

The Personal Program Plan in Secondary Programs:
An Analysis of Selected Saskatchewan School Division Practises and Policies

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By

Alison Dollar

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ABSTRACT

The first of the three purposes of this study was to describe and analyze current Saskatchewan and local secondary school Personal Program Plan (PPP) policies. The second purpose was to compare the perceptions of current school and classroom practises to current provincial policy. The third purpose was to explore the perceptions of selected stakeholders in relation to effective and ineffective PPP practises for students with learning disabilities (LD) among Saskatchewan secondary programs.

This was an inductive study conducted in a multiple phase case study design. Research was conducted through individual and group interviews in six voluntary secondary programs. The study also included the analysis of 100 survey responses from 19 secondary programs. In addition, this study analysed 25 Saskatchewan school division PPP policies then compared these policies to the provincial PPP policy. The conceptual framework was based on a policy model which included influential factors, stakeholders interpretations, implementation variables, with perceived effective or ineffective practises.

The provincial policy was designed for all students with special needs, including those with LD. However, some school division policies delimited PPPs to particular populations (i.e. to only students with designated funding). Additionally, school division policies varied in specificity and detail creating inconsistencies in and across programs. In some cases the PPP content and implementation followed the provincial policy; however, in other cases the PPPs were not aligned to the provincial policy guidelines. Funding was found to be the most influential factor to the design and implementation of PPPs. Other factors included the timing and range of distribution of the PPP, teacher response to

added responsibilities, adequacy of communication between stakeholders, and level of implementation training. Where stakeholders evidenced an understanding of the policy, the PPPs were used effectively used and appreciated by those involved in the process. Participants who used PPPs indicated that they felt this increased their ability to teach students with LD and contributed to students' success. Perceptions of ineffective practises associated with the policy included inconsistency, insufficient time for planning, development and implementation of PPPs, poorly written PPPs, and the lack of professional development.

Implications for theory included the influences at the various stages of policy design and PPP policy implementation. This resulted in the reconceptualization of the framework wherein the implementation of the PPP policy and the influencing factors are highlighted. Among the implications for policy was the attention that needs to be given to policy intention, implementation and experience in order to close the gaps. Implications for practise included considerations related to pre- and in-service training, preparation time for teachers, communication between programs, and a common understanding of funding purposes. Implications for future research included the continuity of services from elementary to middle to secondary programs for students with LD. In addition, the researcher suggests that future research of exemplary inclusive classrooms and the effective use of the PPPs in these settings.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents. To my mother for allowing me to ask as many questions as I needed to while growing up. I probably drove her a little crazy but she was the one who told me, “You won’t learn anything if you don’t ask questions.”

A special dedication is given to my dad. He was a man who taught by example that there is always time to learn and you’re never too old to take classes. He had a story for almost every situation in life. These stories and his gentle understanding pulled me through and helped me feel okay during some of the most difficult times of my life. Regardless of what grade I was in, when my dad dropped me off in front of the school he always said, “Now go to school and be smart like your mother.” I hope I did him proud.

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Chapter 1

The Problem

In Saskatchewan, an appropriate education is the right of every individual (Walker & Chomos, 2003), but what has been considered to be the appropriate educational environment has changed over time. Once, segregated schools based on student ability were considered ideal for students with special needs; this separation became unacceptable. Segregated classrooms within public schools were established, again based on student ability, which were found to be unsuitable because students were not placed with their age appropriate peers (Lerner, 1993). Currently, the responsibility of meeting the educational needs for all students, including those with special needs, has increasingly been transferred to the general education teacher (Cook, 2001). Without written policies that guide programming for inclusive education, problems develop that limit efforts in promoting change, initiating reform, and improving educational practise (Roach, Salisbury, & McGregor, 2002).

The Saskatchewan special education policy manual, *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), was created as a guide to meet the need for individualized education. It recommends a Personal Program Plan (PPP) for every student whose needs limit his or her success in the general classroom. According to the policy, the PPP is based on a process of comprehensive assessing, planning, evaluating, monitoring, and consulting, all of which involve administrators, educators, parents or guardians, the student, and support personnel (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002).

Statistics Canada (1999) estimated that 10 to 12 percent of the Canadian student

population requires special education services. These services include the provision of special education for students with low-incidence disabilities such as sensory impairments, physical, intellectual, or multiple disabilities, and chronic illness, as well as students with high-incidence disabilities such as learning disabilities and speech or language, social, emotional, and behavioural disorders (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). The desire in Saskatchewan is to provide this individualized education in as inclusive an environment as possible. However, as Baker, Wang, and Walberg (1995) stated, “the concern is not whether to provide inclusive education, but how to implement inclusive education in ways that are both feasible and effective in ensuring school success for all children, especially those with special needs” (p. 34). Many students cannot achieve success in the general education system and need assistance such as specific teaching methods and strategies, modified or alternative programs, behavioural plans, specific materials or equipment to achieve a level of success close to those without special needs (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002).

Purposes of the Study

The first purpose of this study was to describe and analyze the current Saskatchewan provincial and local secondary school policies with respect to the Personal Program Plan. The second purpose was to compare the perceptions of current school and classroom practises to current division and provincial policies. A third purpose was to explore the perceptions of selected stakeholders in relation to effective and ineffective PPP practises for students with learning disabilities (LD) among Saskatchewan secondary programs. The purposes were addressed through the following research questions:

1. In what ways do school division policies align with the Provincial PPP policy in

The Children's Services Policy Framework (2002)?

2. In what ways do the design and implementation of PPPs in various secondary programs across Saskatchewan reflect division and provincial policy?
3. What factors may be influencing the classroom implementation of provincial PPP policy?
4. To what extent do principals, vice-principals, special educators, teachers, parents or guardians of students with learning disabilities, and students with learning disabilities perceive that PPPs are used effectively in Saskatchewan secondary programs based on current provincial policy?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study relates to four areas of special education policy and implementation.

1. This study contributes to the literature that exists in the areas of special education policy and in perceptions of key stakeholders in the individualized education process for students with learning disabilities. Furthermore, this study has the potential to contribute to Saskatchewan PPP policy and implementation.
2. This study contributes to the knowledge of policy alignment and implementation at the provincial level. By discovering the inconsistencies in policies across school divisions, this study contributes knowledge toward creating provincial consistency in policy implementation. It is anticipated that such uniformity will be beneficial to school leaders and educators in provincial collaborative efforts to improve special education.
3. This study facilitates provincial policy-makers' understandings of how school

division personnel interpret and use the provincial policy. It is anticipated that this knowledge will assist provincial policy-makers as they continue to seek to create special education policies that can be more clearly understood and effectively implemented in each school division.

4. This study contributes to school division special education personnel's understanding of effective and ineffective PPP practises for students with learning disabilities in the secondary programs, due to varying perceptions and interpretations of the division policies.

Assumptions of the Study

The researcher assumed the following:

1. The researcher's central assumption in this study was that secondary students with learning disabilities were being educated in an inclusive setting in the general education classrooms;
2. That school division policies that guide PPP implementation were written based on the recommendations and suggested guidelines of the current provincial PPP policy found in *The Children's Services Policy Framework* manual (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002);
3. That principals, vice-principals, general education teachers, special educators, and parents or guardians of students with learning disabilities had some knowledge of both the provincial policy, as well as of the respective division policies;
4. That individuals participating in this study were knowledgeable with respect to the processes involved in creating PPPs and capable of describing effective practises for successful outcomes based on extant policies; and

5. Finally, the researcher assumed that each student had a PPP guiding their educational placement for successful academic achievement and that the teachers in general education classrooms received copies of these plans.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to the following:

1. A total of 25 secondary program special education policies or guidelines were analyzed in this study. These were chosen based on availability;
2. A total of 19 secondary programs from 11 school divisions participated in survey or site visits;
3. This study did not review or analyse the assessment process. It was delimited to students who were identified with LD previous to data collection;
4. This study was delimited to selected principals, vice-principals, general education teachers who taught inclusive classrooms, special education teachers, students with an identified LD, and parents or guardians of students with LD;
5. This study was delimited to school division and Saskatchewan PPP policies. Policies for transition, modified programs, and alternative programs for students with special needs were not included in this study because these programs have separate policies. In the case of Modified and Alternative Programs, separate curricula are used and PPPs are not required in the policy;
6. This study was delimited to an examination of the perceived effective and ineffective use of the PPP with the participating school personnel and their setting. This study did not include data on specific PPPs and transition plans nor did it research situations of students transferring between schools;

7. The perceived effectiveness of particular PPPs were not assessed, nor were individual PPPs compared to academic or transition activities and outcomes; and
8. Finally, statistical analysis of the survey data was delimited to the use ANOVA (Single Factor) and the Student-Newman Keuls tests. These tests were used to compare the means of different participating groups, administrators, and general and special educators.

Limitations

The results of this study were limited by the following:

1. All three data collection phases in this study were limited to volunteer participation;
2. A limited number of policies were available at the time of this study, as several school divisions were amalgamating or in the process of updating policies;
3. This study was limited by the extent to which students with LD were included in the general education secondary classroom;
4. The extent that classroom teachers were involved in the PPP process also may have limited information and quality of perceptions available to this study;
5. Timing of this study limited division and school participation. Initially, division directors and school principals were interested in participating, but because this study began in early spring, some schools were involved in a number of studies or were at a busy planning time, and their participation was difficult;
6. Overall, fewer individuals than intended had an opportunity to share their perceptions, as the number of participants included in site visits varied across programs. The extent of data collected was ultimately decided upon by each

- principal and varied at each location;
7. The lack of parent and student involvement limited the data gathered. Parent and student participation was based on the principals' nomination and invitation. Parents and students participated at only one site;
 8. The number of participants from each program also varied in survey responses. Attempts were made to maintain consistency in numbers across participants surveyed. The principals made the final decision on who would receive the surveys. Principals often chose to distribute the surveys only to special educators because few teachers were included in the PPP processes. Some principals stated that since students with LD were not included in the general classrooms, teachers did not have the necessary information to complete the surveys. This limited the information gathered from general education teachers who had students with LD in their classrooms;
 9. The differing sizes of each participating school also limited consistency across schools. All but two divisions surveyed were rural divisions with small schools, and response from the large urban centre was extremely limited (i.e., $n = 3$);
 10. Due to the small number of participants, statistical analyses of the survey data were limited to the use of the ANOVA (Single Factor) and the Student-Newman-Keuls tests. This limited the strength of statistical results;
 11. The findings of this study from the survey were limited by the researcher's choice to aggregate data from secondary programs;
 12. Variation in the staff complement of rural schools also reduced the numbers of completed surveys. For example, one school had a small staff complement and

provided only three surveys while another school had a larger staff and invited 43 individuals to participate; and

13. Finally, as with most qualitative studies, researcher bias based on experiences in the field of special education at elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels and subjectivity influence the collection and interpretation of data may have limited this study. Although bias cannot be eliminated, efforts to decrease bias such as member checks were implemented.

Definition of Terms

The following is a brief list of commonly used terms and abbreviations:

Continuum of services – The continuum of services is the common term used to refer to service or placement choices when evaluating the *least restrictive environment* for service or placement based on emotional, educational, and behavioural needs and abilities (Lerner, 1993). In some instances, this is called the *continuum of placement*.

Inclusion – Inclusion has long become more than having a student with special needs physically in the classroom; it involves participation in the full range of academic programs and activities that are available to all students regardless of ability (Winzer, 1998).

Learning disability (LD) – There are several available definitions of a learning disability. For the purpose of this study the official definition of learning disabilities by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada was used:

Learning disabilities” refer to a number of disorders, which may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding, or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from global intellectual disabilities.

Learning disabilities result from impairments in one or more processes related to perceiving, thinking, remembering, or learning. These include, but are not limited to language processing, phonological processing, visual spatial processing, processing speed, memory and attention, and executive functions (e.g., planning and decision making).

Learning disabilities range in severity and may interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following:

- oral language (e.g., listening, speaking, understanding)
- reading (e.g., decoding, phonetic knowledge, word recognition, comprehension)
- written language (e.g., spelling and written expression); and
- mathematics (e.g., computation, problem solving).

Learning disabilities may also involve difficulties with organizational skills, social perceptions, social interactions, and perspective taking. (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p.10)

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – Through the LRE continuum, a student is offered educational services which are the least restrictive and most beneficial for that individual’s educational, behavioural, and emotional needs. The LRE continuum includes, from least restrictive to most restrictive: the general classroom (no special support services), indirect services within regular class, direct services and instruction within the general classroom, resource room services, self-contained special education classrooms, special day school, residential school, hospital program, and homebound instruction (Lerner, 1993).

Perceived effective practises – Effective practises are perceived by those involved to accomplish the purpose or goal intended in a student’s PPP.

Perceived ineffective practises – Ineffective practises are practises that are perceived by those involved as unproductive or unable to accomplish the purpose or goal of a student’s PPP.

Personal Program Plan (PPP) – A personal program plan is developed for each student who “requires continuing special education interventions and individualized

supports to participate in and benefit from the educational program; or has been identified for individual incremental funding” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002, p. V.4.1i). The information included in the PPP is dependent on the needs and strengths of the student:

For students who are receiving ongoing special education interventions in only one or two areas of the instructional program, the PPP addresses the particular area(s). For example, a very succinct PPP may be written for Mathematics or English Language Arts (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002, p. V.4.1i).

Two examples of PPPs (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004) are available in Appendix A.

PPP team – The team is comprised of individuals involved with the student for whom the PPP is designed. This team may include the principal or vice-principal, teachers, special educators, *support staff* (see definition below), parents or guardians, and the student. Depending upon the student’s needs, teams may also include other human services professionals such as a social worker, parole officer, nurse, or doctor.

Secondary program – Saskatchewan has several K – 12 schools, therefore the term *secondary school* cannot be used in this study. Instead, secondary program is used and refers to programs specifically designed for Grades 9 – 12.

Special needs – Based on *The Children’s Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), special needs were those requiring alternative or modified curricula, instruction, and supports appropriate to the student’s individual strengths and needs based on an identified learning, behavioural, intellectual, or physical disability.

Support staff – Individuals who provide additional services as required in the PPP to meet the needs of a student with special needs. The staff may include teacher assistants, audiologists, school psychologists, speech and language pathologists, school social workers, teacher consultants, and others as required.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 1 provides an overview. This includes the three purposes of the study, research questions, and conceptual framework that guided this study.

Chapter 2 contains a brief history of special education in Canada and Saskatchewan. This chapter also focuses on the literature surrounding special education identification, planning, and placement, the ongoing debate between inclusion and the least restrictive environment, and the personalized education plans in educational placements. Because the PPP is the planning tool and cornerstone for an inclusive setting, both aspects will be discussed throughout this study.

Chapter 3 contains the rationale for choosing the methodology and methods for exploring the research questions. This chapter also contains descriptions of the method of data collection, selection of documents and participants, and instruments of data collection and analyses.

Chapter 4 contains the review and analyses of school division policies as compared to each other, to the provincial policy, and to what is considered effective policy.

Chapter 5 contains descriptions and demographics of the schools visited or surveyed. Data were collected through observations, interviews, group interviews, and surveys. This chapter analyses these data, and perceptions of effective and ineffective practises in secondary classrooms emerge.

Chapter 6 includes a summary of the chapters and responds to the research questions and the purposes of this study. It also includes a discussion of the implications.

Chapter 2

The Policy Context and a Review of the Literature

Rigorous research in the education of people with disabilities began in the 1950s with changes in educational placements and services evidenced in the 1970s through the development of new laws that ensured free and appropriate education for all individuals regardless of disability (Treherne, Dice, Grigg & Sanche, 1974). Aspirations of more equal access to educational services has grown in the field of special education over the last 30 years, and through this period, a deeper understanding of individuals with special needs and the need for specific policies have developed.

This chapter begins with a brief history of special education in an effort to provide selective detail of the changes and growth in placement and programming over the years. In the context of this history, influences such as the debates concerning inclusion, shifting attitudes towards students with special needs, educational accountability, added responsibilities for schools, specialized teacher training and education in the area of special needs, and parent involvement and expectations have influenced policy changes and understandings of what constitutes effective policy and practise.

A discussion of effective policy development and the influencing factors found in the literature that may alter perceptions of the Personal Program Plan (PPP) and special education policy, thus creating perceptions of ineffective practises, is also explored in this chapter. These influences and individual perceptions may alter the final classroom implementation from that intended by the provincial PPP policy. This is not an all-inclusive treatment of influences but rather includes the most pressing and prevalent factors facing today's classrooms, according to the literature review.

Finally, discussion follows of special education programs suggested in the Saskatchewan special education policy manual and the recommended effective practises cited in *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) and *Creating Opportunities for Students with Intellectual or Multiple Disabilities* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001). These two documents were chosen because they are the provincial guides to effective special education policy implementation and planning by Saskatchewan Learning and are available to educators via their web site (see References).

A History of Special Education Policy

Smith (as cited in *Directions for Diversity*, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000) offered three important reasons to study the history of special education: to understand why we do the things we do today, to help plan for the future, and to reduce the chance of repeating the same mistakes. This is a brief look at the evolution of special education policy at the provincial and local (school division) levels in Canada with a focus on Saskatchewan's policy.

The first major recognition of the right to a free education for every individual was proclaimed in article 26 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948. This document discussed the need for education to be directed toward the full development of human personality and to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (MacKay, 1984).

Although article 26 documents educational expectations, it does not create specific laws for the countries that accepted the declaration. Nevertheless, most countries felt the need to review the area of equal rights for all. It then took years and countless court cases before educational institutions and other agencies in service fields legitimated, offered,

and worked to sustain free appropriate education for all children and youth (MacKay, 1984).

Historical Events and Changes in Canada

Beginning with the Canadian *Constitution Act* of 1867, the responsibility for education became a provincial matter. With this constitutional beginning, responsibility variations developed from one province to another in educational matters, as did rights pertaining to the protection of those individuals with disabilities (Dickinson & MacKay, 1989). In an effort to protect the rights of these individuals, *One Million Children: A National Study of Canadian Children with Emotional and Learning Disorders* (Roberts & Lazure, 1971) was published. For the first time, and after thorough research, this report offered 144 recommendations and documented the scope of requirements for children with special needs (Treherne et al., 1974).

Included in this national report (Roberts & Lazure, 1971) are recommendations toward the establishment of integration, rights to free public education, and instruction based on individual learning characteristics instead of categories of exceptionality. In 1972, the Canadian Committee of the Council for Exceptional Children established a “Model Legislature Committee” with a mandate beyond that of other countries in two areas: it included all exceptional children, and it was not limited to educational agencies, including government departments and private agencies. After months of deliberation, the committee found provinces already had policies in place governing these special needs. However, they found no model that could serve the needs of the diverse population across Canada (Treherne et al., 1974). It remained the responsibility of each province to revise and extend the existing policies to reflect these recommendations.

The Inclusion of People with Disabilities in the Law

In 1981, Canadians with disabilities and representatives of individuals with disabilities lobbied Parliament Hill during the time of the writing of the Constitution to ensure they would receive equality under the law. In April 1982, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Government of Canada, 1982) came into effect, and Canada became the first country to constitutionally guarantee equality rights for all persons with disabilities (Friend, Burusck & Hutchinson, 1998). The two sections most commonly discussed in special education cases are sections 7 and 15:

Section 7

Every one has the right to life, liberty, and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice. (Government of Canada, 1982, p. 2)

Section 15

15. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

(2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program, or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. (Government of Canada, 1982, p. 3)

Canadian provinces accepted the *Charter* in a variety of ways (Dickinson & MacKay, 1989), and as anticipated, these varieties opened the doors to court cases and legal revisions at the provincial level regarding special education programming (Dickinson & MacKay). For example, a Saskatchewan committee investigating the provision of special education noted:

The 1997 Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Eaton vs. Brant County Board of Education* held that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms does not give rise to the legal presumption of a right to be integrated into a regular classroom. The court determined that children are not burdened or disadvantaged by such placements

when:

1. The best placement of the child is considered;
2. The child's best interests and special needs are taken into account;
3. An ongoing assessment of the child's best interests is provided so that changes to the child's needs may be reflected in the placement; and
4. The decision is made from a subjective, child-centred perspective, one that attempts to make equality meaningful from the child's point of view, rather than from the point of view of the adults in the child's life. (British Columbia Teacher Federation, 1998)

Provinces accepted the responsibility for educating students with special needs and ensuring equality to all students although legal debates continued (British Columbia Teacher Federation, 1998; Dickinson & MacKay, 1989).

Developments in Saskatchewan

The *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* (1979) declares that every person and every class of person has the right to education in any school, college, university, or other institution or place of learning, vocational training, or apprenticeship. This declaration sought to guarantee an education without discrimination based on race, creed, religion, colour, sex, marital status, physical disability, nationality, ancestry, or place of origin. However, opportunities to discriminate against individuals with disabilities continued to exist due to wording that could be inadvertently used against people with disabilities, especially intellectual, behavioural, or learning disabilities. Therefore, more work was needed in the province before all children had the equal right to an appropriate public education (Dickinson & MacKay, 1989).

After a great deal of research, a document was published in 1974 detailing recommendations for the Saskatchewan education system; "*A Matter of Principle: Principles Governing Legislature for Services for Children with Special Needs*" (Treherne et al., 1974). This comprehensive set of recommendations considered and

included the requirements of every child with special needs and their families. Among its recommendations were routine ratings of the services provided. This information would then be used to revise and update legislation, accessibility to buildings, and treatment provided as a basic right (such as day care, special education, and diagnostic services). This document (Treherne et al.) also recommended that legislation ensure benefits were provided in ways that would promote normal social interactions and involvement with both the child and family (recommendation 27). Assistance required by the child was to be offered as close to home as possible (recommendation 28), and financial support would be provided for the use of these services (recommendation 30).

Recommendations 31, 32, and 33 expressed the need for parental involvement in all areas of the child's education. Agencies involved with the child had to inform the family of available programs, but the responsibility remained with the parents to choose those best suited for their child. If conflict arose and a parent was unhappy with the decision, due process was offered through an appeal to an impartial board (Treherne et al., 1974).

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Government of Canada, 1982) together with the *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* (1979) are often referenced in special education design. Subsection 13(1) of the *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* states that every individual has the right to an education in any school, institution, or place of learning without discrimination. *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995), and *The Education Regulations* (1986) stipulate that school divisions are the providers of education and that the responsibility of the divisions is to ensure that students are provided with programs that meet their needs and suit their abilities.

In November 1989, Canada became one of the first signatories of the *United Nations*

Convention on the Rights of the Child (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002, previously named Saskatchewan Education). This international agreement specifies the right of families to free and accessible education (article 28) and provides some general direction and stipulations for the provision of education. Included in these rights are the following: the development of all children to their fullest potential; respect for human rights and freedoms; respect for differences in cultures; and preparation for citizenship in a free and peaceful society (article 29) (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002).

Saskatchewan Policy

The Saskatchewan special education policy manual, originally written in 1977, has been updated and revised three times since original development. Background, policy, and guidelines are included in the manual for every area of special education. In an effort to improve education delivery for all students, the Saskatchewan Special Education Review was initiated in 1998.

The final report, *Directions for Diversity: Enhancing Supports to Children and Youth with Diverse Needs* (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000), was the written outcome of this important review of special education in the province. This report outlines the vision and actions for strengthening schools' abilities to meet the diverse needs of students in provincial schools. Also in this report, there are recommendations offered to assist in the creation of the most recent special education policy manual, *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). This manual contains the PPP policy for the province, which is the focus of this study.

Special Education Review Committee Final Report

This section is based on information in *Directions for Diversity: Enhancing Supports to Children and Youth with Diverse Needs* (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000), the Special Education Review Committee's final report.

To begin the review of special education in Saskatchewan, the committee conducted two forums, one in Regina and one in Saskatoon, and teams were invited from each school division. These teams consisted of directors of education, board of education members, consultants, principals, special education teachers, general education teachers, teacher associates, and parents. Representatives from 21 school divisions attended. In addition to these forums, 18 schools were visited to gather information regarding the delivery of services. Although the committee found a great desire in the schools to serve students with special needs, variations in what was offered, and how service was offered were found between schools and school divisions (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000). The committee recognized "that the role of the school in delivering a variety of support services to children has changed. The staff, knowledge, and resources of education alone are no longer sufficient to meet the challenges of providing for the diverse needs of children in schools" (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000, p. vi). The committee found it was time to describe significant deficiencies and advocate for change.

Major findings of the review committee. The committee identified the following outstanding requirements:

1. To enhance the capacity of schools to meet diverse needs;
2. To collaboratively develop the provincial philosophy of supporting students with special needs;
3. To renew policy to support and communicate the philosophy;
4. To design a set of related practises to implement the policy; and

5. To restructure resources and supports to sustain and renew the practises.
(Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000, p. vii)

The committee also found that many of the paraprofessionals were inadequately educated and prepared for the jobs they were asked to do. Some professionals believed that the responsibility for educating students with the greatest needs had been moved to those least qualified to provide it (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000, p. 43). Findings that specifically related to the PPP and students with LD included:

1. The concept and use of the collaboratively developed PPP process strengthens service delivery. The use of PPPs needs to be enhanced (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000, p. 47);
2. School divisions report success meeting the needs of many designated students. The challenges arise with behavioural disorders, learning disabilities and at-risk students (p. 47);
3. Local autonomy has allowed many and varied practise across the province, some variations in practise lead to inconsistent supports (p. 49); and
4. Many students experience excellent educational opportunities. Present options and quality of programs may not adequately meet some students' needs. (p. 49)

Once the research was completed and the information analysed, findings were put into recommendations in hopes of improving special education programs and delivery in the province (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000).

Recommendations from the Special Education Review Committee. Among the recommendations offered by the Special Education Review Committee, the following relate to the PPP and its effective practises in Saskatchewan schools. These recommendations were taken into consideration when developing *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (2002).

Recommendation 7 (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000, p. 61) stated that Saskatchewan Learning ought to develop policy and guidelines for effective practises to support students with diverse needs. This recommendation suggests that a

working document be written with clear requirements and procedures for practise, addressing pre-referral practise, collaborative teamwork, and interagency procedures for working with students with special needs. The committee also suggested that this document provide direction and support for all personnel providing services to students with special needs. The purpose of this would be to achieve greater consistency in practise across school divisions. It should also provide direction and support for all personnel, in the hope of obtaining greater consistency in practises across school divisions in special education and its services. Finally, it was recommended that the complete document be widely publicized and available on the special education unit web site (Directions for Diversity).

Recommendation 10 states “That the Children’s Services Advisory Committee direct a strategy to enhance use of Personal Program Plans as an ongoing process and as a mechanism for accountability” (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000, p. 62). Recommendation 32 suggests that Saskatchewan Learning and the education partners develop a strategy to improve local accountability, including the “Effective Practises” to support students with special needs. Within the recommendations for effective practises, it was recommended by the committee that these be used as a framework for consistency and accountability across the province and that the processes should be carried out in an informative way that corresponds with roles in special education programs and in the delivery of services.

The recommendations of the Special Education Review Committee emphasized the need for change. Updated information, including *Directions for Diversity: Enhancing Supports to Children and Youth with Diverse Needs* (Directions for Diversity,

Saskatchewan Learning, 2000), *The Children's Service Policy Framework*

(Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), and examples of written PPPs have been distributed to school divisions and placed on the Saskatchewan Learning web site.

At the provincial level, one response was School^{Plus}. This approach saw the school as the centre of its community and the core of services and supports for the neighbourhood it serves. Provincial consensus was that the role of the school had changed and that schools now have two functions:

1. to educate children and youth – nurturing the development of the whole child, intellectually, socially, spiritually, emotionally, and physically; and
2. to support service delivery – serving as centres at the community level for the delivery of appropriate social, health, recreation, culture, justice, and other services for children and their families. (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002, p 1)

To achieve the vision of School^{Plus}, the provincial government departments of Community Resources and Employment; Corrections and Public Safety; Culture, Youth, and Recreation; Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs; Health; Justice; and Saskatchewan Learning were committed to working with provincial partners, Aboriginal organizations, community-based organizations, communities, and families (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002, p. 1).

Current Saskatchewan PPP Policy

Consistent with one of the purposes of this study and in order to to fully understand the impact of the Personal Program Plan and its policy, a review of the current Saskatchewan PPP policy was required. This led to the first two research questions: *In what ways do school division policies align with the provincial PPP policy in The Children's Services Policy Framework (2002)?* and *In what ways do the design and implementation of PPPs in various secondary programs across Saskatchewan reflect*

division and provincial policy? As recommended by the Special Education Review Committee (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000), in September 2002, *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) was completed and made available via the Special Education Unit web site. Rationale and guidelines were also provided for each policy. Some policies were presented as legislated requirements, while others identified the need and expectation for policy development. Each was referenced to *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995), *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1985), or both.

The Children's Services Policy Framework

Based on the recommendations of the Special Education Review Committee (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000), an updated policy manual was written to guide the practises in special education programs. For the purpose of this study, Policy 4.1 (see Appendix B), PPP policy was thoroughly reviewed. Policy 4.1 states that:

A personal program plan based on the student's strengths and needs is developed for each student who: requires continuing special education interventions and individualized supports to participate in and benefit from the educational program; or has been identified for individual incremental funding recognition. (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002, p. V.4.1i)

Guidelines for this policy include effective professional practises for the best use of the PPP for all students who continue to need special education services (see Appendix B). They also outline what should be included in a PPP, such as educational objectives, instructional resources, and individualized supports that are systematically planned, documented, monitored, and evaluated. For those students who are on individualized programs or who are receiving continuing special education support, a school-based team is responsible for collaboratively planning and documenting the program. This team

could include the principal or vice principal, special educator, classroom teacher(s), paraprofessionals, parents, and the student. A school counsellor, an educational psychologist, a speech pathologist, a social worker, or other specialists might be involved depending upon the needs of the student (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000).

To reduce confusion, the guidelines also state that information included in the PPP would depend upon the needs of the student (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). Students with more complex special needs might require a PPP that would be quite detailed and lengthy. For a student who is receiving ongoing special education interventions in only one or two areas of the instructional program, the PPP would only address the particular areas of need. For example, if a student has special needs only in Language Arts, a PPP would be designed to detail the assistance or adaptations in that class as well as propose how to monitor and evaluate progress. This tied in with the recommendation of consistency, in the form of a written account of revisions to assist other teachers, or future teachers, to maintain routine in each student's educational life.

The PPP process for any student who needs special education services includes identification of student abilities, needs and interests, the establishment of goals and objectives, a selection of appropriate strategies and activities, and ongoing evaluation and revisions when necessary. The guidelines suggest that the PPP should include relevant personal and educational data, identification of the student's strengths and needs, long-term goals and short-term objectives, instructional strategies, and instruction with adaptations. It is further suggested that the plan include assessment methods, reporting of student progress, responsibility for carrying out the plan, and a design for review,

evaluation, and updating of the plan (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002, pp. V.4.1i - V.4.1iii).

The relationship between funding and the PPP. Although several educators believed that the PPP was necessary only for those students who received designated funding, as will be discussed in the following chapter, based on the written policy, it was for any student who received ongoing special education services (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002, pp. V.4.1i - V.4.1iii). It is important to note the subtle conjunction, “or” placed in the policy (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). It states that a PPP was designed for any student who “require[s] continuing special education interventions and individualized supports to participate in and benefit from the educational program *or* has been identified for individual incremental funding recognition” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002, p. V.4.1i) [emphasis added]. The guidelines also specify that PPPs be written for any students who need services, from intensive special education programming to extra assistance in the regular classroom.

The manual contains a description of the “Adaptive Dimension” as a means to accommodate students with special learning needs. When reviewing policy and recommendations, the use of the Adaptive Dimension, in many cases, was not to replace a PPP but to use in conjunction with a written PPP (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002).

The classroom use of the Adaptive Dimension. The traditional practise of making children fit the curriculum has been an area of concern for many years. The practise of assessing needs and adapting curriculum content and instructional practises to accommodate the educational needs of all students in the classroom is now being attempted through the use of the Adaptive Dimension (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). The Adaptive Dimension is not a policy in itself, but is recommended by provincial

policy for use with students with special needs. The Adaptive Dimension is not to be confused with a PPP. The Adaptive Dimension uses the general education curriculum, whereas the PPP contains changes where needed to meet students' needs.

As described in the manual, the Adaptive Dimension provides teachers considerable range to adapt curriculum, instructional strategies, and the learning environment to match the needs of individual students. Without changing the foundational objectives, and based on the student's abilities and needs, educators have the flexibility to enrich, extend, and reinforce the goals and objectives to make the learning experience appropriate and meaningful for each student. The classroom teachers use this information to create an adaptive plan to meet the student's needs (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). If these adaptations do not bring about the desired educational results, a modified program or an alternative education classroom is then to be considered (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002).

The PPP policy guidelines recommend that a PPP, including adaptations, be written both as information for parents as well as an outline of instructional plans and resources to be used to maintain consistent teaching (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). Consistency in educational practises is a key value in the recommendations of the Special Education Review Committee.

Meeting Needs Through Policy

Four central findings of the Special Education Review Committee (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000) that relate to planning for students with special needs include the necessity to enhance the use of PPPs, expanding collaboration, and meeting the challenges of behavioural disorders, learning disabilities, and at-risk students. In addition, due to local autonomy, it was found that some variations in practise

led to inconsistent supports and that the current options and quality of programs might not adequately meet some students' needs. Although these were not all of the findings of the committee, these particular conclusions directly relate to students with learning disabilities (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000).

Recommendations based on these findings led to revisions in the provincial policy. Saskatchewan Learning responded with the current PPP policy and guidelines as depicted by the arrows in Figure 2.1. To meet the special needs of students the current provincial policy recommends that they all have a PPP. It also recommended that the PPP include the identification of abilities, needs and interests, goals and objectives, appropriate strategies and activities, and ongoing evaluation and revision of the plan.

A PPP should also include the current level of performance, strengths and needs, strategies and classroom activities and adaptations, assessment methods, student progress reports, assignment of responsibility, support services, technology and equipment, a transition plan, a review, and an evaluation and updating process. To enhance the use of the PPP, the policy recommends that the processes of development, implementation, evaluation and revision of the PPP be conducted in a collaborative fashion.

Although school divisions maintain local autonomy in funding use, implementation of the programs and services directed by the policy across the province may reduce the variations found in practise that have led to inconsistent supports (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000).

Planning for students, collaborating, clarifying expectations, and consistency in teaching and programming are the desired classroom outcomes. With these results, the four recommendations of the Special Education Review Committee would be met and, as

depicted in Figure 2.1, effective classroom practises would be achieved.

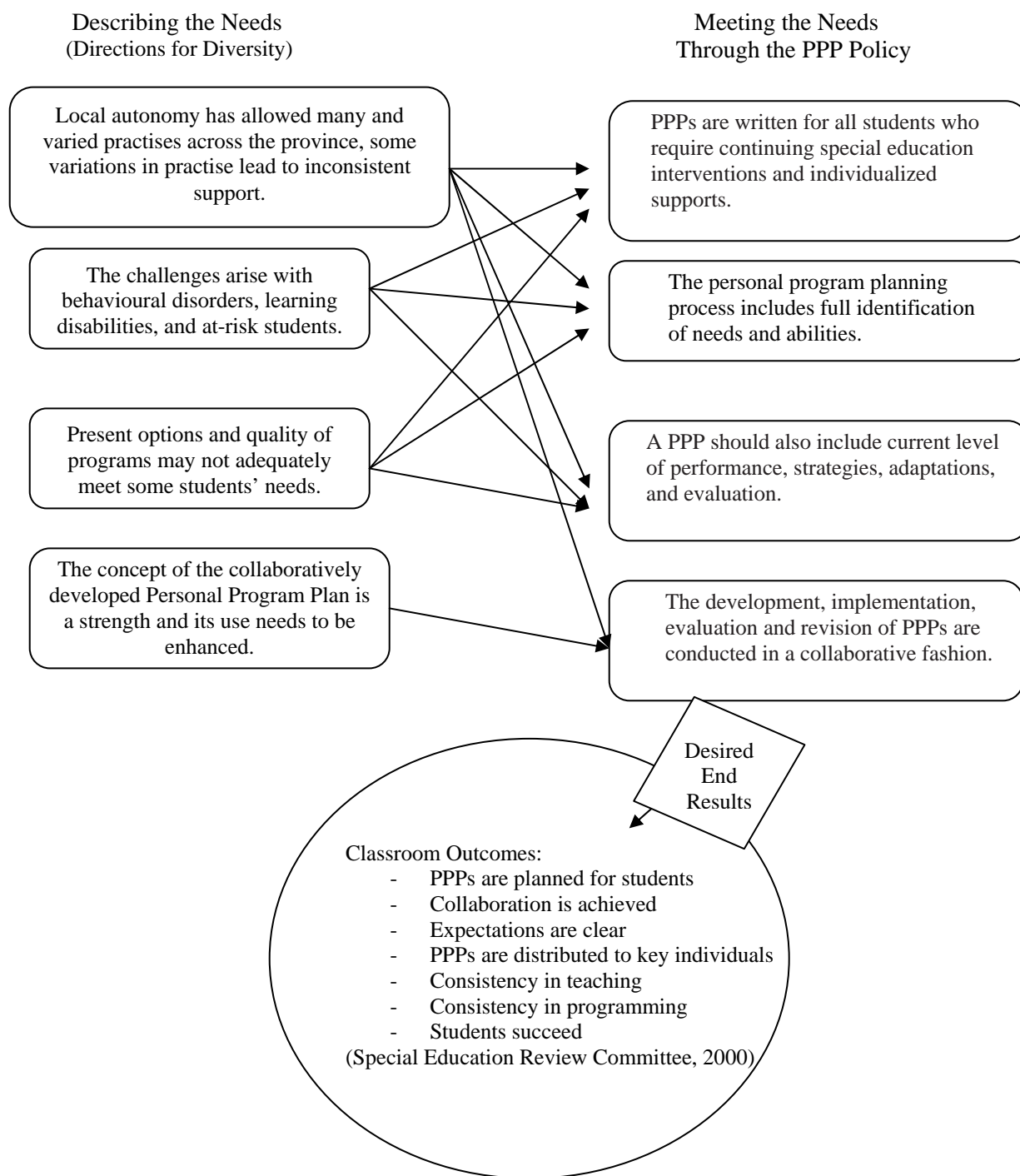


Figure 2.1. Synthesis of Provisions of PPP Policies that Address Students with Special Needs

(From Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000; Saskatchewan Learning, 2002)

To further understand the desired outcomes and explore the second research question (*In what ways do the design and implementation of PPPs in various secondary programs across Saskatchewan reflect division and Provincial policy?*), the following section will review effective policy design and implementation in Saskatchewan.

Effective Policy Design

A central concern of this research relates to the relative effectiveness of the PPP policy. To achieve an understanding of what might constitute effective policies, this section reviews policy use and effective policy criteria.

Policy Defined

Policy by definition is the plan of action adopted by an individual or a social group; it is the course of action in an organization (Wordnet, 2005) based on constitution or law. *Policy* is also defined as the plan of action for undertaking political issues. It designates the process or procedures by which reforms or changes will be conducted (Wikipedia, 2005). The Saskatchewan special education manual *The Children's Service Policy Framework* (2002) is the provincial plan of action detailing the processes and procedures to carry out the special education laws.

