical passion for the ethical treatment of others (Dunn, 1968; Goldstein, 1967; Guskin & Spicker, 1968). Education has become a data driven institution (Bouck, 2009; Browder & Cooper-Duffy, 2003; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). The void of input from special education teachers and the importance of their input and attitude are relevant to best practices in education. As student performance is now tied with inducements to schools (NCLB, 2001) and job retention in education (Bouck, 2009; NCLB, 2002; Roberts, 2010;

Tienken, 2010), it has become even more imperative to assess all areas for potential improvement to student academic outcomes. The implementation of inclusion in the Happy Village school system followed the institutional approach, which is rooted in survivalism (Rowan, 1993). Survivalism has taken on new urgency in education with the recession and its effects on every aspect of the public school system.

Input from special education teachers for implementation of inclusion was not initially sought but can still be gathered to make adjustments in the program for the betterment of the students and staff. This study provides a format where special education teachers can be heard and their opinions expressed as is crucial for the successful implementation of inclusion (Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). The void of input from special education teachers and the importance of their input and attitude are relevant to best practices in education.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter 3 identifies the procedures used to investigate special education teachers' perceptions of inclusion in the high school setting. A qualitative research method was employed for an in-depth understanding of the participant's experiences and thoughts regarding inclusion in secondary public schools. Using a phenomenological study format, the goal of this research endeavor was to make a *real world* connection between research and application (Merriam, 1998). Completion of the study provided the opportunity for improvement in inclusion practices for service delivery persons, administrators, and ultimately the primary recipients, the students themselves.

An extensive literature review revealed a paucity of data from the perspective of the service delivery providers, the special education teacher (Burgin, 2003; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Tudor, 2004). This finding was surprising given the critical role of special educators in the success or failure of inclusion (Cook, et al., 1999; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). Fore (2008) observed an overall scarcity of research on inclusion in high school as well. The WEAC (2007) cited a lack of comparative data on inclusive vs. noninclusive placement effects on students' annual yearly progress, graduation rates, postsecondary training, work, or individuation. At issue is the educational outcome of the students.

Qualitative research was the method chosen for this research, as the human experience is not always quantifiable. The phenomenological "...process involves a blending of what is really present with what is imagined as present from the vantage

point of possible meanings: thus a unity of the real and the ideal” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 27). Input from the special education teacher was not initially sought for the implementation of inclusion. This research provided the opportunity to review the practice of inclusion from the perspective of the front line, the special education teacher. In doing so research findings permitted adjustments and a meshing of the real and the ideal.

The following questions were used to investigate the perspective of the special education teacher regarding inclusion services in a high school setting.

Research Questions

Overarching question: What is your opinion on inclusion services in the high schools of the county where you are employed?

1. What are the participants’ perceptions regarding the practice of inclusion in a public high school setting?
2. What are the participants’ perceptions regarding the efficacy of this practice?
3. What factors facilitate successful incorporation of students with special needs in the regular education class in a high school setting?
4. What factors are barriers to successful incorporation of students with special needs in the regular education class?

Research Design

Multiple sources of data were necessary to conduct a thorough qualitative study of inclusion in Happy Village's high schools. Participants in the study were selected based on purposeful sampling definitions. Subjects were unique as they fit the narrow definition of a special education teacher in a high school setting who had worked in an inclusion program for special education in the county where the research was conducted. This selection process provided the information rich cases necessary for a comprehensive qualitative research design (Merriam, 1998). Subjects were asked to sign an informed consent prior to participation in the study. In-depth interviews were conducted through a combination of focus groups and one-to-one interviews with the 11 participants identified as satisfying the purposeful sampling definition. The interviews occurred over an extended period of time to meet the standard of prolonged engagement (Merriam, 1998). Interviews began with a structured collection of demographic data information and progressed towards a semistructured format focused on the special educators' experience as service delivery persons. Using semistructured interviews that began with open-ended questions permitted flexibility during the data collection process facilitating an increased understanding of the problem (Creswell, 1998). Interviews occurred on school campuses during planning times. Exceptions were made for those individuals preferring different times and locations. Additional data collection included document review. A microcassette recorder and live scribe pen recording device were operated during the interview process. Participant observation techniques as temporary members of a group were instituted. While recording was a primary method for data collection during interviews, it was still essential for the researcher to document observations and inference

as part of the research process. Transcribers accurately took the information from the tape and put it in a readable form but they could not record the subtle social nuances and exchanges that occurred during the interview process. It was up to the researcher to record those impressions during the interview process and integrate that information into the research itself. It was not always what was said but how it was said that conveyed the true meaning. These inferences and interpretations are part of what enhances the credibility of qualitative research.

Coding was used to categorize the data. According to Merriam (1998) coding is simply the assigning of some form of shorthand to segments of information for ease of later retrieval. After transcribing the information collected during the interview process the researcher looked for themes in the data and categorized accordingly. Patterns emerged among the coded data. These patterns or common themes were the core of the theoretical framework (Patton, 1990). Common and/or atypical themes were then organized for cohesiveness. Member checking was implemented by checking informally with participants for accuracy during data collection.

The Role of the Researcher

According to Denizen and Lincoln (1994) there is no qualitative research that is completely void of bias. Reality is based on perception and it is that unique perspective of the interviewer, the participant, and the interaction of the two that is the essence of the qualitative study (Creswell, 1998). One of the characteristics of qualitative research data collection is the use of the researcher as a human instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Bias can occur when the selection of data fits the preconceived notion of the researcher

(Miles & Huberman, 1994). A personal bias occurs with the prejudices the researcher brings prior to the study. However, Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) point out that in phenomenological studies the researcher is personally familiar with the event being studied. It is this intimate experience with the phenomena being studied that lends credibility to a qualitative study and sets it apart from a study founded in quantitative methods (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Gall et al. (1996) declared researchers should “identify a topic of personal and social significance” (p. 601). The researcher’s experiences as a school psychologist and the upheaval in education with systemic reforms such as NCLB (2002), IDEA-IA (2004), and the Race to the Top Grant (Roberts, 2010) satisfied Gall et al. (1996) recommendation for “personal and social significance” (p. 601).

It was important to recognize the personal biases developed through the researcher’s 18 years of experience as a school psychologist. Job interests and experiences contributed to the selected topic of inclusion in education where the researcher had seen the pendulum fully swing from segregation to an emphasis on mainstreaming and onto the trials of full inclusion. The researcher’s prejudices concerning methods for policy development and implementation caused reflection on Sowell’s (1995) discussion of the vision of the anointed where policy makers have been accused of attempts at enlightenment through passing well intended but ineffective change. On the other hand, the vision of the benighted, though grounded in experience, may be passed off as mere perceptions and dismissed by the anointed as less righteous (Sowell, 1995). The philosophical training received in institutions of higher learning had often conflicted with the imperfect ground level experience of practical applications.

This consideration helped the researcher empathize with the plight of the participants. According to Creswell (1998) phenomenological studies necessitate shared experiences between the researcher and subjects. Working closely with special education and having worked in the same setting with administrators, parents, students, and other teachers helped facilitate empathy and insight regarding their observations. There was a similar point of reference from which to draw.

The researcher was employed in the county where the study occurred and held a position that carried the role of expert in a given field. Expert power is an individual's power deriving from the skills or expertise of the person and the organization's needs for those skills and expertise (French & Raven, 1959). Education law dictates professionals holding specific licensures, such as school psychologists, complete evaluations for special education certification (TSBE, 2007). School Systems are complex organizations and school psychologists function as specialist within the system's matrix (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). In French and Raven's (1959) dissection of power, expert power is further broken down as information power. While the difference between expert power and information power is subtle people with this type of power are well informed, up to date, and also have the ability to persuade others. These individuals have an automatic credibility about them and high expectations anticipated by others. During the interviews the researcher's opinions were not discussed and the focus was on the subject. Nonetheless, any perception of the researcher's opinion regarding inclusion could have had an effect on the subjects' responses. In this regard undue influence and the researcher's biases could potentially impact participants' responses. There was no

evidence that this type of exchange between researcher and participant occurred; nonetheless, the potential for convolution must be acknowledged.

The terms emic and etic are discussed in qualitative research (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). The term emic refers to a psychological mindfulness where the researcher remains open to the understanding of the phenomenon from the participants' perspective (Merriam, 1998). The term etic is considered an outsider's viewpoint and requires the researcher to recognize her own interpretation of the stories being told (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). A conscious attempt was made to be psychologically emic throughout the activities of this study

Trustworthiness of the Study

Gall et al. (1996) purports trustworthiness in qualitative research as essential for deriving meaningful results. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe four evaluative criteria for establishing trustworthiness. It is through the techniques used for establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability that validity and reliability in qualitative research is addressed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility is posited as the confidence in the truth-value in a qualitative study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Creswell (1998) distinguished believability as the cornerstone for credibility in qualitative designs. Credibility in this study was addressed using the techniques of prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Interviews were in-depth and occurred over an extended period of time thereby satisfying the criterion for prolonged engagement (Merriam, 1998). "Prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304). Contextual factors were

recorded during the interview process to provide the enriching detail inherent in verbal exchanges. This focus on the critical elements in the conversation satisfied the prolonged engagement criterion. Triangulation is the cross validation of information in a research study (Merriam, 1998). Triangulation was accomplished through document review, interviews, collection of demographic data, and a thorough literature review.

Triangulation was an important factor for internal validity (Creswell, 1998; Denzin, 1970; Merriam, 1998). The purpose of peer debriefing is to expose the researcher's biases and suppositions regarding the topic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A respected colleague was recruited to probe the researcher's thoughts and expose preconceived notions. By identifying these notions the researcher could be aware of biases. Peer debriefing revealed the researcher had relied on personal experiences and possessed a definite opinion on inclusion. The researcher believed inclusion was part of the continuum in specials education as advocated in education law and did not adhere to a policy of full inclusion given the current resources available through general and regular education. Member checking involved checking informally with participants for accuracy during data collection (Merriam, 1998). Active listening was used in member checking.

Thick, rich description is used for establishing transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The detail wrought in qualitative studies allows for a transferring of information to other settings to determine applicability (Creswell, 1998). This study was broad and deep in scope. Purposeful sampling techniques supplied the reader with a functional definition of whom and what was studied. The combination of purposeful sampling and rich, thick description contributed to the transferability of this study as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1998).

Dependability is used to address consistency (Lincoln & Guba, 1998). Reliability is the consistency in measurement (Sattler, 1992). Triangulation, thick description, and auditing are recommended to confirm dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These techniques were used in this study. Triangulation and thick description have already been addressed. The auditor was a special educator who had worked in multiple settings including pullout programs and inclusion. The auditor reviewed excerpts from the interviews on a periodic basis for dependability. The auditor reviewed the completed study and provided verbal feedback to the researcher. Through this method the auditor addressed the process and the product of the research for consistency.

Confirmability is the naturalistic inquiry term for objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative research relies on interpretations of emergent findings through the perspective of the participants and the researcher. The researcher is considered a key instrument in data collection (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Gall et al., 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). How can confirmability in qualitative research be addressed? Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended employing a confirmability audit, an audit trail, triangulation, and reflexivity. Dissertation committees and particularly the head of the committee provide a built in confirmability audit by challenging the process and study findings. This process ensures the validity of a study. Record keeping is the essence of an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process provides the reader with enough detail to enable a replication of the study (Creswell, 1998). The accumulation of information in this study consisted of document reviews, tape transcriptions, and categorical matrices. The researcher maintained these records for future reference. Triangulation was implemented by comparing observational data with

the interview data, checking for consistency through prolonged and multiple interviews, and comparing the different viewpoints of the participants. Reflexivity is the notion the researcher's perspective influences all research, both quantitative and qualitative. For this reason Patton (1990) says "to stay out of futile debates about subjectivity versus objectivity" (p. 55). Patton (1990) coined the phrase empathetic neutrality and addressed the seemingly dichotomous terms by defining them in according to research efforts. According to Patton (1990) empathy "is a stance toward the people one encounters, while neutrality is a stance toward the findings" (p. 58). Demonstrating neutrality of the research interpretations contributes to the validity of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This researcher's many years in the education arena necessitates opinion in matters of philosophy and application of inclusion. Employing confirmability techniques enhanced this study by acknowledging biases and through auditing by outside parties.

Selection Process

Participants for the study were selected based on purposeful sampling techniques in order to provide a rich, thick descriptive study of a bounded entity (Creswell, 1998). The study was set in a county with multiple high schools in the public education system. There are four high schools in the county and two alternate schools where students who are 13 or older may attend. There were approximately 3,000 students enrolled in the county's secondary schools at the time of the study. One of the area high schools was a larger school (1,300 students or more), one was a medium school (800 to 1,299 students enrolled) and two were smaller schools (fewer than 799 students). The population of the two alternative schools shifted on a continuous basis but still fit the categorization of smaller schools.

The participants in this study had to be licensed special education teachers whom were either currently teaching or had taught in inclusion classes in the high schools. Because inclusion had been implemented countywide for no more than 5 years, the individuals in this study had recent experiences in inclusion in the high schools. The special education director in the county provided the researcher with a current list of special education teachers employed in various positions. The researcher noted the special education teachers working in the high schools. Next, the researcher took the list and asked the special education director if any other personnel had worked in inclusion in the high schools. Those individuals were duly marked. Chain sampling was used to locate any other special education teachers fitting the definition as a participant in the study. Chain sampling is the process of one participant recommending another participant (Creswell, 1998; Gall et al., 1996).

Focus groups and individual interviews were used in this study. Focus groups are group interviews where the researcher provides a topic of interest and observes interactions and discussions among the participants (Creswell, 1998). The focus groups occurred in the natural setting, the high schools in the county. Those individuals unable to attend or preferring more anonymity were interviewed one on one. The focus groups were comprised of two to four people. Each participant signed a consent form. A data sheet with demographic information was completed prior to the discussion. Each participant was assigned a pseudo name for confidentiality purposes.

Data Analysis

All interviews were taped using a micro cassette recorder and a live scribe pen. The recorded discourses were transcribed verbatim. The researcher took notes on

paralinguistic behaviors during the interview process. Transcripts from the interviews and observations were initially coded according to emerging themes in the data. Next, categories were developed in order to better ascertain patterns among the themes. By refining the data in this manner common threads emerged from the collected data. This type of organization formed the theoretical framework for the study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations included protecting the identity of all individuals involved in the interviews. While coding can protect identities to a larger degree in a one-on-one interview, it cannot assure confidentiality through a focus group. Consent forms and confidentiality agreements were provided and discussed. Even so, complete anonymity could not be guaranteed to the participants in the focus groups, as the other participant's behaviors could not be controlled. This is always a consideration when using focus groups (Gall et al., 1996). Participants may agree to keep the confidences of the focus group but once they leave the confines of the room it is at their discretion to honor that commitment. Acknowledging this ethical consideration, it might have been that participants refrained from full disclosure for fear of reprisal from persons in authority should they portray the services and programs in the school system as less flattering. Coding is a tool but not an assurance for complete confidentiality.

Partial coercion is also a consideration. Partial coercion occurs when the study may have direct benefits for the program the participants are charged with delivering (Gall et al., 1996; Merriam, 1998; McMillan & Shumacher, 2006). This set of circumstances may have impeded the participants' true free choice to participate or not participate. Their responses may have reflected that compromise.

The gathering of data to assess the inclusion model in the high schools of the Happy Village school system allows a shift to a task oriented environment where achievement and goal setting is the basic premise (Tn.gov., 2007). Task oriented environments are deified as productive systems providing resources for the output of goods. In effect this type of organization recognizes its codependency on others and is more apt to seek information that is research-based to align goal setting, resources, providers, and coordinate technologies for scholastic output.

Summary

Chapter 3 contained an overview of the research methodology including the research design, role of the researcher, trustworthiness of the study, selection process, data analysis, and ethical considerations. The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of the dynamics of the inclusion program from the perspective of the special education teacher. The special education teachers in this study were purposely selected in an effort to provide a rich, descriptive study. This study was limited to the perspective of special education teachers with experience in high school inclusion programs in one county.

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of high school special education teachers regarding the inclusion program in the high schools of the Happy Village School System. Burgin (2003), Fox & Ysseldyke (1997), and Tudor (2004) concluded that the implementation of inclusion programs has taken place for the most part without the consultation or insight of the service delivery providers, the special education teachers. This finding was surprising given the critical role of special educators in the success or failure of inclusion (Cook et al., 1999; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). This study was intended to provide special education teachers with the opportunity to provide this missing voice.

The data for this study included demographic information and results from semistructured interviews incorporating 21 questions. In addition, the participants' paralinguistic behaviors during these interviews were also noted, providing further insight as to their true feelings regarding the inclusion mode. The 21 questions addressed the overarching issue of the special education teachers' perspective on inclusion services in the high schools where they were employed. In some cases follow-up questions were asked of the participants for further clarification.

The results of the interviews and anecdotal data have been synthesized into categories according to emerging themes. The categories provided organization of the participants' responses into four areas: perceptions regarding the practice of inclusion in a public high school setting, the efficacy of inclusion, the supports that facilitate inclusion

programs, and barriers to successful incorporation of inclusion services. As themes emerged, subcategories were created to analyze the data in a meaningful way.

Introduction to the Participants

Participants were purposefully selected based on a narrow definition. To take part in this study participants had to be licensed special education teachers who were either currently teaching or had taught in inclusion classes in the high schools. Inclusion had been implemented in the county where the study took place for no more than 5 years thereby ensuring the individuals in this study had recent experiences in inclusion in the high schools. Pseudo names were assigned to each participant in this study to ensure confidentiality. Table 1 is a summary of participant demographic information.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Name	Gender	School Size	Years of Experience	Years Teaching High School Sped	Highest Degree Earned
Stephen	Male	Large	6	6	B.S.
Veronica	Female	Large	3	3	B.S.
Cassidi	Female	Large	40	6	Ed.S
Ashley	Female	Medium	8	7	MS.
Savanna	Female	Medium	16	9	B.A.
Era	Female	Small	26	5	MS.
Doe	Female	Small	6	6	Ed.S
Jayne	Female	Small	6	2	B.S.
Chris	Male	Small	13	11	Ed.D
Ronnie	Male	Large	5	5	MS.+30
Robert	Male	Large	5	5	MS+30

1. Large School- Defined as a school with 1,300 or more students.
2. Medium School- Defined as a school with 800 to 1,299 students.

3. Small School- Defined as a school with fewer than 799 students.

Stephen is a male special education teacher in a large high school setting. He has 6 years of teaching experience, all in a high school setting. At the time of the interview Stephen was providing inclusion services through regular education classes and teaching a pullout resource biology course. His highly qualified status for both special education and biology allows him to work in the regular classroom providing inclusion services and assigning grades for his pullout biology course. This was his first year teaching a pullout resource class. Stephen defines inclusion as, “special ed teachers going into a general ed classroom.”

Veronica is a female special education teacher in a large school setting. She has 3 years of teaching experience, all in a high school setting. At the time of the interview she was providing inclusion services for grades 9 through 12. She agreed with another participant’s definition of inclusion where inclusion programming was defined as extra support for special needs students within the regular school program.

Cassidi is a female special education teacher in a large school setting. She has 40 years of experience in the education system working as a teacher and administrator. She has 6 years of teaching experience at the high school level for special education. At the time of the interview she was working as a special education consulting teacher and as an inclusion teacher for one period a day. Special education consultants are assigned with managerial and organizational tasks for the school building on behalf of special education students and their families. She defined inclusion as, “extra support for special needs students within the regular school program.”

Ashley is a female special education teacher in a medium school setting. She has taught special education for 8 years with 7 of those years taking place in a high school setting. Ashley is highly qualified in math and is currently teaching a pullout math class for special education students as well as work-study courses for identified students. She has experience working in inclusive settings in other high schools in the county. She directs special education assistants in inclusive settings at her current placement. Ashley defines inclusion as, “including special education students in the regular program and providing student support and educator support so that setting is appropriate for that student.”

Savanna is a female special education teacher in a medium school setting. She has been employed as a special education teacher for 16 years, working in a high school setting for 9.5 years. During those 16 years she also worked in special education at the elementary and middle school levels. Her high school experiences include leading the Read 180 program, which is a computer based literacy effort. The Read 180 program included both special and regular education students. She is currently providing special education services through a pullout resource program that functions much like work-study. When asked to define inclusion she said, “It’s a team effort with regular and special education teachers. The student is not singled out as special ed., and also regular ed. students get some help, some input from the special ed. teacher.”

Era is a female special education teacher in a small school setting. She has been employed as a special educator for 26 years, working in the high school setting for 5 of those 26 years. She has experience working with children with special needs from kindergarten through age 21. Era defined inclusion as, “the least restrictive environment

to give them the best education that there is and no matter what the disability, there should be accommodations and education for all.”

Doe is a female special education teacher in a small school setting. She has 6 years of experience in the education system working as a special education teacher and consultant for special education in the high school setting. Doe defined inclusion as the least restrictive environment and noted, “All students have a right to be educated in the least restrictive environment.”

Jayne is a female special education teacher in a small school setting. She has been employed as a special education teacher for 5.5 years with 1.6 of those years in a high school setting. Jayne defined inclusion as, “the least restrictive environment for academic reasons, as well as the social interaction with the same grade level students.”

Chris is a male special education teacher in a small school setting. He has been employed as a special educator for 13 years. He is in his 11th year working in high school special education setting. Chris defined inclusion as, “the least restrictive environment for kids to succeed and providing them with the requisite accommodations to succeed in that setting.”

Ronnie is a male special education teacher in a large school setting. He has been employed as a licensed special education teacher for 5 years. He has worked in a public high school setting for 6 years, 1 year as a special education assistant and the following 5 years as a special education teacher. Ronnie is highly qualified to teach high school English and is expecting a pullout resource class for the next school year for special education students. Ronnie focused on the least restrictive aspect of inclusion in his

definition and touted the "... socialization students get from being with their peers as opposed to being in resource..." as one of the major components of inclusion

Robert is a male special education in a large school setting. He has been employed as a special education teacher for 5 years and has worked all of those years in a high school setting. Robert defines inclusion as, "two teachers working together to help make the material understandable to both ends of the spectrum, the high and the low performers."