Policy Implementation

Typically, policy-making has been seen as a top-down process, although meaningful change most often occurs through bottom-up behaviour (First, 1992). According to Downey (1988), "it is a well-known fact of organizational life that, unless persons affected by policies are involved in shaping the policies, the policies are not likely to be implemented with fidelity" (p. 24). To date, the top-down policy practise has not

produced the desired outcome or effect (Kreutzer, 2004). School leaders must find ways to foster and encourage positive change from the bottom-up (First) because it is the perceptions of those responsible for policy implementation in the classroom that affects the degree of actual implementation (Kreutzer). However, there has been no single rule for creating and implementing new policies that would ensure effectiveness due to the perceptions of those involved (Recesso, 1990).

Policies and procedures that have traditionally served the needs of students and adequately fulfilled the expectations of the public have increasingly come under attack (Lupart & Webber, 2002). According to the National Committee on Teaching and America's Future (1996), "new courses, tests, and curriculum reforms can be important starting points, but they are meaningless if teachers cannot use them well. Policies can only improve schools if the people in them are armed with the knowledge, skills, and supports they need" (p. 5). However, educators have not been told why a policy is in place, only that it is to be followed (Green, 1994). This means that policies may be implemented by educators without their knowledge, understanding, or agreement as to why they should be carried out (Green). Therefore, a policy implemented through top-down incentives, instead of through an understanding of it as a valid need, artificial buy-in may develop and may not present the positive outcomes originally intended. As a result, both effective and ineffective practises may develop and perceptions of these practises frequently maintain their use. Most organizations develop a set of accepted behaviours, practises, and habits that govern life in the organisation. As a result, all members learn to think and behave in accordance with certain cultural norms, values, and beliefs (Kreutzer, 2004). With time, routine develops; eventually anything out of the

routine does not make sense (Skrtic, 1995).

General and special educators have a history of policies, values, and beliefs that have created education routine. Often what may have appeared as “unwillingness,” may simply have been following tradition (Kreutzer, 2004). Further discussion is needed to avoid policy misinterpretation and ineffective practise.

Effective Policy Criteria

Effective policies provide a framework for planning and serve as guidelines to promote consistency, and reduce uncertainties as a reference point for administrators, teachers, parents, and students. The Guidelines for Second Level Schools (School Development Planning Initiative, 1999) outlines the features of effective policy as:

1. Clearly structured, concise, and specific, with jargon-free language;
2. Consistent with the school’s statement of mission, vision, and aims;
3. Containing a clear framework of intentions that indicates what is required of the implementers;
4. Written with unambiguous direction and guidance and leaves room for professional judgement;
5. Containing an outline of how that policy will be monitored;
6. Produced through collaboration and consultation;
7. Owned by the staff and evident in practise; and
8. Accessible to all interested parties. (p. 2)

According to educational organizations (e.g., National School Board Association, 2000; School Development Planning Initiative, 1999), effective policies must also conform to the law, as well as to the mission and vision of school and school division. Focusing on the mission while creating effective guidelines would ensure that policies meet their obligations to the school and community they serve. Procedures should be flexible, allowing the freedom for professional judgment and day-to-day problem solving. Therefore, they should be created in a manner that guides the school leaders and

educators while allowing for necessary daily variations.

An effective policy should also be written collaboratively and followed consistently. This is more likely to happen if it is based on the organization's mission and vision. If a policy is not, or cannot, be followed consistently, change might be necessary (National School Board Association, 2000; School Development Planning Initiative, 1999). Such changes might occur in specific procedures, but the policy itself should remain consistent (Decker & Decker, 1992). Offering improved guidelines may not ensure that a policy will be implemented as intended. Before classroom implementation occurs, the intended policy changes as it is filtered through a number of influencing factors such as traditional practise, student abilities, parent expectations, attitudes, accountability, added responsibilities, and leadership styles.

Factors Influencing Policy Implementation

Special education has been plagued with criticisms about the inappropriateness of identification, programs, cost effectiveness, and lack of focus on student outcomes (Trent, Artiles, Fitchett-Bazemore, McDaniel & Coleman-Sorrell, 2002). Thus, to explore research question three, *What factors may be influencing the classroom implementation of provincial PPP policy?* this section reviews current influences found in the special education literature.

Traditional Practises in Special Education

Given the traditional positivistic epistemology, educational psychology and special education practises have influenced what was considered normal within school populations. Predictions based on this assessment and evaluation information have been

used to create educational and behavioural plans to control behaviours outside the norm (Skrtic, 1995). Those in special education are now being asked to examine traditions and routine practises and give more consideration to the means and ends of their discipline (Kavale, 2002).

The special education foundation. Special education has been firmly positioned within the functionalist grounding with four assumptions:

1. Student disability is a pathological condition;
2. Differential diagnosis is objective and useful;
3. Special education is a rationally conceived and coordinated system of services that benefits diagnosed students; and
4. Progress in special education is a rational-technical process of incremental improvements in conventional diagnosis and constructional practises. (Skrtic, 1995, p. 210)

Wolak (1998) studied 100 Individualized Education Plans (IEP) of students with learning disabilities. She found that with this paradigm in place, educational teams continued to perceive students as individuals with deficits that required fixing rather than students with strengths that could be supported and encouraged in the general classroom. These assumptions have guided special education over the last century and are now being revisited in an effort to find a less rigid form of consideration and assessment (Kavale, 2002; Trent et al., 2002). However, due to the bureaucratic nature of educational systems and policies, the integration of new guidelines has been a slow process (Kreutzer, 2004).

The effects of bureaucracies and specializations. Assumptions that have guided special education have been maintained by the scientific paradigm and school bureaucracies (Kreutzer, 2004; Skrtic, 1995). Organizations form both machine and professional bureaucracies. Machine bureaucracies develop when work is simple and certain enough to be rationalized into a series of routine exercises (Kreutzer, 2004; Skrtic,

1995). When this happens processes become conventionalized and specific rules are created for each task (Skrtic, 1995). Professional bureaucracies tend to develop when tasks become too complex or uncertain to be rationalized and formalized (Skrtic, 1995). According to this understanding, the division of labour is achieved when staff members specialize in a specific area (Wolak, 1998). If the specialist does not match the student's needs, another is sought. As student needs become more diverse, more specialists are necessary (Mock & Kaufman, 2002; Winzer, 1998). Once a student is removed from the classroom, the general educator is no longer responsible for the individual needs of the student and no longer needs to question her own skills and practises repertoire. Collaboration and innovation are unnecessary because the student can simply be removed. The specialist then fulfils her professional role by designing a plan to fit the student's needs, and the classroom teacher simply follows the plan (Trent et al., 2002; Skrtic, 1995).

However, as more students were identified as needing special services, fewer general education teachers were willing to accept student diversity in their classrooms (Hocutt, 1996; Lupart, 2000). Furthermore, based on a survey conducted by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (1998), new teachers were most supportive of inclusive settings, although support for inclusion decreased as years of teaching experience increased. In a study involving 87 general educators, Kruetzer (2004) found that over time new teachers assimilated into the beliefs and norms of the overall school culture. Regardless of teacher acceptance or support, the push continued toward inclusive settings, and changes occurred (Hocutt, 1996; Kruetzer, 2004; Lupart, 2000; Mock & Kaufman, 2002).

One of the changes included policies requiring the placement of students with

disabilities in the general education classroom to the fullest extent possible. However, most of these placements were symbolic and ceremonial, without the necessary services (Kruetzer, 2004; Skrtic, 1995). Many students placed in inclusive settings did not receive the individualized education they needed (Baker & Zigmond, 1995). Often, they lacked the opportunity to develop skills and abilities necessary to function in the new environment (Mock & Kaufman, 2002; Winzer, 1998). This shifting of responsibility between general educators and special educators created increased workloads and responsibilities that the general educator was not prepared for.

Teacher Workload and Added Responsibilities

The inclusion controversy shifted focus from responsibility for the individual student to a placement debate; consequently, students with disabilities were at risk of the negative effects created by the indiscriminate use of inclusive policies (Kavale & Forness, 2000). Numbers of other teachers tried to use a special education structured classroom (Clabaugh, 2002; Schultz-Stout, 2001). Still many believed that all students belonged in the general education classroom, and that skilled teachers could meet the needs of students of all abilities (Clabaugh, 2002; Mock & Kauffman, 2002; Schultz-Stout, 2001). In a study of 142 Individualized Education Plans (IEP), Grotheer (1999) found the outlook for students with special needs disappointing because of overcrowded classrooms and the lack of trained teachers able to cope with students with special needs, as well as the wide range of learning abilities and behavioural issues in the general classroom.

The difficulty with including students with special needs in the general classroom has been that even the most effective teachers find themselves unable (Bricker, 2000; Bunch & Finnegan, 2000), and sometimes unwilling, to accommodate every individual (Winzer,

1998). Therefore, many students have been misplaced and improperly educated (Crockett, 2002). Even though general and special education were more united due to inclusive settings, typically, general classrooms were not prepared for the full inclusion of students with special needs, and many students did not receive the individualized education offered through the continuum of services necessary for their success (Seitsinger & Zera, 2002).

Often general educators were not properly prepared for the multitude of disabilities encountered in an inclusive setting; coupled with standards-based assessments and public accountability, an educational disaster has been in the making (Grotheer, 1999; Mock & Kaufman, 2002). In a study conducted in Newfoundland and Labrador (Walters, 1999), teacher perceptions of the Individualized Support Services Plan (ISSP) indicated that more university courses were necessary in the area of special education programming in order to meet the additional classroom workload. In this study, general educators indicated that they did not have sufficient time, skills, training, or resources for inclusion. Walters found that the extensive time and energy required from teachers due to the additional workload and lack of training meant that some students with special needs who required additional attention suffered academically.

Bunch and Finnegan (2000) interviewed 136 teachers across Canada and found that they were not prepared for the diversity found in their classrooms. Furthermore, they had the additional responsibility of researching and understanding special needs and changing teaching styles. Participants also indicated that insufficient classroom and resource support added to the difficulty of inclusive settings (Bunch & Finnegan). The majority of the participants also indicated that administrative support was insufficient; administrators

suggested that this was actually due to a lack of communication. Considering these issues, educators continued to maintain confidence that a positive relationship could develop between special and general educators. However, teachers indicated that this development would be more complex than previously thought as foundational and resource issues required change. As the next section will demonstrate, part of the complexity of inclusive settings involves the accountability mechanisms in place.

Accountability in Inclusive Settings

Accountability has been one of the most commonly used terms in education, and yet often the notion has been evoked without a clear definition (Erickson, Ysseldyke, Thurlow & Elliott, 1998). The broad metaphor related accountability to a tool that could create or destroy depending on how it was used. *Accountability* has also been defined as a means to inform those in and out of education of the direction that students' program or the educational system is moving (Erickson et al., 1998) through public reporting of academic progress.

Three conditions have been identified as necessary to achieve accountability in education (Mitchell, 1996). The first of these is the need for standards or criteria for evaluation purposes. An effective PPP, according to policy, contains an evaluation and review process component. The second condition is a mechanism for evaluation which must be observable and contain measurable goals and objectives. As goals set in the PPP are achieved, the teacher evaluates the student's progress as well as the relevancy of the plan. Measurable goals and objectives ensure that the PPP continues to be relevant to the student's educational path. The final condition necessary to achieve accountability is an incentive or motivator to encourage improvement (Mitchell, 1996).

Increasing accountability is an equally important purpose of developing and implementing a PPP for a student with special needs in the general classroom. With the growing concern for educational improvement, policy makers have found the educational process has not worked (Erickson et al., 1998). The focus on accountability for the educational accomplishments of all students has created both positive and negative attitudes towards inclusion and the students in the general classroom.

Teacher Attitudes in Inclusive Settings

Cook (2001) found four common attitudes held by general education teachers toward their students with special needs in the inclusive settings. These attitudes were: *attachment, concern, indifference, and rejection*. In the teachers' attachment category, some students are considered a pleasure to have in the classroom. These students receive more attention, praise, and process questions than their peers. Few students with special needs fall into this category. The concern category involves students who generate more concern and care from the teachers. The teachers realize that with their effort, these students could succeed and, therefore, become more intensely and personally involved with them. Students in the concern category may receive praise and attention, but it is often indiscriminate praise instead of the constructive feedback necessary for learning. In Cook's study, a small number of students with special needs are found in the concern category (Cook, 2001).

Being placed in the third category, indifference, often causes students to be overlooked. Teachers rarely paid attention to this group, and when they did their attention was generally brief, infrequent, and perfunctory. The fourth category, rejection, has a high number of students with special needs. The students in this category are seldom

provided with instructional feedback, although they are given behavioural feedback.

These students are more frequently criticized and receive less instructional time with or from the teacher (Cook, 2001).

As described by Cook, behaviours due to teacher attitudes which were directed at the students were not related to the principle of inclusion. In essence, these were attitudes toward the individual student, and instructional and educational opportunities were based on the category of the student (Cook, 2001). However, Shinn, Baker, Haberdank, and Good (1995) discovered that teachers' attitudes were not entirely fixed but instead could be affected by data. By providing understandable and relevant data, attitudes toward inclusion could be changed (Shinn et al.). The researchers found that by providing the teachers with information about the reading skills of the students with special needs relative to the other students in the class, teachers' attitudes were significantly impacted. If a student could read equal to or better than at least one other student in the classroom, the teachers were significantly more willing to include the student. If the student read below the range of their lowest readers the teachers became significantly less willing to include. A possible explanation of effective and ineffective practises in special education and the inclusive classroom may be the teachers' ability and acceptance levels (Shinn et al.). Another consideration is the Tolerance Theory.

The Tolerance Theory (Cook, Gerber & Semmel, 1997) was developed through research on teacher attitude and acceptance of students with special needs. This theory suggests that teachers could match their instruction to a limited variety of learning characteristics. Students with special needs most often fell outside of this tolerance area at both ends of the ability continuum, and this may also have contributed to teachers'

negative attitudes toward them. The teacher felt incapable of teaching in the style necessary, which contributed to the student being assigned to the indifference or rejection category (Cook, 2001).

Within the Tolerance Theory was the Model of Differential Expectations (Cook & Semmel, 1999), which separated disabilities into two categories, hidden and obvious. Hidden or mild disabilities were LD and emotional or behavioural disorders. These students were perceived to have the same skills as other students in the classroom and were expected to learn and behave as their peers because their disabilities were not visually obvious. When students could not reach the expected levels or fit in due to inappropriate behaviours they were rejected by the teacher. Those with visible or severe disabilities were perceived differently. It might be assumed that these students would have fallen outside the teacher's tolerance level and into the rejection category, but because the disability was obvious, the teacher adjusted the expectations and developed an attachment toward the student (Cook, 2001). However, when Grotheer (1999) surveyed 180 general educators, results indicated that they preferred the inclusion of those with milder disabilities, such as LD, to the inclusion of students with more severe disabilities.

Once students with special needs were included in the general classroom, Shum and Vaughn (1992) found that teachers were less willing to spend the necessary time planning for specific objectives or making adaptations to the curriculum. These findings indicate that even though students were included in the general education classroom, they might not have received appropriate instruction, curriculum, or support (Shum & Vaughn). The assumption was that if the teachers routinely and precisely used the established

curriculum, all students would eventually develop into the same desired product (Clabaugh 2002; Tomlinson, 1995). To best understand the educational placement of students with special needs, a review of the next influencing factor, the philosophy of placement and services, is necessary.

Philosophies of Placement and Service Delivery

The struggle to define (Danforth & Rhodes, 1997) and create an appropriate education for students with special needs began by changing special education assessment, referral, and placement practises. Changes also occurred in the school systems in terms of funding use, policies, accountability systems, and instructional grouping practises (Wang & Reynolds, 1996). These changes, left undirected and misunderstood, could result in ineffective classroom practises.

Most educational settings, including those in Saskatchewan, place students in the least restrictive environment (LRE), using a framework called the *continuum of services* (Bricker, 2000; Lerner, 1993). This continuum of services considers appropriate placements based on the student's ability and needs. The continuum ranges from most to least restrictive environments, beginning with placement in an institution and moving through residential schools, special schools, self-contained classrooms, resource room services, and finally to placement in the general education inclusive classroom. This process was designed to cover all possibilities of educational placements (Bricker, 2000; Lerner, 1993). However, it created several difficulties in the assessment processes, classification, and identification of students with special educational needs. Because of these difficulties, the continuum of services met the diverse needs but procedures and policies needed reviewing (Kavale & Forness, 2000; Lerner, 1993). An argument

developed concerning *where* students with special needs were best taught rather than *how* the students were best taught (Hocutt, 1996).

Mending ideological differences. Special and general educators hold a number of ideological differences that influence the effectiveness of practise. Fowler (2000) reports methods of dealing effectively with ideological differences when designing or implementing policy. First and foremost, leaders need to become conscious of and assess personal ideological stance. Without reflection and understanding as the basis for beliefs, individuals view their beliefs as self-evidently true and have difficulty understanding other perspectives. A second method for school leaders involves using preventative measures before conflicts arise, such as creating clear, concise, and consistent policies with input from teachers, community members, and parents. Policy and policy guidelines manuals should be placed in a convenient location in the school, to be available to administrators, teachers, and stakeholders (Fowler).

When ideologies such as those concerning special education and inclusion are challenged, individuals become distressed. When this occurs, one may misunderstand or ignore the another's opinion, respond with negative comments, and spend a great deal of time attempting to change the other's view (Fowler, 2000).

When these conflicts occur, the leader must discover the ideological differences of those involved and identify possible areas of understanding and compromise. Once information has been gathered, the school leader needs to open up a democratic process of decision-making that includes all concerned individuals such as teachers, parents, and community members, and let it be understood that, at some point, their ideological beliefs will be thoroughly considered. Therefore, each individual involved in policy making and

implementation needs to clarify his or her beliefs and understandings and how these may be influential factors in policy implementation (Fowler, 2000).

School Leadership and Inclusion

Many general and special educators disagree with the full inclusive educational setting. Because a student with special needs, with a PPP, is included in the general classroom does not mean that the student has the academic skills or the self-esteem necessary to fit in and succeed (Kavale & Forness, 2000). However, policy makers, school leaders, and the educational systems continue to be driven by the need for positive results (Thurlow & Krentz, 2001), thus moving the discussion to the influence of school leadership.

Leadership roles in inclusive settings. Regardless of the policies developed or the clarity of their writing(s), changing teachers' beliefs about students with disabilities does not appear to be achievable through legislature or policy shifts (Jordan, 2000). Furthermore, changing beliefs requires a large commitment by teachers and school leaders in supplying the necessary resource training and in-house supports (Jordan, 2000). Recently, the goal in special education seems to have been to develop these positive working relationships between students, teachers, administrators, and parents in order to facilitate the academic growth and independence of the student. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) reported that administrators had more positive perceptions toward inclusion than did the general education teachers. For inclusion to become successful the system needs determination and assistance (Seitsinger & Zera, 2002).

Preparing school leaders. School leaders have been responsible for ensuring that all students are appropriately placed based on academic and behavioural needs (Directions

for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000). Powell and Hyle (as cited in Crockett, 2002) observe that the least restrictive environment (LRE) and inclusion hold different meaning for school leaders despite policy description. Consequently, according to Seitsinger and Zera (2002), school reform initiatives of inclusion are often based on misunderstood definitions, and advocating for students' needs has been based on school leaders' own values, ethics, and moral paradigms. During these decision-making times, special educators have a positive role in assisting in the development of responsive leaders in special education and inclusive settings (Crockett, 2002). According to researchers, if support is not given to school leaders in expanding their knowledge of appropriately including students with special needs and teachers are not supported through skills, methodologies, and strategies, difficulties in facilitating learning of all students result (Jordan, 2000; Roach, Salisbury, & McGregor, 2002). On the positive side, Seitsinger and Zera (2002) reported that improvement of the school system and its subsystems could occur if members of the larger educational system were prepared for and open to growth and change.

Administrative and systemic needs. Several changes have taken place within most school systems due to the increase of inclusion; consequently, school leaders have several paths from which to choose (Lupart & Webber, 1996; Roach et al., 2002; Seitsinger & Zera, 2002). Based on an analysis of education reform literature, Lupart and Webber (1996) found that changes were taking place in the general and special education systems. However, these changes were not creating a more unified educational system. The general education system focused on changes toward excellence, whereas the special education system focused on changes toward equity. Each system inadvertently

counteracted the other without realizing the two goals could be achieved simultaneously (Lupart & Webber, 1996). A more positive framework of inclusion is necessary for success.

Positive framework and leadership. Revisions to leadership preparation programs that create positive frameworks for inclusion require emphasis on four specific elements. The first of these is moral leadership, which involves the ethical analysis of disability-related issues. The second is instructional leadership that addresses student-centred learning beyond compliance of policy. The third element, organizational leadership, supports effective program development, management, and evaluation related to students with special needs and their teachers. The final element is collaborative leadership that promotes partnerships for instruction, conflict resolution, and integrated service delivery (Crockett, 2002).

In addition to these elements, Crockett (2002) recommends five principles of special education leadership to introduce issues of disabilities into preparation programs. The first principle refers to moral leaders capable of analysing complexities, respecting others, and advocating for child benefit, justice, and full educational opportunities for every student. The second principle is developing leaders attentive to the relationship between the unique learning and behavioural needs of students with disabilities and the specialized instruction necessary to address their educational progress. The third principle is to develop leaders committed to the informed practises of disability law, financial options, and public policies that support individual educational benefit. Effective programming, the fourth principle, develops leaders skilled at supervising and evaluating educational programs in general, as well as individualized programming and encourages

high expectations, supports research-based strategies, and pursues positive results for students with special needs. The fifth principle refers to effectiveness in communication, negotiation, and collaboration with others on behalf of students with disabilities and their families (Crockett, 2002).

Kopec (2003) offered the following recommendations after studying the experiences of two exemplary principals implementing inclusive programs in Saskatchewan. These recommendations include the need to create a safe and caring community in schools where all children belong and where diversity is valued. In addition, leaders and proponents of inclusion are needed. All stakeholders need to be involved in the planning and implementation of an inclusive program. Flexible learning environments must be created, and communication with all stakeholders as to the purpose and expectations of the inclusive program must be maintained. Kopec also recommended that school leaders identify the changing roles and responsibilities of all staff members, be willing to support collaborative interactions, operate comfortably and effectively in collaborative groups, and provide time for teams to meet, supports for their work and time for staff to attend professional development sessions (Kopec, 2003).

Successfully dealing with students with special needs has always been a challenge for principals, as found in Kopec's (2003) study. In Kopec's view, principals must balance the requirements of students, teachers, and parents with the interests of the rest of the members of the school community. Principals create environments within schools, assemble necessary supports, work collegially with parents, and extend the school programs through community involvement. Therefore the role of the principal has been vital in implementing an inclusive program, while balancing education expectations.

To further education success for students with special needs, Schultz-Stout (2001) offers the following recommendations to assist school leaders in designing a positive, inclusive environment. The first recommendation is that leaders strive toward a unified special and general education system, using the least restrictive environments as the first placement considerations. Decisions for placing a student in any classroom setting should be based on a well-developed individualized education plan with an emphasis on the needs of the student and classmates. In addition, it is recommended that leaders ensure supports and services are available, and parents and students are involved as partners in the decision-making process. Appeal processes should also be developed that allow teachers to object to the practises of educational plan and placements if the plan is deemed inappropriate for a child. Reducing class sizes or increasing the number of teachers in the classroom was also recommended. Further, sufficiently qualified support staff should be employed to address the social, emotional, and cognitive needs of students. Finally, during program development, consideration must be given to multiple teaching and learning approaches, such as team teaching, peer partners, cooperative learning, heterogeneous grouping, study team planning, and station teaching (Schultz-Stout, 2001).

Educational Expectations

According to the authors of *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), as long as educational systems have specific curriculum and criteria that stipulate the educational requirements for graduation, it is necessary to continue developing methods that ensure all students achieve these educational goals. Provincial curricula have provided the criteria and education plan for the majority of

students served in a school system. However, a specific population of individuals, those with learning disabilities, who have been unable to realize the goals as outlined by the system continually need a PPP to achieve the expected educational requirements (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002).

With the recent increase of inclusion of students with special needs in the general classroom, concerns have emerged due to general educators refusing to accept the responsibility (Stanovich & Jordan, 2002). According to Lee (2002), once a student is identified with a learning need and an individualized program is designed, the teacher assumes the role of the general educator has ended. Teachers believe they are no longer responsible for the education of that student, although they continue to feel that the individualized plan was necessary. However, as Stanovich and Jordan found teachers rarely include the planned instructional interventions, fail to link assessment and curriculum, and have minimal parental contact.

Canadian teachers have tended to offer philosophic support for the ideology of inclusion (British Columbia Teacher Federation, 1999; French, 1998; Stanovich & Jordan, 2002). However, as Stanovich and Jordan found, concerns of negative attitudes and acceptance of inclusion have emerged within general education. To alleviate concerns of general educators and to achieve the best possible education for students with special needs, PPPs were created to guide the education of students with special needs in an inclusive setting. However, negative attitudes and the lack of acceptance continue.

Giddens (2002) replicated a study conducted in Ontario by Hambleton and Ziegler (1974) with similar results. After surveying 844 teachers, Giddens found that general educators continued to support the idea of inclusion but felt negatively toward the actual

inclusion of students with special needs. More specifically, Anderson (1998) found that middle and secondary educators in Newfoundland were less positive about inclusion than were elementary level educators. Results indicated that this was due to the complexity of middle and secondary levels, as students had multiple classes and a variety of teachers each semester. Anderson also found that at the secondary level it was difficult for teachers to arrange mutually convenient times for collaborative planning meetings.

In an inclusive environment, teachers trained for the general education setting are responsible for a full class of students including those with special needs (Mock & Kauffman, 2002). The general education classroom has not transformed itself into a domain that welcomes the students it avoided for so many years (Winzer, 1998). Furthermore, “there has been little evidence of the capacity of general educators as a group to make the extensive changes that are needed to facilitate more, and more successful mainstreaming or inclusion” (Hocutt, 1996, p. 97). Educators seem to accept that some students with special needs will simply not develop to their full potential (Lupart, 2000).

Although most special educators have agreed that individualized plans are the key to properly designed programs, questions have been raised regarding the extent to which individual programming remains a focus. These are also concerns regarding the extent to which the same degree of individual planning occurs when students with special needs are educated in general education classrooms (Espin, Deno & Albayrak-Kaymak, 1998).

Individualized Education

One of the most important components in the success of inclusion has been the PPP, which was developed to equalize learning opportunities and academic achievement for

students with special needs. These plans, written specifically for each student with special needs, reflect the best possible learning and teaching strategies and environments for that individual. In a study conducted by Baker and Zigmond (1995) on individualized education plans written in inclusive settings, the researchers:

saw very little “specially designed instruction” delivered uniquely to a student with learning disabilities. We saw almost no specific, directed, individualized, intensive, remedial instruction of students who were clearly deficient academically and struggling with the schoolwork they were being given. We heard no philosophizing about what special education was or should be, only pragmatic talk about helping all students manage the general education curriculum and providing extra help to anyone who needed it. (p. 178)

Baker and Zigmond (1995) found that individualized education plans written by classroom teachers are more general in expectations and descriptions. These plans seem to focus more on qualitative descriptions of students in general, progress through the curriculum, comparisons to average-achieving peers, and so on; they are not written with a specific student in mind. Because of the difference in teacher training, plans written by special educators are written specifically for each student, using information drawn from assessments such as processing skills and speeds, decoding skills, and memory (Espin et al., 1998). However, as Baker and Zigmond point out, “If special education once meant a unique curriculum for a child with a disability, careful monitoring of student progress, instruction based on assessment data, or advocacy for an individual student’s unique needs, it no longer holds those meanings in these schools” (p. 178).

As Clabaugh (2002) points out, the assumption that the majority of the students will eventually and successfully fit into the present general educational systems has been argued many times over. Unfortunately, the onus continues to be placed on the students with special needs to change in order to accomplish this (Lupart, 2000).

School administrators rarely fess up to the fact that their schools are factories. In today's political climate, honesty would soon result in their dismissal. Still, some school "leaders" take their untruthfulness too far. With pasted-on smiles, they actually join the politicians in falsely assuring the public that "no child will be left behind." In factory schools, kids have always been left behind, are still being left behind, and will continue to be left behind. ... Ultimately, the difficulties "special" children create for factory schools are unresolvable ... That's why these kids are "special" to begin with; the school as factory can't process them. ... Unfortunately, mainstreaming and its cousins now ensure that fewer and fewer kids escape the factory. And because they don't escape, the factory becomes less and less efficient. Is that what inclusion advocates want? Perhaps not; but it's what they're getting. (Clabaugh, 2002, p. 7)

Not all students have fit into the general educational system as it has been. General education teachers have had an expectation that students will learn the designated curriculum in a given amount of time. However, students with LD have difficulties in either learning the information or meeting the standard time limits. Students with LD have their own unique learning requirements, with various strengths, and areas of interests. This is the reason that it is "important to determine and enhance supports for each student based on the individual's strengths and needs" (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p. 30). However, matching teacher abilities with student needs has been somewhat difficult.

Teacher abilities and student needs. Often, because of teacher beliefs, training, skills, and knowledge repertoires, teachers have required assistance with students with diverse learning needs (Cook, 2001; Lupart, 2000; Lupart & Webber, 1996; Stanovich & Jordan, 2002). A study of Nova Scotia teachers (French, 1998) found that teacher perceptions of the Individualized Program Plan (IPP) and its efficacy were overall positive. However, results indicated that teachers felt the process was time consuming and created additional work and stress. They also indicated the lack of funding, support, and insufficient time to prepare. Participants suggested that given professional development in the area of special

needs and IPPs, and a supportive school-wide philosophy of inclusion that these negative perceptions could be addressed. Results of this and other studies (Edmunds, 2000; Kreutzer, 2004; Lupart, 2000; Lupart & Webber, 2002; Seitsinger & Zera, 2002; Scruggs & Masteropieri, 1996) repeatedly return to the lack of teacher pre-training, preparation, support, and time as major factors in the negative perceptions of general educators. Researched areas in these studies are similar to the concerns in special education in Saskatchewan. These concerns are reflected in the Saskatchewan Special Education Review Committee recommendations (2000).

Based on Saskatchewan policy, the PPP is designed to offer more than just an individualized plan for the student; it is designed to offer background information about the student so teachers can link the previous year's instruction to the present year. The PPP recommends teaching methods best matched to the student, as well as learning and behavioural interventions to increase appropriate behaviours. Finally, the PPP offers an opportunity for general educators to effectively teach all students regardless of ability (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002).

Effective Teaching Practises in the Inclusive Classroom

Although inclusion has increased and more educational opportunities have been available for students, the quality of instruction has often been contrary to best practises (Bricker, 2000) and the academic outcomes are neither acceptable nor desirable (Espin et al., 1998). Saskatchewan Learning has attempted to meet the requirements of students with special needs in both effective teaching recommendations offered by the Special Education Review Committee (2000) and the provincial policy recommendations (2002). In reference to research question four, this section first reviews recommendations found

in the literature and then reviews the Saskatchewan policy recommendations of effective teaching.

Several recommendations in the literature have been offered to create more effective practises in the classroom, such as offering a more concrete definition of inclusion (Snyder, Garriott & William Aylor, 2001); on-going staff development and training opportunities (Bricker, 2000; Cook, 2001; Van Reussen, Shoho & Barker, 2001); and supporting instruction in and out of the classroom (Snyder et al.; Van Reussen et al.; Bricker). Other recommendations included increase opportunities to share beliefs about the teaching and learning process in an inclusive setting (Van Reussen et al.); discussion of instructional efforts and outcomes; support for students in and out of the classroom (Van Reussen et al.); consideration of the teacher tolerance level before placement (Cook); and finally, emphasizing instead of downplaying the individual needs of the student (Cook).

Special educators have been trained in best teaching practises and, through collaborative efforts, special educators assist the general educators in becoming effective teachers for all students in an included setting (Lerner, 1993). Cegelka & Berdine (1995) identify effective practises as offering an appropriate education to enhance academic growth, social behaviours, and self-esteem in all students. Capable teachers maintain high expectations for their students and their behaviours communicate a strong belief that all students can learn. Effective teachers demonstrate a belief that time is of the essence when teaching students with special needs by being goal oriented and using their time accordingly. When student behaviours are inappropriate, the teacher examines classroom practises to find new solutions. Effective teachers accept responsibility in their classroom

and for their students (Cegelka & Berdine, 1995).

According to the Saskatchewan PPP policy (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), effective teaching practises should be reflected in the planning, writing, and implementing of a PPP. *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) is available to all educators and is intended as a guide to effective practises in special education and PPP design and implementation.

Saskatchewan's Personal Program Plan

In Saskatchewan, the PPP is the individualized education plan. The PPP policy provides an outline of the student's individualized program and is detailed in *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) (see Appendix B) as follows:

Policy: A personal program plan based on the student's strengths and needs is developed for each student who: requires continuing special education interventions and individualized supports to participate in and benefit from the educational program; or has been identified for individual incremental funding recognition. The information included in the PPP is dependent on the needs of the student. For students who are receiving ongoing special education interventions in only one or two areas of the instructional program, the PPP addresses the particular area(s). For example, a very succinct PPP may be written for Mathematics or English Language Arts. For students with intensive educational needs, the PPP typically addresses several or all areas of instruction. The personal program planning process includes: identification of student abilities, needs and interests; establishment of goals and objectives; selection of appropriate strategies and activities; and ongoing evaluation and revision of the plan. (p. V.4.1i)

The PPP policy does not detail different PPPs based on disability, however it does describe differences that might be found. To assist educators, Saskatchewan Learning (2004) offered sample PPPs designed for students with LD (see Appendix A).

Based on *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), effective practises when using a PPP for students with special needs would include

designing the required curricula, instruction, and supports appropriate to their individual strengths and needs. A collaborative team would be formed on an individual case basis. This team would consist of those directly involved, including the principal, teachers, special educator, support staff, the student, and the student's parents or guardians. Other professionals may be included on the team based on specific student need. This collaborative team then designs the individualized educational objectives and decides which instructional resources and supports are needed.

Recognizing the financial requirements of such detailed programming, resources, and supports, Saskatchewan has designated funds to support personnel and programs for students with low incidence special needs. Punshon (2000) found that according to the school division personnel in Saskatchewan, programs for low incidence students were in place where needed and funding was not an issue when creating programs necessary for students with special needs. Although funding is in place for low incidence special education programming, implementation is the key (Patterson & Hoiium, 2001) for both low- and high-incidence disabilities.

Personal program plans and transition plans. A PPP is made up of several sections, including academic, behavioural, and transition goals and objectives. Although this study does not review each PPP section, a short description of transition plans is offered.

The Saskatchewan Transition policy (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) states:

All students go through a number of transitions in their school careers. This includes minor transitions such as moving between activities, settings and grade levels, and major transitions such as the transition from preschool to elementary school, from elementary to high school, and from high school to adult life. Students with exceptional learning and behavioural needs may need assistance to adjust to and benefit from change and new experiences. Advanced planning is necessary to ensure that the student has access to, and is able to participate in future environments. (p. V.4.2i)

Based on the guidelines of the transition policy, a student with special needs at the secondary school level would have an extended planning team when transitioning from school to adult life. This team differs from a PPP planning team in that it would often include an individual from community services, a social worker, an advocate, and a potential employer (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002, p. V.4.2i).

At the secondary level, a transition plan for students with special needs contains the goals and objectives for independent living and employment skills, ensuring that they have the necessary skills to survive and succeed in the adult world before leaving school. According to the Ontario Ministry of Labour, 35 percent of the students identified with a learning disability drop out of school – twice the rate of students without disabilities. Individuals with LD who did not receive the appropriate training or education while in school typically held a job for only three months (Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan, 2004). The importance of transition planning cannot be underestimated, as is true about other programs offered through Saskatchewan Learning to meet the varying needs of students with disabilities.

Programs offered by Saskatchewan Learning. The Adaptive Dimension (AD) requires that all teachers implement an adaptive view of the curriculum to ensure that they are meeting the needs of all students. For this to take place, the school program must be flexible. Instruction, methods, and environment require adaptation to provide the most appropriate educational opportunities for students with special learning needs (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002).

Saskatchewan Learning also developed provincial policies, guidelines, and procedures to be used in Alternative Education programs. Alternative Education

programs were designed to provide students who are cognitively challenged, considered to have low ability, and are having difficulty successfully completing a recognized school program (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002).

Functionally Integrated Programs (FIP) were designed for students with severe multiple or intellectual disabilities requiring separate programs. The specifics on an FIP vary from student to student when accommodating particular disabilities. Students with severe disabilities learn more slowly and require a greater number of opportunities to acquire a skill. The length of the program and its components must be based on the specific needs on the individual student (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002).

Saskatchewan Learning has continually endeavoured to meet the needs of all students, regardless of ability or disability. The Alternative and Functionally Integrated Programs have separate classrooms and curricula for students with more complex needs. These programs do not require PPPs, as the student follows program curricula. The Adaptive Dimension, on the other hand, is designed to adapt the existing curriculum of the general classroom to fit the needs of all students. School^{Plus} also promotes the inclusion of all students. The Adaptive Dimension and School^{Plus} programs do not remove the student from the general classroom; therefore a PPP would be required. To completely address the implementation of the PPP policy in the school and classroom, a review of Saskatchewan Learning's consideration of effective practises follows.

Effective practises. Chapter 4 of *Creating Opportunities for Students with Intellectual or Multiple Disabilities* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001) details effective practises pertaining to special education and the PPP. This manual describes effective practises for all students with special needs.

The first effective practise (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001) offered is the need for a common philosophy within the school community and defined through the vision and mission statement. The vision should correspond with the particular social and economic setting of the school community and reflect democratic and equal opportunities.

The second effective practise (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001) is leadership commitment at the school division and individual school level. Effective school leadership is described as supporting new learning practises; developing meaningful connections with students; developing a school-wide approach to discipline; and creating an inviting school, as well as creating a supportive, caring, secure, and safe community within the school. A committed effective leader also promotes wellness among staff and students; recognizes the demands involved; and finally, values diversity within the school.

The third effective practise (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001) involves family. Schools who work closely with families tend to develop higher achievement and more positive attitudes and behaviours among students. Saskatchewan Learning (2002) considers the importance of family and what the family desires. The teaching staff respects the family's needs and expectations.

The need for collaborative teamwork is the fourth effective practise offered (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001). Not only would it be unreasonable to expect one person, particularly the classroom teacher, to be solely responsible for all programming needs, it is contrary to the policy guidelines. A wide range of expertise should be shared within a collaborative team. The committed teamwork, as well as effective coordination of the integrated service delivery, is fundamental in effectively implementing a PPP. This,

coupled with the fifth practise, the development of support networks, ensures effective practise in all classrooms. Support networks include peer support, creating a circle of friends, peer tutors, cross-age tutoring, and cooperative learning. Teacher support networks can include teacher assistants, team teaching, special educators and resources, in-service on specific disabilities, mentorship, and school division consultants.

The sixth effective practise (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001) includes deliberate processes to ensure accountability, as “effective education for students cannot be left to chance; rather, all processes have to be deliberately planned” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001, p. 31). These include the effective use of PPPs based on assessment and collaborative team planning, proactive planning which includes actively anticipating possible barriers, and problem solving solutions. Collaborative meetings should be well planned and effectively run toward constructive decision making. All team members and educators should maintain flexibility because to “maintain a truly child-centred program it is necessary to assess the changing development and needs of the student and flexibly respond to these changes” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001, p. 31).

The seventh recommendation (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001) is the need for increased effective teaching practises. Materials should be available about teaching students with special needs. Educators and team members should be aware of current practises and choose methods that are appropriate to specific students and situations.

The eighth effective practise (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001) recommends that schools meet the needs of teachers. Teachers require preparation and ongoing support when they have a student with special needs in their classrooms. The purpose for teacher preparation is to assist the teacher in accepting the new student and also feeling

competent about the new requirements. Information should be given to the teacher in areas such as student strengths; current levels of functioning in all areas; the student's specific disability; expectations regarding student learning; specific instructional techniques and the strategies that have been effective; adaptation of instruction and accommodations to diverse learning styles; and the composition of the team. It is also recommended that the roles and responsibilities for each team member, behaviour management techniques, and assessment issues and strategies be clearly outlined.

The ninth recommendation for effective practise (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001) suggests that each educator becomes aware of the individual responsibility to support inclusion. Members of the collaborative team must be aware of the need for commitment, as well as their respective roles and responsibilities. The principal possesses the determining role that influences and promotes an inclusive environment. It is also considered important that general education teachers accept the responsibility as the primary educator, with the support of the special education teacher.

The tenth effective practise (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001) focuses on the systematic instructional factors. Systematic instruction includes a well-planned and diverse approach with specifically designed whole class instruction that includes students with special needs; small group instruction and/or one-to-one instruction; maintenance and generalization of skills; prompting strategies and reinforcement; and adaptations to regular classroom instruction. Effective instruction also includes constructivist and multiple intelligence learning and teaching acceptance and appreciation of differences. Systematic instruction includes looking at the current practises to critically examine instructional strengths and weaknesses and to discover any possible barriers to effective

teaching. Finally, systematic instruction would be collaborative in that it monitors change and student progress, puts action plans into writing, and continually evaluates and adjusts instruction.

The twelfth effective practise (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001) is the development of systematic program evaluation. The PPP is created through a comprehensive assessment which is used to plan an appropriate education for the student. The PPP should be referred to on a frequent basis and used as a way to monitor and assess student progress. Systematic program evaluation is the analysis of the student's personal program in terms of its quality and effectiveness in meeting stated goals. If a PPP is not working then it is changed to better achieve the desired outcomes.

The thirteenth effective practise (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001) is the employment of trained personnel. Staff who are responsible for assessment, program planning, and program delivery must be educated and competent in each of these areas. Ongoing professional development is a must in effective teaching and may include attending workshops and conferences, visits to and observing successful programs, and finding appropriate materials on the Internet.

The final effective practise (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001) is the efficient use of paraprofessional staff. Paraprofessionals can be valuable team members, but roles and responsibilities can be a source of conflict within a team, hinder student progress, and contribute to student dependency. To be effective, the role within the collaborative team requires clarity, professional preparation and training, careful and progressive leadership, and positive working relationships (Saskatchewan Learning, 2001).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the perceived effective policy practises (Figure 2.2) is designed to show the flow of the intended PPP policy from its development to the student. The conceptual framework begins with the development of the PPP policy designed for classroom implementation. This intended policy filters through various influencing factors such as traditional practises (Kavale, 2002; Skrtic, 1995; Wolak, 1998), student abilities (Clabaugh 2002; Shoho & Barker, 2001; Tomlinson, 1995; Van Reussen), attitudes (Cook, 2001; Kreutzer, 2004; Lupart & Webber, 2002; Stanovich & Jordan, 2002; Shinn, Baker, Haberdank, and Good, 1995), accountability (Erickson, Ysseldyke, Thurlow & Elliott, 1998; Grotheer, 1999; Mock & Kaufman, 2002; Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), added responsibilities (Clabaugh, 2002; Bricker, 2000; Bunch & Finnegan, 2000; Grotheer, 1999; Schultz-Stout, 2001; Shum & Vaughn, 1992), and leadership styles (Crockett, 2002; Jordan, 2000; Kopec, 2003; Roach, Salisbury, & McGregor, 2002; Seitsinger & Zera, 2002; Schultz-Stout, 2001). These factors influence individual's perceptions thus affecting the meaning of the PPP policy before actual implementation (Kreutzer, 2004).

As depicted in the framework, the policy flows through different components of thought and behaviours until reaching the final outcome of perceived effective and ineffective classroom practises. Perception is influenced by prior knowledge, past experiences, values, beliefs, environment, and culture. It is the process by which people select, organize, interpret, retrieve, and respond to information. Further, perception is a lens for filtering information, and it influences actions, reactions, and behaviours (Kreutzer, 2004). The intended policy then becomes implemented based on the

perceptions held by each individual involved (Decker & Decker, 1992).

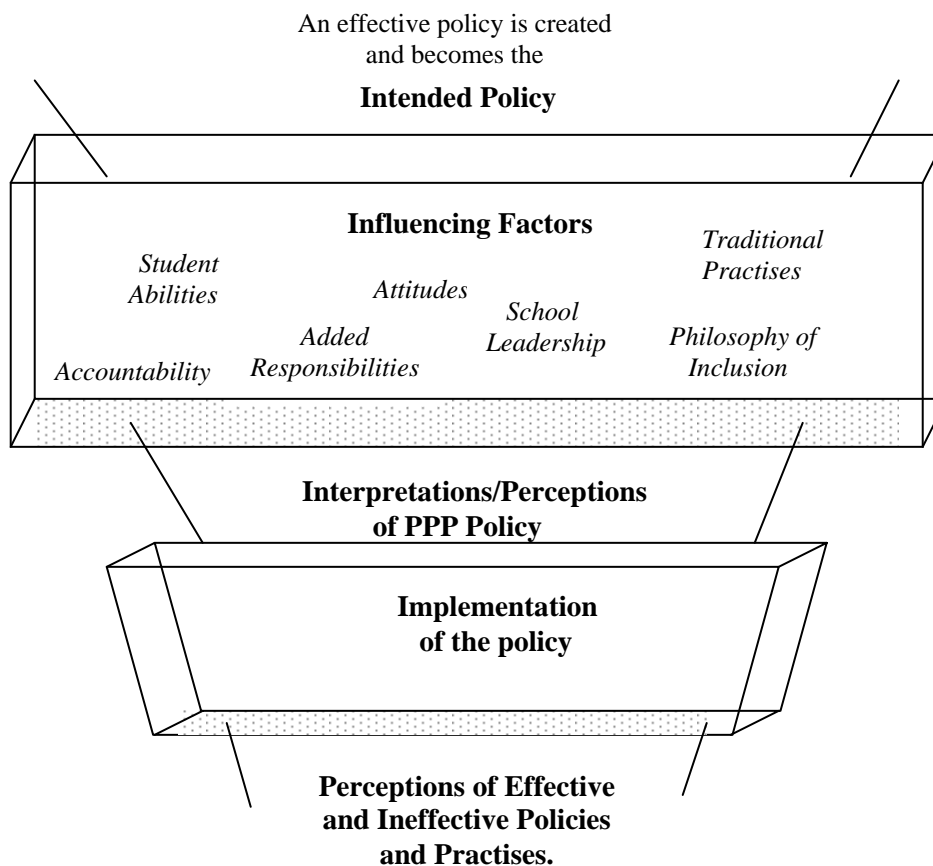


Figure 2.2. The Conceptual Framework of the Perceived Effective Policies and Practises.

The Provincial policy, as recommended, might not actually be implemented in the classroom due to factors that influence key individuals. The actual implementation thus creates both effective and ineffective practises that in turn influence overall perceptions of PPP usage and special education programming. Each component of the conceptual framework – the intended policy, influencing factors, interpretations and perceptions, policy implementation, and perceptions of policies and practises – was described through the review of literature in this chapter.

Summary

This chapter began with a brief history of special education in an effort to detail the changes and growth in placement and programming over the years. This was followed by a review of the literature and current Saskatchewan policy relating to each of the research questions.

The first major step in Saskatchewan was the provincial special education committee review of special education practise, thus creating the manual *Directions for Diversity: Enhancing Supports to Children and Youth with Diverse Needs* (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000). Following the recommendations from this review, *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (2002) was created to guide special education practices in Saskatchewan.

To discover methods to best implement this policy, this chapter included a review of research on both policy design and implementation (Downey, 1988; First, 1992; Kreutzer, 2004; Recesso, 1990). As was discovered in the review, even with great consideration to policy design, effective implementation was not often accomplished. Therefore, literature was reviewed on possible influences existing in special education programs.

These influences included the traditional practices (Kavale, 2002; Trent, Artiles, Fitchett-Bazemore, McDaniel & Coleman-Sorrell, 2002; Skrtic, 1995), bureaucracies and specializations (Kreutzer, 2004; Skrtic, 1995; Wolak, 1998) and the effects of the workload and additional responsibilities of classroom teacher (Grotheer, 1999; Mock & Kaufman, 2002; Walters, 1999). Other influences found in the literature included accountability (Erickson, Ysseldyke, Thurlow & Elliott, 1998), attitudes (Cook, Gerber &

Semmel, 1997; Shinn, Baker, Haberdank, and Good, 1995), philosophies of inclusion (Wang & Reynolds, 1996; Bricker, 2000; Lerner, 1993; Kavale & Forness, 2000; Hocutt, 1996), school leadership (Jordan, 2000; Lupart and Webber, 1996; Roach, Salisbury, & McGregor, 2002; Seitsinger & Zera, 2002; Thurlow & Krentz, 2001). These influences may affect the educational expectations (Lee 2002; British Columbia Teacher Federation, 1999; French, 1998; Stanovich & Jordan, 2002) and the ability to individualize education (Baker and Zigmond, 1995; Cook, 2001; French, 1998; Lupart, 2000; Lupart & Webber, 1996; Stanovich & Jordan, 2002).

In response to the possible influences in special education programming, this chapter included a review of effective teaching practises in the inclusive classroom (Snyder, Garriott & William Aylor, 2001), on-going staff development and training opportunities (Bricker, 2000; Cook, 2001; Van Reussen, Shoho & Barker, 2001), and supporting instruction in and out of the classroom (Bricker, 2000; Cegelka & Berdine, 1995; Snyder et al.; Van Reussen et al.). The conceptual framework of this study was created based on the previously described information. This framework described the flow of the PPP policy beginning with the development of the PPP, through the possible influences. The framework concluded with classroom implementation which develop the perceptions of effective or ineffective special education practise

Chapter 3

The Research Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological orientation, the methods, data collection including site and participant selection, and data analysis and presentation. This chapter also describes the process of establishing validity, reliability, and research ethics.

Research methods were chosen based on the research questions and the information sought (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). This research was structured as a four-phased design and employs several methods. Phase one began with document collection and analysis of available PPP policies from 25 secondary programs in the Province of Saskatchewan. Policies were collected either from school divisions or were available on public web sites. The sample was based on availability.

Phase two focused on understanding the perceptions of participants concerning effective and ineffective PPP procedures in policy implementation through the multiple-case design. This design was chosen because multiple cases provide more significant and compelling evidence than a study of only one case (Yin, 1989).

Phase three deepened the understanding through surveying key stakeholders in Saskatchewan secondary programs. Phase four analyzed the data collected through the process of triangulation.

Methodological Orientation

In this section a general overview of methodological orientation is offered. More specific explanations of the methodology is followed by discussion the nature of special

education research and how certain aspects of special education have influenced this study.

General Methodological Orientation

The effective use of the PPP as compared to the policy pertaining to its use is described in the second phase of this study using a qualitative method based on an adapted use naturalistic-phenomenological philosophy which viewed the events and perceptions collected as multilayered and interpreted through shared experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). Phenomenology is generally understood to be based on sense-making. As such and in order to make sense of the phenomena associated with PPPs, this research was conducted in a multiple case study design which included individual and group interviews, observations, surveys, and document analyses.

This qualitative study allowed for the exploration of attitudes, opinions, and beliefs of a number of participants in special education and for the examination of personal reactions to special education and its policies. The phenomenological nature of this study was delimited to these explorations. Qualitative studies “can explore the nature and extent to which a practice has a constructive impact on individuals with disabilities, their families, or on a setting where they tend to work, reside or be educated” (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005, p. 196). This study focused on the educational policy practices for students with special needs in reference to effective and ineffective uses of the PPP. To best explore and convey this understanding, the qualitative methods of interview and group interviews were chosen.

This particular research was naturalistic because it studied a group in its natural setting without control of the researcher. As Patton (1980) explained, "Naturalistic

inquiry is thus contrasted to experimental research where the investigator attempts to completely control the condition of the study" (p. 42). As Caines (1998) stated, "This research is not about trying to prove a particular hypothesis or test a set of variables. Its purpose is to come to understand how others experience a particular phenomenon" (p. 41). Due to the complexities of special education (Odem et al., 2005) and the focus of this study, this study did not begin with a hypothesis to prove but instead with the desire to share the experiences and perceptions of those who implement the PPP policy on a daily basis.

Phenomenological methods adapted for the specific purposes of this study were effective in bringing forward the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, by giving "voice to people who have been historically silenced or marginalized" (Brantlinger et al., 2005, p. 196). These approaches were appropriate for the purposes of helping the participants voices to be heard, prompting action, and challenging complacency (Lester, 1999).

Through interviews of principals, teachers, special educators, parents and students, thematic analysis and clustering interview transcripts, common meanings and interpretations an experience had for individuals involved in the PPP process and implementation can be discovered. Although some researchers choose to use an artistic or expressive style of writing phenomenological research, it can also be written in essentially an explanatory method illustrated with occasional anecdotes (Willis, 2004). In this multiple-participant study, phenomenological research can be powerful in drawing out the issues and their effects in individual cases, but caution must be used when suggesting a relationship to the population from which the participants for this study were

chosen (Brantlinger et al., 2005).

Research in Special Education

The difficulty with, and importance of, special education research may be due to the complexity of special education programming (Odem, Brantlinger, Gersten, Horner, Thompson, & Harris, 2005). According to Odem et al., special education research differs from research in general education because programming that occurs for one category of disabilities may not be necessary or appropriate for another category.

Complexities in special education research include:

1. The variability of the participants. Special education encompasses 12 categories of disabilities, or eligibilities. Within each of these categories, ranges of abilities exist; and
2. The variability of educational context. Special education extends beyond one setting. At one end is early intervention where services would be offered before school age, to the extreme other end of adult services in the workplace and community. (Odem et al., 2005, p. 139)

Due to the variety of disabilities and the environments in which students with special needs are taught, research in special education cannot simply address effectiveness of a policy generally but must clearly describe the particular category of the disability and setting (Odem et al., 2005). This study addresses the effectiveness of the PPP policy in Saskatchewan. Furthermore, through inductive research, this study focuses on students with LD in inclusive secondary settings where general education teachers use a PPP to guide the students' education.

Due to the complexities of special education (Odem et al., 2005) and the focus of this study, it did not begin with a hypothesis to prove but with the desire to understand the experiences and perceptions of those who implement the PPP policy on a daily basis. To best describe the effective use of the PPP as compared to its policy, the second phase of

this study uses an inductive research method to explore PPP implementation and to gain an understanding of the various possible influences as perceived by key stakeholders.

This study focused on the secondary level because it is here, unlike the elementary levels, that students may have as many as six classroom teachers each semester, and perceptions and implementation of the PPP may differ with each teacher. Students with learning disabilities are targeted because it is this population of students with special needs who are often overlooked or misunderstood during the identification process. Effective planning for this group is often difficult.

Inductive research. Inductive research is a method that moves from specific data collections such as semi-structured interviews, group interviews, and documents analyses, to broader generalizations (Trochim, 2002). The following purposes prompted the use of the general inductive approach of this study:

1. To condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief, summary format.
2. To establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data and to ensure these links are both transparent (able to be demonstrated to others) and defensible (justifiable given the objectives of the research).
3. To develop a model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes which are evident in the text (raw data). (Thomas, 2003, p. 2)

In this study document analyses, case studies, and closed- and open-ended surveys were used. These methods of data collection are most appropriate for the exploration of PPP implementation due to their openness and flexibility. They were also chosen due to the open-ended and exploratory nature of inductive research (Trochim, 2002). Probes were used in both interviews and group interviews to achieve greater details about the statements. Analyses followed the collection of data to discover patterns and themes.

Methods

To achieve the three purposes and respond to the four research questions this research plan used four overlapping phases: document analysis, multiple case study, survey, and the final synthesis of information. The five instruments for data collection are displayed on Table 3.1 as they relate to each research question.

Table 3.1

Research Matrix Based on Guiding Questions

| Research Matrix | Group Interviews | Interviews | Observation | Document Analysis | Survey |
|---|------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|--------|
| In what ways do school division policies align with the Provincial PPP policy in <i>The Children's Services Policy Framework (2002)</i> ? | X | X | X | X | X |
| In what ways do the design and implementation of PPPs in various secondary programs across Saskatchewan reflect division and provincial policy? | X | X | | X | X |
| What factors may be influencing the classroom implementation of provincial PPP policy? | X | X | X | | X |
| To what extent do principals, vice-principals, special educators, teachers, parents or guardians, and students with learning disabilities perceive that PPPs were used effectively in Saskatchewan secondary programs based on current provincial policy? | X | X | | | X |

Note. X indicates method used to collect data.

Each of the phases and methods of data collect will be expanded and clarified in the following section.

The Four Phases of this Study

This study was conducted in four overlapping phases. The next section contains the methods of data collection and analysis.

Phase One: Document Collection and Analysis

The procedure for selection of participants consisted of inviting all directors of education to send by fax the current PPP policy for their divisions. Those who chose to

respond to the faxed requests or those whose policies were publicly available through their web sites were included. These 25 policies (both submitted and publicly available) were then compared to the provincial policy and guidelines on developing a PPP, including the expected team members and expectations of practises among Saskatchewan secondary programs. Categories were produced based on similarities and differences in order to explore and describe themes that could influence effective and ineffective use of the policies.

Document collection. Again, faxes were sent to 79 school divisions in Saskatchewan requesting a faxed, e-mailed, or mailed copy of the PPP policy for that division. During this time (December 2003 to May 2004), an Internet search of Saskatchewan school divisions was conducted for available policies online. One of the most important uses of document collection is to confirm evidence gathered from the other sources (Yin, 1994). Documents collected were compared to and used to confirm understandings gained from interviews (n = 12) and group interviews (n = 20) with 32 participants, and surveys (n = 100).

Document analysis. Coding was used in this phase, as in each of the three phases of this study, to develop themes used in interpreting and describing meaning (Smith & Stewart, 2001). Coding and classifying data from both document collection components and site visit components in this study were based on the three-step review method described by Smith and Stewart. The first step is to broadly study the data for themes. This is achieved through several readings of the data. The second step is to read through the data again to analyse deeper for words and policy sections that could be more specifically coded. A third review of the policies and codes ensures that all relevant

information is incorporated and evolving themes are included in the coding process.

The reliability of the effective policy analysis is shown through *intercoder agreement*. Intercoder reliability or intercoder agreement is the term used for the extent to which independent coders evaluate characteristics of an artifact and reach the same conclusion (Tinsley & Weiss, 2000). The policies were rated according to criteria for effective policy by the researcher and a colleague. This was achieved by giving the colleague a detailed list of criteria and the policies to be analysed. Once the colleague completed the analysis, the analyses were compared. Reliability “is a necessary criterion for validity in the study and without it all results and conclusions in the research project may justifiably be doubted or even considered meaningless” (Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Campanella-Bracken, 2004). Ninety percent agreement was found between intercoders. Discussion and negotiation between the researcher and the colleague occurred in 10 percent of the cases where agreement was not initially found.

Phase Two: Multiple Case Study

This second phase, the multiple case study, involved site visits of secondary programs in the province and requires more detailed explanation than the other phases. The multiple case study contributed information through interviews and group interviews and furnished depth to phases one and three.

The multiple case study was chosen as the best suited method for the second phase due to the qualitative nature of that component. This multiple case study is a non-experimental method of research conducted in the natural educational setting of the phenomenon without interference or experimentation by the researcher. Without any type of control, many researchers may argue that it is difficult to generalize findings.

However, the strength of this multiple case study is that the interpretation, innovation, creativity, and context of the participants can be studied without a controlled, experimental design (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993; Val Dalen, 1979). Studying policy implementation through a multiple case method offers more detailed information of the natural occurrence than would have a statistical, experimental type setting. Further, case studies have a history of acceptance in many areas including educational and special education research (Brantlinger et al., 2005; Val Dalen) and policy research (McMillan & Schumacher; Yin, 1994).

Yin's (1984) three conditions were a constant consideration throughout the research planning stages and when choosing the particular design: the type of research question, the extent of control the researcher had over the phenomenon, and the degree of focus necessary.

Special education programs, although guided by one provincial special education policy manual, vary from division to division. This multiple case study allows for the description of unique perceptions and implementations in a number of secondary programs in Saskatchewan.

Sources of information in a multiple case study. Using suggestions offered by Stake (2000), the following areas were used to gather information that best met the needs of this study. Historical background was gathered through the literature, interviews, document collection, and group interview conversations. Information was gathered from those with the greatest extent of knowledge, the members of a PPP team. In combination, these sources of information (Yin, 1994) offered a wealth of understandings and knowledge of perceptions of effective and ineffective practises of PPPs in Saskatchewan.

Careful consideration was also given to how the interviews were organized. Although the interviews were flexible, they were not unorganized or random. The interview design was divided into three stages (Doyle, 2001). The first stage established the background of each of the interviewees. Both before and during the interviews, participants were encouraged to talk about themselves, describe experiences relevant to the topic, and in addition are asked specific questions (for interview protocol see Appendix C).

The second stage shifts focus onto to the details of participants' present experiences, for example, discussing PPP teamwork or implementing a PPP in the general education classroom. During the third stage, the meaning of participants' experiences is discussed. These stages are followed in each interview to ensure that participants presented opinions after careful reflection.

School and participant selection. Once letters of permission to conduct the research were received from division directors (see Appendix D), and directors decided if they would be involved in surveys or site visits, three secondary programs in the northern half of the province and three secondary programs in the south were invited to participate based on division directors' nomination. The purpose of this equal distribution was to gain a deeper understanding of PPP practises in Saskatchewan.

The six schools were selected based first on permission to conduct the research in each school division and then by each school's nomination by the division directors or superintendent. The key focus of this second phase of research was to collect information through interviews and group interviews with key informants. Not all teachers were involved in the PPP processes, therefore, only key individuals in the processes of PPP development and implementation were invited to participate in the interview and/or

group interview component of this study. The principal of each participating school selected the participants based on their special education expertise or experience.

Interviews. Interviews are one of the most valuable tools in a qualitative study and are used in many forms and may vary from a structured format planned in advance with little variation in the type of answers sought to open-ended questions that have the flow of a conversation rather than an interview (Mathers, Fox, & Hunn, 1998). Practise interviews were conducted before the study began to ensure that the questions flowed, asked what they were meant to ask, and to check tape recording equipment. Practise interviews are also useful in sharpening interviewing skills, such as paying attention while taking notes, following the research questions, monitoring time, paying attention to nonverbal cues, and deciding when to probe for more detail or move to another question (Doyle, 2001).

All interviews in this study were open-ended and conducted in the form of a conversation (Yin, 1994) to allow the participant to feel comfortable. Interviews took place in the school setting, most often in a quiet office. However, in two cases the interviews were held in the classroom by teacher choice. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed at the end of each day. (See Appendix C for the full list of interview questions used.)

Group interviews. The design of the research integrated the individual and group interview data for the analysis. Due to the number of possible participants involved in each school ($n = 32$), group interviews were an appropriate addition to this study. An advantage to, and a primary reason for using group interviews is that greater amounts of data are gathered in a shorter amount of time (Krueger, 1994). Another advantage in using group interviews is that discussing perceptions of effective and ineffective uses of

PPPs in a group situation draws out a wealth of sharing between participants. The group interviews became an open opportunity to discuss questions and share information. A possible drawback of this method is the tendency to become involved in the conversation flow (Mathers et al., 1998), possibly losing some spontaneous honesty. In an effort to decrease the loss of honesty, increase comfort and to reduce influences, parent and student group interviews were held separately from teacher group interviews. These face-to-face discussions also presented the greatest flexibility, probe and prompt opportunity, and misunderstanding correction during discussions (Mathers et al.). In each of the three group interviews, interest and desire in sharing information created a format where participants also probed and prompted each other for clarification or further information.

Each group interview met for approximately 45 minutes. As with the interviews, the group interviews began with casual conversation to ensure all participants were comfortable. The research questions were used to lead the group interview. This allowed for more detailed discussion of the research topic, additional questions to emerge, and prompts when more in-depth answers were required (Mathers et al., 1998). Participants themselves often probed and questioned each other.

Group interview discussions were tape recorded, which ensured all information was included in the field notes. Also, the recordings were transcribed for participant review and editing, as well as used in the final analysis.

Site visit protocol. Based on the work of Spickard (2004) there are two main steps to designing interview and group interview protocol. The first step is to identify a central research question (CRQ), theory-based research questions (TBQ), and interview questions (IQ). Every study has a central research question that identifies specifically

what the researcher wants to learn. This becomes the set of interview and focus questions used (Table 3.2) (Spickard, 2004). In Table 3.2 below, the theory-based research questions are listed in the left column with the interview questions across the top of the table (See Appendix C for the full list of questions). An *X* indicates the interview questions used to answer each of the theory-based questions.

Table 3.2

Interview and Group Interview Protocol Design

Central Research Question: *To what extent do principals, vice-principals, teachers, special educators, students, and parents or guardians perceive that PPP are used effectively or ineffectively in Saskatchewan secondary programs based on current provincial policy?*

| | Interview and Group interview Questions | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Theory-Based Research Questions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| TBQ 1 | | X | | | X | | X | | | | X | X | | X | X | X | | X |
| TBQ 2 | X | | | X | X | | | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | | X | X |
| TBQ 3 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| TBQ 4 | X | | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | X |

Note. X indicates interview questions used to answer theory-based questions (TBQ).

Literature typically identifies possible resolutions to the central question in addition to suggesting theory-based questions that can lead the researcher to more in-depth answers. The theory-based questions were too general to be asked as interview questions. These questions needed to be operationalized, or broken down into smaller parts, for the ease of the respondents.

The second step was to translate these interview questions (IQ) into a useable format (Spickard, 2004). Interview questions need to be logical, clear, and engaging to the informants. This flow was achieved by reviewing the interview and group interview questions and arranging them in a smooth order (see Appendix C). This protocol elicited

the stories and reflections of the participants in a more comprehensive manner. Furthermore, depending on how a story unfolded, additional probing questions were asked. All of these responses taken together allowed the researcher to answer the research questions (Spickard, 2004).

Direct observations. When possible, general observations of schools and classrooms were used to gather information about the overall educational environment and resource facilities (Yin, 1994). This information was used to write field notes at the end of each day describing the special needs classroom and general school atmosphere.

Tape recordings. For both interviews and group interviews, conversations were tape recorded. At the end of each school visit, these tape recordings were transcribed. The tapes and transcriptions were useful for reviewing and finding subtleties that were overlooked during the interviews and group interview encounters. As Wittgenstein pointed out, “The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity” (Silverman, 2000, p. 832). The use of tape recordings also allowed the opportunity to replay the interviews and group interviews several times to ensure reliable printed versions.

Site visit analyses. Transcripts from interviews and group interviews were subjected to a three-step analysis. The transcriptions of the tape recordings were sent to the participants for review and approval and returned with signed release forms thus increasing their authenticity. These documents were reflected upon regularly to identify themes emerging from each new school visited and from each participant to ensure experiences were expressed and perceptions were clear (Lukiv, 2004).

Every individual, principals, general and special education teachers, and parents

assigned meaning to their experiences in PPP development and implementation, but their viewpoints were not always explicit. Thorough analysis of all data collected was necessary for an accurate interpretation (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). To accomplish this, once data were collected from site visits, a three-step review method was used (Smith & Stewart, 2001). The first step was to broadly study the data for themes. This was achieved through several readings of the transcripts. The second step was to read through the data again to analyse deeper for words and phrases that could be more specifically coded. A third review of the transcripts and codes ensured that all relevant information was incorporated and evolving themes were included in the coding process. Triangulation more fully captured the dynamics of participant perceptions.

The site visits yielded two types of data: observations and transcripts. Observations were used in the descriptive section of each site. They were also used when discussing the interview and open-ended findings.

The transcript data were used to identify and define themes. The specific codes were derived from multiple readings of the raw data (Thomas, 2003). The transcripts were then copied and pasted into the Text Analysis Mark-up System (TAMS) (Weinstein, 2002), a computer program developed to assist with coding qualitative data (Appendix E).

To use this analysis program, each interview and group interview transcript was converted to a Rich Text Format (RTF) and transferred into the TAMS where it was stored in the "Files" window. Each transcript was then opened and coded by the researcher, using codes created from meaning units or actual phrases (Thomas, 2003). The phrases or sentences were highlighted and colour-coded for the ease of locating these at a later time. Once the information was thoroughly coded, a search was conducted

within each major theme and lists were created of themes with corresponding quotations, later used in chapter 5. During this stage of analysis, deeper meanings, patterns, and concepts emerged from the coded sets and secondary codes were added (see Appendix F). At this point, ambiguous or undeveloped concepts began to appear. This gave another opportunity to review category appropriateness, observe similarities missed, or create new categories. A final review of the data ensured that all relevant information was included in the coding process (Smith & Stewart, 2001). Analysis then moved from a specific format to broader generalization (Trochim, 2002) of themes to discover the underlying structure of experiences that became evident in the transcripts (Thomas, 2003).

Phase Three: Surveys

Two hundred surveys (see Appendix G) were sent to principals, vice-principals, teachers, and special educators in 15 secondary programs in Saskatchewan. The only criteria for volunteer participation were that participants be in the secondary program, be special educators or teach students with LD in an inclusive classroom, and give permission to be surveyed.

Survey design. The surveys were designed based on the research questions guiding this study. Appendix H details how each survey question relates to a research question and how each item pertains to PPP policy, design, and perceptions of effective and ineffective practises.

The first 13 questions were designed to gather demographic information. The next 5 questions were opinion questions, answered with a simple yes or no. Questions 18 through 44 were responded to by using a 5-point Likert scale, which offers a range of

possible responses from “never” to “very frequently”. Finally, the last 10 questions were open ended in order to gain a more detailed understanding of the current practises. The open-ended questions were designed to provoke thought as the questions moved along and the amount of reflection increased, leading to the last question, “What would you change given the opportunity?” The surveys were confidential, voluntary, and self-administered.

Survey distribution. Survey packages were sent to the principal of each school with a request that she or he complete one and distribute one survey to the vice-principal, secondary teachers of inclusive classrooms, and special education or resource room teacher. These individuals were requested to participate in the survey during the initial telephone call, but the principal made the final decision regarding survey distribution.

Each package contained the appropriate numbers of surveys as identified by the principal, a cover letter with assurance of anonymity, as well as directions, a return date, and a return stamped envelope addressed to the university address of the researcher. A small poster was also included with the package that could be placed in the staff room as a reminder of the requested survey return date.

Survey analyses. The surveys were designed with both closed- and open-ended questions. Data from surveys were analysed distinctly: qualitatively and quantitatively.

The open-ended questions were analysed using the same process as the interview and group interview responses. Once open-ended responses were formatted into the Rich Text Format (RTF) they were transferred into the Text Analysis Mark-up System (TAMS) program. Each open-ended statement was then opened and coded by the researcher, using codes created from meaning units or actual phrases (Thomas, 2003). The process of

coding and allowing themes to emerge was conducted in the same manner as the interview and group interview transcripts. These themes were triangulated with the themes that emerged from the interview and group interview themes.

The closed-ended questions were analysed using the Microsoft Excel program. Due to the low numbers in each group, responses from principals ($n = 5$) and vice-principals ($n = 6$) were combined for the purpose of the statistical analyses. This group was renamed administrators. Data from survey questions were transferred into Excel to conduct the descriptive statistics test using a confidence level of 95 percent. Because of the difference in group sizes (for example, the school-based administrator group had 11 participants, whereas the teacher group had 71 participants), ANOVA (Single Factor) Tests were then conducted with an alpha level of 0.05 to determine any differences in means. The ANOVA (Single Factor) Test was first conducted on three groups together. The Student-Newman Keuls test was then conducted. The purpose of this post-hoc test was to discover the difference between specific groups.

Phase Four: Study Summation and Analysis

Once data results were collected and organized they were analysed through the process of data triangulation (Stake, 2000). Data were collected for this study through documents, observations, interviews, group interviews, and closed- and open-ended questions on surveys. Triangulation involves multiple qualitative and/or quantitative methods of study; if the conclusions from each of the methods are the same, validity has been established (Brantlinger et al., 2005; Guion, 2003). Therefore, triangulation was considered an appropriate strategy of showing the credibility in the analyses of this study.

There are four basic types of triangulation. The first is *data* triangulation, which

involves triangulating time, space, and/or individuals. The second is *investigator* triangulation, using multiple rather than single observers. The third is *theory* triangulation, which requires more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of the phenomenon. Finally, *methodological* triangulation involves more than one method of collecting data (Denzin, 1978). In this study, document collection, interviews, group interviews, and surveys were used to collect data, and methodological triangulation was chosen as the most appropriate means to analyse data (Guion, 2003).

Data from open-ended questions, interviews, and group interviews were integrated, compared and grouped into themes. These data were then compared with data collected from closed-ended questions. Data from the document collection, surveys, interviews, and group interviews were compared to each other to find recurring themes and patterns. Together, this information from participants on effective and ineffective practises was compared to the current provincial and available divisional policies. These analyses were conducted to discover how policy recommendations compared with participants perceptions of effective and ineffective practises.

Establishing Validity

Within all research designs, both qualitative and quantitative, the question of validity arises. This section addresses areas of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability in qualitative studies. Validity and reliability in qualitative studies are explained and related to this study. In addition, the element of researcher bias is described.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is not a scientific design, and therefore, validity is not as easily acquired or confirmed (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). Guba and Lincoln (1999) suggest four criteria for determining the validity of a qualitative research design: credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. The following is a description of how each of the criteria was considered in the qualitative component of this study.

Credibility. Credibility was established through results that were believable from the perspective of the participants involved in the research. To achieve this, once the transcripts of the interviews were completed, they were sent to the interviewees for review. At that time, the interviewees had the opportunity to add, delete, or change any part of their transcript as they saw necessary to clearly represent their voice. The same procedure was followed once the transcripts were completed for the group interviews. Transcripts were sent to all members of the group interviews, again reminding them of their right to add, delete or change anything in their responses, but not in those responses of other members. After participants completed the transcript review, they returned their copies, any changes or additions, and the Transcript Release Form (see Appendix I). By conducting these member checks, the transcripts provided an accurate, credible, and trustworthy representation.

Transferability. Transferability is the degree to which results will generalize or transfer to other contexts or settings. It is the responsibility of the reader to determine to what extent the findings apply to his or her situation. To assist in identifying possible transferability, descriptions of the schools visited, demographics of survey participants,

and policies analysed were included in this study.

Confirmability. Confirmability refers to the extent that the results can be validated by others. In an effort to increase confirmability, again, all participants of interviews and group interviews were given the opportunity to review the completed transcripts for accuracy. Once the Transcript Release Forms were returned, the three-step method (p. 77) was used to analyse documents, interviews, and open-ended questions. An outside auditor, hired by the research supervisor, conducted the final data check.

Dependability. Changes in circumstances may occur during a research period. It is the researcher's responsibility to account for and describe these changes and how they affect the way the results are approached. A researcher's journal was kept during this process and used to describe changes and difficulties experienced throughout this study.

Validity and Reliability of Quantitative Research

The survey questions in the quantitative component of this study were checked through a number of revisions to ensure that careful wording, format, and content increased validity and reliability. Once written clearly and focused on the research questions, a pilot survey was given to four colleagues at the University of Saskatchewan. The survey was revised and a second pilot test was conducted with a group of 10 special educators to ensure the questions were clear and asked what they were intended to ask.

Summary of Validity and Reliability

Survey and interview questions were designed to answer the research questions, thus addressing the three purposes of the study. Appendix H categorizes the survey questions based on each of the research questions. Through several revisions and pilot

tests, reliability and validity were addressed. Interview questions were produced from both the research and survey questions influenced by the interviews and group interviews.

Accounting for Researcher Bias

I have been in the field of disabilities and special education for 29 years and have had the opportunity to see both wonderful work on behalf of the students and parents, as well as what I would consider to be questionable practises. While I was teaching in a program for adult students with LD at a post-secondary educational institute, a new student joined our program. As part of my educational assessment, I called the high school from which this student had recently graduated asking for her assessment records and personal program plan. I received a file that dated back to kindergarten and had a wealth of background information for this student. Not only did it include every assessment the student had taken in her academic years but also all of her personal program plans. This student had been assessed with the utmost care and consideration to her needs both educationally, as well as physically and behaviourally.

The following school year, another student joined our program. She was the same age and had approximately the same disabilities as the former student but had graduated from a different high school. Again, during my assessment, I called her high school for background information. This time I was told that, although this student had been placed in a class for students with special needs, she had not had a personal program plan. When I asked for records of her most recent assessment, I was told that this student had not been assessed. I asked how she could be placed in a class for students with special needs without an assessment, and the teacher quickly answered, “Well, because she’s mentally

retarded.” So I asked, “Without an assessment, how did you come to the conclusion that this student is mentally retarded?” The answer was simply, “Just look at her.”

These are just two examples of the planning differences between secondary programs in the area. As a special educator and advocate for students with special needs, I found it difficult to understand how the basic obligation to an appropriate education in several cases was not offered. Was it the perception of those involved that a personal program plan was no longer necessary, while others believed it was an important educational guide? Had an individualized plan become a document that was written only to fulfil a policy requirement? These were a few of the educational uncertainties from which my research questions and my desire to conduct this research emerged.

It is my belief that students with LD, particularly at the secondary level, slip through the cracks of the educational system. Due to their desire to learn, frustration develops and can present as negative behaviours, thus compounding the issue. It is also my belief that, to maintain consistency and routine, students with special needs, regardless of degree of disability, need a personal program plan when accommodations, adaptations, or modifications are required. Due to this belief, throughout this study I recognized the need to make a constant effort to acknowledge and put aside my biases and assumptions to maintain accuracy and objectivity to the utmost degree possible. Furthermore, colleagues in both special education and educational administration have reviewed the interpretations of this research.

It is my desire that this study articulate the perceptions of the participants in the most respectful and accurate way possible. In my opinion, the best way to affect educational planning for students with LD through this research is by truthfully representing the

individual participants' experiences and resulting perceptions.

Research Ethics

Respect, dignity, and emotional, mental and physical safety should be the utmost priority in all studies involving living beings, and it is necessary to understand and adhere to ethical and legal responsibilities. (See Appendix J for a full review of the ethical procedures of this study, certificate, and external audit.)

The *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (Canadian Tri-Council Policy, 1998) outlined the following principles that guided this research: respect for human dignity; respect for free and informed consent; respect for vulnerable persons; respect for privacy and confidentiality; balancing harms and benefits; minimizing harm and maximizing benefits (pp. i5-i6).

A letter was sent to all participants explaining the research study and consent protocol in order to obtain participation consent. This letter also assured participants that respect, confidentiality, and anonymity would be maintained throughout the study. With respect to confidentiality, school and participant names were not used. Instead, for clarity in writing, pseudonyms were used.

Although there were no anticipated risks or deception in this study, consideration was given to the types of questions asked. It was also the responsibility of the researcher, when designing interview and group interview questions, to carefully weigh possible negative effects against the positive benefits of conducting the study. In cases where an individual disclosed information and later changed his or her mind, the information was removed. In one case, the interviewee later rewrote the transcript of the interview, and the interviewee's version was used for data analysis.