Perceptions

Reality is based on perception (Exner, 1993). It is that unique perspective coming from life experiences and the participants' sole way of organizing and accommodating information that is inherently enriching to a qualitative study (Creswell, 1998; Exner, 1993). The phenomenological process involves a union of what is actually present with what is interpreted as present from the viewpoint of multiple individuals over a single phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994, p. 27). Moustakas (1994) referred to this method of in-depth interviewing for research as "... a unity of the real and the ideal" (p. 27). The research questions used in the interviews for this study were designed to discover the participants' perceptions regarding the phenomenon of incorporating special education students in regular education classes through inclusion programming in a public high school setting. Subjects were purposefully selected in an effort to judiciously study the defined phenomenon from the perspective of the licensed special education teacher charged with the implementation of the students' program.

Great effort was made to remain psychologically emic (Merriam, 1998) throughout the activities of this study. However, Denizen and Lincoln (1994) state there

is no qualitative research that is completely void of bias. Burdette (1999) notes, “The qualitative narrative relies heavily on the voice of the researcher to tell the story” (p. 60). It is precisely this combination of experiences coupled with ethical and structured exploration of the phenomenon studied that is the cornerstone of a qualitative study (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990).

Perceptions Regarding the Practice of Inclusion in a Public High School Setting

The myriad of experiences and philosophies the participants brought to the interviews are reflected in their responses. Interestingly, all subjects interviewed voiced support for the concept of mainstreaming and/or the continuum of placement clause currently defined in IDEA (2004) versus full inclusion. Full inclusion is the practice of including children with disabilities in the regular classroom 100 % of the time regardless of the handicapping condition (Crockett & Kauffman, 1999; Friend & Bursuck, 1996). The discussion on inclusion versus segregation for identified students prompted this response from Cassidi:

I think it depends on the severity of the issue. Those students ...who can handle the regular program with just some support (should be placed in the regular education classroom). But those students who are severe and profound or have great difficulties with their academic learning need a special resource pullout situation.

When respondents were specifically queried regarding their opinion on the implementation of full inclusion, each participant disagreed with the notion and application. Progressive inclusion, however, received much backing. Progressive inclusion is a concentrated emphasis on integrating children identified with special needs into all facets of life at school but recognizing a need for segregated options and therefore

continuing to employ the *continuum of services* protocol (Osgood, 2005). The idea and implementation of progressive inclusion while recognizing some specific limitations was largely supported as evidenced by Ashley's comment:

...a student who has particular medical needs that need to be taken cared of, that would take them out of a regular ed class. I would say during that period where they need to have their medical needs met or emotional needs met, maybe they should be taken out of the regular program. But if they could be scheduled to participate for the full hour and a half in the regular program, they should.

There was support for the special education students right to participate in regular education classes by Ashley when she stated, "I think every student has the right – it's not just a privilege, they have the right to participate with their peers." This is consistent with legal requirements for LRE and Congressional intent; that consideration must be given to the regular education classroom first, prior to alternative placements where children are segregated from their nondisabled peers (Heumann, 1994; President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002). Era added, "Well, every child has a right to it, however, it's not right for every child." Era's statement is consistent with the *continuum of service clause* found in IDEA-IA (2004).

Interestingly, one participant's comments regarding progressive inclusion encompassed the full spectrum of exceptional student education. Ronnie stated, "They've got to cope better in the real world." He implied that the diversity of the regular education setting better prepared special education students for life post graduation. However, he also noted that a regular classroom teacher is supposed to be able to teach to all students in a *normal* classroom. He defined a normal classroom to include students exhibiting a continuum of skills from "two standard deviations below" to "two standard deviations above" the average. He implied that teaching to students with this diverse

range of abilities including those labeled as intellectually gifted as well as intellectually disabled does not typically occur in a regular classroom setting.

Inclusion classes incorporate students with vast ranges of academic and intellectual abilities (Osgood, 2005). Nonetheless, other participants mirrored these same guidelines for special education students and participation in regular education classes. In Era's opinion, "...for some of them, even though we're told they have to go out into inclusion, that is not the best place for them. So therefore, least restrictive is going to be another environment."

Jayne spoke to the effect that some students in special education may have on the regular education classroom:

...I do not agree with that part of inclusion, where someone is mandating (that all special education students must be placed in a regular education classroom), because I have two regular ed kids of my own and two special education kids and I didn't want any of them to interfere with anybody's education.

In the same vein, Era expressed that some students' abilities are so far behind their regular education peers that they are not able to benefit from that level of academic instruction. She stated that some high school special education students can be developmentally like "a 2 year old. ... If he's going to make all these noises and be disruptive, then he's taking it away from the other kids." She goes on to state that the regular education teachers must be able to cover all the material required by law. The regular education students have to meet graduation requirements and this can be difficult to achieve when a student is disruptive. When queried regarding a special needs student's impact on the class and on nonspecial education students, Stephen said; "If they are severely challenged, they are going to hold any class back I think." Stephen elaborated, "I mean they will, because the teacher will have spent a little more time with them."

Stephen further qualified his response stating that it was appropriate for some special education students:

Possibly a kid who passed a Gateway. But for the ones in there in the math or biology, that there's no shot at it ... but they're still in that class...Honest opinion here, they're going to hold that class back.

Stephen seemed aware of a potential political incorrectness when he elaborated saying, "...that's kind of mean to say but I don't think it's...I feel it's the truth." Stephen may have experienced some uneasiness sharing this viewpoint but Cook and Semmel (2001) support this position through their research on Tolerance Theory which recognizes finite resources and the vast combination of learning characteristics that curtails teachers' ability to address all student needs at any given moment. Savanna has observed this phenomenon and the impact on students. When asked about special education students' impact in inclusion classes Savanna said:

It depends on the teacher. For some it doesn't matter because they plough ahead regardless if they're sped or regular ed, they go forward, either get it or not get it. The (teachers) who try, the ones who are a little more invested, then that time is taking time up from other students. So, you do see there's an impact. There's only so much time in a class.

Veronica provided additional insight into the reasoning behind the support for the *continuum of service* clause and the need for an instruction option available through segregated classrooms:

...for the most part; they don't have a sense of others. An awareness, ...but that doesn't mean that they know that that teacher needs to focus on somebody other than themselves. They don't understand what they are doing.

This too is in alignment with Tolerance Theory (Cook, Gerber, & Semmel, 1997; Cook & Semmel, 1999; Cook & Semmel, 2000; Gerber, 1988; Gerber & Semmel, 1985) where teachers are burdened by the constraints of time, energy, and even expertise to address all

student needs at any given moment. These limitations make certain students more likely to fall outside the instructional tolerance of most teachers (Cook, 2001). Patti supported this view when commenting, "...sometimes they don't come very grown up." All students enter high school settings with a range of developmental levels, but special education students in particular present with a vast array of adaptive, academic, cognitive, and emotional growth (Tienken, 2010). According to Tolerance Theory it is logical to expect that students with exceptional needs, as is the case with special education students, are often at the limit or outside the tolerance of the regular education teacher and the regular education classroom (Cook, 2001).

There was an acknowledgement that nonidentified students make demands on teachers' time too. Providing accommodations for testing situations requires time and effort (Osgood, 2005). Doe spoke to the extra amount of time required by teachers to provide testing accommodations for regular education students as well as students in special education. She said, "I mean by the state, even regular ed students can have accommodations, legal accommodations." Veronica spoke to the needs of nonidentified students and the time required addressing those needs:

But, I mean it's not just like a special ed. kid in there, I mean any kid that's not even identified, it takes time away. ...it really varies with kids...each kid takes a certain amount of time, so...

As Cassidi said, "Because you could have two special needs kids in that classroom, but there's eight others that are not identified that take up the teacher's entire time."

Veronica added, "And these special ed kids aren't even getting what they need." Cassidi further added, "And they're not getting what they need, but neither is anybody else."

Ashley had a different take on the time required for special education and regular education students:

I would stand by our student's behavior a hundred percent. I think their behaviors are a hundred percent better than the kids in the regular program and the kids in the regular program are atrocious. Our kids don't ever want that label attached to them, so they are going to make sure that their behaviors are generally above board. I don't find that they take any more for our children than they would for kids in the regular program who have missed the learning, who don't understand it, for whatever reason, absenteeism, inattention.

According to Hodkinson (2005) believing and/or accepting that all students are capable of being educated in the regular education classroom is an important factor for the successful integration of inclusion. Participants' responses consistently indicate support for progressive inclusion but not full inclusion. Participants' responses are particularly poignant given findings by Cook et al.(1999) and Fox and Ysseldyke (1997) where special educators' direct role in implementation of inclusion policy is significant and affected by their beliefs regarding inclusion and the disabled students' ability to succeed in that setting. According to Cook et al. (1999) special educator's positions on the efficacy of inclusion may be partly based on negative experience with inclusion and student outcomes. This seems substantiated by Savanna's comment, "I'm not seeing that inclusion is working."

NCLB, State Regulations, and Graduation Rates

There were other dissenting statements regarding the practice of progressive inclusion in the schools. According to Savanna many special education students are getting less vocational training. Emphasis is now placed on skills these students may never acquire and will never apply in life. Savanna stated:

...the higher functioning of the CDC children are coming into work-study for help with Algebra and all these other courses so that they can take the Gateways and they're not doing portfolios on them. I think we're doing these kids a great disservice.

Savanna is referring to the emphasis on NCLB (2002) and the Tennessee Diploma Project (2010). Regulatory provisions have focused on graduation rates and a change in the requirements for earning a high school diploma (NCLB, 2002; TDP, 2010). Changes at the federal and state level have created great upheaval as concerns remain regarding the participation of students with disabilities performance on standardized tests and the impact on AYP (Allbritten et al., 2004; Bouck, 2009; Gaona, 2004, Tienken, 2010). According to Allbritten et al. (2004), "NCLB virtually guarantees that the presence of special education students in a school will contribute to the school's failure to make AYP" (157). Ronnie alluded to the focus on NCLB requirements as negatively impacting regular education teachers' feelings toward the presence of special education students in their classroom. He stated:

...and you can understand that when a student comes in, one of our special ed students that aren't performers, if that's going to count on their numbers, then they're very worried. And I can understand them getting these attitudes. And that's sad.

Savanna added, "I've seen a lot of frustrated teachers. Very frustrated teachers because they know they're going to be evaluated so to speak on their end-of-course testing, gateway scores"

The push for increases in graduation rates for all students and concerns for AYP and NCLB has prompted a shift in the county whereby resource classes are, once again, being developed for special education high school students. Ashley is highly qualified to teach Algebra at the high school level. When asked if this return to pullout reflected a

failure of inclusion practices she said:

But it doesn't have anything to do with inclusion really. We just found that there were certain populations of special ed students that are not going to be able to be successful in the regular algebra program. So we try to scale it down and get them some of the background stuff that they had missed. Some place along the way they've missed a lot of the underlying support that they need for Algebra, we can teach it so that they can go to a geometry class and be successful there, and potentially I could teach a geometry class.

Stephen is teaching a pullout class in Biology I for special education students. He possesses the highly qualified status for the course. An Algebra course strictly for students identified for special education is also available at the largest high school in the county. This is the first year that high school has made pullout resource classes an option since moving to inclusion and doing away with the old system of mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming is the concerted effort to place students with disabilities in the regular education classroom with consideration given to the student's ability to function in that environment. Placements are selective and do not prohibit the identified student from participating part of the day in a pullout resource type setting (Ferguson, 2000).

Mainstreaming allowed special education teachers to teach core subjects and assign the grade. Reportedly, the school system is looking to develop more pullout classes throughout the county. According to Ashley:

We're going to develop some kind of math ...course they could take as a senior that would have personal finance, budgeting of checkbooks and stuff like that. They could take that and then they would have their four maths. Instead of having to take Algebra II – that's impossible. For my very, very best students that's very difficult. The majority of my students don't go there. They're not going to do anything with it; it doesn't do them any good.

It is Savanna's understanding is that administration and central office are looking to incorporate more options through pullout resource programming in the high schools.

She said:

So next year and the year after, we're going to start teaching those students physics as a required course for graduation. I've heard there had been talk that we'll have a class that will be like a work-study physics class like we have a work-study algebra class now.

Each of these pullout resource classes will require a teacher with the highly qualified credential for that particular course. Thus far all of the core courses strictly serving the special education population have licensed special education teachers with proper highly qualified status for that subject. Ashley shared the reasoning for the shift to more pull-out with the following, "So the goal is to get their regular diploma while having them meet the same credentials as they would in the regular setting, but more support." The move to pullout classes reflects the emphasis on NCLB (2002) and graduation rates.

Conflicts with a functional curriculum as defined by Bouck (2009) NCLB have been highlighted by a number of organizations and researchers (Allbritten, 2004; Bouck, 2009; Gaona, 2004; NCTM, 2000; Tienken 2010). Savanna mirrored these concerns with the following statement:

No Child Left Behind is being interpreted as "everybody is going to college, so let's treat them all like they're going to college." Not everybody is going to go to college, not everybody is college material. So the way that they're interpreting that No Child Left Behind is that everyone is going to college. So, let's prepare them all two years before in language, physics, chemistry, calculus, dah-dah-dah. We're doing assembly-line education here. We're giving lip service to individualize education program, IEP. It's lip service.

Savanna further elaborated with the following:

Just like No Child Left Behind looks good on paper. It's just like our legislation where every kid going to college is prepared for that, looks good on paper. But when you come down to working with real kids, real people, it didn't work.

Ronnie shared his frustration with regulatory requirements. He expressed a belief that if an educational placement of a self-contained class or pullout resource made 'sense' for a

particular student's needs, the regulatory requirements stated, "we can't do that." He has been frustrated that although students have the right to an individualized education plan, NCLB has forced educators to continue to treat these students like all other students in terms of academic expectations. In his view NCLB has forced students to fail first rather than enabling teachers to be proactive to ensure student success. Ronnie was following up on a comment regarding the school's rather recent shift from full inclusion for the majority of special education students to the development of pullout resource courses. According to Ronnie the school followed LRE requirements by including special education students in inclusion courses but, "...the ones that start to fall way behind...as their grades continue to plummet, then we pull them out and put them in a resource class. And that makes sense." Robert's said, "...it's more leveled and they academically have done better..." when speaking to the effectiveness of pullout resource classes in high school. Robert shared his opinion regarding the move to pull-out resource classes, "The student's have done remarkably better." Ronnie agreed and identified factors he perceived as contributing to the student's successes including, "... the pacing and the individual attention of our classes ..." Ronnie shared the following when discussing regulatory requirements and student's needs:

It's not one size fit's all. You can't have one size that fits everybody. ...We're analyzing and we're doing an assessment on these cases based on their needs, and then we're putting them in the place where we can address those needs.

He also emphasized the importance of addressing functional goals vs. mastery of facts that some special education students will not be able to apply. When asked about the Tennessee Diploma Project (2010) and special needs students, Ronnie had this to say, "and there you have again the people that-how many of them have made these decision

that have never been in a classroom? Have no clue. One-size-fits-all. Just for political – who knows what.” In Savanna’s words, “We’re doing assembly line education here.”

These comments are consistent with those of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2000) and Allbritten et al. (2004) on the paradox between NCLB’s (2002) move toward uniformity and IDEA’s (2004) focus on individuation.

Many participants commented on restrictive procedures concerning special education services. Apparently, the special education teachers have been instructed that they may only spend a small percentage of their time with regular education students.

According to Doe:

Right, but when the state comes in and says you can’t co-teach because you have to be 100 % special ed, not regular- you can only be like what? I think its 1 or 2 % regular ed that you can work with.

Chris was also under the same impression as is evidenced by his comments, “You have to be careful with that, though, because from a technical standpoint, you’re only supposed to work with special ed kids.” One of the benefits for regular education teachers as cited by Block (1999), Hines (2001), and Hunt (2000) included additional assistance in the classroom with help provided through special education personnel and their resources. The participants’ interpretation of legal limitations concerning their involvement with regular education students seems somewhat contradictory to the cited benefit of another pair of hands to assist in the classroom. In Doe’s words, “See, they have tied our hands. They have tied us down bad.” When asked where this directive originated from Robert responded that he believed “The state...they said that we could only teach our students. We could not instruct the classroom in general.”

Chris identified a procedural concern with this method of assisting only special education students in the regular classroom. According to Chris:

Again, the very fact that you are working with those kids individually, the special ed kids, in and of itself is not the ideal model and it's not the least restrictive environment because you're singling them out. You know what I am saying? It's a contradiction of terms there.

Jayne addressed the irony of privacy issues with respect to applying this mandate within the inclusion model when she said, "We've done 97 papers that say confidentiality."

Chris elaborated on his concern with inadvertently identifying students within the regular education classroom as having special needs when he said, "We're satisfying the letter of the law but not the intent of the law when you do what I just described." Veronica spoke to the issue of confidentiality in an inclusion class when she said, "I agree that you're not supposed to single out the special ed kids and we're only allowed to work with the special ed kids. How is that not singling them out?" Era had a similar concern as evidenced by the following, "Yes, and they go ahead and they say, 'Don't separate. Don't make it known that these are special kids.' Well, as soon as you go and say, 'I can only work with this group,' you've just done that." Doe continued in the same vein with:

And if you pull one special ed student and you leave the room, you're not giving service to the other students so you have to pull all special ed students. Everybody knows who they are.

Ronnie described his frustration with the confidentiality issue:

Now what are we supposed to do? Not point out. We're supposed to maintain confidentiality. But yet we can't help the regular ed kids? What does that do then? So, it's a paradox of what they tell us to do.

Jayne spoke to her decision to work with regular education students in inclusion classes despite the directive to focus her time and service with students identified as having special needs. She stated, "I do help them." Era voiced support for Jayne's choice to

work with regular education students saying, “That’s what we’re here for.” Jayne expressed frustration and commented:

These are the children who fall in that crack, ... They need that little perk to do all that regular ed work and do well and be successful, but they’re not low enough to be identified.

Doe went on to say:

The letter of the law tells us ...you can work with a percentage of regular ed but it’s so low that it’s like half a person in the class. We can’t work with half a person. And if it’s one person, because the class has higher numbers, then you work with one person? You choose one regular ed student ...but you can’t help anyone else in class? That’s not right.

Era summed it up by saying, “I think the law forgets what we are here for...We are here for the children. That’s collective.” Era went on to say:

We went into this because we wanted to be educators and to educate; we are here for all of them. Yes, we should concentrate on our special ed students because that’s what they need, but that’s not what the law is telling us we’re here for.

Ronnie had this to say regarding limiting special education teacher access to only special education students in a regular education setting:

When you think things can’t get any goofier, they do. Again, I think these are the politicians that have no clue what goes on in a classroom or whatever. But to not address the needs of non-special ed kids in an inclusion environment?

Doe shared her frustration with the law and the required shift from learning problem solving and processes to long lists of objectives as specific facts:

We are such a resource but the law limits our abilities. ... Education could be so much better if we were allowed to do our job. I’ll give you one better. The law is limited... We really cannot teach the way we would be able to teach. We could teach at a higher level if they would stop putting restrictions on us.

In Era’s opinion, “You’re either teaching to a test or you’re teaching who they tell you you can teach to. You are not teaching the general population. You’re not teaching education.” Era added, “The whole premise of inclusion originally was a great idea until

government got involved and politics got involved.” Doe spoke positively of the staff at her school and expanded on the idea that the special education personnel in her department had much to offer but faced regulatory impediments:

I can only speak for this team that we have at this school and I know our county has some great special ed teams. I have actually worked with other people and collaborated with other special ed people, teachers in this county. But the team that we have here, we all work together, and if we were actually allowed to go into these classrooms and really help these teachers and really help these students, it would be off the charts. But we’re not allowed. We’re held back. Now as special ed teachers, we have been told that we can work with regular ed but it is such a small percentage we have to be so careful not to go over that percentage and break the rules.

The interviewer followed up by asking, “So they say 100 % just to carte blanche cover it?” Doe responded, “So just say 100 % special ed.”

When queried about other perceived regulatory impediments Ronnie stated that requirements for learning and progress for special education students needed to be adjusted for potential. He had this to say:

They’re going to have to make some differences in accountability ...you can’t squeeze blood out of a turnip. And it’s going to be counterproductive. If you’re going to hold somebody accountable for something that is undoable. Then what are they going to do? They’re going to try to avoid that whole thing. Try to get it out of their face. And that’s where again; the system is failing these kids.

Savanna addressed the concern with accountability and graduation rates:

Yes, especially with how our state is doing everything now with assuming that every student is going to college and in requiring that they take chemistry and physics. I don’t see how they’re going to do that in the next couple of years with these students. Try and have them start taking Physics...or Chemistry, and Calculus. I don’t see how they’re expecting that to happen, and I think our dropout rates are really going sky high.

Ronnie went on to express that due to some students’ lack of ability and the requirements of the law, students have audited required classes:

What we try to do is get some of these kids, and I don't understand all the intricacies, and sometimes we've been able to do it, and other times not, to basically get them off the roster, and basically what they're pretty much doing is auditing the class...the teacher was being hammered for numbers...that's foolish when the teachers are held accountable for that.

Overall, participants contended that the special education population suffered the most from the shift toward fact acquisition as mandated by NCLB (2002) vs. application and functionality. These students and the low functioning nonidentified students, they asserted, will not achieve this level of thought process incidentally. They must be taught these skills and given time to practice them. This was reportedly lacking from an effective progressive inclusion model.