This study also underwent an audit conducted by an outside consultant, chosen and hired by the research supervisor, who reviewed research products maintained in and submitted for this study. This audit established the accuracy of the following records (see Appendix K):

1. Consent and data/transcript release forms signed or attested to by senders' e-mail addresses or researcher's notes.
2. Selection of samples for verification and accuracy of tapes to transcripts and accuracy of quotations in relation to data sources.
3. Accuracy of dissertation chapter references to transcripts and accuracy of references in dissertation to tape transcripts.
4. Inspection of ethics proposal and certificate.

(For a complete review of the ethics guiding this study and the external audit see Appendices J and K.)

Summary

In this chapter, the four phases of this study were identified along with the methods that were used in each phase. Phase one began this study with document analyses of PPP policies from participating secondary programs in the province. The second phase utilized multiple case study methods consisting of interviews, group interviews, and document collection to construct a comprehensive understanding of what is perceived as effective and ineffective PPP policy practises. The third phase surveyed a variety of Saskatchewan educators in secondary programs in order to gain an understanding of perceptions of effective PPP practises in a number of schools in a limited amount of time. Chapter 4 will review and analyse the data collected from policy, and chapter 5 will analyse data from interviews, group interviews, and surveys. Chapter 6 summarizes data and discusses findings and implications.

Chapter 4

Saskatchewan Personal Program Plan Policy and Practises

One of the purposes of this study was to describe and analyze the current PPP provincial and local school policies and/or special education guidelines in Saskatchewan. This chapter describes the Special Education Review Committee's final report, which has guided changes to provincial special education policy. The key changes are specifically expressed in *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), which details the PPP policy. This manual also contains discussion of the findings and recommendations from the Special Education Review Committee and the resulting provincial PPP policy. Division policies and/or guidelines are reviewed and analyzed. In response to the first research question, *In what ways do school division policies align with the provincial PPP policy in The Children's Services Policy Framework (2002)?*, the analysis of provincial and division policies is used to compare the perceptions of current school and classroom practises to current provincial policies, the second purpose of this study.

In the first section of the chapter, policies and/or guidelines are reviewed based on an inductive examination which consists of reviewing each of the school divisions' policies and/or guidelines available at the time of this study (O'Connor & Poffenbarger, 2005). In the second section, policies and/or guidelines are analyzed based on references to legal documents used during policy development (Kouritzin & Mathews, 2002). The third section analyses policies and/or guidelines based on an inter-policy alignment with the provincial PPP policy (O'Connor & Poffenbarger, 2005). Finally, an analysis is

conducted of provincial and division PPP policies and/or guidelines based on the characteristics of an effective policy (School Development Planning Initiative, 1999).

Analyses of Various Saskatchewan School Division Policies and Practises

It must be stressed that there was a range of policies available for analyses. Several of the policies and/or special education guidelines collected for this study were written prior to the current policy manual, and on the other extreme, there were newer policies not yet publicly available at the time of this study. Several schools and divisions were still in the process of developing web sites, while others chose not to place their policies on their web sites. This lack of availability reduced the number of obtainable policies for this study. Also, with the recent amalgamations, newly formed divisions were still in the process of rewriting policies. This section reviews and analyses the available policies and/or guidelines through a descriptive review of each policy, through a comparison of division policies and/or guidelines to reference documents, and to the guidelines and suggestions of the provincial policy. It also compares and analyses policy and/or guidelines against effective policy criteria.

Several school divisions were using the previous term *Individualized Education Plan* (IEP), but these divisions were in the process of changing the term to *Personal Program Plan* (PPP). As indicated in chapters 1 and 2, an IEP and a PPP usually refer to the same document; it is a merely a difference in terms. For clarity in this section and to reduce confusion, the term PPP will be used throughout.

In total, 32 special education policies and/or guidelines, were collected through faxes and web sites. After reviewing the collected policies and/or guidelines the researcher found that seven policies did not pertain to a PPP but instead to areas of professional

development, modified programs, or alternative programs. The remaining 25 policies were PPP policies and/or guidelines. (See Appendix L for a list of division PPP policies and/or guidelines consulted.) Most policies and/or guidelines were summarized due to the length of the division special education manuals. (Only policy and/or guidelines sections that detailed the PPP are included in Appendix L.)

These policies and/or guidelines did not differentiate between elementary and secondary practises. Eleven of the 25 policies and/or guidelines were written after Saskatchewan Learning distributed the current provincial policy manual (2002). Eleven others were written between 1990 and 2001, and three were not dated. The following is a brief description of each of the available school division PPP policies and/or guidelines. These descriptions were used to compare school division policies and/or guidelines to each other and then to the current provincial policy.

School Division A – 2003

This division's PPP was to provide a program that was appropriate to the strengths, needs, and age of a student with special needs. Programming and the PPP followed the regular curriculum as closely as possible in preparation for re-entry into the general classroom.

Based on this policy, the PPP contained personal data including health, vision, hearing, general educational information, and standardized assessment results. It also contained identification of strengths, needs, and learning style preferences, long-term goals and short-term objectives, program description, general adaptations of curriculum, instruction, learning environment, and evaluation. Finally, the PPP contained the date of PPP review team meetings and year-end placement and program recommendations.

To develop the PPP, the resource teacher was to initiate and facilitate a team meeting of involved school personnel to collaboratively write the PPP. It was then to be presented to and signed by the parents, the classroom teacher, the resource teacher, and the principal. As the resource teacher updated the PPP, a copy was to be provided to the classroom teacher and placed in the student's cumulative file. Team meetings were to be held on an ongoing basis, and PPPs were to be updated as required.

School Division B – 2003

The first step outlined in this policy was assessing students with special needs. Once this assessment was complete, and depending on findings, the students were eligible for service based upon the categories listed in the policy, including disabilities that were considered low as well as high incidence. As described in the policy, if the student met the discrepancy criteria for LD, he or she was given a written plan and services were offered. Time spent in the resource room, changes to the regular program, and responsibilities were included in the PPP.

School Division C – 2003

Based on the school system's special education master plan, it was the philosophy of this division to strive to provide the most appropriate educational opportunities for all students. A variety of programs for students with special needs were available based on the students' specific requirements. To accomplish this goal, guidelines were developed for special education programs.

This master plan acknowledged that these students had varying learning needs in addition to diverse levels of educational achievement. To implement effective programs,

competent professional personnel, with appropriate knowledge, training, and experience were required. Further, it was recognized that ongoing special education staff development activities were essential.

Inclusion of the students with special needs in a regular class setting was viewed as the preferred approach, when appropriate. The guidelines recommended that schools develop and maintain supportive and cooperative relationships with other resources and services available in the community and the province. Parents were considered essential.

School Division D – 2003

This policy contained the school board's philosophy of education on the inclusion of students with special needs, although it did not address specific disabilities. The expectations listed in the policy guidelines offered ways in which individualized instruction could be accomplished without a separate program for each student. Individualizing instruction, it was suggested, could be achieved by implementing such methods as units of work, activity stations, student projects, flexible individual learning plans and contracts, providing alternate materials, and adaptations within the regular classroom.

School Division E – 2003

The policies and guiding principles of this division supported a collaborative, supportive, student-centred environment where each student could succeed. This division also recognized the necessity to provide services for students with special needs in the context of a learning community. The policy recommendations were based on best-practise guidelines, which paralleled the effective practises outlined in the provincial

documents. Because of the diverse range of student needs, the division's policies outlined services to be delivered through a collaborative model.

Once the PPP was written, a special educator's responsibilities included observation, analysis of work samples, formal and informal assessments, individual instruction, small group instruction, and co-planning or team-teaching with the regular classroom teacher. A variety of professional learning opportunities, professional development, collegial support, and divisional and regional in-service were offered.

School Division F – 2003

Here the philosophy pertaining to students with special needs was to place them in the most enhancing environment and develop programs that used collaborative and consultative methods. These students included those designated as gifted, as well as those who had physical and/or intellectual disabilities and/or chronic health impairment.

For all students identified as having special needs, placement was decided in consultation with parents or guardians, the student, and other professionals. The coordinator of Student Services, together with other school division personnel, was responsible for monitoring and periodically reviewing the programs of students in special education.

School Division G – 2002

The policy for this division began with the statement that all students with special needs within the division have access to special education programs through direct or consultative service. These programs were also provided for students who had LD. The division supported these programs through a network of resource teachers, teacher aids,

in-service support, and when necessary, alternate and modified programs in regular classrooms. In each school, the resource teacher functioned in a supporting role and worked collaboratively with the classroom teacher. The resource teacher was also involved in the delivery of programs through direct service or consultation with the classroom teacher and teacher assistants.

School Division H – 2002

This brief policy was written after the provincial policy manual was released. It simply stated that the school board attempted to accommodate and provide alternate program placements for all students with special needs in accordance with the *Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995). Reference to particular disabilities or the PPP was not found or was unavailable.

School Division I – 2002

Based on the policy for this division, the development of a PPP served the purposes of supporting program planning for all students with special needs. It also provided a framework for planning collaboratively with the classroom teacher, parents, and other members of the inter-disciplinary team. It served as a document to ensure the reflective review of and necessary revisions to the student's program. The PPP supported transition between grades and schools, guided personnel who were new to the school, established a record of the service, and provided accountability.

Guidelines for developing the PPP included collaboratively identifying student's needs and abilities, establishing goals and objectives, selecting appropriate strategies and activities, and evaluating and revising the plan. Key participants were parents, the

classroom teacher, learning assistance teacher, administrators, paraprofessionals, and when appropriate, the student. When necessary, the extended team also included the system administrator and specialists or resource personnel from related support services at the school division or community level. The guidelines also suggested that the PPP include pertinent personal and educational data, the student's strengths and needs, long-term goals and short-term objectives, and instructional strategies and resources. Finally, it was suggested that the PPP include the assignment of responsibility, implementation of appropriate technology and equipment, transition planning, process for review, and evaluation of the plan.

School Division J – 2002

Written to guide the special education services, this policy included modified, alternative, functional, and locally developed programs. Although it detailed who team members were expected to be and that approval from parents must be sought, it did not specify for whom these programs were written. The policy stated that the school division was to have a Special Education Master Plan that coincided with the Saskatchewan Education Special Education Policies and *Directions for Diversity* (2000) document. This master plan was not publicly available.

School Division K – 2002

This special education guideline manual, as with other division policies based on *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) for PPPs, was a detailed description of every component necessary in developing and implementing PPPs for students with special needs. Students with a learning disability were among the

students who received a PPP.

As outlined in this manual, PPPs should contain personal and educational data, program description, identification of strengths, needs, and learning style preferences, long-term goals and short-term objectives, general adaptations of curriculum, instruction, learning environment, and evaluation, and a PPP review date. The PPP was developed collaboratively with a team approach including the classroom teacher, special educator, parents, and other professionals as deemed necessary. Information from the PPP and the progress of the student was regularly shared with all personnel involved.

School Division L – 2001

Members of this division stated their belief that all students were entitled to instruction at their level of learning ability. A Special Education Master Plan was developed to augment the educational delivery and the PPPs. Students with LD were included among those listed to receive a PPP. Categories of services and the students for whom they were designed were listed in this policy guide, but the Special Education Master Plan detailing each of these categories was not made available.

School Division M – 2000

In this school division, once assessments were complete, a team consisting of the provincial consultant, classroom teacher, resource room teacher, school principal, parents or guardians, and instructional assistant designed a relevant PPP. When age appropriate, the student was also part of the team.

According to this division's special education guidelines, the PPP should include a statement of present educational function outlining the strengths and weaknesses, as well

as the amount of inclusion, annual goals and short-term objectives to assist and evaluate progress, and a list of required materials or programs. The PPP should be reviewed at least annually. Communication between the home and school was emphasized and encouraged. If a student required the Adaptive Dimension to be applied in certain subject areas for successful inclusion, the adaptations and assessment procedures were documented. Copies of these adaptation sheets were given to the individual teachers and were filed in the student's cumulative record. In addition to the annual full review, re-assessments were conducted upon teacher request to determine whether objectives were being achieved or whether alternative programs were necessary.

These guidelines also included a statement of authority. The authors of this manual stated that the special education consultant and educational psychologist might make recommendations but did not have authority to enforce compliance. In addition, although most teachers were willing to try alternatives and apply the Adaptive Dimension, principals had the authority to insist that teachers attempt the changes.

School Division N – 2000

In cases where students' educational programs required modifications beyond the Adaptive Dimension, this division's PPPs were written to guide the implementation of specific programs and services and were used as a basis for ongoing evaluation and program adjustment. The plans were developed collaboratively by the classroom or referring teacher, special education resource teacher, principal or designate, parent or guardian, and the student when age appropriate. This PPP was reviewed in collaborative consultations as frequently as necessary but at least annually.

The PPP included identifying information, names of the education team,

present level of functioning (including instructional levels, strengths, and areas of concern), and health information. The PPP also included long-term goals and short-term objectives, a description of the program, strategies and materials, and a record of assessment results, planning meetings, and parent conferences.

School Division O – 1999

This policy did not specify for whom PPPs were written. However, it did state that special education programs were established based upon one or more of the following criteria: a demonstrated need, the requirements stated in *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995), or as an innovative program. In consultation with the principals, parents or guardians, and other board of education personnel, students were assigned to programs in special education. The coordinator of student services, in cooperation with the principal, other board of education personnel, and parents or guardians, initiated and facilitated the inclusion of students with special needs who were identified for inclusion into regular classes. The coordinator of student services was then responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

School Division P – 1998

This policy and its regulations did not specifically discuss the PPP but described what was expected of students with sensory defects, intellectual challenges, communication disorders, neurological, orthopaedic, or physical impairments, or behavioural disorders. Special instructional programs were designed to meet the requirements of all students with special needs to the extent permitted by the resources of the division. The policy also specified that the child must meet criteria to be designated as high cost.

School Division Q – 1995

The principles supporting this program were based on the premise that every child was exceptional, and the goal was to have every child's educational needs met in the least restrictive environment. The policy outlined what was expected when a student had special needs.

The guidelines describing program and PPP expectations were minimal and stated only that the policy should include students who required a special plan to meet their needs. These needs were related to a physical or cognitive disability or combination of these, occurring in various degrees, and to gifted pupils. The results of assessments, which were to be carried out by qualified personnel, were shared with individuals involved with the student. The board of education was responsible for the determination of student placement, and the director designated high-cost students and funding.

Parents were consulted and informed at all stages of identification, referral, assessment placement, educational planning, and evaluation. When parents disagreed with the identification or placement, or the failure to identify or to place a student with special needs, they had the right to a formal appeal.

School Division R – 1994

This older policy was based on the idea of following the continuum of placements with a commitment to include students with special needs as much as possible with the rest of the school population. The division also recognized that students could have a wide range of special educational needs, possibly requiring a variety of educational settings, supports and services, and degrees of inclusion, all of which could change over a time.

Once the student was assessed, the appropriate program was implemented. This might be regular, a modified, or an alternate program, or in some cases a combination which allowed the student to learn according to particular learning needs.

Students who received services and individualized programming included those with mental retardation, learning disabilities, sensory impairments, communication disorders, orthopaedic and physical disability, chronic health disorders, or giftedness. A team approach was encouraged through policy involving the classroom teacher, resource teacher, school administration, support staff, and parents, to develop and guide designation, programming, instruction, and evaluation of exceptional students. Once the plan was written, the classroom teacher was responsible for the appropriate programming, instruction and evaluation of students in the classroom.

School Division S – 1993

This policy was also older than the provincial policy and many details were not given. The guidelines simply stated that each student had unique educational needs, and the board of education expected the teacher to make every reasonable effort to individualize instruction whenever it was in the best interests of the student. Individualized instruction did not necessarily mean separate programs for every student. It was recognized that inclusion in the general classroom was valuable. Grade level promotion procedures had to reflect the principle of individualization of instruction and the program was expected to continue as long as necessary.

School Division T – 1992

Procedures for the designation and placement of students followed the legislation,

regulations, and policies as recommended by the Saskatchewan Department of Education (1992) and included students from kindergarten to twenty-one years of age. Early and ongoing identification and programming was emphasized for students with special needs. When possible, these were conducted within the regular school curriculum with the aid of resource room teachers or teacher assistants. The director of education was responsible for recommending the facilities and materials necessary to provide opportunities for the students.

School Division U – 1991

This policy placed students in the least restrictive environment and supported the process of inclusion of students with special needs. The provision of special programs, facilities, and services were offered as recommended by the director of education. Within this division, alternative education programs were offered to provide cognitively challenged, low-ability students, and low-achieving students with the opportunity to successfully complete a recognized school program in an inclusive setting. Specific goals included preventing early school leaving, providing appropriate opportunities for academic success, upgrading basic skills, increasing students' self-esteem, and vocational training.

School Division V – 1990

It was the view of this school division that every student should be capable of proceeding through the school curriculum based on individual abilities and that most students could achieve the academic goals and expectations.

Guidelines to this policy stated that placement was on an individual basis. Although

academic achievement was the focus, it was not to be the sole basis when considering promotion, retention, or program modification. Chronological age, social and physical maturity, attendance pattern, ability, grade level, and number of previous retentions were considered in grade promotion and retention, but emphasis should be on prevention of failure. If the student was not making adequate progress, immediate and intensive assistance should be provided and followed by classroom changes in instruction. Any alterations to the normal progression through grade levels must be documented. Information would be gathered by the regional shared services personnel, the special education and classroom teachers, and in consultation with the parent or guardian.

School Division W – No Date

The special education guidelines available from this division were written as appropriate special education practises and services. The resource room teacher was responsible for assessments through formal and informal testing, classroom observation, and interviews with teachers and parents. Next, meetings with the classroom teacher established long- and short-term programs for the students in the resource room. The resource room teacher was responsible for writing and keeping a PPP and describing the remedial programs being offered for each student. This teacher also provided individual or small group instruction and designed, coordinated, and monitored programs for designated students in need of long-term alternative programming.

School Division X – No Date

Based on this division's special education manual, PPPs were developed for students with special needs and students who were retained in a grade. The PPP was also written

for students who regularly needed resource room assistance. Parents and students must be fully aware of resource room help, adaptive curriculum, as well as modified or alternate programs. PPPs included: personal data, a summary of assessment, analysis of strengths and weaknesses, long-term goals and short-term objectives, assignment of responsibility, program schedule, strategies, materials, evaluation procedures, and a review date.

School Division Y – No Date

Although this educational manual detailed expectations and programming, it did not specifically outline different programs for particular disabilities. It also did not state for whom these plans were written or how they were written. It did, however, discuss diverse learning needs. Differentiated programming options were encouraged to meet the requirements of various levels of giftedness, needs, and interests. Flexible methods of scheduling time, forming groupings, providing alternative environments, and offering a variety of activities were among options suggested. Reviewing programs and student achievement at the school and classroom level was used as means to ensure students had the placements and opportunities necessary to be successful.

Summary of Inductive School Division Review

For the purpose of this study, 25 school division policies or special education guidelines were collected between December 2003 and May 2004. The current Saskatchewan policy manual was published September 2002. Eleven of the 25 school division policies or special education guidelines were written after the current provincial policy manual was distributed. Of these 11, 9 had similar components to each other, as well as to the provincial policy. Of the 11 newest, Division H did not offer a detailed

policy. Instead, it stated that the school board would attempt to accommodate and provide alternate program placements for all students with special needs in accordance with the *Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995) and related board policy. The other 10 recently developed policies offered clear guidelines for implementation.

Eleven school division policies and/or guidelines were written between 1990 and 2001 (predating *The Children's Services Policy Framework*, 2002). The majority of these had detailed descriptions of expectations and implementation processes. Three policies were not dated but offered detailed descriptions of expectations and procedures for implementation. Given the details offered in the school division guidelines, effective implementation could be carried out.

Analysis of Policies and/or Guidelines and Legal References

Although this is not a review and analysis of all 79 Saskatchewan school division PPP policies, the available 25 policies and/or guidelines reflected a variety of views and practises in the areas of special education, PPPs, and students with special needs. The purpose of this analysis is to detail and understand the documents used when creating the provincial PPP policy and school division PPP policies.

The Education Act (1995) was publicly available at the time that 16 school division policies were developed. *The Education Regulations* (1986) was publicly available when 21 of the school division policies were created. Three policies were not dated. Therefore, whether a school division policy was written before or after the current provincial policy was created, *The Education Regulations* (1986) and *The Education Act* (1995) were available for referencing. Considering the recommendation to develop consistency across school divisions (Saskatchewan Learning, 2000), the following analyzes congruity in

policy development (Table 4.1).

Referenced Documents

The differences found among the policies and/or guidelines collected include reference documents used while creating the policy. A variety of documents were used in the division policies and/or guidelines, while some referenced *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), others referenced *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995), *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986), or had no references listed.

References to The Education Act

Section 186 of *The Education Act*, (Saskatchewan Education, 1995) (see Appendix M) is one of the most commonly cited sections when discussing special needs, because it is this section that defines the education of students with disabilities (Table 4.1).

Subsection 178 (1) defines a student with disabilities as a student who is unable to participate at an optimal level in the regular program of the school because of inabilities due to physical, mental, behavioural, or communication disorders. Subsection 178(2) clarifies for whom services are provided and when alternative educational situations should be offered.

The process of referral and educational alterations is described in section 178 (Saskatchewan Education, 1995). This section states that every student will be provided with a program of instruction consistent with the student's educational needs and abilities.

Table 4.1*Legal References Extant in Selected Division Special Education Policies*

| Provincial Policy | | References |
|---|--------------|---|
| 2002 – Children’s Services Policy Framework | | Section 146; subsections 178(1), (2); clauses 142(1)(b), 178(6)(b), 231(2)(a), (b), (c) of The Ed. Act, 1995, S.S. 1995, c.E-0.2 Subsections 52(1) and 50(5) of The Ed. Reg., 1986, c.E-0.1 Reg 1 |
| Dated Division | Policy Guide | References |
| 2003 – Division A | X | Children’s Services Ed. Act 144(1),178(1); Ed. Reg. 52(1), 52(9) |
| 2003 – Division B | X | No legal references found |
| 2003 – Division C | | X No legal references found |
| 2003 – Division D | X | No legal reference found |
| 2003 – Division E | X | Ed. Act 185, 186, 187 |
| 2003 – Division F | X | Ed. Act 146, 178, 186 |
| 2002 – Division G | X | No legal references found |
| 2002 – Division H | X | Ed. Act Sec. 142 |
| 2002 – Division I | X | Children’s Services |
| 2002 – Division J | X | No legal references found |
| 2002 – Division K | | X No legal references found |
| 2001 – Division L | X | Special Ed. Manual |
| 2001 – Division M | | X No legal reference found |
| 2000 – Division N | X | Ed. Act. Sec I 78, 86; Ed. Reg. 48-52 |
| 1999 – Division O | X | No legal reference found |
| 1998 – Division P | X | Ed. Act 146, 178, 186, 187, Ed. Reg. 48-52; |
| 1995 – Division Q | X | Ed. Act 141, 143, 146, 186.1(1)(b); Ed. Reg. 48, 50.1, 51, 52 |
| 1994 – Division R | X | Ed. Act 145; 178(1)(A)(B); 184; 190 |
| 1993 – Division S | X | Ed. Act 169 (1)(2), 170 (2), 171, 178 |
| 1992 – Division T | X | Special Ed. Manual |
| 1991 – Division U | X | No legal reference found |
| 1990 – Division V | X | Ed. Act 175(j), 227(j) and (p) |

Note. Three divisions had guidelines, but neither date of origin nor legal references were found in these documents.

All other sections referenced in both *The Children’s Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) and division policies specify the right to an education (section 141) in the home neighbourhood that is age and level appropriate (section 142,

and 145), funding responsibilities (sections 146, 169, and 171); vocational education (section 185), programs for gifted students (section 187); responsibilities of the principal (section 175) and teachers (section 231) (Saskatchewan Education). Each of these sections is a component detailed in a PPP for students with special needs.

References to The Education Regulations

Whereas *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995) defines the meaning of disability, *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986) categorize each of the disabilities based on specific criteria (see Appendix N). The term “high-cost student” is commonly used and refers to a student with a moderate to severe disability who requires appropriate special educational services, meets the criteria specified in section 49 (Saskatchewan Education, 1986), and is identified with a high-cost disability based on section 50 or 51 (Saskatchewan Education, 1986). A “low-cost disability” refers to a student with a mild to moderate disabling condition who requires appropriate special educational services but does not meet the criteria for identification with a high-cost disability. Subsection 50(5) (Saskatchewan Education, 1986) states that the special education program be reviewed annually.

Based on section 52 (Saskatchewan Education, 1986), it is the responsibility of the board of education to make available free of cost, appropriate special education services for students with special needs, including special schools and classrooms, resource rooms, and itinerant and tutorial programs. It is also the responsibility of the board to provide students access to the least restrictive program. Finally, the board must ensure that the services described above are offered by staff with special training acceptable to the minister and to provide special instructional materials, facilities, and if necessary,

reduce the student-teacher ratio.

Given the availability of these sections of *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986), one would expect to find them referenced in school division policies guided by the Education Act and to find these services offered to students with special needs in Saskatchewan secondary programs. The following section reviews *The Education Regulations* and references found in the school division policies.

Policy References

The current provincial policy was written with references to the recommendations of the review committee, section 146; subsections 178(1) and (2); clauses 142(1)(b), 178(6)(b), 231(2)(a), (b), and (c) of *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995) and subsections 52(1) and 50(5) of *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986).

School division policies referenced the following sections and subsections of *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995), and *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986). School Division A had a detailed plan that contained recommendations and guidelines much like that of the provincial policy. It was written with reference to the current provincial policy as well as sections 144(1) and 178(1) of *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995) and sections 52(1) and (9) of *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986). Division I also referenced *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) but did not make reference to either *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995) or *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986).

School Divisions E, F, and H did not reference the current provincial policy, but Division E sited sections 185, 186, and 187 of *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995). These sections outline vocational education, special education programs, and programs for gifted students, respectively. Section 186 (Saskatchewan Education) specifies special education programs and those responsible for the consultation and planning but does not specify levels of disabilities for which programming was developed. School Division F listed sections 146, 178, and 186 of *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education). Sections 146 and 178 (Saskatchewan Education) were mentioned in the provincial policy section, and 178 (Saskatchewan Education) was referenced in Division A's policy. School Division H named only section 142 of *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education). This section pertained to funding and was also referred to in the provincial policy.

The PPP policies and/or guidelines of school Divisions B, C, D, G, and K were written after the publication of the provincial policy; however, these policies did not include references to the provincial policy, *The Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995) or *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986).

Summary of Referenced Documents

Saskatchewan Special Education Review Committee (2000) recommended developing consistency across school divisions. After reviewing the legal documents referenced when developing each of the school division policies, consistency was not apparent. Given the differences in legal document references, an inter-policy analysis based on the PPP recommendations and guidelines of the provincial policy was undertaken in the following section.

Policy and Guidelines Alignment Analyses Based on the Provincial Policy

Saskatchewan Learning has reviewed the findings and recommendations of the Special Education Review Committee and, together with *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995) and *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986), developed the PPP policy. This section contains the analyses of the school division PPP policies as they compare to the current provincial policy.

According to *The Children's Service Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), the PPP is based on the student's strengths and needs and developed for each student who requires continuing special education interventions and individualized supports to participate in and benefit from the educational program. It is also designed for students identified for individual funding. This section begins with a description of the provincial policy and each of the recommended sections of the PPP based on this policy. A comparison of provincial policy and school division policy PPP components follows (see Table 4.2).

Based on the provincial policy (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), it was recommended that a PPP be written to include the following: the identification of student abilities, needs, and interests; establishment of goals and objectives; selection of appropriate strategies and activities; and ongoing evaluation and revision. The provincial policy guidelines also recommended that the PPP include adaptations to instruction.

It was suggested that the following be included in the PPP: assessment methods, process for reporting progress, assignment of responsibility, appropriate support services, implementation of appropriate technology and equipment, transition planning, and a process for review, evaluation, and updating of the PPP (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002).

Table 4.2*Division PPP Policies Compared to Provincial PPP Policy (School Divisions A-L)*

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.Students | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Low-cost | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | - |
| b. High-cost | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | - |
| 2. PPP | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. abilities | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | X | X | X |
| b. goals/objectives | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | - | X | - | X | X |
| c. strategies | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | - | X | - | X | X |
| d. evaluation | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | X | X | X |
| 3. Suggested | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. background | X | - | - | X | X | - | - | - | X | - | X | X |
| b. strengths/needs | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | X | X | X |
| c. goals/objectives | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | X | X | X |
| d. adaptations | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | - | X | - | X | X |
| e. assessment | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | X | X | X |
| f. progress rep. | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | - | X | X | X | X |
| g. responsibility | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | - | X | X |
| h. services | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | - | X | - | X | X |
| i. tech/equip | X | - | X | X | X | - | X | - | X | - | X | X |
| j. transition | X | - | X | X | X | - | - | - | X | - | X | X |
| k. review | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | X | X | X |
| 4. Team | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | - | X | X |

Note. "X" indicates where the division policies contain the provincial PPP policy recommendation and suggestions.

Table 4.2 (Continued)*Division PPP Policies Compared to Provincial PPP Policy (School Divisions M-Y)*

| | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.Students | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Low-cost | - | X | - | - | X | - | X | X | - | - | X | X | X |
| b. High-cost | X | X | - | - | X | - | X | X | - | X | X | X | X |
| 2. PPP | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. abilities | - | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| b. goals/objectives | X | X | - | X | X | X | - | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| c. strategies | X | X | - | X | - | - | - | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| d. evaluation | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 3. Suggested | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. background | X | X | - | - | - | X | - | X | X | X | X | - | X |
| b. strengths/needs | X | X | - | - | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| c. goals/objectives | - | X | - | - | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| d. adaptations | - | X | - | - | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| e. assessment | - | X | X | - | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| f. progress rep. | - | X | X | - | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| g. responsibility | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| h. services | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| i. tech/equip | X | X | X | - | - | - | X | X | - | X | X | X | X |
| j. transition | X | X | - | - | - | - | - | X | X | X | - | X | X |
| k. review | X | X | X | - | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 4. Team | X | X | X | X | X | - | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |

Note. "X" indicates where the division policies contain the provincial PPP policy recommendation and suggestions.

The provincial policy recommended that the planning and writing of a PPP be completed through collaboration with parents, classroom and resource room teachers, teacher assistant, and if necessary, the principal. For students with substantial needs an extended team might include a system administrator and specialists or resource personnel from related support services at the school division or community level (pp. V.4.1i-V.4.1iii).

The above recommended and suggested guidelines (Saskatchewan Learning 2002) for developing a PPP were offered and available provincially. These provincial guidelines (see Appendix O) were used as a comparison to the PPP components described in each of the 25 school division policies (Table 4.2).

The Students Requiring a PPP

The first component of the PPP specifies the student for whom this policy applies. Low-cost students referred to those who did not receive designated funding but still required ongoing special education services, such as those with LD. Eighteen of the 25 school division policies and/or guidelines (A – K, N, Q, S, T, and W–Y) either specified that a PPP should be written for students with LD or for students who required continuing services.

Twenty of the 25 school division policies and/or guidelines specified that PPPs were required for students who were high cost and received designated funding. Keeping in mind that the new policy was released in 2002, the school division policies and/or guidelines L through U were written before the provincial policy was published. In comparison, all of the school division policies written since 2002 specified students with low-cost or high-cost needs needing a PPP.

Recommended Components

The second section of Table 4.2 compares the basic student information recommended by provincial policy to be included in all PPPs including the student's ability, goals and objectives, strategies used in the classroom, and the process for review and evaluation. This information was recommended in the policy and also *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986). Divisions A through E included all of these areas in their PPP; they were also five of the six newest policies and/or guidelines written.

Policies for school Division F through J, with the exclusion of G and I, were also written after the provincial policy was released but did not include areas such as goals, objectives and strategies. School Division H chose not to build in any of this information in their policy, and Division J included only the student's abilities and evaluation as necessary information.

School division policies and/or guidelines K, L, N, T, U, V, W, X, and Y entered all information as recommended. However, the last three policies did not include dates. Divisions K through S incorporated student abilities and an evaluation process but focused less on goals and objectives and did not take account of strategies used in the classroom or resource room.

Suggested Components

The next section compares the suggested components of a PPP. This is a more detailed section of a PPP and requires more specific information about the students and their daily activities. This information includes background information, strengths and needs, goals and objectives, adaptations used, assessment, progress reports,

responsibility, services offered, technology and equipment, transition plans, and a process to review the plan. Again school Divisions A through E included all these areas in their policies and/or guidelines, except in one area where Division B did not include background information technology and equipment or a transition plan. School Division C also did not include background information and school Divisions H and J did not mention these categories.

Most school divisions included information such as strengths and needs, goals and objectives, assessment, progress reports, responsibility, services offered, technology and equipment, and a process to review the plan. Adaptations were not a component in 6 of the policies and transition plans were not a component in 11 of the policies. Background information was included in only 14 of the 25 school divisions. This section of a PPP would be of great importance to its design, and will be discussed further in the following chapter.

The Collaborative Team

The collaborative team was considered an important part of the special education programming process in *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995), and *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986). It was apparently equally important to the divisions, as PPPs were developed and implemented as a collaborative team in 22 school division policies.

Summary of the Policy and/or Guidelines Analysis

Given that 17 of the 25 school division policies and/or guidelines contained all of the

provincial PPP policy components, with a total of 24 school division policies having all or most of the recommended components, school division policies appeared to be based on the provincial policy current at the time of their development. At the school division level, consistency was discovered in PPP policies. It would then follow that consistency in PPP development and implementation across the schools located in these divisions could be achieved as recommended by the Special Education Review Committee. The following section will analyse the provincial and divisions effective PPP policies.

External Analysis of Provincial and Division PPP Policies

The external analysis (see Table 4.3) was based on the following characteristics of an effective policy: clearly structured, concise and specific, written in jargon-free language; consistent with the school's statement of mission, vision, and aims; clearly framed intentions that indicate requirements of the implementers; unambiguous direction with room for professional judgement; outlines policy monitoring; produced through collaboration and consultation; owned by the staff and evident in practise; and accessible to all interested parties. Each of the available division policies was rated using the codes of Meets Criteria (M), Partially Meets Criteria (P), Does Not Meet Criteria (N), Unspecified in Policy (U), and Not Observed (NO).

The policies were rated according to criteria for effectiveness by the researcher and a colleague. Ninety percent agreement was found between raters. For the remaining 10 percent, agreement was found through in-depth discussion and negotiation.

Table 4.3*Analysis of Effective Policy Criteria and School Division Policies*School
Division

Policy Criteria

M - Meets criteria P - Partially meets criteria N - Does not meet criteria U - Unspecified in policy
NO - Not Observed

| | Is clearly structured, concise, and specific | Is consistent with the mission and vision | Presents a clear framework of intentions | Provides unambiguous direction and guidance and professional freedom | Outlines how the policy will be monitored | Was created through collaboration | Is owned by the staff and evident in practise | Was made accessible to all interested parties |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| A | M | M | M | M | U | U | NO | M |
| B | M | M | M | M | U | U | NO | M |
| C | M | M | M | M | U | U | NO | M |
| D | M | M | M | M | U | M | NO | M |
| E | M | M | M | M | U | M | NO | M |
| F | M | M | M | M | U | M | M | M |
| G | M | M | M | M | U | M | NO | M |
| H | N | N | N | N | U | N | NO | M |
| I | M | M | M | M | U | M | NO | M |
| J | M | U | U | N | N | U | NO | M |
| K | M | M | M | M | U | M | NO | M |
| L | M | M | M | M | U | M | NO | M |
| M | M | M | M | M | U | M | NO | M |
| N | M | M | M | M | U | M | NO | M |
| O | N | M | N | M | U | U | NO | M |
| P | M | M | M | M | M | M | NO | M |
| Q | N | M | N | P | U | U | NO | M |
| R | N | U | N | U | U | U | NO | M |
| S | P | M | N | P | U | U | NO | M |
| T | M | M | N | P | U | U | NO | M |
| U | M | M | M | M | U | M | NO | M |
| V | M | M | P | M | U | M | NO | M |
| W | P | M | M | M | U | M | NO | M |
| X | M | M | M | M | U | M | NO | M |
| Y | M | M | M | M | U | M | NO | M |

Structured and Concise Policies

Based on the criteria, an effective policy would be written with clearly structured, concise, and specific language that is jargon-free. Nineteen of the 25 school divisions met this criterion in that they were clearly written and could be easily understood and followed by those who read them. School Divisions H, O, Q, and R, however, did not meet this criterion. Their policies did not describe the intended implementation in a clear manner. For example, School Division Q discussed individualized planning and

instruction but did not detail how this was to be accomplished. The wording allowed for school decision-making but did not give guidance toward planning decisions. School Division H simply stated that the board would attempt to accommodate and provide alternate placements for all students with special needs. It did not describe how or what placements would be made, nor did it describe possible choices before making alternate placement decisions.

School Divisions S and W partially met the criterion of structured and concise policies in that they described what was expected but did not offer guidelines. School Division S, for example, stated that the school board recognized the need for students with disabilities to be taught in the least restrictive environment and offered specific goals such as increased self-esteem and preventing early school leaving, but did not offer guidelines or procedures towards these goals.

Overall the policies were structured and concise. For example, School Division F had the policy, recommendations, and procedures detailed to an extent that any interested individual would understand the intention and means of implementation. Such policies left no area of confusion.

Missions and Policies

Twenty-two of the 25 policies and/or guidelines stated that the programs and procedures were consistent with the mission and beliefs of their respective divisions. Again, the policy for Division H was very short and left a great deal open for interpretation or self-directed implementation. It did not discuss the mission, vision, aims, or beliefs of the division.

Framework of Intentions

Seventeen of the 25 school division policies and/or guidelines offered a clear framework of the intentions, implementation, and outcomes. For example, School Division A stated that PPPs “are developed for any student who is identified as high cost as well as students with a learning disability whose program is deemed by the Education Team to be significantly different from the regular program” (School Division A, 2003). It outlined the contents of the PPP, such as background and general education information and records of assessments. In addition to describing the sections of the PPP, it explained the processes for its distribution, implementation, updating, and monitoring. The remaining 16 divisions had similar descriptions and details.

School Divisions V partially met these requirements, in that it outlined the procedures but did not offer full descriptions of its program. School Divisions H, O, Q, R, S, and T did not meet this criterion. School Division Q, for example, stated:

While children in schools are grouped for the purposes of instruction, each child has unique educational needs. The Board of Education expects that every reasonable effort will be made by the teacher to individualize instruction whenever it is considered to be in the best interests of the individual child.

The policy described the individualized instruction and student promotion but did not offer a framework toward the implementation of individualized instruction nor of the policy itself. School Division R briefly described placement and individualized instruction but did not offer a structure for decision-making and PPP planning. It referred to both the legislation and Saskatchewan Department of Education (now Saskatchewan Learning) as frameworks of expectations.

Direction with Guidance

Based on this criterion, an effective policy provides unambiguous direction and guidance while leaving room for professional judgement. All the divisions left room for professional judgement but not all provided initial direction. School Division H's policy was very basic and stated that accommodations and adaptations would be offered to students with special needs but did not offer direction for these accommodations and adaptations.

School Divisions Q, S, and T partially met the criterion. Each of their policies outlined what was expected sufficiently for an individual to implement the PPP but professional judgment would be necessary throughout. For example, both school Divisions S and T failed to offer direction for meeting their described goals. Therefore, professional judgement in decision-making during placement and PPP scheduling would be necessary.

Twenty school division policies and/or guidelines offered detailed direction for implementation while still allowing for individualized decision making at each stage of the process.

Policy Monitoring

This principle expects an effective policy to outline how it will be monitored. Although policies described monitoring and revising plans and programs, only one of the policies (School Division P) described the processes for monitoring and revising the policy itself. This criterion may have been met in general sections of the division manuals, but it was not met within the policies themselves.

Collaboration and Consultation

Collaboration and consultation were cornerstones of provincial PPP policy in the development of its manual, as well as processes within the policy itself. Fifteen of the 25 school divisions also described the development of procedures through collaboration. During the interview with the special educator at school Division F, it was learned that this special educator and those from three neighbouring divisions regularly met to review and redesign implementation procedures to best meet the changing needs of their students.

School Divisions A, B, C, J, O, Q, R, S, and T did not specify the process of collaboration and consultation. It cannot be assumed that the policy was not developed in a collaborative or consultative manner, only that it was not so stated.

Staff Ownership

Staff ownership was a criterion that could not be analysed from the written policy; however, it must be identified through interviews, group interviews, and surveys. Therefore, this criterion will be discussed in further detail in chapter 5.

Accessibility of the Policy

The final analysis of effective policy is its accessibility to the individuals it will effect. As Jordan (2000) commented, effective programming cannot be achieved through legislature or policy shifts. Simply writing an effective plan will not create effective practises. School division policies need to be accessible, understood, and reflect the best interest of the student. All programs were considered accessible because they were publicly available.

Once *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) was completed, it was distributed to provincial school divisions and placed on the Saskatchewan Learning Special Education Unit web site. Whether or not this constitutes communicating the policy, it has been publicly accessible since the fall of 2002.

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, some policies were placed on division or school web sites; others were not. Each of the school divisions reviewed in this section was accessible, not only to individuals involved in the particular school divisions, but to any individual interested in division policies. Therefore, all of the 25 school divisions met this criterion. Policies not used in this section did not meet this criterion as they were not accessible.

Effective Policy and Guidelines Summary

The criteria used for this analysis states that an effective policy is clearly structured, concise, and specific and was consistent with the school's statement of mission, vision, and aims. The criteria also state that an effective policy presents a clear framework of intentions that indicates what is required of the implementers. While providing unambiguous direction, it leaves room for professional judgement. The effective policy should be a product of collaboration and consultation, owned by the staff and evident in practise, and accessible to all interested parties. Effective policies also contain an outline of the monitoring process (School Development Planning Initiative, 1999). One criterion could not be properly analysed (*It is owned by the staff and evident in practise*) in this section as it requires information gathered from site visits and surveys.

Based on the criteria of effective policy design, the majority of the PPP policies reviewed were competently written. In addition, school division PPP policies were found

to be based on the provincial guidelines. Given the expectations that effectively written PPP policies would yield effective PPP plans, together with the consistency found among school divisions, it would follow that classrooms would reflect successful PPP implementation.

To analyse an effective policy would be to understand it from the perspective of those who implement it on a daily basis. The analysis of the extent that PPP policies, both provincial and divisional, have been accessible, communicated, understood, and were effective will follow in Chapters Five and Six with the discussion of PPP policy in practise.

Summary

In this chapter the development of the current PPP policy was described, followed by a discussion of the findings and recommendations from the Special Education Review Committee (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000) and the resulting provincial PPP policy. Available school division PPP policies and/or guidelines were first described through an internal examination, followed by an analysis based on the use of legal references, inter-policy alignment with the provincial policy, and an external analysis of provincial and division PPP policies.

In response to the first research question, *In what ways do school division policies align with the provincial PPP policy in The Children's Services Policy Framework (2002)?* The internal examination found that the majority of the division policies and/or guidelines contained similar information and recommendations. However, this examination also found that policies were not consistent throughout each section recommended by the provincial policy. The comparative analysis of division policies

and/or guidelines to the legal references revealed that the newer division policies contained most of the recommended components stipulated in the current provincial policy. Several of the older policy documents contained policy expressions that might opportune misunderstanding by the intended users. Overall policies and/or guidelines were written in a competent manner, based on the eight criteria assigned to analyse effectiveness.

After analysing PPP policies by comparing school divisions to each other, to the provincial policy, and with other legal documents, the researcher found that newer policies and guidelines were consistent among Saskatchewan school division PPP policies, with the provincial policy (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), with *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995), and with *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986). The effective use of the PPP policies for students with LD, based on the perceptions of key participants, is explored in the following chapters.

Chapter 5

Stakeholder Perceptions of Effective and Ineffective PPP Practises

The purposes of this study were threefold: to describe and analyze the current Saskatchewan provincial and local school policies with respect to Personal Program Plan; to compare key stakeholders' perceptions of current school and classroom practises to current provincial policies; and to explore the perceptions of selected stakeholders in relation to effective and ineffective PPP practises for students with LD.

In chapter 4, the first phase of the study, the review and analyses of the provincial and school division PPP policies and/or guidelines provided an overview of the PPP policy expectations for the special education programs in the province. School division PPP policies were found to be consistent when compared to other provincial school division policies and to the provincial policy.

This chapter begins with a description of the site visit schools and follows with the sample of the schools to which the surveys were sent. In this chapter, the second phase (multiple case study) and third phase (the survey) of this study are presented and described. Next, the quantitative data from the survey results are discussed. Finally, the survey data and the multiple case study findings are triangulated to provide a description of perceived effective PPP practises.

Setting Up the Study

In February 2004, a letter was sent to 79 school division directors in the province requesting permission to conduct research on the topic of PPP implementation for students with learning disabilities (LD) in the inclusive classroom. The letter detailed the

study and requested permission to conduct a site visit and/or survey. The initial hope was to visit six schools and survey individuals in 20 schools.

During the initial set-up period for this study, communication with division directors, principals, and special educators was an interesting task. School division directors showed a great deal of interest in the topic of the perceived effective use of PPPs and were positive about their participation. Several principals were also positive about involvement, but for various and unknown reasons, some schools participated while others did not. This section first discusses the demographics of those who participated and then describes the set-up process.

Demographics of the Study

On May 20, 2004, the last of the six school visits was completed, with a total of 32 individuals participating. Of the two hundred surveys sent to 19 schools, data from 15 schools were returned, resulting in a return rate of 50 percent. The following section provides details on the participants in the school visits and the demographics of the survey component of the study.

School visit participants. Interviews and Group Interviews were conducted with principals, vice-principals, teachers, special educators, parents of children with LD, and students with LD in the six schools visited. A total of 32 individuals participated in the school interviews or group interviews. Table 5.1 displays the sites and participants, using pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. The letter *I* identifies personal interviews, and *GI* designates group interviews.

Three principals were interviewed, one each from St. Theresa Collegiate, Samari High School, and Ryen High School. Eighteen classroom teachers participated: 15 were

part of teacher group interviews at two schools, Ryen (n = 10) and Southeast Prairie School (n = 5). Three teachers from Northern Collegiate, St. Theresa Collegiate, and Ryen High School participated in personal interviews. One special educator was interviewed at each site (n = 6). Three parent and two students with learning disabilities participated in a group interview at Ryen High School.

Table 5.1

Location and Number of Participants in School Visits (n = 32)

| School Visited | Principal | Teacher | Special Educator | Parents | Students |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|---------|----------|
| Northern Collegiate | | 1 (I) | 1 (I) | | |
| St. Theresa Collegiate | 1 (I) | 1 (I) | 1 (I) | | |
| Ramstad High School | | | 1 (I) | | |
| Samari High School | 1 (I) | | 1 (I) | | |
| Ryen High School | 1 (I) | 10 (GI) 1 (I) | 1 (I) | 3 (GI) | 2 (GI) |
| Southeast Prairie School | | 5 (GI) | 1 (I) | | |
| Total Participants n = 32 | 3 (I) | 15 (GI) 3 (I) | 6 (I) | 3 (GI) | 2(GI) |

Note. The special educator for Ramstad High School was also the vice-principal.

I = Interview; *GI* = Group interview.

At each of the six site visits the special educator participated in a personal interview; and in the case of Ramstad High School, the special educator was also the vice-principal. Three parents and two students with LD participated in an evening group interview discussion at Ryen High School.

Participants in the survey phase. One hundred of the 200 surveys sent out were returned (see Table 5.2). As this survey was voluntary, some participants chose not to

respond to all questions (see Appendix G).

Participating schools were situated in a variety of locations. The largest number of surveys returned ($n = 63$) was from schools in communities with populations between 501 to 10,000. The next largest number ($n = 23$) came from schools in municipalities with a population of between 10,001 and 50,000. Nine percent of the returned surveys came from schools in a town with a population of 500 or less, and three percent were returned from urban centres larger than 500,000.

Seventy-four percent of the surveys were returned from participants in the public school system and 24 percent from separate schools. One participant did not respond to the question regarding type of school, and another participant checked the “other” category but did not explain what was meant.

Of the survey participants, five were principals, six vice-principals, 71 general education teachers of inclusive classrooms, and 18 special education teachers. Twenty-three percent of the teachers surveyed had Saskatchewan recognized special education credentials, but five of those teachers chose to teach in general education programs.

Experience working with students with special needs also varied. Thirty-two percent of the teachers had 0 to 5 years experience working with students who have special needs 23 percent had 6 to 10 years experience, 13 percent had 11 to 15 years, 19 percent had 16 to 20 years, and 13 percent had 21 years or more. Of the 32 percent of respondents who had less than five years experience, the number was not determined.

Table 5.2*Respondent Demographics*

| Demographic | Freq. | Percentage of the total sample | Demographic | Freq. | Percentage of the total sample |
|---|-------|--------------------------------|--|-------|--------------------------------|
| City or Town Population: | | | Type of school: | | |
| 100 – 500 | 9 | 9 | Public | 74 | 74 |
| 501 – 10,000 | 63 | 63 | Separate | 24 | 24 |
| 10,001 – 50,000 | 23 | 23 | Other | 1 | 1 |
| 50,0001 or larger | 3 | 3 | No Response | 1 | 1 |
| No Response | 2 | 2 | | | |
| Location of School: | | | Number of secondary students: | | |
| Urban | 30 | 30 | 1 – 100 | 17 | 17 |
| Rural | 70 | 70 | 101 – 200 | 32 | 32 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 201 – 300 | 6 | 6 |
| No Response | 0 | 0 | 301 or more | 42 | 42 |
| | | | No Response | 3 | 3 |
| Estimated number of secondary students with a PPP: | | | Approximate number of secondary teachers (FTE): | | |
| 0 – 10 | 34 | 34 | 1 – 10 | 37 | 37 |
| 11 – 20 | 23 | 23 | 11 – 20 | 21 | 21 |
| 21 – 30 | 15 | 15 | 21 – 30 | 9 | 9 |
| 30 or more | 22 | 22 | 30 or more | 33 | 33 |
| No Response | 6 | 6 | No Response | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | | |
| Estimated number of qualified special education teachers: | | | Approximate number of secondary educational assistants: | | |
| 1 | 22 | 22 | 1 – 5 | 49 | 49 |
| 2 | 36 | 36 | 6 – 10 | 31 | 31 |
| 3 | 20 | 20 | 1 – 15 | 13 | 13 |
| 4 | 10 | 10 | 16 or more | 2 | 2 |
| 5 | 6 | 6 | No Response | 5 | 5 |
| 6 | 2 | 2 | | | |
| No Response | 4 | 4 | | | |
| Years of teaching experience: | | | Years of experience working with students with special needs: | | |
| 0 – 5 | 23 | 23 | 1 – 5 | 32 | 32 |
| 6 – 10 | 14 | 14 | 6 – 10 | 23 | 23 |
| 11 – 15 | 18 | 18 | 11 – 15 | 13 | 13 |
| 16 – 20 | 17 | 17 | 16 – 20 | 19 | 19 |
| 21 or more | 27 | 27 | 21 or more | 13 | 13 |
| No Response | 1 | 1 | No Response | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | | |
| Possess recognized Saskatchewan qualifications and certification in special education: | | | Current role: | | |
| Yes | 23 | 23 | Principal | 5 | 5 |
| No | 77 | 77 | Vice-Principal | 6 | 6 |
| No Response | 0 | 0 | Teacher | 71 | 71 |
| | | | Special educator | 18 | 18 |
| | | | No Response | 0 | 0 |

Initial Contact with Principals

Fourteen division directors responded positively to the request to approach school principals and offered permission to contact the principals of specific schools to survey or visit; a total of 26 schools were nominated. Because the focus of this study was at the secondary level and seven of these specified schools were elementary, the number of appropriate schools was reduced to 19 in 11 divisions. Of these 19 schools, 15 participated in the survey and six in the site visits, with two schools taking part in both.

Although initial telephone contact was positive, principals suggested that some school situations lacked relevance to this study. The most frequent reason given was related to time constraints. Another common explanation was the lack of inclusion of students with LD within the school. In these cases, the special education teacher was the only one who could supply information. Finally, most principals were correct in their belief that parents would be reluctant to become involved in school functions or meetings. Only three parents chose to participate.

One principal said he tried including students with LD in the general classroom, but students and teachers found the inclusive setting unsuccessful, and the self-contained classroom reinstated. Another principal said the teachers did not see the education plans or PPPs; only the special educators were involved in creating them. This was the case for several general educators participating in the study, as will be discussed further in this chapter. These telephone conversations with principals were interestingly diverse and provided insight into the realities and variations among secondary programs, with respect to the ways in which inclusion was perceived and practised.

The schools surveyed. Overall, responses from principals were positive about the

administration of the survey. The next step was to decide how many surveys to send. It was explained to each principal that the surveys were designed for principals, vice-principals, special educators, and educators in inclusive classrooms, and that the questions focused only on students identified with LD. Some principals requested 15 to 25 surveys and made decisions on their distribution after they arrived. For example, a principal of a large secondary school requested 15 surveys, but they were given out to only three special education teachers. The principal explained that teachers in the general education program would not be capable of answering the questions because they were not involved in the processes nor did they see PPPs written for students with LD in the school.

As principals decided who would receive the surveys, the number of distributed surveys was less than the number requested. A second factor that reduced the numbers of surveys distributed was the size of the schools that agreed to participate. Variation in the staff complement of rural schools also created differences. Some school principals had small staffs and requested only 3 to 5 surveys. One school principal had a larger staff and asked for 43 surveys. Again, not all surveys sent were distributed or completed. For example, in the school that received 43 surveys, 30 were returned, and of those, only 23 were completed.

At three schools, principals believed that their teachers taught in inclusive classrooms until it became apparent that the teachers could not respond to the survey questions. They found they did not have information about PPPs or the inclusion of students with LD and returned the surveys unanswered. Other surveys were returned with notes attached explaining the teachers' lack of involvement in the PPP process.

After distributing the surveys, three principals surmised that few teachers could respond with any level of confidence on the content of PPPs and their implementation. Two principals decided to return the surveys unanswered, but one of the two agreed to participate in the site visit. The third principal explained the difficulty teachers had in answering the survey questions but did not withdraw from the survey or the site visit components.

The two schools that had difficulties with the survey component were visited and members of the staff interviewed. During the interviews, principals and teachers voiced their concerns that the surveys would not reflect their schools' special needs programming. Most staff members were not involved in the PPP processes or special education programs.

The School Site Visits

The original letter to school division directors requesting participation in this study (see Appendix D) outlined that the school visit would include individual interviews with the principal or vice principal, special educator, and a teacher of an inclusive classroom, as well as a group interview with teachers in inclusive classrooms and a group interview with parents and students with LD.

Four principals chose to reduce the school visit components to interviews with the principal, special education teacher, and a general education teacher. One school visit included an interview with the principal, the special education teacher, and a group interview of teachers. Only one school visit included all the components requested. The following sections contain a description of each of these schools. Again, to protect the participants' confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms were used.

Southeast Prairie School

Southeast Prairie School in southern Saskatchewan is a large K – 12 school located in a small rural town with a population of approximately 700. The school is situated in two neighbouring buildings about five feet apart. The larger of the two buildings houses the secondary program. The staff and students considered the facilities to be two distinct schools, but they hoped that school unity would occur after renovations were complete. At the time of this study, the special education teacher was located in the elementary building, which caused some difficulty as she was also needed in the high school area on a daily basis.

The large population of high-needs students at the elementary level kept the only special education teacher busy all day. The high school teachers commented that they taught several students with special needs, but without guidance from the special education teacher, they had no way of knowing the specific disabilities of their students. The students at the secondary level did not have PPPs or plans of any sort. The teachers felt that the pressure of meeting the needs of their students without assistance or resources was often overwhelming.

At the time of this school visit, no special programs were in place to assist students with special needs at the secondary level other than some alternative and modified programming. To teach all students in one classroom without the assistance of a special educator or a teacher assistant (TA) was demanding. The day before the interviews, an elementary level TA was freed of her usual duties as the teachers and administrators had decided collaboratively to have her “float” in the high school. This redeployment was welcomed by many of the teachers.

St. Theresa Collegiate

This Catholic high school is located in the northwest section of the province in a municipality of approximately 15,000 people. The school had a population of 750 students; 15 students had PPPs. To meet all of the students' needs, the school employed 1 full-time and 1 part-time special education teacher, 10 teacher assistants, 3 guidance counsellors, a chaplain, 2 vice principals, an addictions counsellor, and an RCMP liaison officer part of the time. They worked as a team, and although not all personnel attended every meeting, they were involved when needed. As the principal commented, their program worked because they had a common vision.

The principal and staff of this school appeared to have a positive philosophy towards inclusion that was not limited to the classroom. They found a variety of ways to accommodate and include the students with special needs by creating a number of activities, such as running the school's store, which allowed students and staff to meet and become acquainted. The students with LD also had a learning assistance room where students could go when they needed extra help. This was scheduled in their day like any other class. Most often, the learning assistance period was scheduled for one semester; if needed this could be extended to two semesters. Also, the students who were included in the regular classrooms attended in pairs. For example, two students (a high cost designated student and a non-designated or low cost student) were included in the same classroom and shared the assistance of the one TA. The TA was introduced as the classroom assistant and was available to help all students. Consequently, it was not as obvious to students in the classroom to which student the TA was assigned. This was considered a constructive method of maintaining a positive philosophy of inclusion.

Samari High School

Situated in a small central Saskatchewan town of 600 people, Samari High School caters to approximately 1200 students from Grades 9 to 12. Students come to Samari High School from neighbouring towns.

After a tour of the special education area, the special educator explained the available programs. There were 14 students with PPPs, and each of them was taught in a self-contained special needs classroom. Of these students, 8 had LD, behavioural problems, or were at risk, and they took their full academic load in the special needs classroom. Every second day, the students went to a large urban centre for work experience.

This special education program had been in place for eight years, and its success was founded on teacher-student, trust-building skills and student involvement in planning the program. Inclusion was considered optimal only when it was in the best interest of the student.

Ramstad High School

The town in which Ramstad High School is located had a population of 1,200. There were approximately 250 students in the school. The philosophy of staff and faculty in this school was that every student should be included to the fullest extent, while maintaining the best interest of the students. Teachers were involved in planning to meet the needs of the students, and because of the smaller size of this school, the staff and students knew each other well. The interview was conducted in one of the resource rooms. It was a small room but organized with everything necessary for counselling or providing support for students with varying special needs.

The special education teacher interviewed was also the vice-principal. She believed

that students should be included in the regular programming as much as possible. There were 10 students with high needs with full PPPs and another 10 students with LD who had an educational plan but not a full PPP. Every student with special needs had a plan in place, whether they were considered high needs or not.

Ryen High School

At the time of this study, approximately 400 secondary students attended this high school in rural Saskatchewan. The philosophy of the staff members of this school was inclusion, based on what was perceived as best practise for the student. This school used a team approach that was supported by the principal and appreciated by the staff. Types of team meetings included full staff, grade level, and individual student meetings. The grade level and staff meetings included all personnel, and the individual student meetings involved all key individuals (classroom teachers, special education teacher, teacher assistant, principal, and parents).

There were 7 students with high-needs disabilities with full PPPs, and the special educators stated that there were approximately 150 students with LD who had adaptive plans. Students designated for funding and with a full PPP had individualized meetings; those on an adaptive plan did not. In the case of an adaptive plan, meetings with parents were held. If there was no meeting, discussions were held at a general grade level meeting, and parents were informed at a parent-teacher meeting. This high school also offered a work-study program and an advanced placement program to ensure it was meeting the needs of all its students.

Northern Collegiate

Northern Collegiate High School is located in the northern region of the province in a town of approximately 4,000 and with a student population of approximately 500. The school offered a wide range of programs to meet student needs.

This high school had three special education teachers and a number of programs, including Alternative 10, 11, and 12 programs, the Functionally Integrated Program (FIP), a Grades 7 and 8 upgrading program, and Structure for Success, a behavioural education program. All of the students in these programs had a PPP in place. There were six teacher assistants, although at this high school they were called tutors. Each tutor was assigned to specific students with special needs, of whom there were approximately 25 at the school. The FIP and Alternative programs each had 10 students, and 10 students in the Grades 7 and 8 upgrading program. The balance of 5 students was in the regular classroom with assistance. Students were encouraged to stay in the regular program with assistance, and they were allowed to retake courses as often as required to achieve a grade level without modifications. This school believed in inclusion and achievement. As the special educator said, they do not build rapport with their students they build relationships.

Summary of Schools Visited

Each of the six schools visited practises the principles of inclusion when beneficial and appropriate, based on what the administrator and staff perceived to be in the best interest of the students. All the schools had separate classrooms and programs for students with high needs. None of the schools visited perceived full inclusion as a beneficial method of teaching.

Placement and programming services varied across schools for students with LD. One school had a self-contained classroom and programs for this population together with students who had behavioural disorders or were at risk. Two schools had a learning assistance room for students with LD. Teachers knew that students had disabilities but did not have the assistance necessary to plan and teach them appropriately.

The primary focus of schools was on programming for high-needs students, although tutorial services were in place for students with LD. PPPs were developed for high-need students in all but one school. One school (Central) wrote PPPs for students with LD. However, the other five schools visited used adaptive plans or a resource room plan. These were not as detailed as the PPPs but included a list of strategies that could be used. Participants in the site visit interviews commented that PPPs were developed for the students with more obvious disabilities. Details from these school visits are discussed further in the presentation of qualitative data findings and analysis to follow.

Description of Individual and Group Interview, Together with Open-ended Survey Responses

The following section presents the data and discusses the findings from site visit interviews, group interviews, and surveys. This information was stored in categories based on the original research questions then described through various themes that emerged. However, findings related to research question three, factors which may be influencing the classroom implementation of PPPs, were integrated with the responses of the second and fourth research questions and will be discussed further in chapter 6.

The quotations from interviews are identified with an “*T*” and group interviews with a “*GI*”. To specify the role of the person quoted the following initials were used: “*T*” for

teacher, “VP” for vice-principal, “P” for parent, “C” for student, and “SE” for special educator. When conducting a code search using the TAMS Qualitative Analysis Program, a numbered identification code is added to the end of each quotation. The initials precede the identification code given to each quote by the TAMS, for example (I.T.4579) identifies the quotation as “interview with a Teacher, (TAMS identification number 4579.”

Quotations from the open-ended survey questions, “S”, were identified in the same manner. All open-ended survey responses were compiled by the researcher and numbered for identification. Survey responses were then identified using the first number of the survey question and second number of the response. For example, (S.SE.47.12) signifies that the special educator’s quotation answered question 47 of the survey and was the 12th response on the compiled list. (The interview and group interview protocols are available in Appendix C.)

Design and Implementation of the Personal Program Plan Practises

Of the divisional policies and/or guidelines identified and reviewed in chapter 4, all but two discussed the need for a team process when developing a PPP. Given that this process, and the first research question, was detailed in the provincial policy and in 23 division policies and/or guidelines, the second research questions explore the responses of participants surveyed and interviewed about the PPP design and implementation in their schools.

Developing and designing the PPP. Participants were asked to describe the process used to develop a PPP. Five of the 71 general educators left this question blank, and 9 indicated that they were not certain of the process but offered similar answers in the

open-ended section of the survey such as “I think it is a meeting with special ed teacher, the teacher associate and the parents. I don’t know this for certain” (S.T.45.6), and “I’ve never actually been involved on creating one” (S.T.45.8). These responses indicated a lesser degree of involvement of the classroom teacher in the PPP process.

Responses from 10 participants indicated that one individual was responsible for developing, writing, and implementing the plan. Nine general educators were aware of the team and participated in the meetings but did not understand the actual process. Twenty-three respondents indicated that the general educators were not involved in the process. Based on information from principals during the initial phone call to set up the surveys and responses given in both surveys and site visits, a team composed of only the special educator seemed to be common practise. Thirty-five of the 71 respondents indicated that special educators developed the PPPs, and teachers were not involved in the process. The additional responsibilities then placed on general educators may have affected the productive implementation of policy recommendations.

Based on these 35 responses, teachers had no input into the development of the PPP and were not aware of the process. In one school where the special educator had sole responsibility for PPP development, one general educator observed that the special education teacher would write the PPP then distribute it to teachers and parents. Based on responses, classroom teachers were not involved in the design of the PPP.

Sixteen responses from general educators indicated that the special educator developed the plan through collaboration with the classroom teachers. In these cases, the teachers had an opportunity to share what they considered important to their subject and what they considered achievable in the classroom. General educators in 5 of the open-

ended survey questions similarly described the process as “the student support coordinator meets with the teacher to elicit information about content needs of the curriculum and the learning needs of the individual student” (S.T.45.49). However, all (n = 18) of the special educators participating in the survey described the PPP development process as a full collaborative team effort. The meeting format was described in 16 of the 100 surveys completed.

All of the responses indicated parent involvement in the process. However, as teachers and special educators commented in interviews, it was sometimes difficult to schedule meetings when parents could attend, and in some cases, parents did not show the interest that was desired by school personnel. One teacher at Northern Collegiate commented, “some parents really don’t want to be involved” (I.T.10603). But the adaptations continued, and if the parents had the opportunity to come in and sign the form, the form was signed. The statement indicating lack of parental involvement in the process was corroborated by other educators’ responses, such as “sometimes student and parents are there and other times [they’re] not present” (S.T.45.17). Responses indicated that parent involvement might not have priority when designing a PPP for classroom implementation. In policy and guidelines, parent participation was viewed as an important component of effective implementation, but this was not reflected in participant responses.

In situations where the special educator developed the plan independently, other key stakeholders were informed of the contents of the plan. Teachers and parents had the opportunity for input at that time and during the school year. In other cases, team members met throughout the school year:

PPPs are written up by the special ed teacher; they are shared with the classroom teacher, TA included and parents; parents meet regularly with the LRT to discuss the PPP and have input into forming of PPP; parents, classroom teacher, LRT all sign the PPP. (S.SE.45.61)

Policies written before the current provincial policy (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) was published did not include the components contained in the newer division policies. Several schools and divisions were in the process of updating policies and processes. As more policies are updated, there is the possibility that more divisions and schools will develop their PPPs through the collaborative process.

The secondary program PPP team. As with the process of developing the plan, some staff members had no knowledge of how team members were chosen. Twenty-two of the 71 general educators surveyed indicated that they had no idea how or why members were chosen. More specifically, one teacher responded, “there’s a team?” (S.T.46.2). Another teacher knew of the referral collaboration but not of an actual team that developed the plan. One teacher’s response indicated confusion about the idea; that individual reported that members were not qualified for the position, “whoever applies who is the best qualified is hired, not necessarily the person who has the qualifications” (S.T.46.12). It was not clear in the response what this respondent meant by “applies.” The composition of teams and the selection process varied. Thirty of the 100 respondents indicated that attempts were made to include as many of the key individuals as recommended in policy, while in other schools the team was composed of only the special educators.

The team is the special educator. Often in survey responses the term *team* was put in quotation marks emphasizing that in some schools this was a misnomer. Based on nine of the survey responses, in some schools the team was made up of only the special educators and teacher assistants. For example, “my understanding is that the special ed. teacher and

the TA that work with that student develop the PPP” (S.T.46.12) and “we have only one specialist in the special ed. field, therefore she is the “team” (S.T.46.20). Traditional special education practises appear to have influenced areas of responsibility and accountability in team development and membership.

Three participants indicated that becoming a member of the planning team was not a choice but an appointment. They were appointed because of involvement with the student or by qualifications, but in either case, team membership was not voluntary. Responses echoed that “members are selected by principal and special ed. teacher” (S.T.46.22).

Based on responses to related survey and interview questions, teachers felt they were left out of the process and did not have the understanding necessary to properly and successfully implement the plan. One special educator reported that choosing the same PPP team members had become a habit in the school, thus further indicating traditional practises as an influential factor:

Habit is the strongest reason – training and qualifications is next. Admin. needs to know what’s going on. Classroom teacher and TA, the two people most involved with the student and responsible for actually trying to achieve the PPP goals are *often* left out. This is improving but very slowly. (S.SE.46.62) [Emphasis in original]

However, twenty-nine of the survey responses described the type of team membership that occurred in the schools as comprising those involved with the student. When this collaborative membership occurred, responses were positive both in teaching and learning successes.

Special educators pointed out that the main purpose of choosing team members based on involvement was that they knew the student and offered information that fully developed an individualized PPP. The principal at Ryen High School explained that before he came to the school, teachers and special educators worked separately and did

not plan as a team. Since his arrival, he had encouraged the use of team planning and collaborative implementation of PPPs. He found that the teachers appreciated this process and that they found working together a beneficial method of planning for and teaching students with LD. This also reduced the teachers' classroom workload:

Well, we just started them [teams] this year, they're new this year. I'm coming from a school, I'm coming from [name of school] and it took us probably about three years to get the team working the way I would like it to be. This team has come along very well, I think they understand why a team approach is far better than individuals, and the other part I notice as an administrator, is the special ed. people tend to burn out for some unknown reason... writing all those PPPs [said jokingly]. And when you have supports around you people can pick up and help you when they need to be, you don't feel like it's all left on your shoulder. (I.P.23862)

Participants in schools that used the team approach considered the collaboration valuable and necessary in regard to sharing information, responsibilities, and reducing general educators' workloads. This information sharing and team process was described and recommended in the provincial policy (2002).

Factors Influencing Classroom PPP Implementation

The third research question, which sought factors that may be influencing classroom implementation of provincial PPP policy, was difficult to contain in one section as most areas of PPP policy and implementation have been affected. As mentioned in the introduction of this section, contributing factors were also infused in the responses of the second and fourth research questions. The following influences were commonly described in this study.

Accountability and information sharing. According to teachers and special educators interviewed at site visits, the accountability process had improved. However, key individuals still had areas of concern, pertaining to the process and the sharing of

information:

I would like to see meetings solely focused on the students who have learning disabilities, in the fall and in late spring. In spring meet for assessment. Let's look at the year's PPP: what changes need to be made; how can we help this student more; how does the student feel about the year? In the fall, receive new PPP for new school year *at a meeting*, where all teachers of student can be present to hear and share comments and ideas. Just being handed a copy of PPP is *not* effective. (S.T.53.16)
[Emphasis in original]

and

Teachers must voice their opinions about what will happen in their classrooms; more support and time will make teachers less reticent about working with PPPs; student support teachers must be prepared to "show me," not just tell me what I'm to do. Working with a PPP student one-on-one or in a small group is very different from working with the student(s) in a classroom setting. (S.T.53.29)

Another classroom teacher offered that "often, the specific PPPs are not shared with teachers. I know they have one but I don't have the specific details" (S.T.53.28).

According to several classroom teachers interviewed and surveyed, this information sharing was not occurring. Due to the lack of shared information, general educators were uncertain of which students had an LD. As one educator pointed out, "I am sure many students are not even identified – or if they are, as a teacher, I am not receiving any information" (S.T.53.22). Based on the response of one classroom teacher, for the PPP to be effective, it was imperative that classroom teachers be informed as to which of their students had an LD and who had a PPP in place (I.T.54062). Throughout this study teachers spoke of their desire for additional information, available in a timely fashion, of the PPP process.

Necessity of timely distribution of PPPs. Teachers suggested that timeliness was also a measure of effectiveness. The sooner the team could meet, develop, and distribute the plan the more successfully it could be carried out. A special educator suggested that PPP team members should "review more frequently, i.e., quarterly; more specific objectives –

that can be measured; classroom teachers using them when planning units; to aid in including students with PPPs” (S.SE.53.45). But as participants pointed out, more time would be needed for meetings and in a busy school year, this was not an easy accomplishment. Even though attempts were made to hold meetings, consult teachers, and collaborate to develop a plan, one classroom teacher commented, “Some teachers don’t plan for students with a PPP” (S.53.17).

Secondary versus elementary PPPs. While this study did not specifically study elementary PPPs, one concern voiced by participants related to their perceptions that the elementary level was far ahead of the secondary level in its development and implementation of the PPP in the classroom. Given the data collected on the amount and types of pre-service and in-service training, together with the difference in elementary and secondary level expectations, it was apparent that more training was necessary for teachers at the secondary level. The expectation of teaching numbers of students with diverse learning needs each semester was difficult for some general educators to meet.

Although the school division and provincial policies did not differentiate between elementary and secondary PPP practises, participants were concerned with the differences in support found at different levels. At Southeast Prairie School, a classroom teacher commented that “this has been a concern that was brought up by some of the high school teachers, that these kids get resource time through elementary then they hit Grade 7 and there you go. They don’t get the extra stuff that they need” (GI.T.11310).

According to the principal at Ryen High School, one of the issues at the high school level was the strict set of curriculum expectations: “You don’t hear those terms in an elementary school, they’re not worried about what’s legal, they’re more worried about

what's right for the kids, which is the legal thing to do? [But you will] in a high school because of the standards that are set by Sask. Learning" (I.P.15188). He added:

The elementary is better than the high school and I can say that because I just came from an elementary school, I was there for four years, then coming back to a high school, the elementary school teachers are far better at, at this point in time, making those and working with the SSS [Student Support Services] people because they just do it. It's been done for a while now. The high school guys are still a little bit leery about having these people in their regular classroom settings, at times. We're seeing growth there. (I.P.11769)

At the secondary level, students were passed on to the next grade, and as one classroom teacher said during the group interview at Southeast Prairie School, "to me, it's setting them up for failure. You pass them on to the next class without the foundational skills that they need" (GI.T.25873). Another member of this group interview added:

that's because it's 7, 8 and 9, you just need the total pass you don't need it in each class, so you have a kid who's failed three years of math or English or whatever, well good luck to the Grade10 teacher because that's a full time task right there, you have three or four of those and you're re-teaching the whole concept again. (GI.T.26157)

This was a shared concern of those who participated in the surveys, as was evidenced by suggestions such as "In-service our secondary teachers. Elementary teachers are way ahead in accommodations" (S.SE.53.38). Principals, special educators, and classroom teachers alike stressed the need for increased information sharing, involvement, and collaboration (I.SE.12353).

Expressed concern in meeting student needs. Another expressed concern relating to successful inclusion and effective implementation of the PPP was the degree of responsibility given to general education teachers. It was feared that they would not have the skills to meet the needs of all the students in the classroom. One special education teacher added extra sheets to the open-ended questions section of the survey to describe

this issue:

The document we use is okay for me the Resource Teacher, Central Office and Department, but I have tried to make one simple goals sheet for teachers. I also only include the goals that directly affect them. I am concerned with the high number of special needs student we are expecting our classroom teachers to deal with. They are dealing with the entire spectrum of Sp Ed needs at times plus trying to teach a variety of curricula (e.g., our two-third teacher has 29 students of which there are 6 foster students, two are FAS; 1 C.P. wheelchair bound; one is Post-Traumatic Stress; two students who receive counselling for family issues). This may not sound too bad on the whole but we are also asking them to be on top of the four P3s [PPP] she has in this room. Now we do have awesome K-7 teachers who, in the rural areas, have been doing this for years. Unfortunately, our secondary teachers have not. There needs to be more specified *secondary only* in-service. For too long the “it’s not my responsibility” or “I have 120 students to look after” attitude has been prevalent. It’s not their fault. They need direction and education in how to manage P3s [PPP] and the students that go along with them. Sorry for airing my thoughts but I thought this was a safe place to do it. (S.SE.53.39) [Emphasis in original]

The diversity in today’s classrooms described by this special educator details the number and needs of the students with disabilities together with the frustration often felt by general educators. As discussed in the literature review, this diversity in student needs has created negative attitudes toward the students (Cook, 2001).

General educators and principals were also concerned about the influence on teacher attitudes due to the added responsibilities of classroom implementation. The diverse PPPs made consistent and effective implementation difficult for the classroom teachers, special educators, and ultimately the student. A student transferred to another school might find the entire system so different that it could be confusing (GI.T.26802). The following suggestion was often made: “Each school and even special ed. teacher can be so different in the way they formalize and use their PPP. To have some common characteristics among PPPs may make things more effective” (S.T.53.42).

Several participants advocated setting observable and measurable goals and objectives to improve consistency. Goals and objectives that were not clearly written and

lacked an obvious method of observation and measurement decreased the effectiveness and relevance of the overall plan:

These plans should be more available to those working with the student. Classroom teachers and TAs. The students, themselves, need more input and opportunity to take responsibility for fulfilling the goals of the PPPs. They should be written in such a way that the goals can be measured and compared with the student's achievement. (S.T.53.43)

Many participants shared information on the importance of the PPP. For example, the Ramstad High School special educator stated, "it's the easiest way to give everyone the same information and sit down and write goals together" (I.SE.5815).

Classroom teachers' implementation ability. Based on the interviews, group interviews, and survey information, participants indicated that an effective PPP practise was to ensure teachers had acquired the skills necessary through formal education, professional development, and/or in-service to develop and use the PPP and appropriately include students with special needs. Teachers at the secondary level have been trained to teach the content of their classes, such as English, math or history. They were not trained to accommodate students with special needs. Teachers were concerned with the growing numbers and diversity, while trying to meet the needs of all the students.

The principal of St. Theresa explained that "teachers are busy and there's no doubt it requires a better understanding and a better, a different way of doing things for teachers. And the reality is, for some teachers it's [inclusion] going to impact on more than others" (I.P.32912). Although teachers expressed a lack of knowledge and ability in appropriately including students with LD in the general classroom, increasingly it was becoming their responsibility.

The survey regarding classroom teachers' level of education and/or training in using

PPPs revealed that 9 of the 58 teachers had no previous education or training in this area and yet those nine teachers each had 4 students with special needs in their classrooms at one time (See Table 5.3). Of the total of 58 sampled, one reported having had 12 students with special needs included in the classroom without the advantage of in-service equipping or pre-service training.

Another teacher without training in how to design or implement PPPs reported having 8 students with special needs in her classroom. In her case, however, the special educator had consulted with the teacher and reviewed methods and strategies detailed in the PPPs. In three cases, where training was not offered or taken, the special educator or resource room teacher had consulted and collaborated with the classroom teacher.

Of the teachers who had some special education or experience, two had minored in special education, another had previous experience as a special education teacher, and 14 teachers had some in-service and/or workshops in PPP development and implementation. One teacher had participated in a workshop on PPPs but did not know how many students with special needs or which students with special needs had been included in her classroom at one time. Five other teachers who did not have any form of training also had no idea of how many students with special needs had been included in the classroom. Three teachers did not have students with learning disabilities in their classrooms.