Concerns were also expressed about the large amount of paperwork required to implement an individual education plan. Ronnie expressed that this negatively impacted the amount of time he had for his students, particularly in the school's inclusion model. He said: "Because of the huge volume of paperwork that we have to do, and then we are doing basically part of what a regular ed teacher does." Savanna mirrored Ronnie's conjecture:

Special ed teachers are so overloaded, there is no way that they can keep up with all of the paperwork and teach a class and do consultation work with other teachers. There is absolutely no way you can do this and keep your sanity.

Savanna added, "I'm doing the absolute best I can do. But I didn't get in this field to do paper work."

Ronnie also addressed the software system implemented by the state referred to as Easy IEP. Easy IEP enables computer based monitoring of census and IEP requirements from remote locations. Clearance levels determine access to various functions of Easy IEP (Easy IEP, 2011), making creation of required documents a multi-step process

involving numerous personnel. A red stop sign appears when there is a noncompliance problem reflected in the input loaded onto the software program. State monitors conduct a review of census errors at certain times of the year and use the information from Easy IEP as part of their monitoring process. Monies are tied to the census and compliance (TDOE, 2011). Participants expressed increased pressure and time demands as a result of the “stupid red stop sign” as Ronnie quipped. Savanna’s comments were in line with Ronnie’s when she said, “So many times with this Easy IEP stuff I have to devote time away from teaching just to do that or else I would be here until 9 o’clock, 10 o’clock every night.”

Number of Special Education Students in Class

One of the specific challenges for high school inclusion classes noted by Dieker and Marawski (2003) was large class sizes. NEA (as cited by Hines, 2001, p.2) recommends a specific ratio to ensure true integration. Participants’ responses included information on both class size and ratios for inclusion classes in the high schools in Happy Village. The NEA recommended that the total number of students in an inclusive class not exceed 28, and that the number of learning disabled students in that inclusion class be capped at 25% (as cited in Hines, 2001, p.2). The expressed ratio of 25% of 28 students is equivalent to 7 special education students per 28 total number of students. The purpose to this strategy is to ensure true integration. That which may be referred to as an inclusion class may, in fact, still be segregated if special education students are disproportionately clustered into that classroom (Fraturre & Cappa, 2006). When speaking to the dynamics of inclusive classrooms in his high school, Ronnie stated that the ratio is jeopardized by a lack of personnel, “But we simply don’t have the personnel

to have, with the mix. What are we supposed to have? How many percent of special ed?” Regarding the number of special education students per class Ronnie said, “...they watch those numbers very closely, and try to make sure that they don’t get past that 50% in the regular class. When asked about the total number of students in the classrooms Ronnie said, “Usually 33 to 35.” When asked about the total number of special education students in the inclusion classes Robert said, “I’ve been in classes with maybe 10 to 12. And 10 to 12 keeps me hopping.” The ratios shared by Robert and Ronnie are equivalent to 30% to 34% of special education students in inclusion classes. Other participants shared the ratios of special education students to regular education students in the inclusion classrooms they serve. Doe said, “...the ratio depends on which class it is.” Jayne said her second period class had, “Half or more.” Chris said his classes had, “Probably about fourth to a half. Yeah. There’s a range. Probably anywhere from 10% to about 50%.” Overall, it appeared that inclusion programs in the high schools have failed to meet these ratio criteria.

The Efficacy of Inclusion

Numerous research studies have touted teacher efficacy as pivotal to a successful inclusion program (Anderson et al., 2007; Bandura, 1997, 1998; Goddard et al., 2004; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Soodak et al, 1998; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). The role teachers play is significant and effected by their perceptions and expectations in inclusive practices (Cook et al., 1999; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). Participants discussed their roles and assets as special educators as well as that of the regular education teacher, administration, and parents. Participants also addressed perceived social and academic benefits for special education and regular education students.

Special Educators' Role

Participants shared their views on their roles within the high school setting. Participant responses seemed to focus on provision of support through modifications, materials, and direct guidance of special education students through the special education staff. Savanna depicted the role of special education in an inclusion classroom as supportive, "I think that they are there as a support for the regular ed teacher." Doe shared a similar outlook, "As a support. Not as a primary but as a support." When asked about functioning in a classroom Savanna said, "I think the regular ed teacher is going to take the dominant role." Savanna added, "I try to work closely with the regular education teachers. I find out where my students are lacking, or missing assignments, or not understanding concepts, or whatever, and I try to work with those teachers." When speaking of the students Savanna said, "They're our clients." She added, "I feel like resource or work-study should be there as a support." Era spoke about her role as a special education teacher:

I have CDC students who I put into the classes but I also send an attendant with them. I find out what they're doing in the curriculum and have taught and trained and talked to my assistants (about) what they're doing and how we can modify their work ... I also talk to the teacher, what they're doing, so if they're doing something that I can make it easier for them to understand, I will.

Era spoke about the benefits of knowing her students and the opportunity to participate in class selection on their behalf:

And I put them into different classes; I try to put them where I think they'll be successful. If they don't know their ABC's, I'm not going to put them in a computer or a technology class where there's a computer even though they have an attendant. That's just frustrating.

Doe shared her viewpoint of the role special educators' play, "Whatever you need for our special ed students, let us know. We will take care of it. We will help you. We'll do whatever we need to do to help this student succeed." Era said, "We're here for the kids." Savanna shared the same sentiment when she said, "I'm here for the kids." Ronnie said, "Truly help the kids." Doe said:

Yeah, I did not enter education for the money.... I did not enter education for the hours. I did not enter education because of the summer, because let me tell you, I work just as hard in the summer for education as I do during the school year. I entered education so I could help students.

Doe added, "And so I could teach and so I could be a role model and make a difference."

Ashley viewed her position as more subordinate to the regular education teacher, "I want to make sure that the class perceives me as a substitute teacher and under that authority of the regular teacher. I don't see it as a coteaching or lead teaching, simply supportive." She said, "One thing I've never done is teach a lesson as an inclusion teacher." Ashley elaborated:

I can do one on one basis with a student; mostly I try to do it in conjunction with the same way that the teacher has taught them how to do it. I'm not going to teach them in a different way or go around and try to chump it up in a simpler way because they still have to understand the way the teacher is teaching.

When asked about special education teachers adapting the curriculum versus the regular education teacher providing the adaptations Ronnie said, "I think that's okay. Because when I ask the teacher they'll tell me, whatever you want to do." He went on to describe some of his activities in this role:

...I've typed up tests and then they use those tests. You know, they'll just have a stack of tests and the special eds are on the bottom, and she'll just go out and hand out the tests. ...Then when they come to one of my kids, they'll deal off the bottom of the deck.

Ronnie elaborated on his role as a special educator by speaking to the different approach that special education teachers use to present course material. He alleges regular education teachers look at instruction primarily from an academic standpoint. Special education teachers consider classroom instruction from the standpoint of learning strategies and determining which ones are the most effective for each student.

He added:

...The teacher, you know, says well, that's the same thing I said. Well yeah, but he didn't open the memory draw here to add this bit of information to it before we went on. That's where I try to help teachers with their warm-up exercises in the morning. To try and remind us what we did yesterday, and remind us what we did last week.

Jayne spoke to her ability as a special education teacher to make adjustments in the curriculum for the student, "...so I knew what was gonna be presented as it was gonna be presented and then I would go online, find things comparable where they could be successful and that's what they did." Era went further by speaking to her ability to influence what courses the special education students on her caseload take. The inclusion model has facilitated more collaboration between the special education teachers and the guidance counselors in course selection for special education students.

Special Education Teachers' Assets and Benefits

Block (1999), Hines (2001), and Hunt (2000) identified benefits of inclusion classes such as additional assistance in the classroom, the applied expertise special education personnel provide, and the knowledge and experience special education personnel offer through insights in planning and delivering curriculum. Participants were queried as to the benefits and assets special education teachers bring to the classroom. When asked Veronica began with, "We bring more patience." There were multiple

references to the importance of an *extra set of eyes* and making observations beyond that of the regular education teacher. Stephen said, “Extra set of eyes.” Veronica added, “And paying attention to who’s struggling and who’s not.” Doe said, “They don’t see what we see and a lot of time...” In Doe’s opinion:

I think we offer differentiation, because sometimes people get into a routine or a rut. And I think that we can come in and see it with fresh eyes and say, ‘Okay, we see differences in the students’ and sometimes not all regular but some regular teachers don’t see the differences. I’ve had teachers say, ‘Oh, I just need to do that and they’ll understand? Yeah, I’ll just do that.’

Doe spoke to the knowledge the special education teacher has concerning special education students and faculty, “I could tell you who’s in every room and where every teacher is and what they teach. I think that’s a difference in special ed. We take time to know people. I know every teacher, every assistant.” Era expanded on Doe’s comment:

...we want to learn the culture, the climate, everything there is to know about the school, the personalities, because we have anywhere from, whatever school you’re in, some maybe 50, some maybe 200, 300 special ed students, and you have to know the personalities of everybody in the school to know where to place these students.

Ronnie addressed the collaboration and revelations regarding a students functioning, “We talk about our students all the time in our office. And we have personal knowledge usually of their home life.” Robert said, “We do a lot of inter collaboration.” According to Jayne:

I know one thing I appreciate...our caseloads cross...so therefore, I truly know more about them on a day-to-day basis and I’ll come to Chris and say, ‘Hey, so-and-so said he’s going to (skip school). I need to call a parent. Okay with you?’ Sure, that’s fine.’ And then I do. We document.”

Jayne shared her thoughts regarding the special educators’ personal knowledge of the student, “I take those assignments, because I’m familiar, and I know each child well enough to know what they can do and be successful.” Ashley said, “I think we’re pretty

darn good. I think we carry with us an awareness of what happens in the regular program, we want our children to participate as much as possible.” Regarding special educators’ assets and benefits Era said, “...we offer knowledge and experience.” Doe expanded, “Yeah, and we advocate. I think we offer them security because they know if they’re having a problems with a regular ed teacher, they can come to us and we are going to help them get back to where they need to be, as far as academically. Ashley, “I’m more aware of the student’s issues emotionally and how they feel about having this educational intervention than would be the teacher...”

When asked about the instructional assets and benefits special education teachers offer Chris said, “...I think providing materials sometimes during instruction; for emphasis on instruction, supplementary materials such as manipulatives. Maybe during math lesson, algebra tiles.” Stephen spoke to the benefit of reducing the amount of time and energy a regular education teacher must expend on individual students by having special education personnel in the classroom. Stephen said, “...but when they’re in the inclusion part of it, it’s definitely reduced because you do have that inclusion teacher in there with them.”

Ashley spoke to a willingness by special education teachers to provide extra support without prompting:

I’m willing to go off in the classroom and run off those materials for the students so that they can do that. I’ll do that, and I have two assistants who work with me. We’re willing to do that. We’re willing also to go in the classroom and be a resource for every student.

Chris spoke to accommodations and modifications initiated by the special education teacher:

Basically, we do accommodate when needed, pullout services for testing in a small group setting, if it's a read aloud situation. Extended time model for assignments, extended time model for projects and what not. If it's a research situation and kids need to go to the library, providing that for them. I think clarifications of lesson, of instruction. There's a dialog that goes on between the regular ed teacher and the special education teacher, if you're in the correct environment, where they might introduce a particular term that might be really obscure to a special ed kid or any other kid. There's a way you can clarify certain things or use a different word that they can relate to.

Ashley spoke to special education teachers and special education assistants in the classroom as supports:

They can meet the environmental needs of the students and recognize the supports that they need. They have modifications, and sometimes there are other supports that they can add to that. If they are presenting off a whiteboard, sometimes turning off the lights will help out a lot because it will make the contrast much better. Sometimes keeping the lights on will help a child with ADHD.

Era said, "...if they're doing something that I can make it easier for them to understand, then I will." Robert talked about reteaching material previously reviewed by the regular education teacher in class. He explained that at times teaching a different strategy for the same math problem could help special education students.

Ashley addressed her ability to hold special education students accountable for their required work while continuing to foster independence. Often times students do not want to be seen as needing an extra adult around, particularly in a high school environment. She said:

Sometimes I'll approach them outside of class and I say, 'I notice you're having problems in math class, do I need to come in and help you?' If I see that you're improving, I'll stay out of your way. I don't want to come in there and I don't want to bother you, I don't want to be that lady that identifies you as somebody who does that. But if I need to, if I show up at that door you better examine your conscience real quick because I might just come in and put paper on your desk that has missing assignments, and I know that's something you don't want to do.'

She identified this individual attention to work completion as another benefit to the classroom instructor. Ashley stated that progress reports enable special education staff to communicate with parents about the success or failure of modifications and goals within the full inclusion environment. She said that this level of communication was also beneficial to the regular education teacher

Special education assistants are often part of inclusion programs (Osgood, 2005). Ashley addressed the involvement of the assistants she is in charge of and their contribution:

Support the student, as the teacher is teaching or they're doing independent practice we can go around. I'm really proud of our assistants because they know algebra as well. It's taken awhile because a lot of people will look at algebra and say, 'I can't do that.' Sure you can...my two assistants are my age, if they can do it anybody can do it...and they're willing.

Ashley also spoke to the requirements of the IEP and the special education teachers' facilitation of those requirements in an inclusion class. As the burden of covering an increasing number of objectives for the class as a whole increases, keeping track of the individual needs and modifications for numerous special education students in full inclusion can become overwhelming to regular education teachers. Ashley referred to regular education teachers and her role as case manager of various IEPs stating, "Making sure that they pay attention to the accommodations and modifications... all you have to understand about the law is you got to do it." Ashley expanded on the IEP and its function. Ashley said:

In the IEP...we wrote... we got to make it true. If we don't make it true, we got to figure out what happened, who's the problem. If the student's the problem, we got to say the student never changed that behavior.

Ronnie spoke about the attitude special education teachers bring to the school climate, “I think all of us in special ed, we never give up. We always hold the bar high, but the reality of it is you know, it doesn’t mean that we give up on them.” Doe said, “We’re their encourager. We’re their cheerleader.” Speaking personally, Savanna said, “I’m happy working with the kids.” Era addressed a fellow special education teacher by saying,

... I want to tell you that I’ve heard from other parents what a confidence builder you are; especially in math and algebra...he offers a lot of confidence. I have parents who have called for tutoring... and your name always comes up.

Robert shared the following, “I took a sign off the wall...put it on the sleeve of my notebook, then I carried it around. It said, you know, that fairness is not everyone giving everyone the same. It’s everyone getting what they need.” In Ronnie’s opinion, “It’s not giving them everything they need, but giving them...the same opportunities...It’s not a handout.”

Regular Education Teachers’ Roles, Assets, and Benefits

Farrell (2004), Horne (1985), Idol et al. (1994), Martinez (2004), and Villa et al. (1996) recognize the regular education teacher’s attitude as pivotal in the success or failure of inclusion programs. Participants were asked about the role and contributions of the regular education teacher in inclusion classes. When asked what regular education teachers offer special needs students Doe said:

Regular education teachers offer diversity because they’re not just seeing us. They are seeing the real world and it’s more like a real world application because when you’re out in society, you’re not going to have just one or two people around. There are gonna be all sorts of people around you. And the regular teachers offer that diversity that we, as a special ed teacher, can’t give because we are few in number.

Era spoke to the familiarity special education students experience in the school at large as a result of being in inclusion classes. She said:

Cause they can go up and down the halls and feel comfortable. They're not afraid to go up and down the halls and if they need something, they know they can go to that teacher. And if they're kind of lost, if I send them on an errand, they know that they're safe and secure. Familiarity, I think that's part of it.

Jayne personalized her experience:

Because fully self contained...they identify and I was one time in a SED class, well, for four years. Those children identified primarily with the certified TA's there, but then I began to implement inclusion. And in my case, inclusion worked on the flip side too. I brought reg ed into my class.

When asked about contributions of regular education teachers to inclusion programs in the high school, Ronnie spoke to their expertise in various subject matters. He noted that in a full inclusion model special education students have the opportunity to take advantage of instruction prepared by someone whose focus is that subject. In a self-contained class the special education teacher must provide these various areas of the core curriculum. He completed his thought with the following:

If I have a question about chemistry, ...but I would stand at the back of the class and take notes, and then go help a student...You know, I can't exactly do what a regular ed teacher does.

He noted that while the regular education teacher can provide the core knowledge, he can then focus on implementation of whatever adaptations and teaching strategies that will help individual special education students absorb that information to the best of their ability. Robert expanded with:

And the fact of the matter is we have to prepare in several content areas where if I was just doing one content area, I could be(prepared) but I have English and I have Physical Science. I have biology, and I have Algebra to prepare for, and I can't get in-depth in any of those subject areas that a teacher who only teaches chemistry can do.

Ronnie summarized, “So they’re great with the core contentI can’t present the material because I have too many other things to do.”

Coteaching, New Teachers, and Veteran Teachers

Participants’ responses consistently came back to topics involving coteaching, veteran teachers, and new teachers. Responses reflect participants’ perceptions of the impact these factors have on special education students and school dynamics.

Stephen spoke to the openness of new teachers to coteaching, “...I mean a lot depends on the teacher. I think teachers just out of college now (are more open to coteaching.)” Veronica responded to a comment from Stephen regarding new teachers. Veronica said the training and expectations new regular education teachers experience impacts their attitude toward working with special education students within their classrooms:

In this day and age... They are being trained that way. They’re being trained coming out of college, to be that way. Identifying that they have a need...they recognize that there is a need period.

According to Jayne she participates in coteaching with two of her regular education teachers. In her description, “I teach. We teach. My two teachers that I work with, we work well together. And we appreciate each other.” Doe chimed in, “She teaches the special ed.” Jayne went on to say:

I teach sped, the special education students. She teaches regular ed. He teaches reg ed and I will reintroduce it with sped ease. And the reg eds will go ahead and be working, but you know what? If they learn something from me, that’s okay. I do not take my identified children and say, ‘Now children, come to this table.’”

Doe expressed frustration with what she believed was the state’s mandate that now explicitly requires 100% of special education staff’s time to be spent with special education students only.

...when they came back with this that you can't co-teach because you have to do 100 % of your time with special ed, it hurt our relationship with the regular ed teachers because all of a sudden, everything had to be pulled back. It was a good relationship. In coteaching, it's not that special ed was doing the job of the teacher or working with regular ed. We were still working with special ed. It's just that occasionally a regular ed student might hear the conversation or might actually benefit from the way it's taught to the special ed students.

Robert said of his high school setting:

I think we were moving towards more coteaching." He expanded: The first ...year I was here, I was just told to sit in the corner and behave, you know, like the regular student. But after working with students and teachers though, we got to where I was actually teaching lessons and I would do whatever I could. And then last year or year before they put the kibosh on it.

When asked whom intervened Robert replied that he believed:

The state...said we could only teach our students. We could not instruct the classroom in general. And then that put us back to the teacher doing instruction, and then I'd go around and really explain and reteach to my students. You know if they don't quite understand I'll sit with them and I'll reteach that entire lesson on a small group basis. But as far as coteaching, we don't do it.

Veronica shared her experiences with veteran teachers and coteaching. She noted that this at times has been an impediment to successful full inclusion:

...the older ones that are more set in their ways, they're not used to anybody coming in to help teach...to help them teach, (I)have encountered it in the high school level as well as middle school. 'I know what I'm doing. You just stay out of my way. I'll let you know when I need you.'"

She was speaking to the notion of veteran teachers being forced to work with special education students. In years past veteran regular education teachers were initially trained and historically worked with regular education students with the expectation that they would remain exclusively devoted to that population (Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993; Yell et al, 1998). Doe shared her perception:

We have those teachers that have been here and they're nearing their retirement and they just want, and I hate to say it, but I've actually heard them say it, they just want to finish out their time and they don't want change. They want it to stay the way it is.

Stephen expanded on this idea, "But also, when you sign up to be a teacher, it means you're helping kids. It seems like the older teachers have a more difficult time." Stephen added the adage, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." Overall, participants said that new teachers were a positive influence on successful inclusion with in a coteaching model.

Administrative Roles and Parent Roles

Participants shared their perceptions of administration in regards to the inclusion model during the interviews. There was a mixed response depending on the school in question with some participants experiencing the administration as very supportive and others reporting a lack of involvement when special education was concerned. Ronnie said:

Well, we didn't tell you about administration. Administration is so very supportive. I go through Cassidi. ...Sometimes she'll ask me to go talk to the principal. If I can explain exactly what's going on, he's right there. You know, right there. My favorite quote from the principal is, 'You do what's right for the students, and I'll work it out later.' And I've never had a principal like that...the staff and the administration are just phenomenal.

Robert echoed Ronnie's sentiment with, "Administration's been good to us. I mean, they really have." Ronnie added, "I know we are supported here, and I think as a special ed department, I think we're considered part of the team. I think that comes from everybody's hard work over the many, many years." Era shared conversations she has had with her high school principal in regard to defending special education student

placement in regular education classes. She said her principal shared the following perspective:

Well, along the lines of that, the principal and I have talked several times. How many teachers have walked into a CDC room and really know. ...They can sit and moan and complain about regular ed and all this. Walk into a special ed room, whether CDC or not, and see what really goes on.... you don't have it so bad on your side.

Savanna shared a different experience. She stated that consensus with regards to placement and a complete IEP has been regarded by her principal as, "... a special ed issue...The principal, he's hands off, 'Special ed is over here in this category and we'll let this person deal with it, and if there is a problem maybe I need to know about it otherwise don't tell me.'" Savanna provided a specific circumstance, "I told him about the communication problem several times, but he's not going to do anything about it, so I have just decided to shut up about it and go on."

Participants' perspectives on parents' roles and involvement in special education were interjected into the interviews. Ashley said:

I think parents could definitely gain by understanding what's going to be expected of their children in an inclusion setting or in any education setting. I find a lot of disconnect with that...

Doe talked about the parents' involvement in the development of the IEP for their child. She also implied that parents might request classes for their child that may not be the best fit for their academic needs. Doe said:

Yeah, and sometimes parents will suggest in the IEP meeting, 'I would like for my child to take this. I think this would help him.' And so we try to give the students the classes that the parents would like for them to have.... We have an IEP we have to all agree on.

Era added:

That we make clear. Yeah, absolutely. I always make it clear that we 're a team. It is not my decision and you're the parent...we are a team and we work together. So it works and at this point, you're looking not so much at academics as you're looking at functional daily living skills.

Social Benefits for Students

According to Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk-Hoy (2004) efficacy has a great impact on student outcomes. Participants were asked about high school inclusion programs' capacity for producing positive results. Participants addressed the benefits of inclusion for children with and without disabilities. Veronica began by stating, "It is socially beneficial." Cassidi talked about modeling benefits for special education students:

They tend to learn from their peers... they hear the stimulation and conversations...and learning that's taking place from the regular student. That was the whole premise of inclusion to begin with, learning from your peers in that social setting. So that's what they're thinking that it's more beneficial if they are with regular student's they hear more.

Stephen elaborated:

It's a good role model too, the kids see how they are supposed to act. Like with the resources now, I think (some current students who have not been placed in inclusion may have) a little bit better (behavior) because (they would be) not being around all this negative behavior. They're not seeing the proper behavior ...it's the teacher's job to show that too, but I think inclusion works as far as proper role modeling for how kids should act (by their peers).

Stephen talked about the benefits severely involved special needs students obtain from exposure to a more stimulating environment. He noted the importance of the formations of a socially appropriate form of recreation that enables disabled students to bond with their peers:

Let's say they enjoy the band. If they find enjoyment in it, maybe they can't play the instrument, but if they're sitting there and listening to that, that's beneficial to them. That may be their only enjoyment of the day.

Stephen also spoke to the benefits of inclusion for nondisabled students while using the same example:

That's not taking anything away from the others while they're playing. It could even help the other kids because they've got somebody in there that wants to hear them play. So it's not only beneficial for the special ed kid but it's also beneficial to others because they're getting enjoyment out of playing for them.

Veronica added, "A lot of times, the kids that are performing will go above and beyond just to see the others smile." Veronica paused and then said:

I think that ...these severe kids need to be out there in certain classes. So if anything else, their peers know that they're there. They matter. And don't make fun of them; they can't help the way they are, but they matter. And speaking as a parent, it's made my child more tolerant.

Era also spoke about tolerance and the school climate:

And so I see there is a positive because the whole population accepts them more. I see the positive that they're accepted. We can go out...there are some ... who make noises and make comments, but overall they're not. So the teachers are more accepting because they see them, they get to know them. So the positive side of that is they're not being held in the room and not eating lunch in the room and breakfast in the room and everything is in there seven and a half hours. They are out there.

Ashley mentioned the regular education teacher's tolerance of special education students in her comments:

I'm really proud of them (special education students) because we do a great deal of work on what behaviors are expected of them as a highschooler, and they do a good job. They're not competitive with the regular students there but they enjoy what they hear, they can enjoy being with their peers. I think some of our teachers really, really enjoy having them in class.

Era said, "For me, they (special education students) feel more secure out there, just knowing a familiar face. Familiarity, I think that's part of it." Chris noted the issue

of acceptance and special education students' participation in the school climate as more complex:

The overall school culture encompasses a lot of things. It encompasses academics...encompasses social, emotional, physical. One breaks, they all fall. In this school, I think they're all in place and that's why it works.

Jayne talked about keeping knowledge of the student's status as an identified special education student between herself and the classroom teacher, "I work with children that no one in that room except their teacher and I know they have an IEP."

Ronnie talked about trying to be discrete, "But then you go in trying to be covert about it, of course, kids know, but still you still do that, play that game, where you pretend they don't know." Research by Block (1999), Kochhar et al. (2000), and the National Study of Inclusive Education (1995) identified opportunities for more friendships and friendships with nondisabled peers as well as membership in a regular class as social benefits engendered by special education students participating in inclusion classes.

Ronnie mimicked these ideals when he shared his thoughts on the topic of student socialization and inclusion programs:

They feel more like normal students than a special student when they are in inclusion classes. Even though everyone in the class knows who I help, but they're still part of that class, and they're not in a special class. I have students that say they, you know, don't want to be in a special class. They want to be with their friends.

Jayne talked about the influence regular education students had on special education students in her classroom:

It was beneficial, my students watched the reg eds. Not that they were little darlings, trust me. They were third, fourth, and fifth grade little boys. But it taught my boys...to pull back on some of that verbal nasty and the physical outbursts, 'cause they really did want to be friends with these kids. They (regular education students) just didn't want to be a part of that. So my kids had to regroup.

Assertiveness and self- advocacy were also discussed. Jayne said, “I can think of two, a male and a female...that actually learned to advocate for themselves and their needs a lot.” Doe elaborated, “They weren’t really diplomatic but, “This is what I need’ and that’s what they (special education students) had to do.” Doe added, “Inclusion was a positive thing for them because we have had in the past two years, eight of them that were identified CDC (successfully) go out into inclusion.” She shared that one of the CDC students had been selected as a superlative for their high school. The impact on self esteem was discussed. Ronnie said:

One of the really powerful things I’ve seen is when...a youngster comes in and their self-esteem is in the toilet, and they feel really, really badly about themselves. Then they are now suddenly in an environment with their peers. You see how they (special education students) feel about themselves. Then you see the student through the help you’re giving them (improve) their ability to interact with their peers. Their ability to perform academically improves. You see that self-esteem just improving.

Better salaries and independent living are some of the lifetime returns Salend and Duhaney (1999) established as possibilities for those special needs students participating in inclusion classes. Participants’ responses indicated agreement with findings from Salend and Duhaney (1999) suggesting they perceived a high school inclusion setting with its class periods and student responsibilities more reflective of a work setting than a full-time placement in a segregated resource program. Information gathered through interviews suggest participants distinguish inclusion programs as fostering opportunities for more student ownership of consequences, like that of their nondisabled peers. Jayne seemed keen to help the special education students she worked with to be aware of what the work environment will be like after graduating from high school. She said:

I tell my students on my caseload, 'Once you leave here, nobody's ever gonna read your IEP and say that you have a difference.' If you're not on time for work a couple of days running, you're going to be terminated.

Robert perceived inclusion to be necessary for post high school success. He said:

They have to leave school sometime. You know, that the people at Food City are not going to treat them the same way as we did, they don't have special orientations for them...I think it's important in high school that they do learn to work along with regular people, and be able to take the help and the drive. Most of our students here are helpful to other students, but there is that 1% that are just smart aleck, that want to pick on people for the fun of it. But they need to, especially in high school, be able to (handle that). It takes learning more than one time for them, I think (in the past) we (would) just do it the last year. It isn't going to be any good. They need to go through inclusion in high school (every year) to be ready for outside of high school.

Ronnie agreed with Robert's perception and touted socialization and functional skills as important parts of inclusion:

I agree with you. I think that socialization, learning the skills, because they've got to be able to cope better in the real world, you know, once they get out of this joint. I think that's a very important part of inclusion, and I was going to go somewhere with that, too. I think that is the spirit of inclusion that I really agree with. I think that that's the way it should be done.

Ronnie shared the following, "Back when I was a kid, those kids would have been relegated to, you know, a waitress. Now I'm talking about a bad waitress." Robert leaned forward and said, "They would have been busboys, not waitresses. They wouldn't have made waitress." Ronnie nodded, smiled, and said, "Yeah, that's true." Robert added, "They would have been dishwashers. Then they would have been hollered at for every broken dish." Ronnie made reference to a student who participated in inclusion classes and went on to experience some successes post graduation. He said, "I saw from the very beginning how that again, goes back to the self-esteem and how that self-esteem just grew."

Academic Benefits for Students

Proponents of inclusion cite numerous benefits for students with disabilities including higher academic expectations (Block, 1999; Hines, 2001; Kochhar, West, & Taymans, 2000). Doe referenced a number of special education students she asserted benefited academically from inclusion services. Doe said:

Eight to 10 of them have graduated with a regular diploma. Once they got out there, they became social butterflies. They met the criteria and the requirements. I feel like inclusion caused that. Yes, inclusion allowed them to graduate with a regular diploma and...to work at their potential. Instead of keeping them inside a self contained classroom.

Doe talked about the successes some of their special education students had experienced, “Oh, they’ve already hired five of our students.” Jayne chimed in about one of their former students, “And he is furthering his education.” Doe added, “Yes, he is now in mechanic school in Nashville.”

Ronnie said:

Because they may be certified in Math, so they wouldn’t need that (assistance through special education) in English. Or they may be (identified as needing help) in written expression and reading, so they wouldn’t need that (special education assistance) possibly in Math. We need to have an ability to target each student and determine what their needs are, and then address those students. I think right now, I’m so glad to see what we’re doing here.

Robert briefly addressed how his presence in inclusion classes benefited special education students through accommodations, modifications, and hands on assistance in the classroom:

You know, everyone gets the same instructions in the classes I’m in, but then when it comes to their feedback to us, we adjust that (instruction) a little in Biology or Science classes I work in. Then again, they don’t adjust it at all in Math.

Robert clarified the different approach to math inclusion classes as compared to other

inclusion classes. Robert explained that all students, disabled and nondisabled alike, are expected to cover the same content but special education students may receive accommodations allowing the length of the assignment to be modified:

In Math...we adjust the volume. Some of the students get through five problems in five minutes, and then have thirty minutes to be disruptive. My students take the whole thirty minutes to do those five problems and get them correct. So we only grade them (special education students) on the five then grade the others (nondisabled students) on all of it. I've done Math practices just like playing a musical instrument. It's the practice that makes it work. And they have to meet the same standards as the other students in the class, but hopefully they don't have to do as much repetitive work. Putting your mind on that (math work) for thirty minutes is the same whether you're doing it really quick or you're doing them (math problems) slow if you're concentrating...we haven't modified the content at all. We have modified the homework a little bit. They still have to pass the same tests (and) the same problems. In Science we do a lot more modifications as far as the assessment. In Math they're doing the same assessment as everyone else.

Ronnie acknowledged the need for a different approach for different courses to convey the information in a format his students can comprehend. Ronnie also addressed modifications in testing formats that may be beneficial to the special education student. He said, "... they've been modified. They're the same quality, less quantity."

Facilitators

Participants were asked to identify factors that facilitate inclusion programs in a high school setting. Through the interview process a number of themes for facilitating successful incorporation of special education students into regular education programs emerged. Common themes included education, awareness, public relations, perseverance, and infrastructure. These themes were arranged into categories. Categories identified include communication, attitude, knowledge, and environment.

Communication

Great emphasis was placed on communication throughout the data collection process. According to McClesky and Waldron (2002) collaboration and communication among staff is important for the successful integration of inclusion programs. Savanna seemed to agree with these findings with her first comments, "...communicate with teachers." Doe emphasized working with others when she said, "We collaborate a lot." Robert talked about communicating with classroom teachers daily in order to determine the pressing needs of the day. He said, "They say well so and so had a hard day today in this area... he'll tell me... so I can get with the student... we do a lot of collaboration." Ronnie talked about collaborating and persevering through difficult circumstances when he said, "Just pulling together...there are some problems, just iron it out and you keep going."

Veronica spoke about communication and being attuned to the regular education staff. She expressed the idea that when two teachers share the responsibility of delivering instruction to students with an IEP it becomes necessary to delineate roles. When asked about important facilitators for working in an inclusion environment Veronica said, "Knowing what that teacher wants. Some teachers, they want to be involved...some teachers, they want you to go in and sit and wait until they assign something and go help." Many special education teachers acknowledge the issue of class ownership (Morocco & Aguilar, 2002; Salend & Duhaney, 1999). Buckley (2005) and Yoder (2000) identified the importance of turf wars and personality in successful collaboration. Veronica validated those findings with, "A lot of times...once you start being in there and they realize that you're not there for their job, they become more receptive." She

specifically addressed building rapport with the teacher so both the regular education teacher and the special education teacher may eventually become comfortable with a "... sharing of the territory situation." She related that the development of the relationship between the classroom teacher and special education teacher was pivotal in a functional working relationship when she said, "That's why we work so well together."

Cassidi gave examples of situations where regular education teachers were more amenable to special education teachers' input and participation in their classrooms.

Cassidi said:

I think...when you suggest...for this group of three or four... I have some ideas about modifying... their program they (regular education teachers) seem to be really...interested in doing that. If you say 'we need to reduce just to two choices instead of four,' they're very available to work up that test or work up that chapter review.

Doe spoke about the importance of being aware of the regular education teacher's preferences and communicating with that individual accordingly:

...know how to approach that teacher...and that makes the difference...Some teachers, you have to let them remain in control but you still make decisions but they think it's theirs... then there are those teachers who you can go to and say, 'Hey, look. This is what's going on. What do you think about this?'

Jayne agreed with Doe's statement regarding communication and collaboration.

She said, "I think it also has to do with your approach to them, our approach to them."

Robert talked about persistence in establishing relationships with regular education teachers that led to the opportunity for more collaboration:

...the teachers I have now that I've worked with for five years, they are real receptive to my input. You know, I'll say well this individual student can't quite do this, but he can do this instead. Is that okay? And five years ago they would have said no, everybody has to do the same thing. And now they're saying well yeah, if you think that's best, we'll work it that way.

Ronnie shared an anecdote depicting this same notion of persistence and nurturance in

connection with regular education staff:

I remember one class, that when I first got here, they said that teacher won't let you in because of the previous special ed teacher. And so it was really psychology, basically psychology on this teacher... toward the end she was letting me teach.

Savanna talked about her desire to change the dynamics of the classroom to improve opportunities for communication. She would like to see:

... fewer children in my classes, it gives me more time to push those students that need to be pushed and it gives me more time to communicate with teachers saying, 'So and so is missing assignments, can I get those assignments?'"

Attitude

Research indicates attitude impacts the effectiveness of inclusion (Cook et al., 1999; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). Participants stressed the importance of student attitude, the attitude of the special education teacher and the regular education teacher, and community attitude towards special education.

Participants repeatedly addressed student attitude as essential. Veronica spoke to the autonomy and motivation of the individual student as a crucial element. She said, "It depends on the kid. I've got some kids that really work hard, that are fine in a regular class, even if there's no support in that class, they bring it to me later." In her opinion, "Inclusion works for those kids that want it to work for them. If the kid wants to be successful, then inclusion will work for that child." Other participants' addressed the effectiveness of inclusion for the special needs student with significant cognitive delays Ronnie shared a success story about a student with impaired cognitive functioning.

Ronnie said:

I've got one that was identified as Functionally Delayed, and now she is at South College becoming a paralegal. And I really credit that to her. She had the drive

and she had family support, but also inclusion. We expected her to do it. She started making excuses, and we would make sure that if the excuses were valid we gave her the support she needed. If they weren't, then we just demanded she did it. She stepped up.

Robert shared examples of some positive experiences of students with lower cognitive functioning and the effects of inclusion programming:

I can name three or four students who have done well in the inclusion classroom with that range IQ (referring to an IQ score measuring two standard deviations below the mean). We had one graduate with a regular diploma last year, and had a low IQ. We have one coming back... every time she can, to take the Gateway, trying to pass that Algebra to get a regular diploma.

The special education teacher's and regular education teacher's attitudes were also identified as significant factors in the facilitation of successful inclusion programs. The participants asserted that they all made great efforts to cultivate a positive attitude toward inclusion from the regular education staff. Doe began by describing the attitude of the special education staff at her high school. Doe said, "We have always bent over backwards for all of our regular ed teachers." Ashley expressed a need to provide more support for the regular education teacher. She said:

I think we can support the teacher more. I think what we have to do is empower the teacher to make the decisions, maybe give them information, something that they can do, some way that they can prompt students to perform. It's a support that they could give the students such as seeing, being able to see something, and materials that would help them.

Doe and Jayne talked about projecting an attitude of cooperation and spending time with teachers to establish relationships. Doe called it, "...schmoozing," while Jayne referred to it as, "...the sped spin." Ashley talked about having a supportive attitude on behalf of the students:

All the support that you give the student, whether it be from the special ed teachers, the regular ed teachers, the para professionals who go in with them, the materials you give them for the support, whether you get their modifications and

accommodations to them, collecting the progress on them, being there if there are problems.

Positive attitudes from regular education teachers are considered crucial for a successful inclusion program (Farrell, 2004; Horne, 1985; Idol, Nevin, & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1994; Martinez, 2004; Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin, 1996). Doe talked about the need to improve attitudes towards special education teachers. Doe said, “I think we need to be promoted. No seriously, PR. We are looked at as less than a teacher and I don’t like that. I don’t like it if a teacher comes up and says, ‘Well, they’re just...’” Era finished Doe’s sentence with, “They’re just special ed.” Jayne agreed with the need to promote special education teachers. The implication is that special education teachers are not *real* teachers.

Robert talked about changing the attitudes of regular education teachers. He described a circumstance where a regular education teacher changed his attitude towards special education students, “There’s a teacher just down the hall from us that has almost made a 360, or no, 180 from his original position of saying that these students shouldn’t even be in school. Ronnie talked about changing the attitudes of regular education staff. He said, “We had to legitimize the whole special ed department. And now we’ve got people calling us, ‘What do we do? What should we do?’”

Veronica shared some examples of positive attitudes from regular education staff at her high school. She said, “...there are those teachers that go out of their way. I know we have one that will come in and say, ‘You know, I’ve done this, this, and this with so and so.’” Ronnie talked about building an attitude of trust with regular education staff. He said, “They trust us. The other teacher in there in the past was very unreceptive, but

you see them start to come around, and now we're teaching with them. As a whole it's just a representation of all of us." Ronnie said, "...I think we establish ourselves as being dedicated professionals I think is what it boils down to."

There are organizations and individuals in society who are greatly invested in community public schools and in special education programming within those systems (Block, 1999; TASH, 1999; TEACHH, 2006). Doe shared her thoughts on the necessity of community attitude and involvement towards education. She said:

We need all stakeholders to buy in to education and special education, not just those within the school. We need the community involved... I'm not asking that the community come into the school but they need to be more accepting of student or adults with intellectual disabilities and the more we raise awareness, the more accepting society is going to be to our special ed students, the more jobs they will be able to have, the more recreation that they'll be able to do, and why not?

Knowledge

Research by Anderson et al. (2007) and Salend and Duhaney (1999) revealed that enhanced knowledge and experience contribute to improved attitudes towards placing students with significant disabilities into classrooms (Anderson et al., 2007; Salend & Duhaney, 1999). Preparation for integration and other positive experiences with disabled students are essential for developing and supporting inclusive environments (Praisner, 2003; Riehl, 2000).

Doe spoke about the importance of first hand knowledge saying it is important to, "know everything in this school." She said, "It's called knowledge management. You know what this person does, know what that person does, and just know everything you can about the school and the people in it." In regards to knowledge management Jayne said, "...we have to know each other's kids." Doe said it is important to be have a

working knowledge of your students and interventions for those circumstances when the regular education teacher spontaneously approaches you and probes your insight about a particular student and/or situation. She shared that without this awareness there is that risk of being unprepared and losing effectiveness. She said, "...if we don't have the knowledge management, if we don't know what's going on, then we can't do that."

There was discussion of the need for additional training for regular and special education teachers. Cassidi was speaking about regular education staff when she said, "I think they need some on the job training." Veronica agreed with Cassidi's comments and chimed in, "They need training working with emotions. Most of them don't have the training." Cassidi added that regular education staff needs working with different categories of special education students saying, "The need practice...actually working with those severe and profound students." Cassidi gave examples of opportunities for additional training for working with students with emotional issues but added:

...but you can sit there all day and listen to somebody tell you about, 'Oh this will work and this'll work' but until you are actually out there...try it on you own in front, face to face, talking with a child who's got emotional issues, you really don't see the picture.

Ashley also talked about the need to gain some real time experience, "Just get out there and get in the regular classroom and expose yourself to it."

Doe talked about opportunities for training available at the high school for regular education and special education. She noted staff involvement in the training activities. Doe said, "... this staff volunteers to come in and take a lesson from the teacher, modify it, and show this teacher how to do it." Doe spoke about more formalized training opportunities provided by special education personnel at her school,

“...they need to be educated and we do workshops and we do in-services here at this school too to educate our teachers.”

Some schools place a strong emphasis on training new special education personnel. The one thing that we work on a lot as a department, is every time we get a new teacher in the system, is try to help them through. We try to help them in classroom management as much as possible.

The researcher reflected, “It sounds like you mentor them.” Ronnie responded, “Yeah, whether they know it or not. Then usually after a while...they start to get it. Then you’ll see a change...and then they’ll start asking...what do you think I should do here?”

Environment

One of the specific challenges for teachers working with special education students in high school settings are large class sizes (Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Keefe et al., 2004; Vaughn & Arguelles, 1997). Savanna echoed this sentiment when she responded to questions concerning factors that are conducive to successful inclusion programs. When asked Savanna immediately responded, “...fewer children in my classes...” In Savanna’s opinion fewer special education students in regular classes improves her opportunity to communicate with the classroom teacher and provide needed assistance to the student with special needs. Robert agreed with Savanna and spoke specifically to the addition of new special education staff members. He said, “They have given us two new teachers, and we just feel like we’ve died and gone to heaven.” Ronnie winced and said, “Yeah, we don’t want to forget that, because it has improved. It was just pure hell.” Ronnie said, “They’ve given us more people (but) they gave us more work...” He reiterated, “... more work... but they’ve given us more help to do it.” He finished his thought with, “I guess that’s the best thing to hope for.”

Ronnie spoke briefly about arranging the environment so the special education

student can better access learning opportunities, "... the tools, so they can go out and get what they need." Ronnie was referring to making appropriate and additional materials more readily available in the regular education classroom as well as arranging the classroom environment so special education students can seize learning opportunities. He emphasized providing an environment of opportunity versus a "...handout." In Ronnie's words, "It's not giving them everything they need, but giving them the opportunity...the same opportunities (as regular education students). It's not a handout."