Thirty-one of the 58 general education teachers had had students with special needs without being given training or in-service in the area. The frustration felt by the teachers at Southeast Prairie School was described in this way: "It's so frustrating because we spend so much time and effort on the low end kids and half of them don't want to be here and don't want to learn, and don't want to have anything and we give nothing to the high

end” (GI.T.22636). Furthermore, one general educator suggested:

In some ways we do kind of pass the buck, because it is so much work to modify and to adapt and to do everything we can to get them through and then they become somebody else’s problem. And that’s how I feel a lot of kids fail, they just become someone else’s problem, and then someone else’s problem, and not just within the school, but coming from one school to another, if they transfer in. (GI.T.26769)

Table 5.3

Teacher Training in Using PPPs Compared to Students Included (survey questions 49 and 50)

| n = students w/PPP | n = Teachers | Amount of training or education in PPP: |
|------------------------|-----------------|--|
| 1 | 1 | None |
| 2 | 1 | In-service |
| 2 | 1 | Small workshops, nothing major. |
| 2 | 4 | None |
| 2 | 1 | Previous Sp Ed experience, currently Reg Ed teacher |
| 2 | 1 | Minor in Sp Ed, never taught Sp Ed |
| 3 | 1 | University minor in Sp. Ed, personal interest in keeping current. |
| 3 | 3 | A university class – Introduction to Special Education |
| 3 | 2 | PD workshops and information from R.R.teacher |
| 3 | 5 | None |
| 4 | 9 | None |
| 4 | 2 | Previous experience, a few workshops |
| 4 | 1 | School based workshops, Division in-service |
| 4 | 2 | One or more university classes and a PPP workshop(s) |
| 5 | 5 | None |
| 5 | 1 | Ed degree; discussions with Admin, trial and error. |
| 6 | 1 | Workshops, Systems workshops |
| 7 | 1 | Variety of workshops and PD on PPPs. |
| 8 | 1 | I don’t always see a PPP. No training, Sp Ed teacher has shown her methods. |
| 9 | 1 | Special ed. workshops on PPP design/practise, ongoing in-service with school division |
| 9 | 1 | Specific workshops |
| 10 | 1 | Two specific workshops |
| 10 | 1 | None |
| 12 | 1 | None |
| 10 –12 | 1 | I have developed my own understanding based on student needs, I have participate in meetings regarding this matter and I have been to workshops. |
| Unknown by participant | 1 | One workshop |
| | 5 | None |
| | 3 | Have not had any students included in their classroom with a PPP |

Teachers who were not prepared for this setting or for teaching students with LD found the experience time-consuming and frustrating. Based on interview responses, these teachers were highly skilled in their subject areas but these skills often did not include teaching to a diverse classroom (I.T.13337). Approximately 120 students with special needs were taught by 58 teachers with little or no training in the area of PPPs, disabilities, or special needs. Based on these results, there is an indication of a need for increased training and in-service for teachers in the regular classroom on the subject of PPP development and implementation, as well as other special education teaching strategies.

Challenge of increased teacher workloads. The comments from principals and general and special educators indicated that the classroom teacher's concern about workload and expectations had apparently increased as more students with special learning needs were included. In the general classroom, the teachers' focus was not solely on the students with learning disabilities but on all of the students in their classrooms (I.T.39187). When asked what changes might create more effective use of the PPP, responses from 20 surveys suggested reducing the teachers' workload and increasing assistance through clear and measurable objectives, teaching strategies, shared information, and more convenient meetings. Typical responses from classroom teachers and special educators included the following: "I like the team approach, but I believe there is too much pressure placed on the classroom teacher. It becomes a huge teaching load" (S.SE.53.5), and "PPPs are looking after the special needs end, but what about the other students who are not special needs. Classroom teachers find themselves doing so much work with special needs that there is no time for other students" (S.SE.53.12).

General educators prefer to “spend more time working with kids rather than on paperwork. I know paper work needs to be done but sometimes we get lost in it” (S.T.53.27), according to one teacher.

Common responses from classroom teachers requested increased support through shared information of teaching strategies. Related objectives were “more professional development” (S.T.53.36), and “proper support to implement the programs” (S.T.53.25). It was acknowledged that “a good plan needs to set out not only the capabilities of the student, but *must* outline the proposed goals for the student (in each subject area) *and* provide some ideas about resources available” (S.SE.53.31) [Emphasis in original]. It was suggested by teachers and principals alike that by implementing these suggestions the teachers’ workload should decrease, as teachers would no longer be solely responsible for developing and implementing the PPP in the classroom.

All 32 participants of the six school visits discussed the pressure placed on teachers in the regular program when students with LD were included in the classroom without a clearly written plan (PPP). In one of the school group interviews, teachers indicated that this pressure and lack of training or in-service created situations within which the teachers did the best they could, but without assistance, this was very difficult for them:

That’s one of the problems by the time they get up to high school they’ve been tested and they’ve had some help but at the high school level we don’t have the aides. So we’re more or less on our own. We have some access to people that come in sometimes that do a little bit of a lecture, but when it comes right down to it, we’re sort of on our own. And in a smaller school there’s one English teacher, one science teacher and one math teacher, you don’t really have anybody else to fall back on, like “what are you doing?” There’s different courses, different expectations. (GI.T.12069)

Consideration of the workloads of the secondary classroom teachers was of the utmost importance to the principals, teachers, special educators, and parents during

school visits. During the Ryen High School group interview, one parent suggested that possibly part of the difficulty was a lack of education in the area of LD:

Perhaps some teachers are not as informed as they could be about learning disabilities, I don't know but I bet there are, it's a relatively new thing, relatively speaking. I have no idea how much training or education they have with respect to learning disabilities, and I think unless it's present in their mind either because they are a dedicated, committed teacher or because it's brought to their attention and they're reminded that these things have to be done, they're not going to do it. (G.I.P.29775)

The special education teacher at Samari High School described the situation in her school and how she worked with all the teachers who had students with LD:

I might be going off on a tangent but you have to be very careful with secondary teachers because they have so much on their plate and when we say "Here's an IEP, you have to do this and this." They're saying "Whoa ! Where do I start? What do I do? Look, I've got 30 other kids in this class." (I.T.13721)

Attitudes of those involved with PPP implementation. The lack of background education and experience in teaching students with learning disabilities was not the only concern in schools. The attitude of teachers toward inclusion could be a problem. Teachers in the regular program were focused on teaching the students, together with meeting the requirements of the curriculum. The principal at Ryen High School suggested that many teachers were not yet comfortable trying to achieve teaching both the general education students and meeting the needs of students with LD:

I think the fear that some of the people here have is "You're going to dump these kids in my class without supports and just leave them up to me." Some of the teachers are of the old mentality that they won't pass the class because they can't meet all the objectives, and we're saying "Can they meet the concepts and objectives necessary with adaptations and support to be successful?" and that's still a tough question for some of them. It's a huge question in a high school setting (I.P.12984).

The special educator at Samari High School also expressed a concern about the lack of classroom experience and training that teachers have in the area of LD instruction. But

as the special educator at Ryen High School observed, the process of deciding responsibility was not a matter of choice for the general education teachers:

So, as a special team when we're sitting down at the start of the year and we're saying these are the bodies we have in our allotment, which is based on students population, these are our needs, the first thing we have to do is take care of our high cost students. They have to be, they have to be priority number one. So when we do our programming, first of all, we program for our high-cost students. Then when that's done, then we look at any school initiative that we might have and that comes next, then we look at any percentage of time that has to be there for preparation, and then what's left becomes LD students. (I.SE.23608)

The responsibility to meet the needs of students with LD was then given to the general educators.

In agreement with the findings of Giddens (2002) and Anderson (1998), teachers philosophically accepted the concept of inclusion; the issue was how to include. Beliefs in inclusion (Giddens, 2002; Stanovich and Jordan, 2002; Anderson, 1998; and Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996) were also indicated as an influencing factor in effective practises within the conceptual framework.

Participants suggested that the PPP team meetings ought to include the classroom teachers and that these meetings be held at convenient times for all members. The classroom teacher at Northern Collegiate discussed the negative issues of inclusion in her classroom when she lacked the time and assistance to properly plan for the student:

Having a student in the class without the aide is ineffective because then a strong student is asked to help that student, and it becomes the responsibility of the student. It's too difficult to help all the students and have the one student waiting for specific help. And I was lucky; I had a student who was very patient and helpful. (I.T.2858)
It was also suggested that more involvement of the classroom teachers in both

planning and developing the PPP would increase effectiveness at the secondary level.

However, involving the classroom teacher in the PPP process has depended on individual opinions of inclusion.

Range of views on inclusion. Those who participated in the school visits shared their views on inclusion and how the PPP related to success. In some cases, for example at Ramstad High School, students made the decision of being included in the general classroom based on whether or not they were comfortable in the inclusive setting. Changes in the educational placement for those students might occur. The Ramstad special educator explained:

From grades six to nine pretty well it's total inclusion. But by the time they get to 11 and 12 the students, they themselves feel that they don't want to be there. They know themselves there's a difference between what the rest of the group is doing and what they are doing and they don't want to be in the classroom.... for the core subjects. (I.SE.12062)

The special education teacher at Samari High School also supported the belief that inclusion in the general classroom was not always the most appropriate setting for effective learning:

I talked a lot about the whole belief in integration – which is wonderful – but integration based on whether it's best for the child or not – not based on what's best for the philosophy of integration “Oh yes, we're integrating all these kids, but these kids are failing, or not coming to school.” (I.SE.14982)

The special educators at five of the six sites shared the conviction that inclusion for its own sake was neither an effective nor an appropriate approach. The views of the special educator at Northern Collegiate and Ramstad were similar to that of their colleague at Ryen High School who observed, “as the SSS [Student Support Services] teacher, the first question I'm asking when looking at including those students is always ‘what is the purpose of the inclusion?’ And if there isn't a meaningful purpose then it [inclusion] shouldn't happen” (I.SE.27892).

The inclusive views these participants held were influenced by what they perceived as purposeful and meaningful student-based educational experiences. One the other hand, at

Southeast Prairie School inclusion was the only option, as there were no programs or PPPs in place for students with LD at the secondary level.

Philosophical versus pragmatic planning. Those planning for students with LD were concerned about the funding required, designated, and received by schools to support students with special needs. Students with high needs were supported through designated funds, based on each student's educational and/or physical needs. At one time, the category of LD was a designated funded disability. The principal of Ryen High School explained:

If you look at special education over the years, I think there's been some increase but when they were starting to designate LD [learning disabilities] as a cost, it gave them an increase in value, there was a huge increase in kids who were LD... Then all of a sudden they said "whoa, that isn't working because now it's costing way more than what we want to pay." (I.P.19567)

It was unknown by participants when the change in allocations occurred, but students with LD were funded through blocked funding (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). Under this approach, the amount of resource depended on the number of students with LD. This is different than designated funding, which depends on the particular disabilities and needs of the individual students. With this difference in designations, principals and special educators have often drawn a line between those students who receive a PPP and those who do not. Typically, only students with designated funding had a PPP in place to outline how assets were used in programming and services. The special education teacher at Ryen High School voiced concern about the loss of funding, and the subsequent loss of services:

I think it's been a huge impact on kids. LD was at one time funded then we lost the LD funding and we had the Target Behaviour funding, which kind of took place of the LD funding, Then Sask Learning removed that as well. Your LD students can be your students that consume most of your time. (I.SE.22285)

In a recent Saskatchewan study, Punshon (2000) found that programs were in place for students with high-cost special needs, and funding was not an issue. However, this apparently was not the case with students with LD. According to the special educator at Ryen High School, a student with LD must reach the stage of non-function within the general classroom before designated funding was granted to assist that student (I.SE.26658).

Students with LD have difficulties in many areas such as receptive and expressive language, mathematics, and perception issues, and early identification and consistent intervention are often the key. A special educator interviewed explained:

Many of the LD students, especially at the high school level present with a host of other issues. They often will have issues with attendance, they often will have issues with chemical dependency, all those things that LD are at risk for and so those students really can consume a huge chunk of your time and yet there really isn't any formalized recognition for them. (I.SE.22980)

A parent during a group interview expressed a similar concern:

How long we've been involved in IEPs and PPPs? I think how long ago was it since my daughter was in kindergarten – I'd say about 20 years ago. And we've seen quite a change; I put it almost like a bell curve ... now it seems to be sliding back down again to they'll do whatever it takes as long as it requires the least possible effort and the least amount of money. (GI.P.1272)

Although the identification of LD was important, many participants perceived that money was the bottom line, and the least expensive intervention was often chosen. Together with the confusion over the definition of LD and the funding situation, choices were made between those students who received the necessary assessments and plans and those who did not. The special educator from Ryen High School explained:

Number one it's very expensive to test kids and number two it's very time consuming. And because we're a public school system, the kids that get assessed are the ones with the most visible needs, and often our LD students don't fall into that category. (I.SE.9449)

At Southeast Prairie High School, once a student reached Grade 7 almost all support was removed. According to one classroom teacher, “this has been a concern that was brought up by some of the high school teachers, that these kids get resource time through elementary then they hit Grade 7 and there you go. They don’t get the extra stuff that they need” (GI.T.11310). The special educator expressed her doubts: “Are we writing personal program plans just for funding or are we writing them for the kids education?” (I.SE.27967). Funding continues to be an issue in the planning for students with LD.

Parent expectations concerning PPPs. Parents discussed concerns about PPP implementation and the need for an individualized plan. Responses indicated that student ability influenced the PPP goals and objectives and the degree of individualization and monitoring. During the parent group interview at Ryen High School, one of the parents explained the importance of having a PPP:

If you don’t have a formal written plan, guidelines, or whatever, then it’s very easy for kids to be overlooked because it’s more work for teachers isn’t it? It’s more effort. And some teachers are plain lazy, we know this, not all, some are very good – but some aren’t. So it’s easy to let it slide or not be on top of it if you don’t have these formal written guidelines and in a sense, regular reminders through the meetings or whatever. (GI.P.28975)

As this parent stated, some PPPs were very well designed. It was equally important to the parents that the plan was distributed and implemented by teachers, especially in the case of LD:

The way I understand it is, she [the special educator] identifies the students who need the extra help, she red flags their files – now I don’t know if that’s literal or not, it is passed on to administration and then it is up to administration to let the teachers know or arrange for extra tutorial or whatever. But it is a definite administrative step. (GI.P.46719)

During the group interview discussion at Ryen High School, one mother described an incident that happened the previous fall. Her daughter was “red flagged” as a student with

LD and had a plan in her cumulative file. However, during final exams the teachers were unaware of the plan, and the recommended adaptations were not offered. As a result, her daughter's final grades suffered. When the mother called the principal to discuss the situation the principal commented, "Oh sorry, I guess we dropped the ball" (GI.P.8086). This situation was remedied but parents in this group interview were concerned that such oversights might occur with other students. A further comment suggested that some parents might not understand the system well enough to advocate for their children. Although the number of parents involved in this study was small (n = 3) based on their comments, parent expectations and involvement were key to monitoring PPP implementation.

From the information gathered at the group interview at Ryen High School, it was obvious that some parents were involved in their children's education and promoted their welfare. But as teachers and parents suggested, other parents cannot speak out for a number of reasons, and their children must rely on what the programs and teachers offer. One parent in the group interview offered reasons why some parents cannot advocate for their children:

I mean, this is pretty sophisticated stuff we're dealing with and again, I can fight for [my daughter] and everything else, but how many parents are out there that either don't care or don't have the confidence, self-confidence, to come in and do that sort of thing, or phone, or know how to make a proper letter up, or even know what protocol means for heavens sake. And really it shouldn't be the parents' job. You make sure your kids are fed, healthy, dressed, have support doing homework, go to parent teachers. That's really what you expect of a parent. If there's extra things then you should be able to count on a school as a support not some place where you have to be putting up with. (GI.P.42245)

Parents expected that school personnel would take the time to collaboratively assess and plan for their children. Throughout this study, training, communication and shared

information were identified as key factors associated with the effective implementation of PPPs.

Perceived Effective PPP Practises

The following sections address the fourth research question seeking to determine the extent to which key stakeholders perceived that PPPs were used effectively. Sections also include discussion of the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of processes, planning, and implementation of the PPP as expressed by participants in the interviews and group interviews, and open-ended survey responses in a qualitative presentation.

Individualized goals and objectives. The key to a successful educational plan, for any student is having goals and objectives that match the student's needs (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). In the regular classroom, the curriculum contains standardized goals and objectives, and typically, students can meet those expectations. But in some cases, "... kids need individualized plans, they just can't meet the standardized goals; [the PPP] gives teachers direction" (S.P.51.33). For students who cannot meet the expectations laid out in the general curriculum, the PPP aligns the educational path to the learning needs of the student. The PPP also "gives a clear indication of the goals for each of the students (if the plan is a good one); it also will provide an understanding of the student's abilities and needs" (S.T.51.57). Additional comments included: "tailoring education plan for the individual and providing an assistant to work with student(s); student able to work at own level/rate; much happier students (and staff)" (S.T.51.26).

General education teachers commented on feeling alone and frustrated while trying to teach students with LD. Many teachers felt the special educators were too busy testing and that not enough time was given to the students. A classroom teacher at Northern

Collegiate explained: “Teachers have literally broken down to tears because the students need special assistance. Some teachers have complained about lowering the bar, but I have taught students who don’t have the skills – other teachers feel helpless” (I. T.5709). As another teacher (S.T.51.38) commented, a well-written PPP can remove the feeling of being alone in the planning process.

Strategies provided and shared. One of the recommendations of the Special Education Review Committee, as well as the guidelines for effective practise, was consistency in methods and strategies. Accommodations and adaptations vary throughout the school day; these would be effective for the student if routine and consistency were offered (Directions for Diversity, Saskatchewan Learning, 2000). During the teacher group interview at Ryen High School, teachers were in agreement that order and congruity provide students with strategies they can use in future educational programs. They felt that these approaches helped develop independence (GI.T.16288), stimulate learning, and reduce frustration. One teacher commented, the “student progresses at a rate that is not frustrating to the individual yet learning is taking place” (S.T.51.44). Participants also reported that the PPP “keeps educators focussed on the specific learning objectives; serves as a concrete reference regarding students strengths/areas to be developed; [and] serves as a communication tool between LRTs, teachers, parents, [and] TAs” (S.SE.51.70). Furthermore, once the PPP is in place, “constant monitoring/support is very beneficial; helps these people to stay on track” (S.T.51.21).

Increased student success. The Ryen High School principal explained that as students with LD continually strived for educational success but could not achieve it, frustration caused an increase in inappropriate student behaviours (I.P.18008). General education

teachers responded positively about the increased success with a PPP in place and noted that a decrease in frustration for both themselves and the student was evident. With a PPP, the student gained the feeling of success and had a positive path and the desire to continue:

Less frustration for student and teacher; higher success rate in class and school overall; student needs were more successfully met; recommendations for teachers – very beneficial, teachers were supported to help students succeed. The students are more confident and are less of a behaviour issue. (S.T.51.36)

As students experienced more success in the classroom and teachers no longer felt unheard and unsupported, the educational opportunity for students with special needs increased. During the teacher group interviews, teachers at Southeast Prairie School (GI.T.12090) and Ryen High School (GI.T.16789) explained that they tried to accommodate and adapt for students, but once they reached the extent of their own ability, modification or alternative classes were recommended. One special educator explained that having a PPP, created with teacher input, allowed both the teacher and the student to realize success, and the student was able to remain in the general education classroom (I.SE.7949). Teachers shared similar opinions on this open-ended survey question.

Part of the success and positive feedback on the use of the PPP included the opportunity for communication. Thirty-two survey participants found the process of planning and the plan itself offered the teachers an avenue to discuss their issues and concerns. According to the special educator at Ramstad High School, “at the high school level it’s a very necessary thing because there are so many teachers involved in that student’s life, and the TA is involved, so it’s a very useful thing” (I.T.18507). Also during planning meetings, teachers discussed the needs of the student, methods, most

appropriate strategies, and classroom concerns. PPP meetings and conversation around planning for students with special needs “brings teachers together to discuss a student” (S.T.51.16), allowing an opportunity to share the “much needed info about students; no other way of identifying possible problem areas” (S.T.51.39).

The principal of Ryen High School described the PPP as an opportunity for everyone to work together in the hopes of reducing student frustration and increasing academic success:

once everybody is on the same page and if the staff and the parents are consistent with them, there's definitely improvements and that's what gives that opportunity is presented through the PPP. And usually if there's an improvement in the behavioural then the academic goes with it, in a positive way. To be perfectly honest, a good chunk of these kids, many times, are working to the best of their ability and that's all you ask from them. Some of them become behavioural issues later because of frustration, whether it's personal, family, peers, whatever, but I think you see some of that frustration roll out after a while as they get older. They're working hard and not having success that they should have – and those are the kids that you bend over backwards to help as much as you can. But hey, at times they reach that point where they're frustrated. But I think on the whole, PPPs are a good thing, they do help. (I.P.17925)

Others shared these perceptions; it was necessary to have a PPP that included strategies to achieve the recommended goals and objectives. The PPP was seen as an avenue for classroom teachers and students to accomplish the educational recommendations successfully.

Perceived Ineffective PPP Practises

Participants in this study identified challenges with the PPP such as the time commitment needed, the apparent restrictiveness of the plan, the untimely distribution, and the unshared responsibility. These perceived ineffective practises were believed to reduce the possibilities of success for the student and increased frustration in both

teachers and students.

Increased time commitment. Teachers were in agreement at Ryen High School (GI.T.5804) and Southeast Prairie School (GI.T.2826) that developing a plan was time consuming. A common concern of classroom teachers was that planning took time away from the other students in the classroom. The added responsibility and the number of PPPs were too great to keep the recommendations straight, and the PPPs were often too long (S.T.52.31), requiring a large amount of personal time (S.T.52.24) to plan and prepare. Another issue was the periods teachers spent away from the classroom in order to implement the plan. This compromised the teacher's ability to balance the student with LD with teaching 20 to 25 other students (S.T.52.19).

The time commitment necessary for developing a PPP was seen as a factor that decreased effective classroom planning and practises. Teachers and special educators agreed that less time was necessary for development and classroom implementation was easier when they used collaborative approaches.

Restrictive nature of PPPs. Based on policy, the goal of a PPP was to guide the educational path by offering goals, strategies, and methods, as well as including accountability, evaluation, and a review process (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). However, the principal from Ryen High School (I.P.10924) was concerned that the student with a PPP might not be given an opportunity to try regular programming. This might be seen as inequitable practise for students with LD.

Another observation from a classroom teacher was that PPPs were often "boxing students into behaviour patterns when they may have unique gifts that have not yet been discovered" (S.T.52.33). This was seen as an ineffective use of the PPP. A well-written

plan should strive to develop potential, not restrict possibility.

Difficult PPP implementation. School visits revealed another ineffective practise. When a plan was improperly or poorly written, the classroom teacher was left with the burden of working through implementation. As one general educator reported, “it ultimately leaves all the program development in my lap when I already have a classroom to prepare for, work with and evaluate” (S.T.52.37).

During the parent group interview at Ryen High School, one parent of a student with LD suggested that “the problem does not lie in the assessing, or the making of the plans, or the recommendations for how they deal with the learning disabilities, the problem is in the implementation” (GI.P.37280). This opened a conversation among the parent participants on the importance of effective implementation of the PPP for all students. Their conclusion was that without the involvement of the parent and the classroom teacher, effective PPP execution could not be achieved. The parents voiced their concern, arising from personal experiences, that PPPs for students with LD were not written, communicated, or monitored as thoroughly as those written for students with more obvious disabilities. School administrators commented that in team situations members, including parents and teachers, had the opportunity to plan for and discuss the needs of the student, and the teachers were able to carry out the plan successfully. However, general education teachers reported that they had received “poorly written PPPs from Student Services with little to no recommendations” (S.T.52.28) and with “ideas [that] are not always possible/feasible” (S.T.52.17). Both special and general educators reported that recommendations were not easily implemented without the involvement of the classroom teacher to ensure that goals are clear and measurable.

The special educator at Samari High School suggested that “ineffective practise is when you have these broad goals and there’s no way to measure them and you don’t know if they’re being met or not. And that hurts the child” (I.SE.11970). Teachers shared this perception during the Ryen High School teacher group interview, as well as the concern that the “program may be rigid or as time moves along, the plan becomes farther from reality that they make interesting reading not much more” (S.T.52.57). Without individualized goals and objectives, “most PPPs are made totally separate from reality, most are a waste of paper” (S.T.51.81).

Failure to involve the classroom teacher in the process meant there could be a lack of communication, poorly written plans, or plans that had goals and objectives that were not achievable in the classroom. Teachers also found that restrictive PPPs created reservation in implementation.

Ineffective communication and distribution. The timing of PPP distribution was also an issue. For example, the special education team at Northern Collegiate only began to develop programs in late September or early October of each school year. By the time the classroom teacher received the plan, the student had already been in the classroom for three to four months without assistance. One general educator offered the suggestion that

“meetings solely focused on the students who have learning disabilities in the fall and in late spring. In spring meet for assessment. Let’s look at the year’s PPP: what changes need to be made?; how can we help this student more?; how does the student feel about the year? In the fall, receive new PPP for new school year at a meeting, where all teachers of student can be present to hear and share comments and ideas. Just being handed a copy of PPP is not effective” (S.T.53.16). [Emphasis in original]

In these situations, frustration developed early for the student and the teacher. However, the PPP process “can take *a lot* of time to meet, plan, and write; can be simply a document that is made in the fall and then never looked at again, if the team doesn’t

make an effort to review them during the year” (S.SE.52.51). [Emphasis in original]

In schools with a team approach, key individuals began planning for the student late in the spring or early in the fall. When one individual worked alone it was difficult to complete the necessary number of plans. But as discovered at Ramstad (I.SE.8299), Samari (I.P.163), St. Theresa (I.P.18072), and Ryen High Schools (I.P.23862), a great deal could be accomplished in a shorter amount of time through collaborative efforts.

Exclusion within inclusion. Collaborative planning with key individuals was recommended by policy to ensure that students with special needs be included in the regular classroom (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), but inclusion in the classroom did not always ensure inclusion in the class. Teachers described issues that arose when a plan was written that removed the student from the general curriculum. The student and the teacher became frustrated with the lack of student involvement in an inclusive classroom: “Even though many [students] are integrated, they feel different and want to be a part of regular class for exams, instruction, and activities. Some days they don’t wish to be pulled out of class” (S.T.52.21). Furthermore, “some students don’t like to be separated from the class and feel their peers judge them” (S.T.52.38).

Teachers who participated in the group interview at Ryen High School found that when students were separated from the general classroom they began to feel frustrated, and negative behavioural issues developed (GI.T.2303). In cases such as at Southeast Prairie School (GI.T.10387), students learned to manipulate the system: “Students with poor attitude/very poor work ethic or one who has learned to ‘use the system’; follows minimum requirements; does not push himself, [he] knows we have ‘lower’/different expectations” (S.T.52.22). Another factor that influenced effective practises was that

“some students do not believe they need the PPP and ‘buck’ the help they are provided with” (S.T.52.26).

It was suggested by teachers at Ryen High School that if students were involved in the PPP designing and development meetings, they would understand the rationale for the plan (I.SE.2481). Furthermore, the students would view their learning disability with greater insight, which could encourage the growth of self-advocacy skills and educational independence (I.SE.21088).

Difficulties in assessment and identification. Assessing and identifying students with LD contributed to the confusion and concern in schools. During the teacher group interview at Southeast Prairie School, teachers did not know if a student was playing the system (GI.T.10387) or pretending to not need assistance because of peer group attitudes (GI.T.20603), or was lazy (GI.T.15943). Early and appropriate assessment and identification was seen as extremely important in effective planning and teaching of students with LD. But, as the Ryen High School special educator explained, there was confusion even among educational psychologists when it came to identifying an LD:

So at the high school level you would have students who very obviously have some type of learning disability, cannot access the curriculum in the traditional way, and need supports. But they may or may not actually have formalized assessments saying that they’re learning disabled, one of the things that we’ve encountered as well, and that’s changed somewhat with the Ed. Psychs [Educational Psychologists] that we have now, but generally speaking I found that Ed. Psychs are quite resistant to actually say that a student has an LD, just because it’s, how do you really accurately diagnose that? (I.SE.9785).

Teachers in the Southeast Prairie School group interview shared the same concern. Students at the secondary level were not being assessed, and teachers did not know what kind of learning needs the student had or how best to teach students with LD.

Findings from the Closed-ended Survey Data

The following section is a review of the information collected from the closed-ended statements of the survey (Appendix F) on PPP policy, design, and implementation. Each survey item referenced in the following sections appears in italicized form and in parentheses after the specific survey item number.

Closed-ended Survey Statements

There was a low number of responses in the principal (n = 5) and vice-principal (n = 6) groups. Principals and vice-principals were grouped together and were renamed administrators (A) (see Table 5.4). The 5-point Likert scale offered a range of responses from never (1) to very frequently (5). When ANOVA (Single Factor) tests were conducted with the three groups: administrators (n = 11), teachers (n = 71), and special educators (n = 18). As indicated in the limitations section of chapter 1, due to the low and uneven number of respondents, these findings are not generalizable to other educators.

Responses to open-ended survey questions and information gathered from interviews and group interviews also indicated these specific inter-group differences. No significant differences between the administrators and special educators were found in any of the responses. This may be due to the relationships that develop between administrators and special educators when working together on special programming and funding needs of the students. Based on open-ended responses and interviews, the relationship between administrators and special education personnel was described as a positive and strong partnership.

Survey responses with significant differences based on the means of each group

($p < .0001$) are further discussed in the following sections. Table 5.4 shows the survey question, the number in each group, the mean response of each group participating in the survey (administrators, special educators, and teachers), and the F values. The third column of the Table 5.4, headed “Between Groups [SNK],” clarifies groups used in the Student-Newman Keuls tests.

Table 5.4

Between Group Comparison of Perceptions of Practises Relative to the Saskatchewan Policy (survey questions 18-20)

| Questions | n | | Means | | Between Groups [SNK] | F |
|---|----|----|-------|------|----------------------|-----------|
| 18. I receive professional development on the topic of students with special needs. | A: | 11 | A: | 3.55 | S > A,T | 25.776*** |
| | T: | 71 | T: | 2.34 | A > T | 15.297*** |
| | S: | 18 | S: | 4.00 | S > A | 1.540 |
| | | | | | S > T | 43.194*** |
| 19. I stay current on the PPP policies and practises in my school/division. | A: | 11 | A: | 3.45 | S > A,T | 21.122*** |
| | T: | 71 | T: | 2.44 | A > T | 10.936** |
| | S: | 18 | S: | 4.06 | S > A | 1.767 |
| | | | | | S > T | 38.790*** |
| 20. I have attended workshops or seminars in implementation of PPPs. | A: | 11 | A: | 2.45 | S > A,T | 11.804*** |
| | T: | 71 | T: | 1.65 | A > T | 5.575 |
| | S: | 18 | S: | 3.06 | S > A | 1.196 |
| | | | | | S > T | 22.273*** |

Note. SNK = Student-Newman Keuls. Significance levels: *** = $p < 0.0001$; ** = $p < 0.001$; * = $p < 0.01$. Administrators = A; Special educators = S; Classroom teachers = T.

Personal program plan practises relative to the Saskatchewan policy. There were significant differences found between the responses of administrators and teachers, as well as between special educators and teachers, on item 18 (*I receive professional development on the topic of students with special needs*). Based on these responses, special educators frequently received professional development ($m = 4.00$) in the area of PPPs while administrators ($m = 3.55$) received less professional development but more than did classroom teachers ($m = 2.34$).

Responses during the interviews and group interviews indicated that 15 teachers felt they were not well prepared for the responsibility of inclusion. These teachers stated they

would appreciate more in-service and professional development in this area. The results from item 18 aligned with the pattern displayed in Table 5.3 that detailed education or training received by classroom teachers. Both the closed- and open-ended survey items indicate a lack of professional development in the areas of disabilities with general educators.

For survey item 19 (*I stay current on the PPP policies and practises in my school/division.*), a significant difference was found between the responses of administrators and teachers. Special educators ($m = 4.06$) and administrators ($m = 3.45$) felt that they stayed current on policies and practises within the school division. However, teachers ($m = 2.44$) indicated that they less frequently stayed current on the PPP policy.

Thirty-three of the responses in the other information gathering components of this study, teachers commented on the amount of work they faced on a daily basis and that they simply did not have time to keep up with policies. For survey item 20 (*I have attended workshops or seminars in implementation of PPPs.*), special educators ($m = 3.06$) were more likely to attend workshops or seminars dealing with PPPs than were classroom teachers ($m = 1.65$). However, from the open-ended survey data and interviews, some teachers explained their view that the PPP workshops were developed for and attended by special educators. Both special educators and classroom teachers discussed the need for teachers to become more involved in these gatherings.

Stakeholders' Perceptions of PPP Practises

Significant differences between the three groups allowed themes of effective and ineffective practises to emerge. The perceptions of effective practises were indicated by

the survey questions in the sections pertaining to participation, involvement, and cooperation of PPP team members.

Participation and involvement in team meetings. Item 21 of Table 5.5 (*I attend students' PPP meetings.*) indicates that fewer teachers ($m = 2.63$) claimed to attend PPP meetings for students with special needs than did special educators ($m = 4.44$). When asked if other team members attended and participated in team meetings, no significant differences were found between groups. All three groups perceived that other members of the team attended and take part in meetings. However, differences were found when asked about their attendance and participation in PPP team meetings significant differences were found in both areas between general and special educators.

During the individual and group interviews and in the open-ended responses, some teachers indicated that they did not know when meetings were being held, that the meetings were not planned at mutually convenient times, and that teachers sometimes felt too busy to attend. Finally, because in some cases attendance depended upon the extent of the student's disability, the classroom teacher may not have been expected to attend. PPPs designed for students with learning disabilities were designed based on specific needs of the students. For example, if a student needed specific strategies in Mathematics but not Language Arts, then the Mathematics teacher would attend the PPP meetings. Attendance by the Language Arts teacher in this case would not be required. However, most often special educators led the PPPs meetings, making their attendance mandatory.

The related closed-ended item 22 (*I participate in PPP meetings*) also indicated a significant difference between classroom teachers ($m = 2.68$) participation in PPP meetings and that of special educators ($m = 4.17$). The perceived lack of participation

may relate to responses during group interviews wherein teachers said they felt that they lacked knowledge of the process.

Table 5.5

Between Group Comparison of Perceptions Team Member Attendance and Participation (survey questions 21-25)

| Questions | | n | Means | Between Groups [SNK] | F |
|---|----|----|---------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 21. I attend students' PPP meetings. | A: | 11 | A: 3.64 | S > A,T | 11.596*** |
| | T: | 71 | T: 2.63 | A > T | 4.009 |
| | S: | 18 | S: 4.44 | S > A | 2.675 |
| | | | | S > T | 21.451*** |
| 22. I participate in PPP meetings. | A: | 11 | A: 3.55 | S > A,T | 7.565 *** |
| | T: | 71 | T: 2.68 | A > T | 3.215 |
| | S: | 18 | S: 4.17 | S > A | 1.058 |
| | | | | S > T | 14.015*** |
| 23. In my experiences, all PPP team members meaningfully participate in PPP meetings. | A: | 11 | A: 3.45 | A > S,T | 0.693 |
| | T: | 64 | T: 2.98 | A > T | 1.244 |
| | S: | 18 | S: 3.06 | A > S | 1.354 |
| | | | | S > T | 0.045 |
| 24. Based on the PPP meetings I have attended, the students are given the opportunity to participate. | A: | 11 | A: 2.91 | A > S,T | 2.090 |
| | T: | 62 | T: 2.15 | A > T | 3.773 |
| | S: | 18 | S: 2.44 | A > S | 1.065 |
| | | | | S > T | 0.885 |
| 25. Parents attend their child's PPP meetings. | A: | 11 | A: 3.73 | S > A,T | 4.227 |
| | T: | 65 | T: 3.09 | A > T | 1.90 |
| | S: | 18 | S: 4.11 | S > A | 0.543 |
| | | | | S > T | 7.734 * |

Note. SNK = Student-Newman Keuls. Significance levels: *** = $p < 0.0001$; ** = $p < 0.001$; * = $p < 0.01$
Administrators = A; Special educators = S; Classroom teachers = T.

Cooperation, involvement, and effectiveness of team members. No significant differences were found among the three groups in responses to questions 31, 33, 34, and 36 (Table 5.6). These 4 questions pertained to the effectiveness of PPP team meetings and the members of those teams. It would appear from these responses that when educators and administrators conducted a team meeting, results were effective. Responses from interviews and group interviews did not indicate similar results.

Table 5.6

Between Group Comparison of Perceptions of Team Member Effectiveness (survey questions 31, 33, 34, 36)

| Questions | n | | Means | | Between Groups [SNK] | F |
|--|----|----|-------|------|-------------------------|-------|
| 31. In my opinion, PPP meetings are a team effort. | A: | 11 | A: | 4.36 | A > S,T | 3.471 |
| | T: | 71 | T: | 3.59 | A > T | 4.071 |
| | S: | 18 | S: | 4.17 | A > S | 0.376 |
| 33. To my knowledge, all members of the PPP team are well informed of the ways PPPs are used in our school. | A: | 11 | A: | 3.55 | S > T | 3.599 |
| | T: | 67 | T: | 2.92 | A > S,T | 2.191 |
| | S: | 17 | S: | 3.41 | A > T | 2.548 |
| 34. Based on the PPP meetings I have attended, we thoroughly discuss the student's individual needs before decisions are made. | A: | 11 | A: | 4.00 | A > S | 0.136 |
| | T: | 61 | T: | 3.26 | S > T | 2.317 |
| | S: | 17 | S: | 4.18 | S > A,T | 4.453 |
| 36. In our school, PPP meetings are scheduled at a mutually convenient time for both school staff and parents or guardians. | A: | 11 | A: | 4.09 | A > T | 2.915 |
| | T: | 62 | T: | 3.52 | S > A | 0.240 |
| | S: | 17 | S: | 4.24 | S > T | 6.796 |
| | | | | | | 2.684 |
| | | | | | | 1.882 |
| | | | | | | 0.095 |
| | | | | | | 4.266 |

Note. SNK = Student-Newman Keuls. Significance levels: *** = $p < 0.0001$; ** = $p < 0.001$; * = $p < 0.01$. Administrators = A; Special educators = S; Classroom teachers = T.

Necessary support for PPP implementation. Shared information and the necessary materials also support the classroom teacher in the implementation of the PPP (Table 5.7). Item 28 (*I am provided with (or provide) the necessary support needed to meet the recommendations of the PPP*) and item 29 (*I am provided with (or provide) the necessary materials needed to meet the recommendations of the PPP*) indicated that special educators ($m = 3.72$ and $m = 3.94$ respectively) received and offered the support and materials needed in the classroom, whereas fewer teachers ($m = 2.85$ and $m = 2.69$ respectively) indicated they did not perceive receiving this support to the same extent.

In the interviews and group interviews, teachers discussed feelings of being unheard, unsupported, and overwhelmed when attempting to implement a PPP in the classroom. In some cases, teachers were given a PPP without explanation or the support necessary to carry it out. Several teachers commented in the interview and in open-ended questions

that the goals and objectives written were unachievable, and without the support of classroom materials, it was difficult to implement the desired plan. Although special educators' perceptions indicated support was offered to classroom teachers, both interview and survey responses of teachers did not indicate the same perceived support.

A significant difference was found between special educators and classroom teachers on item 30 (*My suggestions and ideas are considered as we develop the PPP.*). Special educators ($m = 4.41$) indicated that they perceived that their suggestions and ideas were considered in PPP meetings, whereas teachers ($m = 3.22$) did not perceive this to the same extent.