Barriers

Studies focusing on teaching in high schools revealed specific challenges to teachers in this setting (Dieker & Murawski, 2003). Common issues identified as impacting inclusion programs include large class sizes, teacher preparation, adequate time for planning, communication, high stakes testing, and content mastery by the special education teacher (Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Keefe et al., 2004; Vaughn et al., 1997). Participants in this study identified these factors and more as impediments to successful inclusion programs. The identified factors were arranged into five categories including special education barriers, regular education barriers, student barriers, technological barriers and accessibility barriers, and financial barriers.

Barriers in Special Education

Findings from Keefe, Moore, and Duff (2004) indicate a lack of training and skills as contributing to negative attitudes towards inclusion and coteaching. Anderson et al. (2007) and Rice and Zigmond (2000) cite the need for more training for persons charged with delivering services through inclusion while Clough and Garner (as cited in

Hodkinson, 2005) identified a lack of resources and lack of knowledge, among others, as negatively impacting successful adaptation to full implementation of inclusion.

Silverman (2007) documented a lack of training in instructional skills among staff as an impediment to inclusion services. Stephen seemed to echo this sentiment when he said, "...as far as the teaching... I couldn't go into a math class and teach a math." Stephen was referring not only to his highly qualified status but also to his expertise in the subject. Savanna said, "I would be the last person that should be asked or want to teach a math course." When asked if she would be willing to teach an upper level science course, Savanna responded that she would need more training. Ashley talked about the lag of time she had between upper level math courses and her job as a high school special education teacher:

I did not have to take the Praxis (math exam to become a licensed teacher for mathematics), which I couldn't pass (now), because (of the lag of time) between my period in high school and college... I can help students through Algebra II, somewhat. When I went to high school and college our calculators were so rudimentary that they're laughable. It gets intimidating sometimes...

High school courses tend to be more content specific and require specialized training, (Scruggs et al., 2007). Ronnie substantiated that finding when he said, "I don't have the core content knowledge."

Educators have led a request for additional training and professional development aimed at working with exceptional students in the regular education classroom (Anderson et al., 2007). Each of the participants had formalized training through college curriculums but nonetheless expressed concerns with shortcomings in their preparation to work with special needs students with different developmental, adaptive, cognitive, physical, and emotional needs. Stephen talked about his experience prior to working

with special needs students. He said, “I know in college, it was like a fifteen hour practicum and that was ...one semester.” Veronica talked about the lack of training to work with high school aged students. She said, “...they didn’t even focus on middle school. It involved little kids.” She shared, “...my degree is in special education, with an emphasis on early childhood education...those are all classes they made me take. I would sit through them and think, ‘I don’t want to teach these little kids.’” Veronica talked about shortcomings in her preparation to deal with behaviorally based issues when she shared, “I don’t recall taking a class for dealing with emotional and behavioral problems.” Veronica cited her excess of 10 years working in public education then noted that her knowledge came from the years she spent working as an assistant in special education, not from coursework or a practicum. Stephen also noted a lack of training to work with emotional and behavioral problems among students, “I had one class dealing with emotional disturbance...but other than that, no practicum or anything.” Veronica acknowledged that many students experience emotional and behavioral problems when she was discussing the need for more specific training to intervene in emotionally and behaviorally charged situations. She said:

... emotional problems don’t just cover the emotionally disturbed kids. You’ll get behavior problems from LD kids that want to act up to disguise the fact that they don’t understand what’s going on and they can’t do it because they don’t know what to do...you got the kids that are not emotionally disturbed, but they look at something and they think, ‘Oh my goodness, that is so hard, and I am just going to pitch a fit, throw something across the room, she’ll throw me out of here, and I won’t have to deal with it.

Savanna professed a lack of training and communication at the local level.

Savanna was asked if the lack of communication and training occurred occasionally or it was more pervasive. Savanna shared that problems with training and communication

occurred, “a lot...I have to figure it out on my own... what mistakes I make. I’m learning everything the hard way.” When asked if she thought the lack of training was specific to her situation at her school or if it was a larger issue for the county she replied, “Probably status quo for the whole county.” She went on to provide more detail regarding her current situation. She said, “I’ve been back for six months or so now into special ed, and I really haven’t been sat down and told what the inclusion program is. When queried about training for transitioning into working as a special education teacher in inclusion classes versus pullout resource classes Savanna said, “Nobody has sat down with me and talked... what I am telling you is what I have gathered.” Savanna added, “I’m trying to figure it out as I go along, the changes that have been made since the last time I taught special ed here.” Savanna described her immediate environment as being, “...very cliquish, very territorial. Nobody wants to share what they’re doing with anybody else.” She described the territorial issue as being larger than the school she serves, commenting that it was countywide. She did speak more specifically about her department saying:

... the special ed teacher doesn’t speak to me. I’ve had many questions and have e-mailed her many times with questions, our concerns, and a lot of times I do not get an answer. It’s very territorial with the other special education teacher, she’s kind of in charge of what inclusion is done. She doesn’t share her information, she makes the assignments, (she directs) the assistants to go out for whatever student.

Savanna said, “It comes back to the lack of communication. Nobody is on the same page.” Anderson et al. (2007) and Rice and Zigmond (2000) recommended more training in collaborative consultation skills as one intervention for dealing with barriers to inclusion.

Savanna provided more examples of problems with interdepartmental collaboration. She described an experience at the beginning of the year whereby the other special education teacher in her department sent out a letter to faculty at large requesting view only access to a computer based programs where student's grades are recorded. This colleague wanted to view students' grades in order to mark progress reports in their IEPs versus using personal contact with each classroom teacher. Savanna said:

She signed my name to this e-mail without consulting me, which upset me because my philosophy is when I check on progress reports, I need a face-to-face time with the teachers as much as possible. I do e-mail a lot. There's some conflict now on this situation, and regular ed teachers are confused as to what's going on, and I'm still insisting upon face-to-face time because you gather a lot more information when you can talk with the teachers. You hear about behaviors, etc...

Special education teachers may experience problems with collaboration and communication outside their own department as well. Ashley talked about being rebuffed by a regular education teacher after trying to do what she believed to be part of her job duties:

I did have an experience one time... I was in the math classes. I once took a small group of kids outside of the class and tried to reteach them, I made the teacher mad. That was not a good thing to do.

Ashley said, "I'm hypersensitive to the fact that maybe my intrusion was not actually welcomed. I won't do it again." As a result of that experience, Ashley is more vigilant in ascertaining whether or not her physical presence is welcomed in a regular classroom or if her presence is considered more invasive. Ashley said, "We won't go in there if they're uncomfortable with it because I don't want them to feel uncomfortable. I don't want to feel uncomfortable." Ashley identified most of the regular education teachers as

being perceptive to special education personnel in their classroom. She said:

I would say it's more like 90%. We really only have a couple of teachers who aren't comfortable with us being there. If they don't want us in the classroom we'll find a way to go after or before, make sure the kid is okay and they're getting what they need. If we need assignments, we'll do it by e-mail.

There is also an issue of perceived intrusion from the special students' perspective. Ashley acknowledged the presence of special education staff in a high school classroom as a confounding factor. She talked about paying attention to signals the students may give off indicating their discomfort with special education staff members within their proximity. She said:

... they're bristling. Sometimes I'll approach them outside of class and say, 'I notice you're having problems in math class, do I need to come in and help you?' They'll say 'Awww...' I'll say, 'Now, because you said that I know that you don't want me to come and help you. If I see that you're improving, I'll stay out of your way. I don't want to come in there and I don't want to bother you.'

Savanna had a different perspective regarding the special education teachers' practice in the classroom. She said:

I think the special ed teacher should be more involved in what goes on in the regular classroom. Right now, it seems to me that this is just reported behavior of the student to the special ed teacher, and they're just kind of really there to observe in the classroom. They don't really do much more than that.

Ashley's stance differed from Savanna's position on special education teacher personnel's practice in the classroom. Ashley intimated special educators should maintain a more supportive stance versus a direct role in class instruction. She said:

I think it would be a little confusing for the teacher to have somebody else coming up and teaching a lesson, unless it was very clear that I was serving as like a substitute teacher. I don't want to take over their class because I know how hard it is to establish control over the classroom and manage behaviors.

Ashley expressed concern that her presentation of material might interfere with the teacher's method of instruction. She said, "I'm not going to teach them a different way

or go around and try to chump it up in a simpler way because they still have to understand the way that teacher is teaching.”

Another inclusion barrier lies in the perceived role of the special educator within the confines of the school. Anderson et al (2007), Buckley (2005), Vessay (2004), and Yoder (2000) identified problems with subordination among teachers as important aspects in inclusion programs. Participants noted problems being acknowledged as fully licensed instructors. Participants’ responses indicated issues with subordination and awareness of special education personnel’s position and function by regular education teachers, students and persons in the community. Robert said, “They just didn’t trust special ed teachers before. They kind of treated us as an attendant, an assistant type, but not really a real teacher. It took us a little while to get them familiar...that we are teachers.” Doe has had similar experiences with regular education staff. She said, “...I have had teachers walk up and say that (special education teachers are not real teachers) about some of these teachers and I’ll say, ‘No, you wait a minute. They are real teachers.’” Jayne said, “I’ve been told (by students), ‘I don’t have to listen to you. You’re not a teacher.’” Doe clarified, “Because we are special ed.” When asked if this attitude emanated from regular education students Doe provided affirming statements. Doe said, “Students think that we’re not real teachers.” According to Era regular educators are not familiar enough with special education support staff. Concerning special education assistants she said, “The don’t know they’re special ed TAs. They don’t even know who they are.” Doe said, “They (regular education staff) don’t know their names. They don’t take the time.” Jayne shared an anecdote regarding the community’s perception of special education. She said:

I had a conversation with my cousin. He's educated three boys that are in their 30's and 40's now, a judge, a dentist, and an insurance man. He had no idea that we had special ed in this county that we did what we do. He looked at me and he said, 'You do what? Just at your school?' I said, 'No, at every school in this county.'

Research documenting organizational barriers to inclusion programs cited staff space, distribution of special education students, and time for planning as important factors (Cook et al., 1999; Fraturra & Cappa, 2006; Hines, 2001; Kochar et al., 2000; Mastropierie & Scruggs, 2001). Ronnie echoed problems with staff and space as organizational barriers in his schools. He said:

For us to address 270 Special Ed kids? To address all those you would have to have a resource class to have enough of us in the class. To spread them around (special education students in regular classes) it's kind of a catch twenty two...because there's not enough special education teachers to teachers now.

Robert talked about the large caseloads many special education carry, "...last year I had 56 on my caseload, and Stephen had somewhere close to 70." Ronnie said, "There was no way to keep up with it...seventy students, and then there were all these issues ...behavioral issues. You get pulled out of class to deal with behavioral issues." Savanna expressed irritation with the staff size and the expectation to maintain what she expressed to be an unreasonable amount of paperwork. She said:

Special ed teachers are overloaded, there is no way that they can keep up with all of the paperwork and teach a class and do consultation work with other teachers. There is absolutely no way you can do this and keep your sanity. Have your meetings with parents, grade papers. This is a 24-hour day job if you were to do it the way it was supposed to be. I mean with the amount of special ed teachers that we have out there.

Jayne also identified, "...the lack of time (and) resources" as primary issues. Doe provided an example in her discourse. She said, "See what kind of schedule we have to keep because we don't have just this class of students that we have to teach this

competency to. We have every individual with a different individualized plan.” Betty Ann explained that each student has “a different set of rules that governs that child.” Doe elaborated, “...we have to go through and make the curriculum work for every single, individual student.” Era noted, “Without lunch, without a planning.” When asked about not getting lunch or planning time Era explained:

Sure, it’s slated in there...It’s written down...But you don’t get it...If one of my kids needs me out there, I’ll give up my planning...my lunch... to go help out there and do it. I’m not gonna say, ‘Oh, this is my planning. I can’t go.’

Doe said, “I’ve seen every teacher in here, including myself, give up lunch and planning. I don’t have to. I choose to.” Jayne said:

We are given by law a duty free lunch. I taught my first 4 years in a self contained behavior classroom. I did not have a duty free lunch for 4 years. I ate with my children every day; 5 days a week...my teacher assistants didn’t have any free lunch either. They chose not to have that...they chose not to because of what we (special education teachers) did.

When asked if she perceived giving up lunch and planning as an option Era said, “Not if your gonna make it work.” The participants were asked if the special education staff’s decision to give up lunch and planning time differed from what regular education teachers did. Era responded, “I believe so.” Doe elaborated, “Let me tell you, our lunchroom or break room for teachers is always full of regular ed teachers.”

Time for more planning is a common request by many educators (Scruggs et al., 2007; Yoder, 2000) Participants talked about the move to resource classes in the high school and the extra work involved. Ronnie acknowledged some benefits to pullout resource courses but noted:

... the ones that are doing their own classes (pullout resource). They’ve got all that stuff to do. It’s like having two different jobs. And in that, somewhere, the ability to address the needs of the student must suffer because you’re so busy trying to meet deadlines.

Many participants spoke about government regulations along with menacing amounts of paperwork that detracted from their jobs and time with the students. Savanna said, “It looks good on paper, but there’s absolutely no way to do this.” Ronnie talked about government regulations and paperwork requirements:

...they just keep piling it on. I don’t think they really understand...they keep piling on more work...the barrier, quite often, is again the system. I come to work every day frustrated just thinking of all the crap I’ve got to do.

Savanna expressed frustration with the paperwork required in special education. She said, “There are things that I have to let slide. I got into this field to teach not to do paperwork. My paperwork, and I’ll be the first one to admit, is not the best.” Savanna elaborated on her aggravation with the paperwork involved:

I do everything I can. I do not give progress reports out to parents every six weeks. You know what, I used to worry about that. I don’t worry about that anymore. If the kids that are failing their classes, if I make contact with their parents and let them know that they are failing and this is what they’re missing, and ‘hello stand up it’s time for you to take part of your possibility because I can’t do it all’ then I feel happy with what I have done.... if I see one that’s failing of course I will contact the parent, but I don’t send a progress report. If I was to do it the way it’s supposed to be done, that’s all I would do. So many times with this Easy IEP stuff I have to devote time away from teaching just to do that or else I would be here until nine o’clock, ten o’clock every night.

Savanna explained that much of the paperwork special education teachers are expected to process, “...is because of lawsuits.” She leaned forward, clearly expressing herself when she said, “Screw the paperwork and getting those damn signatures.”

Ronnie talked openly about his opinion regarding governmental convention. He remarked, “...the powers that be who pass all this goofy legislation...” when talking about rules and regulations. He spoke of “...overcoming hurdles...” and “...getting rid of some of the bureaucracy...” in order to better serve the students while simultaneously

recognizing that some bureaucracy is necessary to make certain institutions at the most fundamental level attempt to apply government sanctioned educational policies.

Ronnie's comments lent credence to research documenting the lack of input from special educators on inclusion practices (Burgin, 2003; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Tudor, 2004) despite the specialized training and perception of special education professionals as knowledgeable advocates for children with special needs (Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). He said, "...We've come up with all these ideas that really do make sense, and they'll say 'oh, we can't do that'. The joke is it makes too much sense."

Barriers in Regular Education

Rice and Zigmond (2000) identified compatibility between regular education teachers and special educators as critical for successful implementation of inclusion. Stephen said, "Some people don't even want you in there" when asked about perceived barriers to inclusion in regular education. Veronica nodded in agreement to Stephen's statement and elaborated:

Some teachers feel threatened by having that second individual in there, feeling that they make a mistake or say something that's inaccurate. I know that sounds strange, but the confidence of the teacher that your going to help or assist, sometimes they feel threatened. Another adult, judging and watching, in other words, constantly being under observation.

Ashley spoke of the resistance from some of the regular education teachers to special education teachers' presence in their classrooms. She talked about the special education staffs avoidance of those classrooms. According to Ashley the staff avoids a physical presence in those classrooms to prevent the regular education teacher from experiencing discomfort with their presence, "We won't go in there if they're uncomfortable with it because I don't want them to feel uncomfortable." Ashley stated that the regular

education teachers' reticence "... is a barrier." She explained that it wasn't necessarily the presence of special education staff but any adult presence in the classroom might garner feelings of discomfort from the regular education teacher. She said, "I don't think it's just special ed teachers or just having an assistant in there, I think having any other adult in the classroom would maybe not be very comfortable for them."

Ronnie talked about some of the regular education teachers' perspective on special education students as a barrier to inclusion. Ronnie said, "... there's still that deep seated thought that ...everything's academic, and if you ain't academic, then you aren't much of a person...you're kind of a, what's the word I'm looking for? An imposition." He said, "Yeah, and I hate to say it, but they (regular education teachers) still are of the mind that these kids are second class citizens. They do come around, though. To a certain extent." Doe said, "We still have maybe one or two (regular education teachers) that resist but they are coming around." Robert chimed in and provided an example of a regular education colleague who was slowly becoming more tolerant of special education students presence in his class. Robert said:

There's a teacher just down the hall from us that has almost made a 360, or no, 180 from his original position of saying that these students shouldn't even be in school. 'I don't want any of those blank students in my classroom.'

Cassidi said regular education teachers attribute special education students' academic performance to a lack of effort on the students' behalf. She said:

They assume the child is lazy, but he could do it if he wanted to, they don't even realize that this child is limited in what they can do. Some of them aren't ready to accept that. They just think the child is lazy. I know that sounds kind of terrible.

Participants were asked if they had heard regular education teachers use the word lazy in IEP meetings. Veronica affirmed that she had heard the word lazy used by regular

education teachers to describe some special education students. She said she had also heard the words, "...unwilling and uncooperative..." by regular education teachers in reference to a special education students' performance in the regular classroom.

The participants were asked how block scheduling impacted the relationships with special education students. Block scheduling is a type of academic scheduling in which each student is limited to four classes per day but each class is scheduled for 90 minutes (Irmsher, 1996). Veronica answered the question by saying, "I think to form a relationship, they (regular education teachers) have to want to form a relationship with them (special education students)." She expanded with:

Okay, one thing I've noticed is a lot of our kids are leery of new teachers, teachers they don't know. In forming a relationship the teacher has to go out to them and attempt to form the relationship...the teacher has to want to form a relationship with them.

When queried as to whether the regular teacher was cognizant of this need to seek a relationship Veronica responded, "It depends on the teacher." She elaborated:

...a lot of times, those teachers will say, 'Well, I have 35 in the classroom and I have three periods a day. I have seen a hundred kids a day. I can't build a relationship. I've got too many kids to worry about.' They've been in the business a long time and it's sort of 'Well, I don't have time.'

Participants addressed relationships and communication among regular and special education staff. Era talked about regular teacher's knowledge of special education assistants and attendants. She said, "They don't even know who they are." Doe said, "They don't know their names. They don't take the time." She went on to speak about regular education teachers' awareness of the location of the special education offices and classrooms. She said, "Ask them where my room is and they don't even know. They've never been down here." Savanna cited problems with communication

between special between special education teachers and regular education teachers.

Savanna said:

We have such an atmosphere here that everybody is doing their own thing kind of thing. A lot of teachers at our school are on Engrade where they want us to check the Engrade. They do not want to communicate. I e-mail, I do face to face communication. They (the regular education teachers) were like, 'Just check our Engrade grades.' I give them that information on the kids, they can check their Engrades! 'Check my web page,' they do not want to communicate.

There was discussion pertaining to the limited vista some teachers may have regarding special education. Doe brought up the concept of *knowledge management* and the awareness of what is going on with the special education students and regular education teachers in the classroom. Era agreed that regular education teachers sometimes limit their awareness to their classroom or "...their department." Chris said, "It's myopic, they have a myopic lens." He said a primary focus for regular education teachers is "...student test scores." Ronnie attributed the narrow viewpoint of some regular education teachers to misunderstandings about special education procedures. He said:

There are a lot of misconceptions in there. Like a lot of these regular ed teachers (think) you can't fail (a student) in special ed class. You can't do this and you can't do that. I can understand the resentment because here are kids that are working hard, and then you've got to just give it (passing grades) to them (special education students), so it's a fine line.

Doe talked about the regular education teachers' belief that having special education students in their classroom requires many additional adaptations on their behalf. She said:

My experience over the years has been that when you have a regular ed teacher and they get a special needs child in there, they think they have to do so many changes, when if you really think about it, regular ed kids all learn in different ways. So you're adjusting and adapting to that learning and teaching (of regular education students). You should be adapting somewhat in some ways. But then

as soon as you put special ed in they think it's a whole big thing and it's not. Because if you're really teaching, you're doing it anyway.

Era agreed with Doe's statements adding that regular education teachers may be put off by the threat of lawsuits. She said, "They've been doing all the adaptations. They do everything you're supposed to do, but you mention the words special ed and you mention inclusion and it's, 'Whoo, hoohoo.'...that's because they realize there's all these laws that are hovering around their neck." Era also spoke about regular education teacher's perception that having special education students in your classroom greatly increases the workload. She gave examples of different learning styles of all students saying, "... you're a visual. I'm a hands on. You're an auditory. They're (students with different learning styles) in your class, anyway. But as soon as you put a special ed kid (in the regular education class)... they (classroom teachers) have difficulties, I think."

Ashley talked about the need for regular education teachers to undergo training to work with students with special needs:

They should take a course on serving special needs students. Something that defines things. There's so many questions, especially with autism spectrum, they want to know 'why is this kid autistic?' Sometimes they know and sometimes they don't know and they have a thousand questions about it. Just a survey course, give them credit for it. Give them full credit for it. Just a survey course that will define special abilities, disabilities, the law. I don't want them to sit through an IEP meeting and have to understand that whole thing, just what the basis of the law is.

Ashley spoke more specifically regarding expectations of regular education teachers' knowledge of disabilities:

They don't have to know everything that's involved with a CP diagnosis or an autism diagnosis or ADHD, what medication they're on or what would be most effective. They don't have to consult with the parent and consider different medications and what they know and what you know about.

Ashley also touched on regular education teachers' knowledge and adherence to special

education law:

Sometimes we struggle with teachers, 'Well, I don't want them to come down to your room and take the test.' We try to be understanding. We're not a pushy bunch because I really hate to bring out the 'It's the law' thing because then you just create a barrier with somebody trying to understand your students.

Stephen spoke of his own practicum in special education extending over one 15-hour practicum and indicated regular education teachers received less training than that.

Training and expertise are important assets for educators but in Ronnie's observation being a part of a classroom is "...intrinsic." He noted that some regular education teachers don't possess the innate understanding to teach academics. Savanna remarked, "Some teachers will just plough ahead whether they (the students) get it or not..."

Veronica focused more on needed teaching strategies in regular education classes. She said:

They have to come in with knowledge of more than one way to phrase a lesson. They can't come in and say, 'This is how I want it done' because not everybody can do it like that. I mean even with your regular kids, not everybody is going to get it the same way.

Veronica cited strategies for mathematical problem solving as a practical example of presenting material in different formats:

A lot of times in math there's more than one way of going about solving a problem and if they can teach more than one way of going about solving that problem, our children are more likely to get the concept. Retention is a huge issue.

Robert also used mathematics to underline his point about student retention of material:

Many of them (regular education teachers) think 'Well, I've already taught that. It's done.' They don't remember that my students have to be retaught, and keep connecting things together. They've got to be shown how this relates to that, and how this relates to that, especially in algebra. We teach five different ways of doing the same thing, but they never tell the students that this list is the same

thing. It's just a different way of doing it. And they're so confused. The regular teachers sometimes go on and on and on.

Cassidi has observed a lack of competency among some staff members. She said, "I'm sorry we do tend to sometimes have incompetent teachers. I don't know what you call it, unprepared, or I hate say, incompetent." When asked if she was referring to regular education or special education teachers Cassidi responded, "Well, I hate to say it, but sometimes both." She went on to say:

I mean, you learn, when you go into a classroom where there's the teacher that really doesn't want to teach students that can't get the material. If they (the teacher) can't, then they should teach the higher level students and don't give them anybody that can't learn because they don't know how to teach them. It's really hard to adjust to that type of individual...when you know ...they can't do the job.

Stephen addressed this issue with a different perspective. He said:

I guess I'll be the devil's advocate here. When somebody picks a job, they know what they want to do. I mean, like, 'I want to be a bricklayer. I'm going to lay bricks for the rest of my life.' As far as when you pick teaching...you pick your subject, 'I'm going to teach English.' But, you don't really ever think about teaching special ed English, and I guess, in the teacher's defense, they did not sign up for it.

Student Barriers

Fox and Ysseldyke (1997) identified relationships between special education teachers and the families of their special needs students as important factors in promoting the notion of inclusion services. Reality is based on perception (Exner, 1993). Research by Exner (1993) suggests personal biases regarding the special educators' perception of the students' families are likely to impact the reality of those relationships. Participants shared their perceptions regarding some special education students' home situations.

Ronnie said:

One of the things we didn't get into too much was home life. Home environment

is so detrimental to our students. And that's something that needs to be factored into this whole thing that isn't. Because you get the student who is not there...they're up all night playing video games instead of their parents saying... go to bed.

Ashley said, "... I love this program (special education) here. It helps our students so much... to give them extra time in school. I like to give it (time) to them in school because I know they can't do it (homework) at home." Ashley was asked to clarify her statement regarding homework completion. Ashley explained that some of the special education programming at her school allowed students identified for special education extra time to complete assignments during the regular school day thereby avoiding the complication of completing course assignments at home. She said students' completion of academic work in the school versus home environment was one of the provisions emphasized in the special education program. Ashley said, "...it gives them that extra time. Ideally, I would love my students to do a little bit of math at home, two problems, because that's good for generalization but in reality it hasn't been done." Ashley went on to say, "...don't punish the kids for something that happens at home, if they don't understand it...if it doesn't get returned from home. I hate it when that happens."

Ronnie talked at length about some of the situations students face in their in their own homes and how he perceives the impact on the student's functioning at school:

...then their home life is so terrible. Why really try to perform here when you're basically living at subsistence level at home? There's no trust there to start with... Security and subsistence ...they don't even have that so why (should the students) think about it (school work)?

Robert talked about limitations in working with families. Robert expressed his frustration with families' decisions regarding their children and prioritizing schoolwork. He said, "How do you interfere with family... You couldn't do it."

Participants also shared their perceptions regarding some of the special education students they work with in the high schools. Ronnie noted a lackadaisical attitude in some students but attributed the students' outlooks to repeated failures. He said, "...some of it is, I hate to use the word laziness, but again, they've been beaten down so many times that they think why bother?" Savanna agreed with Ronnie's assessment of certain students' work ethic. She said:

The students that I see tend to be the students...that are less invested in school and that don't care. I get a lot of that... I've always had those students. It's always been a tendency to stick them in my group, which is fine with me because those kids need more teaching and a little more pushing, and I'm a good nagger.

Ashley talked about some of her students and the need for persistence, "I still have some behavior problems in this class and we still have lots of hurdles to get over." Era ascribed some of the lack of effort on the students' part to self-esteem issues, "Their (students) confidence level isn't high because they were always told they couldn't."

Robert talked about frustrating experiences he had working with students who seemed to have given up, "I've gone home at night frustrated at the end of the day sometimes. Trying to get them to (work)... they're (the students) capable, but they just don't want to fight it." Ronnie surmised:

Some of them are too far gone. They've failed so many times that they just don't have it in themselves anymore. That self-esteem has been destroyed I think. The reality is I think for some children it's just too late. They've failed too many times. Of course, we don't give up on them. We'll just keep trying til they are no longer there.

Ashley talked about the special education students' response to her presence in inclusion classes, "You know when your students don't want to see you there." In her opinion, attempts to help special education students in the regular classroom can create distressing situations where the child with disabilities may feel negatively singled out

among their peers. Savanna echoed this same impression when she shared her observation of a disabled student in the regular classroom who had the services of a special education attendant. She said, “The student had an attendant that was with her every day. It was really frustrating (for her). My feeling was... she felt singled out. “

Participants shared some concerns regarding the adaptive functioning of special education students. Ronnie said, “Real world applications we’re planning are difficult for the kids. A lot of these kids don’t have the abstract thinking process.” He gave examples of stratagems used for working with vocabulary words. He said:

... they’ll copy the definitions out of the dictionary, and then we will come up with worksheets that use those words in abstract form. A lot of these kids just can’t do it. They just can’t do it. They memorize the definition, but when it comes to applying that word to some other concept, they can’t do it.

There is research available suggesting the placement of disabled students into inclusion classes may contribute to negative attitudes towards students in special education when they display objectionable behaviors (MacMillan et al., 1996). Doe focused on the social skill development of some special education students in her high school. She provided an example pertaining to the transitioning of two students from an all-day segregated resource class to inclusion classes:

...after watching them for a semester, we put them out for two classes and on their own, two classes with someone else, with an assistant. Their problem...they had no social skills and they were terrified to be around other people.

Other participants noted problems with social interactions among certain special education students. Robert attributed part of the problem to miscues resulting from students’ observations of social interaction that is not only tolerated but encouraged in some segregated resource programs:

The people (special education students) that have been in this special ed classroom, they're so used to everybody coming in and hugging them...then they get in their regular classroom and they just go hug some girl, and it hits the fan.

Ronnie talked about problems parlaying academic modifications dictated through the IEP into real time functioning in the regular education classroom:

We have this idealistic view that through universally designed lesson plans that this can all be done...all the time...and that just doesn't work. You get some child who, for example, needs a read aloud. What we will do is take them out of class and we will actually modify the test as we're giving it. Maybe limit it to three questions. We'll modify that test, not give them the answers, but give them prompting in order to help their thought process, explain certain things. Then they grasp it, and quite often they can do very well in that. But what's happening then in the regular classroom? The other students have already finished their test and they've gone on to the next topic, so when this student gets back, they're behind then. The kids that just simply need more help, they can't keep up. They need something different, and it may not be in every subject.

Research revealed problems with the weightiness of curriculum coverage in high schools and the need for regular classroom teachers to alter lessons and interrupt the pace of instructions in order to accommodate students with special needs (Vaughn & Schumm, 1994; Zigmond et al., 1985). Savanna addressed problems with trying to slow down the pace of instruction for some students. It was her observation that slowing down instruction to accommodate a few students may not be in the best interest of all students, "Some teachers will... slow down and make the effort to the detriment of the other kids." Veronica talked about special education students academic struggles as well, "One of the things that I am encountering and I do math, is prerequisite skills... they're not getting the skills that they need to get to go into some particular classes." Savanna shared similar observations:

I had noticed that last semester there was a student from the CDC classroom that was going into what is called the work-study Algebra class, and this child was not prepared for it in any way... it was very difficult for her. I think it was very frustrating for her.

Ashley talked about problems with the math curriculum, state guidelines, and provisions for special education students struggling in academic areas centered on mathematics like algebra and geometry. Changes to graduation requirements for students slated to graduate in 2013 dictate all students must earn one math credit per academic year as part of the demands for a high school diploma (Tennessee Diploma Project, 2010). Ashley is unclear what types of changes in the curriculum may occur to address these concerns:

It's something we still have to develop because we just haven't gotten that far yet. Of course the state hasn't really cleared that up, that's clear as mud thank you very much. I'm sorry, I have to plan ahead for my students, I really, really do. I don't want them to come to the end of geometry and go, 'We don't have anything else, so you have to take calculus. Thank you.'"

Savanna noted problems with some special needs students' consistent exposure to academic instruction provided in the regular education classroom:

The problem is they're still included in the CDC programs, Special Olympics, or when they've got fieldtrips and stuff. They miss these classes, these regular classes...they're going out on these... trips...weekly. Like for Thursdays they go to the community center for swimming and bowling. So, they're only in it that regular class four days a week. Then when Special Olympics events come up, they're out even more.

Technological and Accessibility Barriers

Training and materials are two of the numerous professed barriers to inclusion (Anderson et al., 2007; Silverman, 2007). Participants identified updated technology, adequate training to use the technology, and access to technology as impediments in their inclusion programs. Ashley said, "I wish I had better technology." She talked about the abuse her computer had endured and attempts to improve its functioning.

My computer has been kicked up and down the hall, and they've recently improved it. That is great. Special ed, I don't know how they got their mimeo machines, but we've got one to split with four teachers. It is not a mobile piece of equipment. That is a fallacy. I want to smack that guy in the head, he said, 'It

only takes five seconds to recalibrate it.’ Yes, but I have to do it every 10 seconds, and it’s making me a nut. Better technology because we’re so media centric.

Jayne also identified “...technology...” as a barrier and said she lacked the “...training...” for operating and applying more current technology available to special education. Doe addressed technology available in inclusion classes and noted, “It’s only for special ed.” It is Doe’s understanding that purchases made through the special education department are only to be used for and by special education students. Jayne questioned Doe’s observations and asked, “So I can’t use it?” then stated “I’m in an inclusion classroom.” Doe said, “You can use it.” Jayne then said, “Regular ed can’t, not regular ed kids. What am I gonna do, throw them in the hall? That brings me right back to the law tying us up.” Ashley declared her desire for more reliance on electronics versus paper. She said:

I think everything should be electronic. Everything should be electronic. Our transition folders, we should have...no more paper... Well, we can carry around a folder if you have to stick something under your... I think a laptop. You know a little laptop that you can flip it down and show the parent the screen, I think every teacher should have one. With the same amount of papers, we won’t need printers, we don’t need to bribe somebody for printer ink.

Ashley also pointed out that special education students could educationally benefit from better media options. She said:

You have the wants and needs for a variety of media to present to students who have struggled. I got something... I swear I’m going to invent it. I’m going to ask my brother to come up and help me, to do a big calculator for students who are trying to participate in Algebra, to get a regular diploma. You know, the big, fancy calculator. You have to get your kids one or two.

Ashley talked further about media solutions for students with special needs:

...they don’t have that (media) for our students who have mobility issues and eye coordination issues. They still got that same little tiny keyboard, and they got fingers that need a button this big and they got a button that big. There ought to be a way through something like a laptop computer, you should get all the programs that you need, to resize them.

Ashley shared her desire to have devices like Mimeo Boards, wireless options, and access to multiple computers to use with different technologies. She noted, “We’re not there at a point yet where we can make everything work.”

Doe noted concerns with physical accessibility issues for some of our students with special needs and for all individuals with physical limitations. She spoke about her observations on handicapped parking and doors opening outwards on buildings impeding persons with wheelchairs from entering. Doe talked about special needs students physical accessibility issues outside of the school:

I look at it (accessibility) for our students and I think if one of my students came here, how this facility rates for it to be accessible to them. Some of them (rate) very low in my opinion. They meet guidelines for the state but the state needs to update their guidelines.

Doe shared her frustration with the county’s lack of access to disability leagues. She said, “Why is it only in Knoxville that you have disability leagues and you don’t have it here? They have all the facilities in Knoxville. Why don’t we have it here?” She then conveyed her perceived purposefulness for all students but especially special education students given her current role as a special educator, “...is our goal not to be a productive citizen? How can they (special education students) be a productive citizen if it’s (facilities and opportunities for employment) not accessible. If you’re not productive, you’re going into another area and you’re gonna complain about that.” Doe talked about potential outcomes for individuals met with limited access, “It trickles down. Then our jails are full.” Doe said, “The big picture is they are going to be productive working or staying at home and doing nothing because they can’t get out there in society.”

Financial Barriers

Researchers have identified finances as a negative impediment to successful inclusion programs (Anderson et al., 2007; Duhaney, 1999; Fattura & Cappa, 2006). Ashley talked about being "...jealous of everybody's media." When asked what happened to the money the school earned through a technology grant that was intended to purchase media and technology for students Ashley said, "Well, it didn't filter down to special ed." Ashley then talked about the varied needs special education students have and the need for monies to purchase different types of media options and warehouse them for students with special needs. When asked about purchasing these products for special education students through funding provided by IDEA Ashley responded, "But if I put it in an IEP I'm going to get smacked." Ashley meant there would be a backlash from administrators for putting a product intended to educationally assist a special education student without prior authorization. Ashley suggested a solution but intoned her hesitancy in making the ideas known to others, "What I'd like, but I'm never going to say it, but it'd be a nice thing to have, something like a bank of these things...maybe a warehouse of media solutions...but a way to matrix them in individually for each of these students."

Participants talked about bureaucratic ties to finances. Ronnie noted the need for government financing and the coinciding frustration with attempts at adhering to bureaucratic rules required for eligibility for those financial inducements. He said, "It's hard to balance it. You've got to have the funding...that's bureaucracy. Then at the same time, let us do our jobs." Era expressed frustration with bureaucracy; particularly with persons placed into positions of power and influence who lack the qualifications for

expert decision making in matters concerning special education programming. In her opinion, this type of political maneuvering, where finances play an important role, is impacting educators' decisions to leave the public sector. She said, "Money and giving people, whether it's parents or it's political people, power who don't know. That's why educators are becoming less and less."

Savanna indicated she thought inclusion might have been instituted as a cost saving means. She is not alone in this suspicion. Research exist suggesting inclusion programs have been implemented in part as a cost cutting measure to avoid the expense of pullout programs during periods of economic difficulty (Frattura & Capper, 2006). Cook et al. (1999) attributed decisions to implement inclusion for financial reasons to disappointing outcomes in the programs themselves. Savanna vocalized similar thoughts when she said:

Well, that's what why we need an inclusion (program) anyway. I mean...the ideal is that there be more special ed teachers out there in the classrooms. That is what was meant. But financially, money wise, there is no way they can do that. So in order to give lip service to what inclusion is, we have to send our assistants out.

Summary

Chapter 4 was comprised of research data obtained through a structured collection of demographic information, document reviews, and 11 open-ended interviews conducted using a semistructured format (Creswell, 1998), with notation of paralinguistic behaviors observed during responses. The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of the dynamics of the inclusion program in the high schools in the county selected from the perspective of the special education teacher. Participants had to satisfy the narrow definition of a licensed special education teacher who currently taught or who

had recently taught in inclusion classes in the high schools in the selected county. Inclusion had been implemented countywide for no more than 5 years ensuring that all eligible participants had recent experiences in inclusion in a public high school setting. The special education teachers in this study were purposely selected in an effort to provide a rich, descriptive study (Merriam, 1998).

The interviews were recorded using a micro cassette recorder and a live scribe pen recording device. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcripts from the interviews and paralinguistic observations were initially coded to identify emerging themes in the data. Next, categories were developed in order to better ascertain patterns among the themes. This type of organization formed the theoretical framework for the study. Categories identified through this research process were classified as perceptions regarding the practice of inclusion in a public high school setting, the efficacy of this practice, identified facilitators for this practice, and barriers to this practice. Subcategories were identified within the construction of each of the identified categories. Categories were examined holistically in an effort to avoid repetition and to provide an aggregate study of the phenomenon.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Special education is an ever-evolving phenomenon with changes dictated by the cultural push of the day. Transformations in programming for disabled students are impacted by invested parents, changes in legislation, interpretation of legislation, financial inducements, and advocates (Cronis & Ellis, 2000; Yell et al., 1998). More recently societal agendas altered practices in special education via congressional intent by requiring consideration be given to the regular education classroom first, prior to alternative placements where disabled children are segregated from their nondisabled peers (Heumann, 1994; President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002). IDEA-IA's alignment with NCLB provided a causeway for a move towards more inclusive programming (Branstad, 2002; President's Commission on Excellence in Education, 2002). While inclusion is not a federal mandate, many states have supportive position statements on inclusion (Duhaney, 1999). Coupled with congressional intent, favorable state educational policies provide a framework for the integration of inclusion into public education (Duhaney, 1999; Heumann, 1994). Tennessee is one such state that has issued positions on inclusion that may be considered enthusiastic and supportive (Duhaney, 1999; Fisher, 2006). Even with policy statements supporting the notion of inclusion in the state of Tennessee, the method of service provision varies greatly from county to county and school to school.

Much debate surrounds the definition and application of inclusion among scholastic programs. Advocates of full inclusion prefer the practice of educating children with disabilities in the regular education program alongside nondisabled peers 100% of the time regardless of handicapping condition (Crockett & Kauffman, 1999; Friend & Bursuck, 1996). Progressive inclusion focuses on integrating students with special needs into the facets of school life while endorsing the *continuum of services* protocol by recognizing a need for segregated options (Osgood, 2005). The debate surrounding inclusion becomes more complicated when consideration is given to some opponents proclamations that regardless of litigation, legislation, and research in special education inclusion has been ushered with a lack of empirical evidence for its formation and administration (Baker & Zigmond, 1995; Dunn, 1968; Goldstein, 1967; Guskin & Spicker, 1968; Johnson, Pugach, & Hammitte, 1988; Wolfensberger, 1994; Zigmond et al., 1995). Adding to the debate on inclusion are those among us insisting the issue of where special education services are to be provided is less important than the question of how programs will be delivered to ensure Free and Appropriate Public Education or FAPE (Harrower, 1999; Fore et al., 2008; Zigmond, 2003). Currently the law prevails requiring placement decisions be determined by the Individual Education Program (IEP) teams, that these decisions be made on a case by case basis, and that the focus be on the needs of the student (IDEA, 2004).

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the perspective of the special education teacher regarding inclusion services in a public high school setting. Cook et al. (1999) and Fox and Ysseldyke (1997) attribute special education teachers' attitudes as pivotal in the success or failure of inclusion. Yet, special educators' input for inclusion is

not documented nearly as often as that of regular education teachers, administrators, legislators, or parents of special need students (Burgin, 2003; Duhaney, 1999; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Tudor, 2004). In addition to the scarcity of input from special educators regarding inclusive educational practices is the scant research on high school inclusion programs (Fore, 2008). The researcher sought to fill the gap by examining inclusion and the broader issues surrounding this form of special education service delivery in a public high school setting. The investigation focused on the perspectives of licensed special education teachers and the implementation of the model. According to Rowan (1993) programs are often unilaterally instituted without initial input from the service providers. Researching outcomes and special education teachers' responses after inclusion programs had been implemented in the high schools provided the opportunity for special education teachers to supply this missing voice.

A review of literature involving the history of inclusion including significant legislation and key literature, in-depth and open-ended interviews with 11 special education teachers with current experience in inclusion programs in public high school settings along with facets required for a valid and reliable qualitative phenomenological study provided the data for conclusions and recommendations. Conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations for practice and further research are presented in relation to the phenomenon of inclusion practices in high schools through the perspective of the service delivery provider, the special education teacher. Research findings were organized according to the themes that formed the theoretical framework for the study:

1. What are the participants' perceptions regarding the practice of inclusion in a public high school setting?

2. What are the participants' perceptions regarding the efficacy of this practice?
3. What factors facilitate successful incorporation of students with special needs in the regular education class in a high school setting?
4. What factors are barriers to successful incorporation of students with special needs in the regular education class?

Data was analyzed and placed into one of the four categories. Refining the data resulted in the emergence of subcategories. Conclusions and recommendations for future research and further practice were developed and identified from the conglomeration of information obtained through this study.

Conclusions

The findings from this study concerning special education teachers' perceptions of inclusion services in high school settings are presented here as they relate to the four main research questions.