The ANOVA (Single Factor) tests with the three groups indicated a significant difference on item 32 (*I am well-informed of the ways PPPs are used in our school.*), but when each group was tested separately the differences among groups were not found. Teachers in the group interview at Southeast Prairie School described not being involved in the PPP process and not understanding the process, therefore they did not have a clear understanding of how these plans were used. Item 35 (*At PPP meetings, I understand the technical aspects being discussed.*) also revealed a significant difference between the perception of special educators ($m = 4.41$) and classroom teachers. Teachers indicated their sense that they lacked understanding of the technical aspects discussed during PPP meetings to a lesser extent than did the special educators.

Table 5.7

Between Group Comparisons of Team Member Perceptions of Effectiveness (survey questions 28-30, 32, 35, 37-43)

| Questions | n | Group Means | Between Groups [SNK] | F |
|--|-------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 28. I am provided with (or provide) the necessary support needed to meet the recommendations of the PPP. | A: 11 | A: 3.91 | A > S,T | 6.997** |
| | T: 67 | T: 2.85 | A > T | 8.995* |
| | S: 18 | S: 3.72 | A > S S > T | 0.145 8.272* |
| 29. I am provided with (or provide) the necessary materials needed to meet the recommendations of the PPP. | A: 11 | A: 3.36 | S > A,T | 12.080 *** |
| | T: 67 | T: 2.69 | A > T | 4.511 |
| | S: 18 | S: 3.94 | S > A S > T | 2.695 21.511 *** |
| 30. My suggestions and ideas are considered as we develop the PPP. | A: 11 | A: 4.00 | S > A,T | 9.107*** |
| | T: 65 | T: 3.22 | A > T | 4.420 |
| | S: 17 | S: 4.41 | S > A S > T | 1.463 15.262*** |
| 32. I am well informed of the ways PPPs are used in our school. | A: 11 | A: 3.82 | S > A,T | 9.383*** |
| | T: 71 | T: 2.63 | A > T | 8.898** |
| | S: 17 | S: 3.88 | S > A S > T | 0.015 8.627** |
| 35. At PPP meetings, I understand the technical aspects being discussed. | A: 11 | A: 3.91 | S > A,T | 9.094*** |
| | T: 59 | T: 3.15 | A > T | 3.817 |
| | S: 17 | S: 4.41 | S > A S > T | 2.087 15.842*** |
| 37. I receive current copies of my students' PPPs. | A: 10 | A: 3.50 | S > A,T | 10.528*** |
| | T: 70 | T: 2.66 | A > T | 2.829 |
| | S: 18 | S: 4.33 | S > A S > T | 2.731 20.141*** |
| 38. Our PPPs clearly identify personalized accommodations/adaptations for each student. | A: 11 | A: 4.27 | S > A,T | 13.890*** |
| | T: 61 | T: 3.13 | A > T | 9.328** |
| | S: 17 | S: 4.53 | S > A S > T | 0.697 20.754*** |
| 39. In our PPPs, teaching strategies are personalized to meet the student's needs. | A: 11 | A: 4.09 | A > S,T | 6.436* |
| | T: 63 | T: 3.22 | A > T | 6.712 |
| | S: 16 | S: 4.06 | A > S S > T | 0.005 8.276** |
| 40. In our PPPs goals and objectives are personalized to meet the student's needs. | A: 11 | A: 4.45 | S > A,T | 9.768*** |
| | T: 68 | T: 3.50 | A > T | 7.242* |
| | S: 17 | S: 4.59 | S > A S > T | 0.209 13.764*** |
| 41. I refer to the PPP to ensure that accomm./ adaptations recommended are carried out for each student. | A: 11 | A: 3.64 | S > A,T | 8.968** |
| | T: 64 | T: 2.81 | A > T | 4.069 |
| | S: 17 | S: 4.12 | S > A S > T | 1.803 13.764*** |
| 42. I refer to the PPP to ensure that the goals and objectives recommended are carried out for each student. | A: 11 | A: 3.82 | S > A,T | 10.099*** |
| | T: 64 | T: 2.83 | A > T | 6.667 |
| | S: 17 | S: 4.12 | S > A S > T | 0.568 15.633** |
| 43. In our school, PPPs are kept up-to-date. | A: 11 | A: 4.45 | A > S,T | 9.686** |
| | T: 64 | T: 3.34 | A > T | 10.679* |
| | S: 17 | S: 4.29 | A > S S > T | 0.221 11.149** |

Note. SNK = Student-Newman Keuls. Significance levels: *** = $p < 0.0001$; ** = $p < 0.001$; * = $p < 0.01$
Administrators = A; Special educators = S; Classroom teachers = T.

For item 37 (*I receive current copies of my students' PPPs.*), a significant difference

was found between the responses of special educators ($m = 4.33$) and classroom teachers ($m = 2.66$). This result may indicate that special educators may have had copies of the students' PPPs, while some did not. Participants at site visits commented that special educators commonly wrote the PPPs for students on their caseload and would keep the copies for themselves. This apparent lack of sharing of PPPs, may also relate to information gathered which suggests that teachers viewed the slow process of assessment, development, and distribution of PPP information as problematic.

One of the common issues, pertaining to classroom implementation of the PPP described by teachers in interviews was that individualized goals, objectives, and accommodations were infrequently defined. One teacher commented that students were individuals with differing needs, and yet, the recommendations appeared to be copied from one plan to another. The differences in student needs were not evident in the PPPs. This may explain the differences concerning survey item 38 (*Our PPPs clearly identify personalized accommodations/adaptations for each student.*) between teachers ($m = 3.13$) and special educators ($m = 4.53$). Teachers' perceived that the accommodations and adaptations written in PPPs might not have been as clearly individualized for student needs as some special educators believed. Differences found in the responses of survey item 40 (*In our PPPs goals and objectives are personalized to meet the student's needs.*) also indicated that teachers ($m = 3.50$) did not perceive that the goals and objectives were individualized to the same extent as did special educators ($m = 4.59$).

If teachers did not believe that the accommodations, adaptations, goals, and objectives were individualized for the student, it could have influenced their tendency to refer to the plan less often while teaching, as indicated in their responses to item 41 (*I*

refer to the PPP to ensure that accommodations/adaptations recommended are carried out for each student.) and 42 (*I refer to the PPP to ensure that the goals and objectives recommended are carried out for each student.*). Significant differences between teachers for items 41 and 42 ($m = 2.81$ and $m = 2.83$, respectively) and special educators ($m = 4.12$ and $m = 4.12$, respectively) indicated that teachers less frequently referred to the PPP for implementation. During site visits, teachers at Ryen High School reported that they often found the PPP to be written in a general manner, not specifically individualized for the intended student. This may have reduced the inclination of these teachers to refer to the PPP.

Other reasons for these differences could include the workload of the classroom teacher and the difficulty many teachers cited in implementing specific recommendations for individuals in a classroom of approximately 25 other students. These reasons were discussed in the interview, group interviews, and open-ended components. The final closed-ended statement that showed a significant difference in the three-group analysis was item 43 (*In our school, PPPs are kept up-to-date.*). The administrators ($m = 4.45$) believed that PPPs were kept up-to-date more frequently than did classroom teachers ($m = 3.34$). A difference was also found between classroom teachers and special educators ($m = 4.29$), again indicating that classroom teachers tended to think that PPPs were updated less frequently. No significant difference was found between administrators and special educators. This was also true in the other components of this study.

Based on the discussion of the survey items, where significant differences were indicated, and the findings from site visits, the following section will review effective classroom PPP policy practises.

Effective Classroom Practises

As described in chapters 2 and 4, Saskatchewan offers a number of programs designed for students with various special needs. Saskatchewan Learning has also been involved in projects towards the improvement of educational services offered to these students. One such project, *The Student Outcome Project*, was introduced to the special educators through an in-service conducted in Saskatchewan on June 6 and 7, 2004. The researcher was invited to attend.

During this in-service, the spokesperson from Saskatchewan Learning was asked specifically to explain the effective practises for students with LD. The first placement choice for all students was the general education classroom. If this arrangement did not offer the support necessary for student success, an informal plan would be designed using the format of the Adaptive Dimension. If this plan did not meet the student's needs, a PPP team would convene, and a PPP would be created to guide the student's education in the inclusive classroom (Figure 5.1) (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004).

Based on the findings gathered from the surveys, interviews, and group interviews, the following situations commonly occurred. A student with LD was included in the general classroom, and the teacher would attempt adaptations to accommodate the student's learning needs based on *The Adaptive Dimension* manual (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). This process is also detailed in *The Student Outcome Project* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004), describing teaching students with learning disabilities (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004). However, in the majority of cases these adaptations were not written or shared across classes. Often a point would come when the student with LD could no longer achieve as expected, and the teacher was no longer able to adapt the

curriculum. At this time, the teacher would recommend that the student with LD be placed in a modified or alternative program. During this process a PPP was not written or shared among teachers and the student was removed from the regular curriculum.

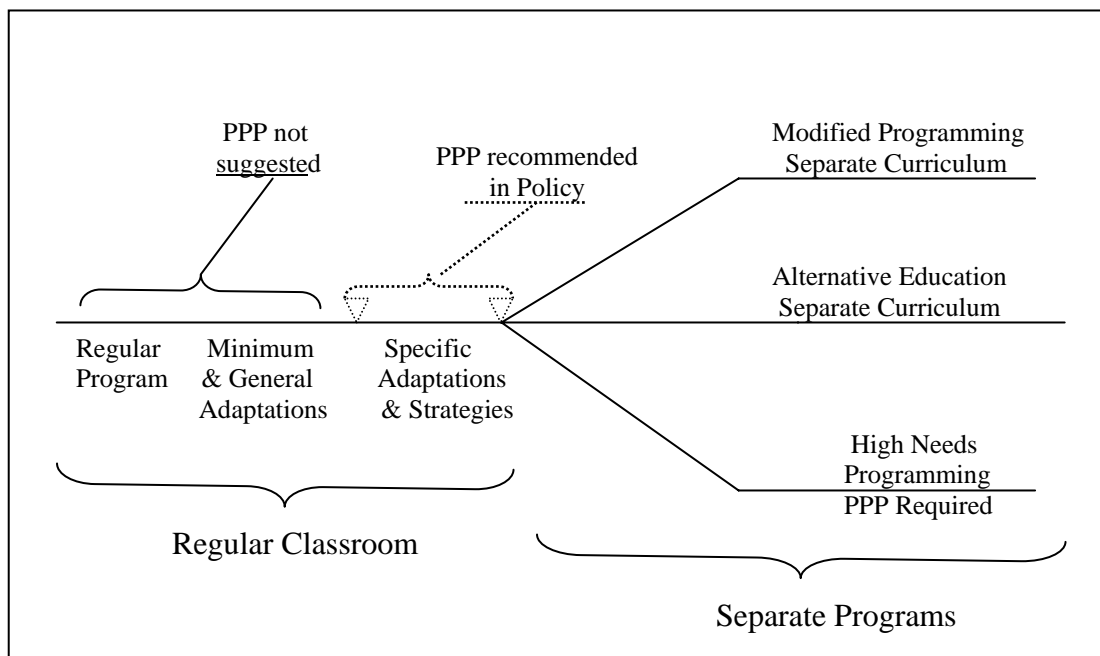


Figure 5.1. Common Classroom Practises

The difference found in the educational path recommended by policy was that adaptations would be written in a PPP and then shared among teachers. Written adaptations with background information, present level of performance, student strengths and needs, adaptations, strategies, accommodations, and the evaluation process could be written in the plan. The policy recommended that a PPP should be developed during the time frame depicted by the dotted arrows in Figure 5.1. Using this PPP allow the student to stay in the general classroom and maintain the least restrictive learning environment as recommended in provincial policy (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004).

Synthesis and Summary of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

In this chapter, various perceptions were gathered through surveys, interviews, and group interviews with key stakeholders in the development, implementation, and evaluation of personal program plans. The following is a synthesis of these findings.

Triangulating the results from closed and open-ended survey results, interviews, and group interviews allowed a more complete understanding of PPP implementation and practices. Participant responses toward effective practices in developing the PPP, as indicated by site visits and survey responses, included increased professional development in the area of special needs and PPP development and implementation. Both special educators and classroom teachers identified the need for professional development. Teachers indicated that they did not attend in-service or workshops in this area. Additionally, in interview and open-ended survey responses, teachers indicated that professional development in exceptionalities, and specifically learning disabilities, was not offered to classroom teachers.

A clear understanding of team membership and increased team participation were two areas indicated as needing improvement. Special educators indicated that increased involvement of classroom teachers in PPP team meetings would increase the effective use of the plan in the classroom. Teachers indicated that they did not have a clear understanding of this process. Collaboration and team building were strong components in provincial and school division policies. However, it was indicated that the push toward team building would need to start with the school leadership. Participants of this study and the current literature indicated that school leaders have a responsibility to create a collaborative school atmosphere. One method that has been successful in some

Saskatchewan schools was to schedule two days each year for PPP meetings then hiring substitute teachers to cover classes for those educators involved. Another method could be to schedule Parent Teacher meetings as PPP meetings. As school leaders encourage collaboration, staff may also begin developing ways to collaborate that better fit their professional needs and schedules.

The advantages of having a PPP included shared information and communication through a written plan, identifying specific goals and objectives that were individualized for the student with learning disabilities. Other advantages included individualized teaching methods and strategies that assisted the teacher in the classroom. Class size and lack of staff were continually an issue; however, with this shared information, teachers' feelings of not being supported, not being heard, and feeling overwhelmed decreased. Teachers also perceived that negative student behaviours decreased and their sense of accomplishment increased with the individualized plan offered in the PPP.

Ineffective implementation of the PPP included slow distribution of the plan, poorly written plans that could not be implemented in the classroom, and plans that did not have individualized goals and objectives and did not fit the needs of the student for whom it was designed. Finally, it was perceived that not enough teachers understood the process involved in developing and implementing the plan, which led to ineffective practices in the classroom.

Schools that used team approaches found PPP team meetings were perceived to be an effective method in their sharing of the information, communicating of needs, methods, strategies, and in their ability to voice concerns and develop a resource network. Participants perceived teachers at the secondary level as subject experts and not special

educators; teacher input was seen as a necessary part of an effective team at this level.

Parent involvement was also seen as an important component of an effective team, but in the cases of students with learning disabilities, teachers and special educators did not view parent involvement as necessary as in cases where students had more severe disabilities. The few parents who participated in this study viewed their involvement in the PPP process as extremely important in the planning stages and perceived their roles as primary advocates for their children's needs.

The consideration of teacher workloads was also indicated as a factor in the effective implementation of the PPP. Together with teacher training, meetings, preparation, and implementation, teachers indicated they felt overwhelmed with the workload, added responsibilities, paperwork, and expectations. The responsibility of teaching a class of students based on the general curriculum guidelines created situations where, according to principals at site visits, teachers had a feeling of being threatened by inclusionary efforts.

Many participants expressed a positive view of inclusion, although this was described as inclusion in the school, not necessarily in the classrooms. This finding was not only indicated in site visit interviews but also through the survey findings. Special educators' and principals' responses indicated that inclusion was based on the perceived best interests of the student, as well as the student's abilities and behaviours. Teachers did not indicate a specific philosophy on inclusion, but instead indicated that it was often not a choice they were given. Discussions of inclusion and PPPs were often followed by discussions of funding. Personnel in five of the six schools visited indicated that they did not develop PPPs for students with learning disabilities because that was not a designated

disability for funding and indicated that PPPs were written only for funding purposes for high-needs (high-cost) designated students.

Responses in both survey and site visit interviews indicated that knowledge of accessibility of the division policies and particularly the provincial policy, was not widespread. Special educators and principals indicated that they had stayed current on policies and procedures of their divisions; whereas classroom teachers indicated they had not. However, during site visit interviews, when special educators, principals, and teachers were asked if they had accessed and read *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), only two of the six special educators had heard of it. One of these had only skimmed through the document.

These perceptions, together with the research questions, purpose, and significance of this study, are summarized and discussed further in the following and final chapter.

Chapter 6

Summary, Discussion of Findings, and Implications

In this final chapter, the research questions are reviewed, together with the presentation of the findings from provincial and division policies and the key stakeholders' perceptions of the influential factors and the effectiveness of PPP policy. Implications for theory, policy, practise, and future research are then presented.

Research Purpose and Questions

The first purpose of this study was to describe and analyze the current Saskatchewan provincial and local secondary school policies with respect to the Personal Program Plan. The second purpose was to compare the perceptions of current school and classroom practises to current division and provincial policies. A third purpose was to explore the perceptions of selected stakeholders in relation to effective and ineffective PPP practises for students with learning disabilities (LD) among Saskatchewan secondary programs. The purposes of the study were addressed through the following research questions:

1. In what ways do school division policies align with the provincial PPP policy in *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (2002)?
2. In what ways do the design and implementation of PPPs in various secondary programs across Saskatchewan reflect division and provincial policy?
3. What factors may be influencing the classroom implementation of provincial PPP policy?
4. To what extent do principals, vice-principals, special educators, teachers, parents or guardians of students with learning disabilities, and students with learning disabilities perceive that PPPs are used effectively in Saskatchewan secondary programs based on current provincial policy?

Summary of the Research Design

Research methods were chosen based on the information sought and the research questions guiding the study. This study was a four-phase design and employed several data collection methods.

Phases of the Study

Phase one began with document collection and analysis of available PPP policies for programs in Saskatchewan. Twenty-five out of a possible 79 school division policies were collected either directly from the school divisions or from available public web sites.

In the second phase of this study, the multiple-case study process was used to understand the perceptions of effective and ineffective use of the PPP through the understandings and experiences of principals, vice-principals, teachers, special educators, parents or guardians, and students with LD. Six secondary programs were visited with a total of 32 individuals participating. These sites were located throughout the province of Saskatchewan. The furthest distance apart north to south, was 831 kilometres and 370 kilometres apart, east to west. At each site, a variety of principals, vice-principals, general educators, and special educators participated in group interviews and interviews. Parents and students with LD also participated in group interviews at one site. In addition, principals, vice-principals, teachers, and special educators at 19 schools participated in the survey component. Each of the research questions is discussed below.

The third phase surveyed principals, vice-principals, general and special educators, parents, and students in secondary programs, in order to gain a wider understanding of effective and ineffective PPP practices throughout Saskatchewan schools. Nineteen

schools from 11 school divisions participated in the survey component, with a varying number of participants at each school. The fourth phase of this study was the synthesis of the data gathered, presented in this final chapter.

Discussion of Research Question Findings

In this section, the information gathered from the provincial PPP policy, the various school division PPP policies, and their relation to one another are summarized and discussed. This is followed by a look at the perceptions of those individuals who participated in this study and the research questions.

Alignment of School Division Policies with the Provincial PPP Policy

The first research question explored ways in which school division policies aligned with the provincial PPP policy. The PPP as defined by *The Children's Service Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) is a document based on the student's strengths and needs. These plans are developed for every student who requires continuing special education interventions and individualized support to participate in and benefit from the educational program or for a student identified for designated funding. It is important to note that based on survey results, special educators and administrators more frequently stayed current on policies and practises within the division than did general educators.

Student designation and PPPs. Eighteen of the 25 school division PPP policies and/or guidelines specifically stated that PPPs should be written for students with LD or for students who required ongoing special education services. Twenty of the 25 specified that PPPs were required for students who were high cost and received designated funding.

Five school division policies and/or guidelines did not specify for whom PPPs were written. Overall, two of the school division policies recommended PPPs only for students designated as high cost. All school division PPP policies and/or guidelines written or revised since 2002 recommended PPPs for all students with special learning needs.

PPP components recommended by policy. Basic student information (student's needs and abilities, goals and objectives, strategies used in the classroom, and the process for review and evaluation) recommended by *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) to be included in all PPPs was compared to student information recommended in school division policies (see Table 4.2). Seventeen school divisions included all of these areas in their PPP policies. Five school division policies were also written after the provincial policy but did not include goals and objectives. Four school divisions included the student abilities and an evaluation process, but not goals and objectives and classroom strategies.

PPP components suggested by policy. A comparison was also conducted between the provincial policy suggested components for a PPP and school division policies and/or guidelines. This information included background information, strengths and needs, goals and objectives, adaptations used, assessment, progress reports, responsibility, services offered, technology and equipment, transition plans, and a process to review the plan. This information is particularly useful at the secondary level where students could have as many as five different teachers every day.

Ten school divisions included all these areas in its policies. One division policy included all areas except technology, equipment, and a transition plan. Most divisions included information on strengths and needs, goals and objectives, assessment, progress

reports, responsibility, services offered, technology and equipment, and a process to review the plan. Adaptations and transition plans were not a component in five of the nine older PPP policies and/or guidelines, and background information appeared in only 14 of the 25 divisions. However, teachers indicated that background information, including the present level of performance, was necessary for planning – to know what had been tried, what had worked, and what had not worked. This information was also deemed important when planning new adaptations or accommodations.

The collaborative team. The literature suggests that collaboration promotes partnerships for instruction, conflict resolution, and integrated service delivery (Crockett, 2002). The composition of members of the collaborative team in the programs studied was dependent upon the level of the students' needs. All but three divisions specifically recommended the team approach in the PPP policies and/or guidelines when planning and implementing a PPP. Recommendations found in the *Directions for Diversity* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2000) and *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), discussed collaboration between general and special educators and parents. This collaboration encouraged enhanced understanding and agreement in the implementation of the PPP policy, as Green (1994) found without policy knowledge and agreement proper implementation can be difficult.

School division and provincial PPP policy alignment. The majority of the school division PPP policies and/or guidelines stated that PPPs were written for students with special needs, not specifying whether the student was funded or non-funded. Seven of the 25 policies reviewed did not specify whether PPPs were written for students requiring ongoing special education assistance or receiving designated funding.

As outlined in *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), PPPs written for students who received on-going services did not need to be as detailed as those written for students with high needs but should include the basic recommended information. The majority of the division PPP policies and/or guidelines recommended that PPPs outline the student's needs and abilities, goals and objectives, strategies used in the classroom, and the process for review and evaluation. Also, it was recommended in division PPP policies and/or guidelines that PPPs be written for students receiving ongoing services and adaptations as well as for high cost students. It would be expected then to find PPPs for all students receiving services to include students with LD in Saskatchewan secondary programs.

The school division PPP policies and/or guidelines, especially the newer policies, closely followed *The Children's Service Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) provincial policy on PPPs. All participating principals were asked if they had read the policy manual and all responded by saying that this was the special educator's responsibility. However, when the six special educators who participated in this study were asked if they had read the manual, only two had heard of it, and only one of those two had "skimmed" it. In total, only two individuals of the 32 participants, including principals and general and special educators, were aware of *The Children's Service Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) manual. However, special educators' survey responses indicated that they had attended workshops ($m = 3.06$) and received professional development ($m = 4.00$) on the implementation of the PPP.

Each school division had its own PPP policies and/or guidelines in place, and educators stated that they were aware of division policies. Based on findings reported in

chapter Four, division PPP policies and/or guidelines closely paralleled the provincial policy. Therefore, it should follow that practises in the schools would reflect both provincial and divisional policy. However, this was not the case.

PPP creation based on policy or funds. The provincial policy did not state that PPPs were recommended only for students with disabilities that were designated for funding; *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) stated that the PPP was intended for all students who received ongoing services or incremental funding. *Teaching Students with Reading Difficulties and Disabilities: A Guide for Educators* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004), a recently published manual, described the necessity of developing a PPP for students with LD and outlined how PPPs would be implemented for students with LD. However, when principals and special educators participating in this study were asked if students with LD received a PPP, these educators indicated that because LD was not a funded disability, the PPP was not required. Two schools had PPPs for students with LD; three schools wrote adaptive plans; while one school did not write any type of plan.

The Design and Implementation of PPPs in Various Secondary Programs Across Saskatchewan Division and Provincial Policy

The second research question sought information explaining the different ways that PPPs were used in various secondary programs. At the beginning of this study the researcher thought that the PPP might be used differently depending on the school, the division, or the community. This was not found. Data gathered through the research question requesting ways that PPPs were used indicated that usage was more dependent upon differing funding methods and philosophical beliefs than any other factors including

community, school, or division.

Personal program plan development. It was recommended in both provincial and division policies that the development of a PPP be conducted through a collaborative team effort. As Espin, Deno, and Albayrak-Kaymak, (1998) found, concerns existed regarding the extent to which individual planning occurred when students with special needs were educated in general education classrooms. Open-ended survey responses and those interviewed explained that, unless the student was designated high cost, team collaboration did not occur, and a PPP was not developed. Survey results indicated that fewer teachers attended PPP meetings than did special educators. In the cases of St. Theresa Collegiate, Samari High School, and Southeast Prairie School, where PPPs were developed for students with high needs, teachers were not aware of the PPP. They also did not know which students had a plan and which did not, unless the disability was obvious or a teacher assistant accompanied the student to class. Interestingly, of those teachers who received the PPPs from special educators, only half referred to these documents on a frequent basis.

Of the schools visited, Samari High School and Northern Collegiate were the only two secondary programs to write PPPs for students with LD. Other than Southeast Prairie School, the remaining four schools had adaptive plans, which in most cases were written by the classroom teachers independently and used in that class specifically. Information in these adaptive plans was casually shared with other classroom teachers but not often and not in depth. It was the teacher's choice whether or not the adaptations were written and shared with parents or other teachers, although provincial policy recommended that adaptations be included in the PPP. As the special educator at Southeast Prairie School

noted, if the division did not ask for the plans, they were not written.

In the schools visited, adaptations were made and specific strategies were used in the general education classrooms, but unless these were shared in the staff room, teachers did not have access to this additional student information. Based on the survey responses on the advantages of the PPP, this information would assist teachers in having consistent methods for teaching a particular student, thus reducing frustration. Ryen and Ramstad High Schools had a system by which all students with special needs, funded or not, had a plan that was shared with the teachers in inclusive classrooms. However, this information sharing often meant that an adaptation sheet was placed in the student's cumulative file. It was then each teacher's responsibility to know that the plan was there, to retrieve it, and read it. In several cases, such as Ryen and Southeast Prairie, teachers were often unaware of which students had LD. This reduced the chance that teachers looked in the student folder and found the plan. A concern that the parents expressed during the group interview at Ryen High School, and also indicated in survey responses, was that the plan was being placed in the students' cumulative files but not shared with other teachers. Open-ended survey responses indicated that one solution would be that the plan was developed as a team to ensure information sharing.

In the survey responses and during interviews, the special educators detailed the team process for students with LD. Often the team consisted of only the special educator, the principal, and the parents when they were available. Although in schools such as Northern Collegiate and Ryen High School collaborative programming between classroom teachers and special educators was evident. This was also found to be the case in open-ended survey responses, where administrators, teachers and special educators

believed PPP meetings were a collaborative effort ($m = 4.36, 3.59, \text{ and } 4.17$ respectively). This was not the case in all schools. At Samari High School the division policy stated that a team approach was recommended and that students with LD were to be included in the regular program as much as possible. However, the actual practise was that the special educator wrote all the PPPs, and the students were in self-contained classrooms.

At Southeast Prairie School, a K – 12 school, students with LD had a plan and the learning assistance necessary at the elementary level. These students were included in the general classrooms from kindergarten through to Grade 7. Between Grades 8 to 9, services diminished, and when students reached Grade 10 they no longer had a collaborative team, specific learning assistance or services, or a plan of any type. Teachers had no way of discovering and assessing the details of the learning disabilities or how to plan for them. This was another area where collaborative teams were viewed as important.

Factors Influencing the Classroom Implementation of Provincial PPP Policy

In responses to the third research question, regarding factors that influence the PPP process the perceived influences were similar to those in the literature pertaining to traditional practises (Kavale, 2002; Skrtic, 1995; Wolac, 1998), student abilities (Clabaugh 2002; Tomlinson, 1995; Van Reussen, Shoho & Barker, 2001), attitudes (Cook, 2001; Kreutzer, 2004; Lupart & Webber, 2002; Shinn, Baker, Haberdank, & Good, 1995; Stanovich & Jordan, 2002). Additional influences included increased accountability (Erickson, Ysseldyke, Thurlow & Elliott, 1998; Grotheer, 1999; Mock & Kaufman, 2002; Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), added responsibilities for classroom

teachers (Bricker, 2000; Bunch & Finnegan, 2000; Clabaugh, 2002; Grotheer, 1999; Schultz-Stout, 2001; Shum & Vaughn, 1992), and school leadership styles (Crockett, 2002; Jordan, 2000; Kopec, 2003; Roach, Salisbury, & McGregor, 2002; Schultz-Stout, 2001; Seitsinger & Zera, 2002), with one exception. In both survey responses and school visits, it was found that the difference between funded and non-funded status had a major influence over what occurred in the general classroom and whether or not a PPP was written.

Traditional practises in special education. Traditionally, students with LD were placed with a special educator. Over time, more students with LD have been included in the general classroom. General educators have not been well-prepared for the increased population of students with LD. Similar to Mock and Kaufman (2002) and Wolac's (1998) findings, this study found a division of labour between special and general educators continued. Even though special educators designed PPPs to fit the students' needs (Trent, Artiles, Fitchett-Bazemore, McDaniel & Coleman-Sorrell, 2002), in many cases classroom teachers simply could not follow the plan.

Attitudes of stakeholders. Overall in this study, stakeholders' attitudes toward inclusive educational settings were positive. Also, participants believed that student placement depended on the proven abilities of the students, regardless of the disability. This finding aligned with a study conducted by Shinn, Baker, Haberdank, and Good (1995) which found that teacher attitudes toward inclusion could be changed with increased information sharing. Given the interdependent relationship between PPPs and inclusion, positive attitudes toward both were perceived as necessary for success.

Findings from this study were consistent with those of Cook (2001) that, because

some disabilities are not visually obvious, teachers often have similar expectations for all their students with or without special needs. Teachers had a difficult time teaching when a student with LD could not learn to expected levels or fit in due to inappropriate behaviours. Teachers became frustrated, and students were often removed from the classroom. This frustration felt by the teacher also affected how the teacher related to the student, and in turn, how the student related to the teacher and school in general which negatively affected learning. Once a student was removed from the classroom, the general educators were no longer responsible to meet the individual needs of the student or to question their teaching skills and practises. As this occurred, ineffective methods developed, such as passing students on to the next grade level before adequate skills were developed.

Parent expectations and student abilities. The three parents who participated in the study articulated a need for improved communication among special educators, principals, students, and parents. The case of the mother at Ryen High School whose daughter's plan was not distributed to classroom teachers and therefore not carried out was an example of the lack of communication among key individuals. As discussed by teachers and parents, the PPP or an adaptive plan could not contribute to educational success if it was simply filed in the office. Parents expected collaborative assessments and planning for their children. They felt that without the communication and shared information students with LD would not receive the needed assistance. This finding corresponded with Crockett's findings (2002) that a collaborative system would increase partnerships for instruction and an integrated service delivery.

Possible influences of teacher preparation. For students who did not have the abilities

to meet the standard curriculum, adaptations were usually offered. If students with LD were receiving adaptations and still not achieving as expected, they were removed from the regular curriculum and placed in a modified or alternative program. This supports the conclusion of Bricker (2000), who found that even when effective teachers were unable to accommodate students with special needs, students were removed.

Responses from teachers, special educators, and administrators indicated that teachers in the general education programs were working to the best of their abilities to support the diverse needs of students in their classes. However, it was perceived by participants that without proper training and preparation, a host of ineffective practises had developed. As found in previous studies (Edmunds, 2000; Kreutzer, 2004; Lupart, 2000; Lupart & Webber, 2002; Seitsinger & Zera, 2002; Scruggs & Masteropieri, 1996), general educators did not have the required pre-service to appropriately plan and teach students with learning disabilities.

Teachers at Southeast Prairie School described situations of not knowing exactly which students had LD or how to accommodate them, and a teacher at St. Theresa Collegiate expressed being unaware of the plan until the teacher assistant told her later in the semester. Teachers at Ryen High School observed students with LD in the classroom without PPPs. A teacher at Northern Collegiate stated that she had other students in the classroom assist the student with LD. Principals and special and general educators recognized the need for more training for teachers in PPP planning, development, and procedures in inclusive classrooms. The lack of training had created a workload that was often overwhelming for the classroom teacher, thus compromising both the design and the implementation of the PPP.

Influences of potential responsibilities in the classroom. General educators who participated in the surveys and group interviews indicated their inability to appropriately plan for and teach students with LD. Teachers discussed studying and becoming skilled in their chosen subject area. Most often this was not special education. These teachers obtained a finite repertoire of practises that were applicable only to the needs of students in a general education setting. This study found similar teacher limitations as did studies conducted in teacher abilities in an inclusive setting. Kreutzer (2004) and Cook (2001) found that general educators are not well prepared for students with LD in the general classroom. Furthermore, this specialization may have decreased teacher innovation to the point of creating a gap between teaching abilities and the students' abilities (Cook, 2001; Wolac, 1998). The need for teacher participation in special education workshops, in-services, and conferences was apparent in participant responses. By including general educators in these events, they could become better prepared for the inclusive classroom.

As described by participants, teachers were expected to contribute in PPP meetings, write the plans, and adapt or accommodate for students with LD without appropriate training. This created confusion, frustration, and feelings of being overwhelmed. This range of perceptions was expressed at each site visit and in the surveys (see Table 5.3). One of the most common ineffective practises described by classroom teachers was the amount of time and work necessary to develop and implement PPPs, especially without training in the area. Other studies (i.e., Cook, 2001) have also found that this may contribute to the student being rejected and passed on to another teacher or grade level.

Teachers' frustration and confusion had negative consequences for the intended policy. Instead of students receiving a PPP to guide their education, they were

recommended for modified or alternative placements. Based on provincial policy recommendations (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), student program changes should be made after a plan has been written collaboratively and shared among teachers involved with that student.

Giddens (2002) found that although teachers voiced support for inclusion, they felt negatively toward including students with special needs in their classrooms. Giddens' findings were supported by the findings in this study. Variation in student skill levels together with the additional paperwork and the lack of training or experience working with students with LD, left teachers in several schools feeling helpless. Special educators' priority has been the students designated as high-cost; therefore, many of the responsibilities for students with LD had fallen to the classroom teachers.

Influence of increased classroom accountability. Accountability in special education was an issue that concerned many participants. Parents in the Ryen High School group interview discussed the advantages the PPP offered, such as increasing responsibility, accountability, and the achievement of objectives and goals.

Since the removal of the designated funding for students with LD, the incentive to write PPPs for this population decreased. Responsibility was increasingly placed on the general educators to find ways to teach the students with LD in their classrooms. Four of the six schools visited chose not to create or maintain PPPs for students with LD. Although informal education plans were written by the classroom teacher, data from surveys and site visits indicated that distributing and communicating the plan to all individuals involved did not occur. Participants perceived lack of funding to be an ineffective practise in PPP implementation and accountability.

Influence of views on inclusion. The majority of the PPP and special education policies and/or guidelines were based on movement through the continuum of services to ensure that students with LD were taught in the least restrictive environment. This movement through the continuum of service in participating schools was described by Wang & Reynolds (1996) as best practise for all students with special needs. Similar to the findings of Giddens (2002), participants in the present study believed that students should be placed at the level of the continuum of services that best met the needs of the student. Although attempts were made to fully include students with LD in the general education classrooms, for some students this was not the most effective and positive placement. Consistent with Schultz-Stout (2001), the need for individually designed programs and the PPP remained.

Based on responses from participants at site visit interviews and surveys, placement decisions were often limited to the principal and the special educator. Therefore, the philosophical views and degree of supportiveness of school leaders equally influenced the effectiveness of PPPs and those involved in the planning. However, teachers ($m = 1.65$) indicated in survey responses that they did not frequently attended workshops and seminars for PPP implementation. Principals, such as those at Ryen High School and Samari High School, had attempted full inclusion and found it to be unsuccessful. They returned to the self-contained (separate) classroom for students with LD, behavioural issues, and for those at-risk for failure. Southeast Prairie did not have programs in place, whereas high schools such as Ryen, Northern, and St. Theresa had a number of programs to meet the wide variety of student needs.

Ultimately, funding more often than not overruled philosophical beliefs. As explained

by principals and special educators at all sites, students with more severe disabilities received designated funding and the help they needed. However, students with LD did not receive individualized funding and, as a result, were in want of consistency in assistance and basic supports. In many of the schools, regardless of policy or convictions, because of lack of funding, individualized planning and assistance stopped after Grade 9.

Influence of school leadership. Changing teachers' practises and beliefs about students with LD requires commitment from school leaders to supply the necessary resources, training, and back up (Jordan, 2000). Given the responses of teachers, special educators, and parents, Saskatchewan was not short of supportive and innovative school leaders. As several researchers (Jordan, 2000; Roach et al., 2002) suggested, where this support of leadership was lacking, it may have been difficult for teachers to feel successful.

Participants viewed encouragement from school leaders as having a positive influence on effective PPP practises. Teachers who reported having school leaders who supplied the necessary materials, resources, and in-class assistance also reported increased success with students with LD.

Influence of systemic issues. Results from survey responses indicated that key stakeholders believed that they had up-to-date knowledge of PPP policies (see Table 5.4). However, findings indicated that few administrators or teachers had knowledge of *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). According to several special educators, when the manual was released in the fall of 2002, unless an educator knew about it and specifically asked for it, they did not receive a copy. According to participants at each of the programs associated with this study, the manual

was sent to division offices but not distributed further.

This lack of awareness of the policy manual (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) led to another issue: Did educators in the school systems know the provincial policies guiding special education? Based on the majority of responses received, very few claimed to know or understand the provincial policy. None of the individuals interviewed had read it, although one had skimmed it. Teachers responded to several survey and interview questions expressing a need for additional information to enlarge their understanding of the policy and the importance of the PPP, which would increase effective implementation.

As parents and teachers explained, there needed to be a push from the administrative level in order for the process of developing and implementing the PPP to occur. Findings from this study indicated that momentum from division and administrators was necessary (Also see Jordan, 2000; Roach, Salisbury, & McGregor, 2002; Seitsinger and Zera, 2002). In Saskatchewan, school division offices required the PPPs to ensure the necessary funding was in place for students with high needs. Students with LD were not designated for incremental funding; therefore, the division offices did not require this information. PPPs at Northern Collegiate were written for school-wide information sharing, not division purposes. This special educator believed that even if the school division did not require the information offered in the PPP, the student with LD and the classroom teacher required this information. This belief was not consistently held across the schools visited.

Although parents and teachers expressed the need for administrative leadership, one principal reported that administrators do not have the funding leverage to force the development of a PPP other than for students with high-cost needs. Developing plans for

students with LD was considered a choice of the special educator or classroom teacher. Typically, special educators and teachers did not write plans without an incentive and the administrator did not push the issue if the teachers chose not to write a plan.

Expectations of the student. A well-written plan offered an outline of the expected responsibilities of team members and the student. Based on responses from special educators, principals, teachers, students, and parents, it was also found that developing and reviewing plans collaboratively ensured that all individuals involved were aware of these expectations. It was also indicated in survey responses that administrators, teachers and special educators believed that PPP team members participated in team meetings in a meaningful manner (see Table 5.5). Concurring with Kopec (2003) and Schultz-Stout's (2001) findings, a collaborative system with balanced responsibilities of students, teachers, and parents is required for success. The principal of Ryen High School stated that this decrease in frustration increased classroom success, and according to teachers, students felt successful and were often happier.