Perceptions

A review of findings revealed that all participants interviewed supported the concept of mainstreaming and/or progressive inclusion versus the full inclusion model. Not all participants clearly articulated the definitive differences between the terms mainstreaming, progressive inclusion, and full inclusion but in-depth interviewing revealed participants' attitudes towards special education students' participation in the facets of school life. Participants cited numerous reasons for preferences toward progressive inclusion. Many identified a potential negative impact severely disabled students might have on the rest of the regular education class. Concerns included issues

with limited time and energy available from the classroom teacher to satisfactorily meet the needs of the disabled student. Participants were apprehensive regarding distracting behaviors exhibited by some children with disabilities. Distracting behaviors were thought to interfere with the education of nondisabled peers as well as higher functioning disabled students present in the inclusive environment. Many subjects used the terminology *least restrictive environment* when providing rationale for the positive stance toward progressive inclusion versus full inclusion. The notion of mandated full inclusion was rejected on the basis that it was not in the best interest of all special education students or their nondisabled peers and did not meet the needs of the identified student. This thought process aligns with Tolerance Theory (Cook, Gerber & Semmel, 1997; Cook & Semmel, 1999; Cook & Semmel, 2000; Gerber, 1988; Gerber & Semmel, 1985) where constraints regarding time, energy, and even expertise to address all student needs at any given moment are recognized. Participants acknowledged that nondisabled students make demands on classroom environments as well. They expressed frustration with the notion that special education students place excessive demands on the classroom when nondisabled students also place stress on the classroom through inappropriate behavior and/or academic needs. Participants noted interruptions in service delivery sometimes brought about by nondisabled peers when special needs students are placed in inclusion classes.

Cook et al. (1999) and Hoy and Miskel (2008) theorized that a top down hierarchy in public school bureaucracy contributes to some special educators lack of enthusiasm towards inclusion. This sentiment was echoed repeatedly in participants' responses. Criticism of the Tennessee Diploma Project (2010) and No Child Left Behind

(2002) reverberated throughout the interviews. Participants perceived NCLB's requirements as negatively impacting regular educators' feelings towards the special education students in their classrooms. This negativity was attributed to special education students' performance on standardized tests and the resulting impact on annual yearly progress scores and graduation rates. Participants expressed concerns that regular education teachers may worry about being penalized by special education students' poor performance on standardized achievement test. Students' performances on standardized tests have serious consequences for local schools (Ed.gov, 2009; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Allbritten et al. (2009) contend NCLB's insistence on special education students' participation in standardized assessments negatively impacts a schools ability to satisfy AYP. Mastropierie and Scruggs (2001) identified high stakes testing requirements as an organizational barrier for inclusion programs. Participants empathized with regular education teachers' uneasiness given the Tennessee Education Association board of directors authorization mandating 35% of a teachers job evaluations be based on student standardized test scores (Roberts, 2010). Participants attributed inducements and penalties tied to NCLB (2000) and the Race to the Top Grant (Klein, 2010) as impetuses behind the return to pullout resource classes. This time special education teachers charged with assigning student grades must meet highly qualified status according to NCLB (2002) rules. A number of participants possessed the highly qualified status for certain subject areas. High schools in the county are currently making the transition back to pullout with the resource teacher, along with their highly qualified status, at the helm of the class. These efforts are being undertaken in hopes to improve the test performance and graduation rates of special education students.

Many participants conveyed frustration with the perceived emphasis on college paths dictated by NCLB (2002) and the Tennessee Diploma Project (2010). Participants preferred addressing functional goals vs. mastery of facts for students in special education. They depict college prep courses as futile for a number of students and professed many disabled students would be better served by focusing on developing functional skills. According to Edgar and Polloway (1994) a rigorous academic model may not best serve students who are not likely to enroll in postsecondary training. Bouck (2009) questions the place of a functional curriculum in the lives of children with special needs and the agreement between current curriculum standards, educational policies, and intent of special education. Smith and Puccini (1995) recommend focusing on development of life skills and vocational skills to help prepare the student with disabilities for adulthood versus investing in curriculum models focusing solely on academic advancement.

There is a unilateral perception among participants that the state does not want them to assist regular education students in inclusion classes. This interpretation of legal limitations concerning special education teachers' ability to assist any student in the classroom contradicts cited benefits to inclusion. According to Block (1999), Hines (2001), and Hunt (2000) additional assistance in the classroom by special education personnel and the knowledge and expertise provided by individuals trained in special education programming are two very important assets for inclusion classrooms. Participants noted irony regarding attempts to maintain confidentiality in inclusion classes yet limiting assistance to special education students. They contend that by working only with identified students they single those students out as disabled

individuals thereby inadvertently infringing on the student's privacy. Participants also expressed concern with the ethical dilemma of ignoring a student when there is a need regardless of the child's status as disabled or nondisabled. Participants extol their roles as educators for all children, not just children in special education.

Participants repeatedly identified inordinate amounts of time spent on paperwork and procedural requirements as confounding factors in service delivery to students. Many lamented the mandated software program used for developing IEPs and census documentation. They described excessive amounts of time spent maneuvering the Easy IEP program and alleged this time could be better spent working with students.

The National Education Association (NEA) recommends inclusive programs limit the total number of special education students in the class to 28 and capping the number of students with learning disabilities at 25% per classroom (as cited in Hines, 2001, p.2). This recommendation is intended to ensure true integration. A class may not be truly integrated if students with disabilities are disproportionately clustered in the classroom (Fraterra & Cappa, 2006). Participants cited a wide range of class ratios for the number of disabled to nondisabled peers. Overall, it seems that the high schools are not consistently meeting the ratios recommended by NEA (as cited in Hines, 2001).

Efficacy

Guskey and Passaro (1994) define efficacy as the educators' beliefs concerning their effectiveness on students' ability to learn. These thoughts about efficacy extend to the most difficult of circumstances including the unmotivated student and the student with disabilities. Participants' responses regarding the efficacy of inclusion in high schools were coded. The following seven subcategories emerged:

1. Special Educators' Roles
2. Special Education Teachers' Assets and Benefits
3. Regular Education Teachers' Roles, Assets, and Benefits
4. Coteaching, New Teachers, and Veteran Teachers
5. Administrative Roles and Parent Roles
6. Social Benefits for Students
7. Academic Benefits for Students

Special Educators' Roles

Educator's perceptions and expectations with respect to inclusive practices significantly influence the role they play in service delivery (Cook et al., 1999; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). Participants defined their roles as special educators as "supportive" with some referring to the students in their charge as "clients". A personal knowledge of the students on their caseload and of the students on their colleague's caseloads was described as essential to be effective in their roles as special education teachers. Some participants depicted their role as more subordinate to the classroom teacher while others described their positions as being more proactive. Those individuals relegating to subordination waited for the teacher to contact them if problems arose while those with more proactive stances sought input from teachers, students, parents, and administrators without prompting. All participants strongly heralded their purpose as being there for the students. Curriculum adaptation with reliance on their expertise as special education teachers was purported to be important in their role as service delivery persons. Some used this expertise and knowledge of the student to influence course selection for students on their caseload.

Special Education Teachers' Assets and Benefits

Additional assistance in the classroom, applied expertise, knowledge, and experience are attributes provided by the special education teacher to inclusion classes (Block, 1999; Hines, 2001; Hunt, 2000). Respondents cited in-depth knowledge of the students and the ability to bring a different approach for problem solving on the students' behalf as professional assets provided by special education teachers. Inter collaboration among colleagues and experiences working with a vast array of students were also identified as assets contributed by the special educator to inclusion programs.

Participants noted their ability to advocate for the student and their rapport with students as advantageous in the effort to promote educational progress. Special education teachers' additional insights in planning and delivering curriculum have been touted by researchers as valuable in the successful integration of disabled students in the regular classroom (Block, 1999; Hines, 2001; Hunt, 2000). Respondents agreed with this idea and held the opinion that their presence in the classroom eased the general educators burden of trying to meet the needs of all students at any given moment. In addition to their presence, they alleged the presence of special education assistants was contributory as well. Special education personnel in general were thought to assist in the students work completion by providing additional prompts, individual attention, and a different format for presentation of material to the students. Participants cited facilitation of the IEP in the classroom as an important asset. The special education teachers' efforts towards parental communication were identified as beneficial to students, regular education teachers, and parents alike. A positive attitude in the school climate was repeatedly referenced as an important asset in the special educator's repertoire.

Regular Education Teachers' Roles, Assets, and Benefits

Researchers recognize the regular education teacher's attitude as pivotal in the execution of inclusion programs (Farrell, 2004; Horne, 1985, Idol et al., 1994; Martinez, 2004; Villa et al., 1996). Respondents noted special education students' opportunity to benefit from interaction with more adults through the inclusion program. It was the participants' contention that regular educators offered diversity to disabled students in inclusion programs by facilitating interaction with more adults. This interaction is thought to align more closely with real life application, as students will be expected to interact with different types of people of various backgrounds upon leaving the school system. Developing confidence through these interactions is thought to encourage student confidence and identification as a group member in the public school. There is a sense of belonging inspired by multiple interactions among different adult staff versus limiting development of relationships only to special education personnel. Participants recognized regular education teachers' content knowledge as being a distinct advantage for the disabled student in inclusion classes. Research by Vaughn and Schumm (1994) and Zigmond et al. (1985) addressed the weightiness of curriculum coverage in high school as a factor for inclusion programs. The specificity required for the breadth and depth of particular subject areas endears the expertise of the trained high school instructor as a positive feature for the integrated classroom.

Coteaching, New Teachers and Veteran Teachers

New teachers were described as being more open to inclusion, coteaching, and input from the special education teacher. New teachers were defined as teachers just out of college with limited classroom experience. This openness was attributed to the

training new educators are now receiving through their college programs. Information imparted by college programs in education are believed to be effected by expectations that all teachers should be prepared to interact with special needs students at some level. This is in contrast to training veteran teachers received through colleges and universities where special education students were expected to remain segregated and the special education teacher was the lead provider for educational services (Osgood, 2005; Winzer, 1993; Yell et al., 1998). There is some indication that coteaching may be occurring on occasion but this is not a consistent phenomenon in the high schools at present. Apparently, there was movement towards more coteaching endeavors until participants received information they interpreted as limiting their time strictly to the attention of identified students. This seemed to interrupt efforts to form more coteaching relationships among regular education and special education teachers.

Administrative Roles and Parent Roles

According to Fox and Ysseldyke (1997) administrative leadership is paramount in inclusion programs. Participants' perceptions varied regarding the administrative leadership and inclusion models at their respective schools. Those reporting positive, supportive administrators identified communication, concern for the students, and awareness of the special education teachers' role in the school as positive attributes among the leadership at their schools. Those depicting a lack of leadership among administration cited poor communication and a laissez faire attitude towards special education programming and interdepartmental issues as prevalent in their school setting. Participants discussed their perception of parental roles in special education programming. All respondents indicated they would like to see more parental

involvement with students but noted a lot of disconnect between parental awareness of their child's developmental and academic functioning and scholastic expectation. IEP meetings were portrayed as collaborative with solicitations for parental participation and attempts for provision of parental requests.

Social Benefits for Students

A number of studies on inclusion programs found well integrated settings to be more beneficial for children with disabilities in making social gains (Madden & Slavin, 1983; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Peterson & Hittie, 2003; Wang & Baker, 1986;). Participants perceived inclusion as being socially beneficial for students. Respondents identified peer modeling benefits for special education students. This is consistent with investigations documenting teachers' reports of benefits from exposure to peer models for appropriate behavior (Carlson, 1996; Vessay, 2004; Ward, 2003; Yoder, 2000). Participants noted special needs students in integrated settings tended to learn from their nondisabled peers through conversation. Proponents of inclusion cite participation in a more stimulating environment as aiding in the facilitation of language and adaptive skills of identified students (Block, 1999; Kochhar et al., 2000; National Study of Inclusive Education, 1995). Respondents noted the importance of forming socially appropriate types of recreation that enabled disabled students to bond with their peers. This is consistent with Block (1999), Kochhar et al. (2000), and the National Study of Inclusive Education (1995) reports of increased opportunities for special needs students to form more friendships when they participate in inclusion programs versus segregated programs. Cited benefits for nondisabled students in inclusion settings include greater acceptance of individual differences, greater acceptance of children with disabilities,

development of altruistic behaviors, and greater understanding of the similarities among all types of students (Helmstetter et al., 1994; Hines, 2001; Kochhar et al., 2000). Participants' responses were consistent with these findings with respondents noting improvement in tolerance of others within the school climate. This improved tolerance of special education students' involvement in the school setting extended to the regular education teachers' attitudes. This is consistent with research findings crediting inclusion programs for regular education teachers' advancement of their understanding and consideration of student differences (Block, 1999; Hines, 2001; Hunt, 2000). Participants described disabled students' hesitancy in being associated with special education. Peer acceptance is an integral issue for disabled children (Block, 1999; TASH, 1999; TEACHH, 2006; Turnbull et al., 1986). Special education teachers said they practice discretion when working with students in inclusion classes, noting that being part of a regular class versus a segregated resource setting is important for special education students' self-esteem. Salend and Duhaney (1999) concluded possible lifetime returns, including better salaries and independent living, for those special needs students participating in inclusion classes. Participants' responses were consistent with those findings. Respondents identified increased self-advocacy for some students enrolled in inclusive classes. Special educators identified student participation in inclusion classes as important for developing social skills and functional life skills necessary for post high school success.

Academic Benefits for Students

A growing body of research suggests inclusive settings may generate academic gains for the student for special education services (Frederickson, Dunsmuir, Lang, &

Monsen, 2004; Madden & Slavin, 1983; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Peterson & Hittie, 2003; Rea, Mclaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002; Wang & Baker, 1986). Participants provided some support for these findings by referencing a number of students they identified as academically benefiting from inclusion services. Students were to profit from the accommodations, modifications, and hands on assistance facilitated by the special education teachers presence in the classroom. Additionally, the special education teachers' knowledge of the students learning styles and academic strengths and weaknesses permit them the opportunity to present the information in a format that may make the information more readily understandable to the disabled student. Special educators' knowledge of the student and experience with test modification is deemed as another advantage for improving the special education students' academic performance.

Facilitators

Factors that facilitate inclusion programs in a high school setting were identified during data collection. Data refinement revealed four subcategories for facilitating factors. The subcategories that emerged are as follows:

1. Communication
2. Attitude
3. Knowledge
4. Environment

Communication

Communication and collaboration among staff is central to the integration of effective inclusion programs (McClesky & Waldron, 2002). Participants repeatedly identified communication and collaboration as imperative for the facilitation of inclusion

services. Special education teachers often take subordinate roles in inclusion programs (Buckley, 2005; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Rice & Zigmond, 2000). Many special educators acknowledge the issue of class ownership (Morocco & Aguilar, 2002). Yoder (2000) reported the need for some type of negotiation that must occur in the classroom in terms of territory and expectation between special education and regular education. Participants agreed upon the importance of establishing rapport with regular education staff in order to create a positive environment for facilitating communication, collaboration, and establishing turf. Participants cited awareness of the regular education teachers' preferences for communicating and the resulting approach by the special education teacher as important in establishing a positive working relationship and negotiating expectations within the classroom environment. A willingness to be patient while relationships between special education and regular education developed was deemed necessary in order to nurture a positive regard that seemed eagerly sought after.

Attitude

Research by Cook et al. (1999) and Fox and Ysseldyke (1997) denote attitude as an influential factor in inclusion programs. Special education teachers interviewed identified student autonomy and motivation as crucial elements for academic progress in inclusion classes. Participants steadfastly identified student attitude as an essential element for achievement even for those students with significant cognitive delays that might otherwise be prohibited from experiencing success in an inclusive setting.

Special educators are directly engaged in the implementation of inclusion programs. Their positions on inclusion significantly impacts service delivery (Cook et al., 1999; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). Participants identified supportive attitudes towards

regular classroom teachers as an important facilitator for successfully integrating classes. Empowering regular education teachers by providing them with pertinent information about the student, methods of instruction, modifications, and accommodations were all recognized techniques for supporting the regular educator. Regular education teachers were reported to be more receptive to this manner of support, provided the special educators had presented themselves to regular education staff as cooperative and positive over a period of time. One participant referred to this manner of presenting positively to the regular education teacher as "...the sped spin," while another called it "...schmoozing." Both participants seemed to be addressing the development of rapport with regular education for the students' benefit and the benefit of inclusion programs in their respective schools.

The general educator's attitude is endorsed by many as a crucial component in the success or failure of inclusion programs (Farrell, 2004; Horne, 1985; Idol, Nevin, & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1994; Martinez, 2004; Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin, 1996). Changing the attitudes of regular education staff towards special education teachers was related as essential to improving facilitation of services. Participants contended that they were perceived as less than licensed, qualified teachers by some individuals in regular education. Promoting special education teachers was intoned as a positive move towards improving relations among all staff and service delivery for students. Some participants have already observed positive changes in the regular educators perception of special education teachers. This change in attitude has prompted more solicitation of collaborative exchanges between educators. This, in turn, has reportedly led to an

increase in trust and more positive perception of special education teachers as true professionals.

Participants recognized the importance of community support and involvement in special education as a final tenet in the facilitation of integration. A review of literature revealed community based organizations advocating the promotion of inclusion (TASH, 1999; TEACHH, 2006). There are advocates fully engaged in ushering in an era of full inclusion for all students. These strides towards inclusion are asserted as moving disabled students towards independent functioning as adults and as facilitating the promotion of broad based acceptance of individuals with disabilities by society at large (An Inclusive Talkback: Critics Concerns and Advocates' Responses, 1996; Inclusion and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1996). Participants spoke to a stakeholder buy in to educational programming for special needs students. The intent was not necessarily for hands on involvement at the school level but increased awareness, tolerance, and engagement of disabled students and adults for the betterment of humanity.

Knowledge

Knowledge and experience contribute to improved attitudes towards integrated settings (Anderson et al., 2007; Salend & Duhaney, 1999). Participants supported this idea using the terms *knowledge management* and the need to know everything in the school. Having a working knowledge of the school's infrastructure, sociopolitical climate, caseloads, interventions, and process and procedures were important for preparedness and effectiveness. Participants voiced the need for additional training for regular education teachers and special education staff alike. All staff was targeted as needing additional training for working with students with emotional problems.

Recommendations for regular education staff included working with different categories of special education students with an emphasis on students categorized as severely and profoundly impaired. Some participants noted that the special education teachers at their school were involved with on-site workshops to assist with enhancing knowledge of special education programming, assessment, and intervention. Other participants noted informal mentoring as a productive means of improving staff knowledge.

Environment

Participants identified class size as a facilitating factor for inclusion programs. Smaller class sizes were requested to improve opportunities for communication and collaboration with the classroom teacher and to provide assistance to students in need. Research by Dieker and Murawski (2003), Keefe et al. (2004), and Vaughn and Arguelles (1997) found working with special education students in large classes in high school settings to be specifically challenging. Participants spoke about the addition of more special education staff as a facilitating factor. Other facilitators identified included arranging the environment by making appropriate and additional materials available in the regular classroom and arranging the classroom setting to make it a more conducive setting for learning.

Barriers

Information pertaining to barriers to inclusion programs was plentiful from both the perspective of the special educators participating in this study and the literature review. There are those who purport that the full implementation of inclusion is encumbered by a, "...lack of knowledge, lack of will, lack of vision, lack of resources, and lack of morality" (Clough & Garner as cited in Hodkinson, 2005, p. 44). Many of

these facets were addressed during the interviews. The barriers that emerged from this study have been grouped into the following five subcategories:

1. Special education barriers
2. Regular education barriers
3. Student barriers
4. Technological barriers
5. Financial barriers

Special Education Barriers

A lack of training and skills are cited repeatedly as barriers to inclusion (Anderson et al., 2007; Burgin, 2003; Keefe et al., 2004; Osgood, 2005; Rice & Zigmond, 2000; Silverman, 2007). Coursework specificity required at the high school level is recognized as a confounding factor to coteaching relationships between special education teachers and regular education teachers (Scruggs et al., 2007). Participants agreed with this application and cited classes where they lacked the content mastery to engage in a true coteaching arrangement. Silverman (2007) noted educators' lack of training and knowledge of classroom management techniques necessary to work effectively with disabled students as an impediment to inclusion. Participants shared shortcomings in their preparation to work with special education students with different developmental, adaptive, physical, cognitive, and emotional problems. All special education teachers interviewed received formal training through college curriculums but for those working in high schools the formal training fell short as many of them lacked a practicum or internship in a public high school setting. Their college experiences seemed focused on elementary aged settings with absences of experiences in high schools and

middle schools. Participants' frequently cited shortcomings in training or experience in working with behavioral issues and students identified as Emotionally Disturbed.

Problems with training, communication, and collaboration at the local level were reported. There seemed to be a lack of training for transitioning from a public school system that operated a special education program through the traditional format of segregated resource classes with student mainstreaming to a program where inclusive services were emphasized. Research indicates that few school districts engage in systematic and practical procedures based on indicators assigned to successful inclusion programs (Salend et al., 1987). Interdepartmental problems as well as problems communicating with administration were reported by participants. According to Semmel and Gerber (1999) significant predilections of principals and special education teachers may account for poor outcomes from inclusion programs.

Participants had shared experiences of rejection from regular education teachers regarding their presence in the classroom. Research has revealed problems with turf wars and personality conflicts between special education regular education teachers and special education teachers in inclusion classes (Buckley, 2005; Morocco & Auguilar, 2002; Salend & Duhaney, 1999; Scruggs et al., 2007; Yoder, 2000). Special educators interviewed discerned problems being accepted as fully licensed teachers. Participants detailed issues with subordination and awareness of special education personnel's position by individuals in regular education, students, and people in the community. Disabled students sometimes perceived special education staff's presence in inclusion classrooms as intrusive making the service delivery more difficult. Some participants accepted a subordinate role and referred to their positions as supportive to the regular

classroom teacher and conducive to student tolerance, while others voiced a call for a more direct role in instruction.

Some special educators noted a lack of time for collaboration as an obstacle to successful implementation of inclusion programs. All participants were mutually frustrated by what was articulated as excessive amounts of paperwork and time spent on satisfying bureaucratic policy. Participants admitted to a lack of planning time. Many educators express a dire need for more planning time (Scruggs et al., 2007; Yoder, 2000). Procedurally, schedules may appear to meet state requirements allotting a certain amount of planning time; however, the reality of what is written on paper and what qualifies as real planning time is inconsistent. Duty free lunches, another legal requirement mandated by the state, are also not guaranteed. Participants insist they cannot adhere to planning times or duty free lunches if they are to adequately fulfill the hours and meet the goals written on the IEP of all the students on their caseload. They continue to request additional personnel in hopes that this would allow them to meet the needs of students and satisfy regulations governing mandated paperwork. Currently many report inefficient, incorrect, and/or sometimes no completion of mandated paperwork. The paperwork is a reflection of the adherence of policy and procedure set forth by state and federal requirements (TDOE, 2011). Time limitations were cited as an obstruction to satisfying all job requisites. Participants contend bureaucratic obligations and the responsibilities to the vast spectrum of students they serve can seem like an impossible undertaking. The move to more resource classes in the high schools are purported to increase the demands on an already strapped special education department. Some special education teachers charged with instructing segregated resource classes continue to

provide services through inclusion classes. Preparing for a segregated classroom, plus the demands placed on time and energy through inclusion classes, as well as trying to meet regulatory deadlines amidst fears of legal sanctions are reportedly taxing limitations.

Regular Education Barriers

Participants perceived some resistance to inclusion from regular education staff. Turf wars and classroom ownership have presented as boundaries to contend with in the implementation of inclusion (Buckley, 2005; Yoder, 2000). Regular education teachers may value special education teachers' contributions and expertise but nonetheless prefer full discretion when it comes to authority in *their* classrooms (Buckley, 2005). Special education teachers interviewed empathized with regular education teachers feeling threatened by the presence of another adult in the classroom. Rather than feel like an intruder, some special education teachers have chosen to avoid a physical presence in those classrooms. This avoidance is purportedly instigated in regard to the regular education teacher and attempts at improving compatibility. Rice and Zigmond (2000) identified compatibility between regular education teachers and special educators as critical for successful implementation of inclusion.

There are educators who believe that students with disabilities are better served in segregated settings where staff has knowledge and experience working with students with disabilities (Anderson et al, 2007; Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995). Participants agreed that some general educators continue to share this perspective. Some regular education teachers allegedly believe that if students lack a certain amount of academic prowess, their presence in the classroom is an imposition. Participants noted some regular

educators attribute special education students' difficulties in the classroom to laziness. The term has purportedly been used by regular educators on occasion during IEP meetings along with the words "...unwilling and uncooperative..." in reference to a particular student. Even though there are those teachers who still consider special education students to be "...second class citizens," special educators participating in this study have observed some movement towards a broader tolerance of students with disabilities. Still, some teachers are reticent to engage students on a more personal level. Participants said some regular education teachers insist limitations on their time prohibit the opportunity to form relationships with their students despite block scheduling where students are present in a single class for 90 minutes at a time (Irmsher, 1996). Some participants believed the issue with limited time is a guise and that much of the blame lay on the teachers' lack of motivation to invest in the student. They did recognize wariness on behalf of some students to engage with teachers.

Responses to interview questions indicated that regular education teachers did not appear motivated to seek consultation and collaboration with special education staff. Furthermore, there were claims that some regular education staff did not know the location of the special education offices. According to Anderson et al. (2007) many teachers accredit the success of inclusion programs to proper and adequate support from special education. It may be that some teachers do not possess the knowledge of staff and services available in their buildings in order to seek collaboration on behalf of the student. Keefe et al. (2004) recommend regular education teachers be attuned to special education staff to improve facilitation of inclusion services. There were those special educators interviewed who ascribed the regular educators limited awareness of special

education personnel and location to a myopic view. Worrell (2008) states that many regular educators in a high school setting are habituated to working rather independently or at the outset well within the confines of their departments. High stakes testing may be contributing to a myopic view from the regular teacher (Tienken, 2010) and is considered an organizational barrier in the successful integration of inclusion programming (Mastropierie & Scruggs, 2001; Roberts, 2010). Participants noted misconceptions about special education procedure as a contributing factor to the narrow viewpoints of some regular educators. There is a belief in some circles of regular education that having a special education student in class equates with many additional adaptations in the classroom. Participants acknowledged that teachers may not be aware that they are often times already making adaptations in their teaching methods to address the different learning styles of their students and that these same techniques can be applied for instructing students with disabilities. Participants acknowledged that some of the worries from regular educators are related to threats of lawsuits from potential missteps in special education. Inclusion and other special education practices have been shaped through litigation (Cronis & Ellis, 2000). Participants believe regular educators' misconceptions about special education law, policy, and procedures only contribute to worries about potential litigation.

Participants' reiterated the need for regular educators to receive more training for working with students with special needs. They focused on the need to have a least a cursory understanding of the various educational categories of disabilities, the function and application of an IEP, and some of the reasons for the special educators methods of practice. Special education teachers are aware of the limitations of their formal training

but do point out that teachers in regular education have even less formal training for working with disabled students. Participants remarked that working with students is somewhat intrinsic. Some regular educators are accused of not possessing an instinctual understanding of students and their emerging development. Participants believed this understanding is necessary for teaching academics to all students. Participants observed special educators to be more attuned with their students and to recognize the need to employ alternative strategies more readily. Participants reported a lack of competency among some staff members. When asked to clarify whether the incompetence was being attributed to regular education teachers or teachers in special education, the participant said incompetent staff members could be found in both factions. It was recommended that teachers unable or unwilling to work with students who struggle academically be assigned to the higher level students. One special education teacher empathized with regular education teachers' struggles with having special needs students in their classes. He recognized that many regular education teachers chose their vocation based upon a specific subject they wished to teach and a particular section of students they wanted to work with. He noted that a large number of teachers had not prepared or expected to ever work under the circumstances that inclusion programming presents. He summed it up best when he said, "...in the teacher's defense, they did not sign up for it."

Student Barriers

Participants recognized the impact families have on student performance. They expressed concerns regarding the negative impact families have on special needs students' scholastic performances when home environments are chaotic, abusive, and/or neglectful. According to Exner (1993) personal biases shape perceptions and impact the

reality of relationships. Special education programming was arranged in part to encourage students to complete their work assignments at school as special educators surmised an absence of support in many disabled students' home lives. Participants discerned parents as placing low priorities on their children's education. They experienced this perception of parental priority as limiting and felt encumbered in their ability to reach out to parents to form relationships.

Student functioning was acknowledged as a barrier to academic success in inclusion programs. Student motivation, adaptive functioning, socialization skills, behavior problems, and academic readiness were all identified as contributing confounding factors to successful experiences in inclusion. Participants identified a lackadaisical attitude by some students as an impediment to academic performance. Repeated academic failure and resulting diminished self-esteem were believed to be responsible for many negative attitudes among poorly performing disabled students.

Compromised adaptive functioning related to limitations in cognitive ability were believed to negatively impact students' ability to absorb academic information and to generalize application despite years of intervention through special education programming. This is consistent with Tienken's (2010) summations of well researched and accepted learning theories contending the individual must pass certain developmental stages before moving onto the next. Adhering to the statistically accepted practice of the bell shaped curve would suggest that some students, no matter the breadth and depth of intervention, will not progress to the next stage of learning (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Tienken, 2010).

Research by Macmillan et al. (1996) indicated student placement into inclusion classes did not automatically generate positive feelings or improved acceptance of the disabled student. Nondisabled students related negative attitudes to special education students who displayed objectionable behaviors (MacMillan et al., 1996). A lack of social skills displayed by some disabled students created negative feelings amongst nondisabled peers (Cook et al., 1999; Peck et al., 1990). Participants noted problems with immaturity contributed to special education students experiencing difficulties forming relationships with others in inclusion classes. One participant noted issues with disabled students negotiating expected boundaries, including touching and other physical proximity problems, as a serious detriment to engendering acceptance among nondisabled students.

Legislative amendments in education law in Tennessee have centered on requirements for earning a high school diploma (TDP, 2010). There has been a renewed emphasis on AYP and graduation rates (Ed.gov, 2009; NCLB, 2002; TDP, 2010). Participants expressed concerns with special education students' academic readiness, scholastic performance, and the likelihood of disabled students meeting requirements for a high school diploma. Participants spoke of concerns with modifying the pace of instruction in the inclusion class for a few and wondered aloud if these changes to accommodate the disabled student in the classroom were in the best interest of all students present. Problems with academic readiness for required coursework, especially algebra skills, were repeatedly voiced as a concern on the disabled students behalf. Changes in academic requirements dictated by the Tennessee Diploma Project (2010) are impacting curriculum development in the high schools. Participants communicated

frustration with the states lack of clarity regarding the types of curriculum changes expected to accommodate special education students.

Participants interviewed acknowledged disabled students in high schools sometimes experience distress when special education staff attempts to help them in inclusion classes. This student stress was attributed to feeling singled out by the special help they received in front of their peers. Participants noted problems with some disabled students repeated absence from the inclusion class. Apparently, some of the students miss class on a weekly basis to attend outside activities including trips to the community center, Special Olympics, trips to the grocery store, and other engagements that occur during the school day. The involvement in these events may be part of the student's IEP, but the participants expressed concern over the frequency of occurrence and the possible impact on educational progress.

Technological and Accessibility Barriers

Participants cited updated technology, technology training, and access to technology as barriers to inclusion. Research by Anderson et al. (2007) and Silverman (2007) identified training and materials as inclusion barriers. Special education teachers interviewed pointed to educational benefits special education students could receive from better media options including more physically accommodating features such as larger keyboards and resizing other features for students with mobility and visual issues. Apparently there are limitations on the number and types of modified technology available. Better access to computer based technology for inclusion classes such as wireless connections for easier transport is needed. Questions regarding student and teacher access were addressed during the interviews. It seems that technology purchases

made with special education funds may only be used by special education personnel for special education students. This creates a dubious situation in an inclusion class if regular education faculty and nondisabled students are to be excluded from these devices. Denying regular education staff access may breed resentment and curtail attempts at building relationships. Allowing only special education students access is proximally difficult and creates an issue with confidentiality and privacy by singling out the students using the technology as disabled. Participants voiced ethical concerns with refusing to allow a struggling nondisabled students access to materials that may be beneficial to their academic progress.

Participants broadened the discussion on accessibility to community based barriers including handicapped parking and door entries for wheelchairs. State guidelines for handicapped accessibility may satisfy state and federal legal requirements but participants contend guidelines are in need of review and improvement. Other community based issues included access to services through disability leagues. Participants noted a strong presence by disability leagues in other counties and believe services accessed through these organizations contribute to the development of disabled individuals into productive citizens by providing opportunities for employment and socialization. The absence of these types of services was pegged as a barrier to holistic development for the disabled individual.

Financial Barriers

Research by Anderson et al. (2007), Cook et al. (1999), Duhaney (1999), and Frattura and Cappa (2006) addressed finances as a negative impediment to the successful implementation of inclusion programs. A shortage of finances allocated for special

education staff as well as space and materials for students with disabilities is identified as a financial barrier to special education services (Anderson et al., 1997; Salend & Duhaney, 1999). Participants do not believe that monies earned through fund raising at their respective schools are equally distributed to the special education department despite their contributions to these activities. As part of the student body, special education students frequently do not benefit from use of these monies from other departments as their special education needs negatively impact their access to what has been purchased. Efforts to introduce technological options through the IEP are complicated. What may seem like a good idea can be cost prohibitive. Special education teachers have been cautioned about including expensive items into an IEP. This would not only create a burdening financial obligation, but would also be a precedent-setting event that would impact the finances of the system for years to come.

Participants recognized bureaucracy as a necessity in order for government based programs like special education to exist in public schools. They expressed frustration in the lack of experience and qualifications of people placed in positions that develop and influence interpretation of education law. These financially provoked political maneuverings and allocation of resources in education are believed to impact educators' decisions to exit the public school sector. In research by Cook et al. (1999) findings suggest the move to inclusion programs from segregated settings were financially motivated attempts at cost saving measures versus the services implemented in the genuine interest of the disabled student. Participants noted problems with allocating finances so that inclusion services could be adequately staffed and students and teachers could reap the most rewards from this form of special education programming.

Recommendations for Research

The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of the dynamics of inclusion programs in a public high school setting from the perspective of the special education teacher. The scarcity of research at the secondary level on inclusion programming and the relatively limited input from special education teachers suggest the need for additional qualitative and quantitative inquiries within this scope of study.

Recommendations for further investigation are as follows:

1. It is recommended that studies of this nature be replicated to contribute to the breadth and depth of this topic and for comparative analysis. This could be accomplished through qualitative studies focusing on the perspective of general educators, administrators, parents, and/or students and by expanding the study to special education teachers in other counties. A quantitative study might expand into multiple regions measuring the prevalence of special educator's perspectives regarding inclusion.
2. This study was limited to inclusion in high school settings. It is recommended a study investigating the dynamics of inclusion programs from the special education teachers' perspectives be expanded into middle schools, elementary schools, and preschool settings. Focusing on barriers and facilitators may provide data that could contribute to an improvement in service delivery and potentially positively impact student performance.
3. It is recommended studies be completed addressing the postgraduate outcomes of students who have participated in inclusion programs. This might be accomplished through longitudinal studies that begin while

students are still enrolled in public education. Completing this type of study will help provide important data regarding post high school outcomes for students' academic gains, graduation rates, preparation for postsecondary education and/or training, job placement, and/or involvement in the community.

4. It is recommended research be undertaken to investigate the success of entire inclusion classes as compared to the success of regular education classes that do not participate in inclusion services. Doing so may provide pertinent information on possible negative impacts on regular education students.
5. Recommendations for disabled to nondisabled student ratios are not always adhered to in application. It is recommended that research studies be conducted to explore this phenomena and the potential impact on disabled students, nondisabled students, regular educators, special educators, parents, and administrators. The plausibility of financial inducements in implementation of special education programming may be concurrently investigated.
6. Some special educators demonstrated confusion regarding correct understanding and application of special education terminology. It is recommended a study be completed addressing this issue and the potential ramifications. Misunderstanding and misuse of terms may have legal, practical, and ethical implications.

Recommendations for Practice

Recommendations for practice evolving from this study are as follows:

1. It is recommended that the public school system where this study was conducted consider providing an operational definition of inclusion to all employed educators. It seems reasonable to begin by training special education staff members then expanding the training to regular educators and administrative staff. Training may be conducted via on ground in-services regarding terminology in special education or through online podcasting on the county website.
2. NEA guidelines for best practices on disabled to nondisabled students in inclusion classes are not being consistently adhered to in application. It is recommended NEA guidelines be followed or the county devise its own guidelines based on other research models and then make a concerted effort to consistently implement those ratios.
3. Exploring the option for coteaching seems like a viable alternative now that more special education teachers possess the highly qualified status in an array of subjects. This highly qualified status will allow more autonomy in the classroom with regards to grade assignments, curriculum development and implementation, and direct instruction. Implementing coteaching simultaneously with segregated classes such as algebra and biology courses may best satisfy the federal governments mandate for the *continuum of service* clause.

4. Consider adding special education staff to provide more broad based inclusion classes in the high schools. Limited personnel obstruct opportunities for more inclusion based classrooms. Adding more special education staff would facilitate options for course selection for students and provide more students access to a wider variety of highly qualified teachers.
5. Consider using district assessment information to place students in core classes that are the most appropriate for their demonstrated prerequisite skills in order to maximize student success. These data may also be used to determine which students might benefit academically from inclusion classes versus segregated settings.
6. Provide in-service training to regular education staff regarding the role of special education teachers and the variety of special education services provided at a given school. This training might include basic information on the various disability categories and certainly the most prevalent categories presented in the public school system.
7. Explore options for increasing communication between regular education staff and special education staff regarding special education students. It seems reasonable for the school system to consider developing a system for communicating regarding student grades and behavior.
8. Provide training to special educators, regular educators, and administrators regarding working with students with emotional problems.

Discussing how to work with the parents of these students seems prudent as well.

9. Seek grant money to increase access to technology in all classes including adaptive equipment that would provide modification to any student in need. Items provided through these monies may range from sophisticated technology for mobility to less involved technology like larger keyboards on sophisticated calculators used in algebra courses.

The findings from this study concerning special education teachers' perceptions of inclusion services in high school settings are presented here as they relate to the four main research questions. The four research questions focus on perception, efficacy, factors that facilitate successful incorporation of students with special needs in the regular education class in a high school setting, and barriers to successful incorporation. The findings revealed that all participants supported the concept of mainstreaming and/or progressive inclusion versus the full inclusion model. Participants identified barriers including communication, attitude, knowledge, and environment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Email Letter to Participants

January, 2011

Dear Research and Development Team Members,

I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee, degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. I am currently writing my dissertation on special education teachers' perspectives regarding inclusion in public high school settings. I would like to know if you would be interested in being part of the research study. The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of the dynamics of the inclusion program from the perspectives of special education teachers.

As a willing participant, I will ask you questions pertaining to your perceptions regarding the practice of inclusion in a public high school setting, your perceptions regarding the efficacy of this practice, your perspective on what factors facilitate successful incorporation of students with special needs in the regular education class in a high school setting, and what factors are barriers to successful incorporation of students with special needs in the regular education class. Participants will include licensed special education teachers who are currently or have recently been involved in the inclusion service delivery program in special education. Participants involved in the focus groups and personal interviews can expect to spend one to two hours at a school location during the work- day being interviewed and recorded. The interviews will be scheduled during in-service and administrative days.

Participants may withdraw their data at the end of their participation if they decide that they did not want to participate. Participants' identity and personal information will be

kept confidential. By participating in this study, you will be giving me permission to quote you. Your name will not be used in any form when quoting. You will have the opportunity to review a draft copy of your statements. The results will be published in a dissertation document.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time. If you are interested in learning more, please respond to this email within the next five school days.

Sincerely yours,

Lori Bellar Goodin

Appendix B: Demographics Page

Name: _____

Age: _____ DOB: _____

Highest Degree Earned _____

Are you a highly qualified licensed special education teacher? **Yes or No** (*circle one*)

Have you worked as a Special Education teacher in an inclusion class in a high school setting in Happy Village within the last five years? **Yes or No** (*circle one*)

How many years have you been employed as a licensed special education teacher? _____

How many years have you worked in a high school setting as a licensed special education teacher? _____

This is a demographics page only. You will be assigned a pseudo-name to ensure confidentiality. The demographics page is being utilized for organizational purposes in a school based research project.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. Should special education teachers assist in the instruction of students with mild handicapping conditions, severe handicapping conditions and other students experiencing learning difficulties in the regular education classroom? If yes then why? If no then why not?
2. How can special education teachers meet the needs of students identified with mild handicapping conditions in the regular education classroom?
3. How can regular education teachers meet the academic needs of students with mild handicapping conditions in their classrooms?
4. How can special education teachers meet the academic needs of students with severe handicapping conditions in the regular education classroom?
5. How can regular education teachers meet the academic needs of students with severe handicapping conditions in the regular education classroom?
6. What types of the instructional skills do regular education teachers have to teach both students with mild handicapping conditions and general education students?
7. What types of instructional skills do regular education teachers have to teach both students with severe handicapping conditions and general education students?

8. What types of instructional skills do special education teachers have to teach both students with mild handicapping conditions and general education students?
9. What types of instructional skills do special education teachers have to teach both students with severe handicapping conditions and general education students?
10. What types of instructional skills are regular education teachers lacking to teach both students with mild handicapping conditions and general education students?
11. What types of instructional skills are regular education teachers lacking to teach both students with severe handicapping conditions and general education students?
12. What types of instructional skills are special education teachers lacking to teach both students with mild handicapping conditions and general education students?
13. What types of instructional skills are special education teachers lacking to teach both students with severe handicapping conditions and general education students?
14. Does the time devoted to state/district curriculum goals decrease if students with mild handicapping conditions are placed full time in the regular classroom? If yes then how and why is the time decreased? If no then what supports are in place to ensure goals can be met?

15. Does the time devoted to state/district curriculum goals decrease if students' with severe handicapping conditions are placed full time in the regular classroom? If yes then how and why is the time decreased? If no then what supports are in place to ensure goals can be met?
16. How would the achievement levels of students with mild handicapping conditions increase if they were placed full time in the regular classroom?
17. How would the achievement levels of students with severe handicapping conditions increase if they were placed full time in the regular classroom?
18. Is the regular classroom with special education consultant services the most effective environment to educate students with mild handicapping conditions? If yes then why? If no then why not?
19. Is the regular classroom with special education consultant services the most effective environment to educate students with severe handicapping conditions? If yes then why? If no then why not?
20. What factors facilitate successful incorporation of students with special needs in the regular education class in a high school setting?
21. What factors are barriers to successful incorporation of students with special needs in the regular education class?

VITA

LORI BELLAR GOODIN

Personal	Date of Birth: January 02, 1968 Place of Birth: Carthage, Tennessee Marital status: Married to Chris Goodin Child: Savanna Jayne Goodin
Education	Public Schools, Seymour, Tennessee, 1986 B.S. Psychology, Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tennessee, 1990 Ed.S. School Psychology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1993 Ed.D. Educational Leadership, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee 2011
Experience	Graduate Assistant University of Tennessee, Knoxville Tennessee Early Intervention System (T.E.I.S.) 1991-1992 School Psychology Intern Cherokee Health Systems Talbot, Tennessee 1992-1993 School Psychologist Cherokee Health Systems Talbot, Tennessee 1993-1995 School Psychologist Sevier County School System 1995 - Present
Awards	Psychological Examiner's Licensure, Full Athletic Scholarship for Fast-Pitch Softball, Captain of College Softball Team, Suma Cum Laude, Alpha Chi, Kappa Delta Pi, Phi Beta Kappa, Golden Key, Psychology Student of the year, Peer Counselor of the year, Charles Oliver Gray Scholar, Dean's List, President's List, Who's Who award, Executive Alumni Council for Tusculum College, Committee Member of local library branch