Stakeholders Perceptions of PPP Use

The fourth research question asked for specific information on the extent of effectiveness of PPP practises perceived by administrators, special educators, teachers, parents or guardians, and students with LD. Participants' responses described an effective PPP as a well-written plan that offered information and strategies that were likely to be beneficial for student's particular learning needs. Participants' open-ended survey responses indicated that the strategies provided in the PPP decreased the amount of additional work in an already busy teaching schedule.

Perceived ineffectiveness PPPs. Participants indicated that ineffective uses of the PPP

included areas such as a poorly written plan, confusion of responsibilities, lack of consultation with the classroom teachers, and goals and objectives that were not measurable or attainable. These ineffective practises left the classroom teacher concerned as to how to meet the PPP goals. In some cases, goals that could not be measured were not attempted, and the teachers created their own *plan* for the student. Stanovich and Jordan (2002) and Lee (2002) found that teachers rarely included the planned instructional interventions, failed to link assessment and curriculum, and did not feel responsible for the education of students with a PPP.

Another ineffective practise dealt with time issues, such as failure to schedule PPP meetings at times so all members could attend. With the busy schedule of secondary teachers and working parents, finding a time that was mutually convenient for all members created problems. Resentment also developed when teachers had to attend meetings at inconvenient times. Principals at St. Theresa Collegiate and Ryen and Ramstad High Schools spoke of trying to find ways of remedying this situation, such as scheduling several PPP meetings on one day and hiring substitute teachers to cover classes.

Ineffective use of time was also indicated in the daily scheduling of the classroom teacher. This ineffective use of time was also found to be a problem for teachers in various other studies, such as the study conducted in Nova Scotia (French, 1998). When the PPP was written without consultation, as explained by teachers at Ryen High School and Northern Collegiate, the plan was often one that the teacher could not carry out in the time allotted. Special educators and classroom teachers both expressed a need for teachers to be involved in the PPP meetings, but this was not always possible. This led to

another ineffective practise in PPP implementation, imposing strain on the teachers' workload.

Ineffectiveness caused by teachers' workload. An issue for secondary classroom teachers was the additional responsibility placed on them while teaching approximately four to six classes a day with 20 to 30 students per class. Teachers were expected to meet these varying needs, as well as plan for and teach students with LD. Teachers felt overworked. With the addition of students with LD, particularly without support, many teachers were overwhelmed. Findings from other studies (Edmunds, 2000; Kreutzer, 2004; Lupart, 2000; Lupart & Webber, 2002; Seitsinger & Zera, 2002; Scruggs & Masteropieri, 1996) also suggested that time and increased responsibilities can be major factors in the negative perceptions of general educators.

Participants explained that the added responsibility and high workload created inefficient and ineffective classroom planning and implementation. To alleviate this problem, it was requested that there be more in-service and professional development for classroom teachers in understanding, developing, and implementing the PPP. Teachers who had students with LD in their classrooms had to write and implement plans without previous training. Based on participants' responses, this created ineffective practises in the classroom and increased frustration for both teachers and students.

Implications

This final section discusses the implications for theory, policy, practise, and research.

Implications for Theory

The conceptual framework originally developed was based on the current literature in the area of inclusive special education and special needs. The traditional practises,

attitudes, student abilities, accountability, added responsibilities, parent expectations, philosophy of inclusion, and school leadership were considered strong influences in special education programming in the literature. These influences, with the addition of funding-based decisions, were equally strong in the participating secondary programs in Saskatchewan.

Revisiting the conceptual framework. The findings of this study occasioned the researcher's reconsideration of the implementation of the PPP policy, influencing factors and where these various factors were experienced. Figure 6.1 depicts these elements.

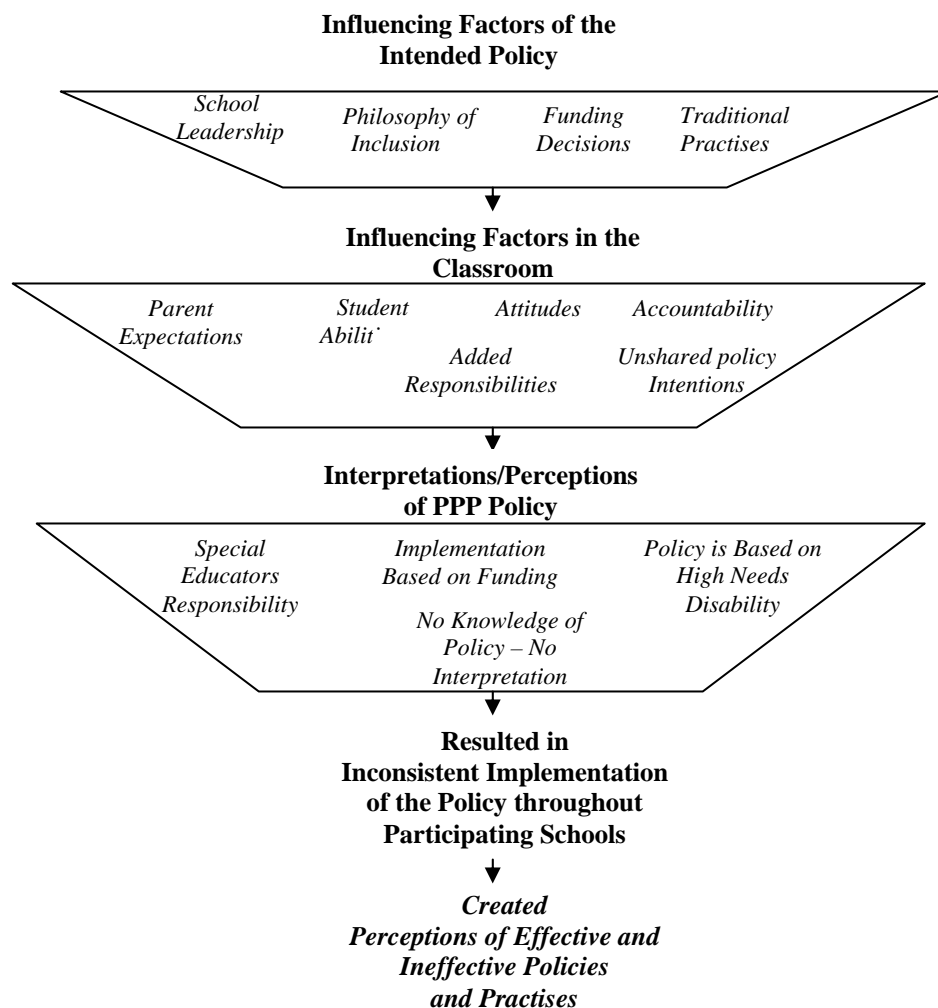


Figure 6.1. Revised Conceptual Framework.

The original conceptual framework (Figure 2.2) placed all influencing factors at the level of policy implementation. However, it has been determined that these influences occurred at various stages of policy design, implementation, and perceptions. Traditional practises, philosophy of inclusion, funding decisions, and school leadership may have affected the initial design of school division policies and/or guidelines, with factors such as parent expectations, student abilities, attitudes, accountability, added responsibilities, and unshared information being factors influencing implementation.

Finally, components such as special educators' responsibilities, PPP implementation based on funding or, specifically, on high-needs disabilities, and not having knowledge of the plan itself influence the interpretation of the policies during and after putting them in effect. These factors thus create inconsistent execution of the provincial policy and a multitude of ineffective special education practises.

Influencing factors of the intended policy. Traditional practises, funding decisions, school leadership, and philosophy of inclusion shifted from influencing classroom practises to influencing the creation of the intended policy. Policies continued to be written with special educators responsible for planning and implementing PPPs, whereas in the classroom, the general educator was found to be equally responsible.

This study found that funding played a crucial role in policy implementation. At one time students with LD were included in the funding designation. As more students were found to have LD, less funding was available and block funding was created to cover these programming costs. This ultimately changed how policy was interpreted. However, this was not meant to alter the intention of meeting students' needs.

Findings indicated that schools with strong leadership were also schools in which

staff members understood the intentions of the division policy. School leadership also played a vital role in meeting general educators' needs and promoting staff development in the areas of special education.

The philosophy of inclusion has been a constant influence on both policy intention and implementation. Guidelines accompanying the Saskatchewan provincial policy recommended that students with special needs be included if the students abilities warranted. Based on responses from general educators, students with LD were often included in the general classroom without having the necessary skills, and they were often promoted to the next grade level without being competent. As put forth in other studies (e.g., Giddens, 2002), policymakers and educators agreed with the philosophy of inclusion but often found it unachievable in actual classroom practise.

Influencing factors in the classroom. Influences found to continue effecting classroom implementation of the PPP policy and/or guidelines included parent expectations, student abilities, attitudes, added responsibilities, accountability, and unshared policy information. Each of the policies reviewed recommended parent participation in PPP team meetings. However, based on findings, parent participation was desired but not often achieved.

Parents participating in this study indicated that their involvement was of the utmost importance as a method of monitoring appropriate implementation throughout the school year. They also indicated that the parent filled the role of advocate for the student with LD. Parent involvement together with student abilities influenced implementation. Although student abilities affected the development of the PPP, general educators felt that implementation of the PPP was often difficult because recommendations did not

meet the student's actual needs.

Attitudes, added responsibilities, accountability, and unshared policy information were the final four influences in the framework. Findings indicated that the added responsibilities and expectations often negatively influenced the general educator's ability to implement the PPP as written. Teachers found this a particular difficulty without training in the special education area. With the added responsibilities of students with LD in the classroom, developing and implementing the PPP, and being accountable for the students' educational needs, teachers reported feeling unsupported, unheard, overwhelmed, and frustrated.

Interpretations and perceptions of PPP policy. Final interpretations of the PPP policy depended on special educators' responsibilities, implementation based on funding, and not having knowledge of the policy itself. Various interpretations resulted in inconsistent implementation of the policy throughout participating schools. These inconsistencies, in both classrooms and schools, created perceptions of effective and ineffective PPP policies which resulted in inconsistent PPP practises.

Kavale and Forness (2000) discussed the divisions between current beliefs in inclusion and the difficulty of openly discussing the disadvantages of each. In the schools visited, participants believed that the general classroom was not always the best placement for students with LD. Principals, teachers, and special educators alike voiced the opinion that teaching students with LD in an inclusive setting may not be as beneficial for the students as previously thought. The theory of inclusion-for-all requires further research, as schools have discovered that this is not always the most beneficial setting.

Researchers (Clabaugh, 2002; Mock & Kaufman, 2002; Skrtic, 1991; Tomlinson, 1995; Winzer, 1998) found that educational plans and practises for students with learning disabilities decreased in individualization and increased in generalized formatted plans. General educators participating in this research supported the theory that special education was no longer an individualized educational program. One teacher described the PPPs she had received as “canned.” She compared strategies and teaching methods offered in individualized plans and found them to be exactly the same regardless of the different types of LD identified in her students. Continued accountability is required on PPPs across Saskatchewan to increase development and implementation consistent with the provincial policy.

Findings in this study also supported the theories of bureaucracies (Kreutzer, 2004; Wolac, 1998) and teacher abilities (Cook, 2001; Cook & Semmel, 1999; Winzer, 1998). These theories state that teachers trained in specific academic subjects are often unable to extend outside their circle of knowledge but instead expect the student to learn within the scope of their teaching skills. This was a common concern stated by several general and special educators participating in this study. Teachers discussed the skill levels required to implement a PPP for a student with special needs. As students with LD were included in their classrooms, teachers found they did not have the necessary skills to effectively implement a PPP. Lacking the skills to teach students with special needs, together with Crockett’s (2002) findings that the LRE and inclusion hold different meanings for school leaders despite policy description, created a difficult situation in the inclusive classrooms.

Implications for Policy

Ineffective practises appear to occur when the policy is subject to various

interpretations resulting in different perceptions and classroom implementations.

Furthermore, an understanding of the purpose of the policy needs to be shared among the individuals expected to implement it. Without an understanding of the policy's purpose, it may not be achieved. For example, policies interpreted by the principals, special educators, and teachers as designated only for students receiving funding left students with LD without a PPP to guide their educational needs. As each teacher decides what should be done in each class, inconsistencies in teaching methods, strategies, and adaptations develop. Thus, the student with LD was given a number of adaptations and accommodations when consistency and routine would have been more effective. This together with the lack of teacher training, communication, and support began a cycle of ineffective practises which developed into potential negative perceptions of the PPP, the PPP policy, and special education programming itself.

Parents have particular expectations of the special education services offered to their children. Although services for high-need students were perceived as well-run and thoroughly covered, those for students with LD were seen as lacking by parents and classroom teachers. This was especially noticed once the student started high school. Differences between the elementary and secondary programs in the ability to develop and implement a PPP were apparent in all areas of data collection. Provincial and school division policies did not differentiate between educational levels although implementation differed. Teachers suggested that because the elementary level teacher has the same students all day, every day, it was less complicated. Consideration of expectations at each educational level would assist in improving PPP implementation.

Finally, participants discussed the relationship between funding and PPP

development. Participants interpreted the provincial and division PPP policies as only pertaining to students receiving designated funding. However, school division and provincial policies (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002) did not specify this difference between funded or non-funded students. The provincial policy was written in a manner that required a PPP for all students receiving ongoing special education services. Interpretation of that policy created a situation where individuals believed PPPs were based on funding alone. Over time this became the accepted understanding held by many stakeholders. Principals stated that they could not force teachers to write PPPs for students with LD, and teachers would not write PPPs without being told. Guidelines more clearly describing special needs, PPP, and funding expectations would assist teachers and principals in ending this circle.

Based on the data gathered during this study, the effective use of the provincial policy would involve several improvements to the policy process. The first improvement would be to write the policy in terms that would clearly articulate what was intended at all levels of education, whether elementary or secondary. Participants in this study were confused as to which students required a PPP and which did not.

The second improvement could be to ensure the policy clearly defines intent and rationale and is distributed to all stakeholders. Of all of those who participated in the school visit interviews, only two special educators had heard of *The Children's Services Policy Framework* (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002). In order for a policy to be effectively used, it would need to be efficiently distributed. Once a clearly written policy is developed and accessible, principals, special educators, and teachers should have the opportunity to receive in-service training on policy expectations.

The third improvement implied by the findings of this study would be to find ways to increase collaboration among principals, special and general educators, parents, and students with LD. PPPs should be written with input from those who have knowledge of the student and those expected to implement the plan in the classroom. This could include scheduling meetings at mutually convenient times and increased professional development for educators and administration.

Although this was a study of effective practises with the current PPP policy, the effectiveness of the policy itself should be addressed. Given the realities of the secondary classroom, the number of students in each class, and the amount of work expected of the general education teacher, the policy itself might not be designed in a way that can be effectively implemented. The decision by some school leaders in this study to not create inclusive classrooms presents issues that need reconsideration. The possibility exists that this policy places undue or untenable expectations on the general educator. Historically, the lack of staff, resources, and funding has been an issue in special education programs that continues to require attention. This is an issue that should be addressed at the provincial level through the encouragement of the general educators.

Implications for Practise

Implications for practise reflect the perceived effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the PPP as it is currently being used with students with LD. Suggestions for improved practise include pre-service training, the development of the PPP, consideration of time factors in special education, communication between programs, in-service support, and an increase in understanding of funding purposes, the policy, and its intent.

University and school collaboration. Based on the data in both surveys and

interviews, classroom teachers have been expected to accept more responsibility for students with learning disabilities, and other disabilities, in their classrooms. This often occurs without the necessary pre-service training. Similar to the findings in Newfoundland and Labrador (Walters, 1999), more undergraduate university courses may be necessary in the area of special education programming and practises to offer the foundation necessary in meeting all students' needs. Increased communication and collaboration between universities and schools may improve the coursework necessary to meet the needs found in an inclusive classroom. This could be accomplished through offering university credit for attending workshops and conferences, or programs offered at the schools for staff, students, and parents involving a collaborative effort of university and school faculty.

Data also indicated that knowledgeable and supportive leadership at the school level was also essential toward positive inclusive education systems for students with learning disabilities. Universities training future school leaders would also benefit from the collaborative relationship with the field to best meet the needs in today's schools. This could be accomplished through school initiative grants prepared and carried out in partnership between the school and the university.

Development of the PPP. The process of developing, planning for, and implementing a PPP was not widely known among secondary programs. Although the administrators and special educators were knowledgeable, skilled, and involved in this process, general education teachers were not. In cases where students with LD were included in the regular programs, teacher involvement was essential. In many situations, special educators continued to develop programs for students with LD separate from the regular

education programs in the school. This built a wall, in a sense, between special and general education that the provincial policy was attempting to remove. Special educators also continued to create goals and objectives that were seen as unattainable and immeasurable by general education teachers. Participants considered these practises ineffective but the practises continued to occur. Where collaborative teams including the general educators were being used, tension and fatigue were reduced, and student success was increased.

Time factors in special education. The special educators in the province understood the PPP process and spent time developing programs and plans for students with special needs. However, this time was most often spent with and for high-cost students. The amount of time they allowed for students with LD was minimal and depended upon time left after planning for students with more intense disabilities. This left a great deal of responsibility and work for the general education teachers, whose schedules were already full. Increased preparatory education in special needs at the pre-service level may alleviate some of this challenge. However the challenge of staffing continues to be an issue in the general education classroom. The need for increasing staff as inclusion of students increases will require attention at both the school division and the provincial level.

Given the reported lack of support, time, resources, and training, teachers continued to attempt whatever was necessary for the success of all students in the schools. The additional workload placed on teachers, the lack of teamwork, communication, time, and training caused the creation and implementation of a PPP to be an increasingly difficult task. Increased use of the team process and information sharing between general and

special educators would alleviate some of the additional work which falls to general educators. In addition, shared and explained PPP plans with individualized strategies and teaching methods would also assist teachers in the inclusive classroom.

Communication between programs. General education teachers found it difficult to plan for students with LD included in their classrooms when they were not aware of the disability or if a PPP existed. The teamwork that was recommended in provincial policy (Saskatchewan Learning, 2002), *The Education Act* (Saskatchewan Education, 1995), and *The Education Regulations* (Saskatchewan Education, 1986) would likely be beneficial for key stakeholders.

Based on teacher responses in this study, the lack of communication between regular and special education programs was seen as a barrier to effective uses of the PPP. Often the plan was filed without notifying teachers who work with the student. Without knowing of the plan's existence, it could not be accessed and used. Plans for students with LD detailing specific adaptations, accommodations, or strategies need to be shared.

In-service support. Increased professional training, in-service, and/or workshops would greatly assist classroom teachers who lack training and bear increased classroom responsibility. Special educators appear to have been well-trained in the field of disabilities and yet a great deal of the special needs in-service was focused on special education teachers to the exclusion of general educators. In-service specifically designed for general educators to understand the terms, processes, and procedures in special education would greatly enhance efforts to increase the effective use of the PPP for students with LD.

Understanding the policy and its intent. Participants appear to agree that PPPs that

contained the components recommended by policy were beneficial in classroom implementation. Two schools visited in this study practised methods of collaboration between general and special education that would be worthy of further study. Although staff were not aware of the provincial policy, they continually reviewed and updated their policies based on the current needs of the student population. These updates were shared with school personnel and collaboration was increased through this shared information. Teachers could quickly review a plan that contained background information, present level of performance, and strategies, adaptations, and accommodations that have worked. Special and general educators could easily track effective and ineffective past practises.

With the increase of inclusive classrooms at the secondary level, teachers will require increased training and preparation in the areas of learning strategies and methods, behaviour management, and PPP development. Increased collaboration is necessary. Researching the skills currently practised by general educators in inclusive classrooms and skills necessary for effective inclusion of students with disabilities would assist universities to better prepare secondary educators. The relationship between university teacher preparation programs and teaching practises needs to be strengthened.

Implications for Future Research

This study explored the perceptions of stakeholders in relation to effective and ineffective PPP practises among Saskatchewan secondary programs. Future research needs to address the fact that, while special educators are trained to plan for and teach students with special needs, teachers are still undereducated in the area of implementing PPPs in the classroom. Based on the data, elementary level educators demonstrated more effective practises in implementing PPPs than have secondary level teachers. Studies in

secondary level teacher preparation for special education planning and programming would be an asset.

Participants perceived a relationship between an effective PPP policy and effective classroom practises. Areas of further study could include: What is the relationship between provincial policy design and school division PPP policy design? How and by whom is PPP development and implementation monitored in the province?

Participants in this study described excellent elementary programs available for students with LD in an inclusive classroom. However, this excellence decreased as the student moved into the secondary level. Further research in the continuation of services from elementary to middle to secondary programs for students with LD would be extremely valuable.

Further research on the perceptions of effective PPP policy and practises at the school division level would add additional information to the final classroom outcome. In addition, questions regarding the effectiveness of local autonomy need to be asked in relation to the consistency of PPPs of special education programs at the secondary level.

Principals and special educators at site visits discussed attempting inclusive settings for students with LD. Attempts failed, and segregated classrooms were again established. Additional research in exemplary inclusive environments, locally, would assist schools desiring successful inclusive education.

Personal Reflections

Previous to this study, I was teaching in an adult education program for students with LD. During my initial student assessments, I contacted secondary programs for student background information and received a variety of responses, ranging from no information

at all or a one-page vocabulary plan to thick folders containing PPPs for the full 12 years of school. This stirred my curiosity.

The interviews, information gathered from surveys, and personal conversations with fellow special educators indicated that others shared my interest. In personal conversations on this topic, before beginning this study, I heard a number of complaints about the ineffective PPP processes and programs for students with LD. The impression was that study was needed. As it proceeded, teachers and special educators used the format to vent concerns and seemed to appreciate an avenue through which to be heard. It was the population of students with LD, especially at the secondary level that stirred the most concern. By bringing these perceptions forward, it is my hope that this study will contribute to the development of improved effectiveness of PPP implementation and the overall education of students with LD in secondary programs.

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Appendix A

SAMPLE PERSONAL PROGRAM PLAN

XXX School Division Personal Program Plan

Board of Education

XXX School Division No. X of Saskatchewan

XXX Avenue N.W., XXX, Saskatchewan
 Phone () - - Fax () - -

PERSONAL PROGRAM PLAN

| STUDENT INFORMATION: | SCHOOL YEAR: | DATE: |
|---|---|-------|
| Name: Sex: Date of Birth: Age: Grade: Parent/Guardian: Address: Phone: (H) (W) | School: Teacher: Special Education Teacher: Principal: Designation: () Yes () VI () D/HH () Other () No | |

| Relevant Background Information | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|----------|-------|
| Family | Medical | Academic | Other |
| | | | |

File Original: cum folder
 Cc: Coordinator of Special Education
 Cc: Classroom Teacher/ Special Education

XXX School Division No. X
 Name:
 2003-2004

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES

Program placement: () Early Entrance (pre-school) () Functionally Integrated (life skills)
 () Alternate (level 18, 28, 38) () Bridging

Special Assistant: Name(s): Time: () Pull-Out Individual () Pull-Out Small Group
 () In-Class Support () laptop () FM system () Other
 Time: () City Transit () Cab () School Van () Other

Resource: () PC () School Bus Route () City Transit () Cab () School Van () Other
 Time: () School Bus Route () City Transit () Cab () School Van () Other

Technical Aids/Specialized Equipment: () PC () laptop () FM system () Other
 () School Bus Route () City Transit () Cab () School Van () Other

Transportation: () School Bus Route () City Transit () Cab () School Van () Other

| Personnel Involvement | Yes/No | Name/Phone |
|---|--------|------------|
| Speech-Language Therapist | | |
| Educational Psychologist | | |
| Counsellor-Education/Mental Health/Addictions | | |
| Occupational Therapist/Physiotherapist | | |
| Special Education Teacher | | |
| Social Services/Corrections and Public Safety | | |
| Mental Health-CYS-CYAP/ICMP - Mentors | | |
| Interagency Mentorship Program | | |
| IMED | | |
| Behaviour Consultant | | |
| Family Resource Centre | | |
| Optometrist/Audiologist/Teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing | | |

File Original: cum folder
 Cc: Coordinator of Special Education
 Cc: Classroom Teacher/ Special Education

XXX School Division No.X
 Name:
 2003-2004

| Testing and Observations | | |
|----------------------------------|------|-----------------------------|
| Date Administered | Test | Results |
| | | |
| Student Areas of Strength | | Student Area of Need |
| | | |
| Parent Goals | | School Goals |
| | | |
| Student Interests | | |
| | | |

File Original: cum folder
 Cc: Coordinator of Special Education
 Cc: Classroom Teacher/ Special Education

XXX School Division No.X
 Name:
 2003-2004

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1st Review Date: | 2nd Review Date: |
| Recommendations | Recommendations |
| | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Signatories | Signatories |
| Parent/Guardian: _____ Student (if applicable): _____ Classroom Teacher: _____ Special Education Teacher: _____ School Administrator: _____ Special Education Coordinator: _____ (Other) _____ <u>Position</u> _____ <u>Name</u> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ | Parent/Guardian: _____ Student (if applicable): _____ Classroom Teacher: _____ Special Education Teacher: _____ School Administrator: _____ Special Education Coordinator: _____ (Other) _____ <u>Position</u> _____ <u>Name</u> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ |

File Original: cum folder
 Cc: Coordinator of Special Education
 Cc: Classroom Teacher/ Special Education

XXX School Division No. X
 Name:
 2003-2004

Appendix B
THE SASKATCHEWAN
PERSONAL PROGRAM PLAN POLICY

The Children's Services Policy Framework (2002): Issue 4.1, Personal Program Plans**Rationale**

Students with exceptional needs require curricula, instruction and supports appropriate to their individual strengths and needs. Curriculum and instruction can be tailored to individual needs through application of the Adaptive Dimension. However, in some situations, students may be working on objectives that are substantially different from those outlined in the Core Curriculum, and may require additional supports and services to access and benefit from the curriculum.

Effective professional practice indicates that educational objectives, instructional resources and individualized supports are systematically planned, documented, monitored and evaluated. For students on provincially approved programs of instruction, objectives, instructional strategies and resources are documented in Core Curriculum guides. For those students who are on individualized programs or who are receiving continuing special education support, the school-based team is responsible for collaboratively planning and documenting the program.

Guidelines

The Personal Program Plan (PPP/IEP) provides an outline of the student's individualized program. It guides the day-to-day work of all the teachers and resource personnel involved with the student, but is not intended to be the daily instructional plan. The PPP/IEP provides parents with information regarding learning objectives and adaptations to support their child's learning.

Policy

A personal program plan based on the student's strengths and needs is developed for each

student who: requires continuing special education interventions and individualized supports to participate in and benefit from the educational program; or has been identified for individual incremental funding recognition.

The information included in the PPP/IEP is dependent on the needs of the student. For students who are receiving ongoing special education interventions in only one or two areas of the instructional program, the PPP/IEP addresses the particular area(s). For example, a very succinct PPP/IEP may be written for Mathematics or English Language Arts. For students with intensive educational needs, the PPP/IEP typically addresses several or all areas of instruction.

The personal program planning process includes:

- identification of student abilities, needs and interests;
- establishment of goals and objectives;
- selection of appropriate strategies and activities; and
- ongoing evaluation and revision of the plan.

It is suggested that the written Personal Program Plan include:

- pertinent personal and educational data, which may include baseline assessment data;
- identification of the student's strengths and needs;
- long-term goals and short-term objectives;
- instructional strategies and resources including participation in classroom activities and instruction with adaptations;
- assessment methods;
- the process for reporting of student progress;

- assignment of responsibility for carrying out the plan;
- provision of appropriate support services by qualified personnel (e.g., interpreters);
- implementation of appropriate technology and equipment;
- transition planning; and
- process for review, evaluation and updating of the plan.

School division personnel collaborate with parents in the development, implementation, evaluation and revision of the Personal Program Plan.

The collaborative team includes those individuals directly involved with the student. For students who require a PPP/IEP in only one or two areas of instruction, key participants may be the classroom teacher, learning assistance/resource teacher and parents. For those students on comprehensive PPP/IEPs, key participants are parents/family, classroom teacher, school-based resource or learning assistance teacher, school-based administrator(s), paraprofessional(s) and the student, where appropriate.

The extended team may also include a system administrator and specialist or resource personnel from related support services at the school division or community level.

Appendix C

INTERVIEW AND GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Introduction:

“My name is Alison Dollar. I am a doctoral candidate from the University of Saskatchewan. I am currently gathering information to understand your perceptions on the effective and possible ineffective uses of the PPPs with students who have learning disabilities in your school. Although I will be taping the interviews, these tapes will be stored in a locked file cabinet in an office at the university, and the information you share today will be held in complete confidentiality. Furthermore, your name will not be attached to the tape; this way no connections can be made. Once the interview is finished, I will ask that you sign a Release of Information form that allows me to use this information in my study, and again, your name will not be used. After I leave today. I will transcribe the tapes and send you a written copy of this interview that you may read over and make any changes you desire, these changes include adding or deleting information or changing pieces you may want to change. You may also refuse to participate at any time during the interview or after. I appreciate your time and your desire to share your experiences with me. To begin please tell me a bit about your self and your involvement with students with learning disabilities.”

After the participant has had an opportunity to share, we begin the questions. Research questions are used similarly as they are used in the survey, in addition to emerging questions throughout the interview. Go to Questions.

Focus Group Protocol

Introduction to focus group:

“My name is Alison Dollar. I am a doctoral candidate from the University of Saskatchewan. I am currently gathering information to understand your perceptions on the effective and possible ineffective uses of the PPPs with students who have learning disabilities in your school. Although I will be taping this focus group discussion, these tapes will be stored in a locked file cabinet in an office at the university and the information you share today will be held in complete confidentiality. Furthermore, your names will not be attached to the tape; this way no connections can be made. Once the focus group discussion is finished, I will ask that you sign a Release of Information form

that allows me to use this information in my study, and again, your names will not be used.

Before we begin we will go around the circle and name each member a letter of the alphabet. Please remember your letter for transcription proofing. After I leave today, I will transcribe the tapes and send you a written copy of this interview that you may read over your parts of the focus group and make any changes you desire, these changes include adding or deleting information or changing pieces you may want to change. Please make changes only to your statements. You may also refuse to participate at any time during this discussion or after. I can guarantee that the tapes and transcriptions will be kept in complete confidentiality; I ask that each of you respect the confidentiality of each other during and after this focus group. I appreciate your time and your desire to share your experiences with me. Let's begin by going around the circle and briefly sharing a bit about your involvement with students with learning disabilities.”

After the participant has had an opportunity to share, we begin the questions. Research questions are used similarly as they are used in the survey, in addition to emerging questions throughout the focus group.

Interview and Focus Group Questions

- 1) Where do you start in the process? If you find you have a student who needs a PPP, where do you start?
- 2) Do you think the PPP is based on the policy framework?
- 3) Who are the secondary PPP team members?
- 4) Are there any students with learning disabilities with a PPP who are included in the regular academic classes?
- 5) What happens if the goals aren't being met?
- 6) Would you tell me about the effective or ineffective practices that occur?
- 7) So the students with learning disabilities in regular classes, do they have a PPP?
- 8) What do you see as the effectiveness of cooperation in the team and their involvement?
- 9) What happens if a parent doesn't want to be involved?
- 10) Are students with LD involved in creating the PPP?

- 11) Part of a PPP is specific teaching strategies. Do teachers receive specific strategies to use when teaching students with learning disabilities?
- 12) Would everyone know the plan?
- 13) So the students with learning disabilities without a PPP but have adaptations – and say for extra time, or a scribe, how does that work if it's not written when it comes to exams or departmental exams?
- 14) Do you think based on the policy, students with learning disabilities should have a personal program plan?
- 15) Is your program design influenced by other division programs?
- 16) How are your PPPs used or designed relative to the Saskatchewan policy?
- 17) I would like to know your thoughts on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of using the PPPs.
- 18) Is there anything you would like to add?

Final Comment

“Thank you again for sharing your time and experiences with me this afternoon. This interview (focus group) transcription will be mailed to you next week for your proofing. Thank you again for your participation.”

Appendix D

LETTER TO DIVISION DIRECTORS



Effective Practices of the Personal Program Plan Policy
Request for permission to conduct a study

Researcher: Alison Dollar, College of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan, (306-966-7613), Fax: 306 966 7020, Email: alison.dollar@usask.ca

Research Supervisor: Dr. Keith Walker, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan (306-966-7623), Fax: 306-966-7020, Email: keith.walker@usask.ca

January 26, 2004

To: Saskatchewan School Division Directors

This is a request for your school division to participate in a research project I am conducting as part of the requirements for the completion of a doctoral degree in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. The data collection for this study will be conducted during the months of February and March, and the final project completed by July 2004. The anticipated benefits gained through this study are an increased understanding of special educational planning and future policy development and implementation. The study is also of high relevance in our School^{Plus} environment.

This study is entitled *Effective Practices of the Personal Program Plan Policy*. Its focus will be the effective practices pertaining to creating and implementing the Personal Program Plan (PPP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) with students who have been identified with a learning disability at the secondary level. This study is being conducted in four phases: Document Collection, Multiple Case Study, Survey, and the final Analysis and Synthesis of data. I am requesting permission for participation in the Multiple Case Study and/or Survey phases of this study.

For the Multiple Case Study, specific school selection will be based on division director nominations of secondary schools. Because the aim of this study is to investigate the perceptions of the effective and ineffective use of personal program plans in the classroom based on policy guidelines, in the nominated school those individuals selected to participate will be those most involved in the creation and implementation of PPPs. These individuals include principals, vice-principals, teachers of inclusive classrooms, special educators, parents or guardians of students with a learning disability, and students with a learning disability. Individual participant selection will be conducted through nomination by the principal of each school visited and only those who consent to be involved in the study will participate.

The researcher will visit the school selected for the case study for one day, during which time interviews, focus groups, and general environment observations will be conducted. Principals, vice-principals, and the special educator will be individually interviewed once for approximately one hour during the day. Two separate two-hour focus groups will be conducted, one with general and special educators and the other with students with an identified learning disability and their parents. The maximum time commitment from the school would be eight hours, 1:00pm to 9:00pm, but individual time commitment would be no more than two hours.

The survey phase of this study will involve surveys being sent to one school within the division, and again, will be based on school nomination by the school division director. Surveys are designed for two categories: principals/vice-principals, and general and special educators. The total time commitment to complete the survey would be approximately 15 to 30 minutes. Schools that participate in the case study phase will not be asked to participate in this survey phase. Individual selection will be based solely on agreement to participate indicated by returning the completed survey.

Participants will be informed that the data collected and results from this study will be used in the researcher's doctoral dissertation and will later be published in scholarly journals and conference presentations. There is no anticipated risk or deception in this study. Participants will be aware of the purpose and why they are participating and may withdraw at any time without penalty. If an individual chooses to withdraw, all data from his or her contributions will be destroyed.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study. Confidentiality will be preserved by use of pseudonyms for real names in transcripts, analysis, and any document that

results from this study. I will also take all measures possible to safeguard the confidentiality of the focus group discussion, but cannot guarantee that participants of the focus group will do likewise. Once all data has been collected, participants will have the opportunity to review their final transcribed interview or focus group discussion to ensure it accurately reflects what they said or intended to say and also to clarify, add, or remove any or all of their responses.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Alison Dollar (306-966-7613), or the research supervisor, Dr. Keith Walker (306-966-7623). This study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board on January 12, 2004. A copy of the approved ethics proposal is available upon request. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Office of Research Services (306-966-2084). Out of town participants may call collect.

Please complete the enclosed acceptance form to indicate your interest in participating in this study and fax it to “Attention to Dr. Keith Walker (Alison Dollar)” at 306-966-7020 or mail it to

Dr. Keith Walker (Alison Dollar)
Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X1

Thank you in advance for your interest and possible participation in this study.

Alison Dollar

Dr. Keith Walker

Appendix E
SAMPLE OF TAMS DATA ANALYZER

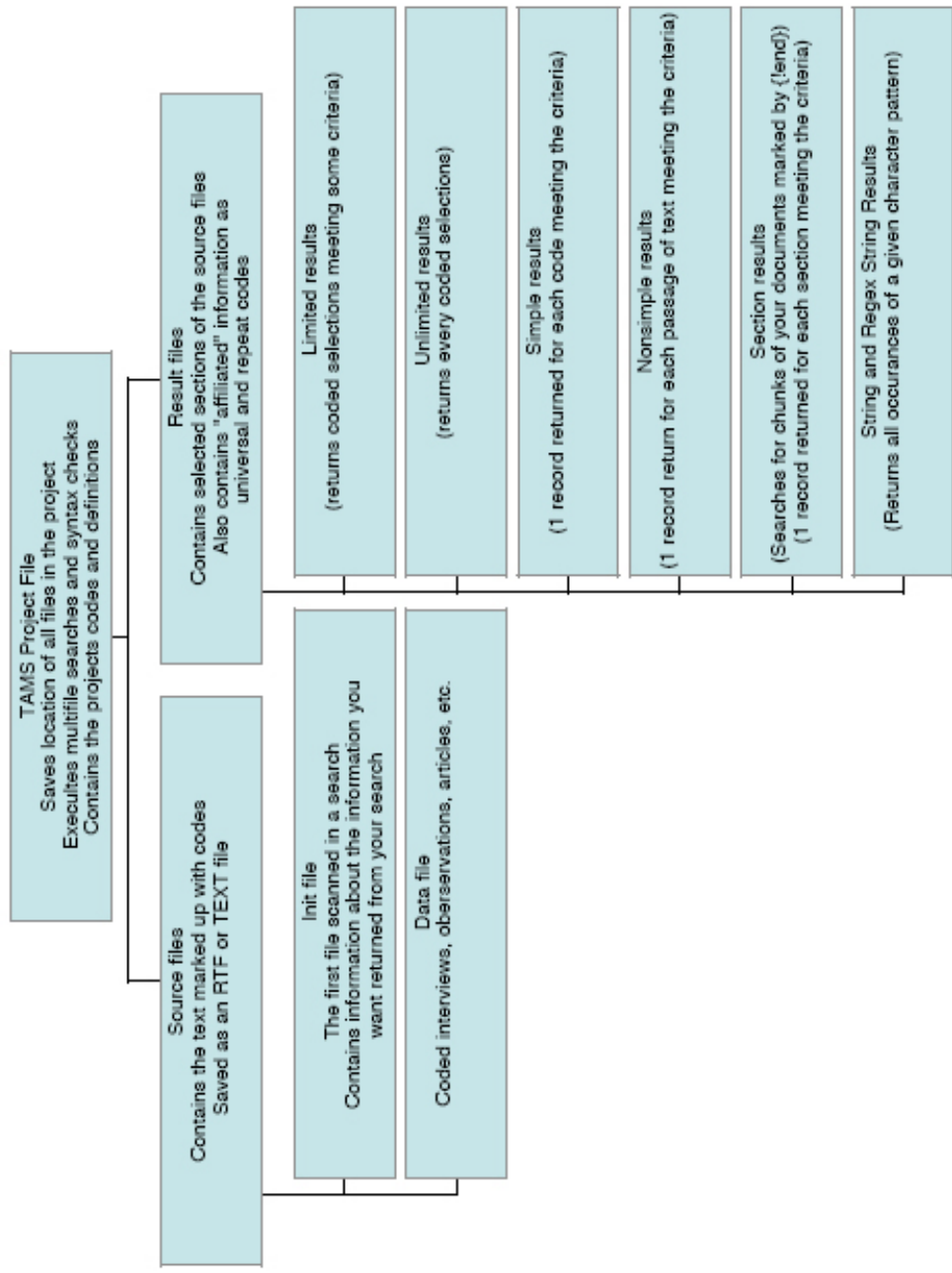
TAMS Analyzer

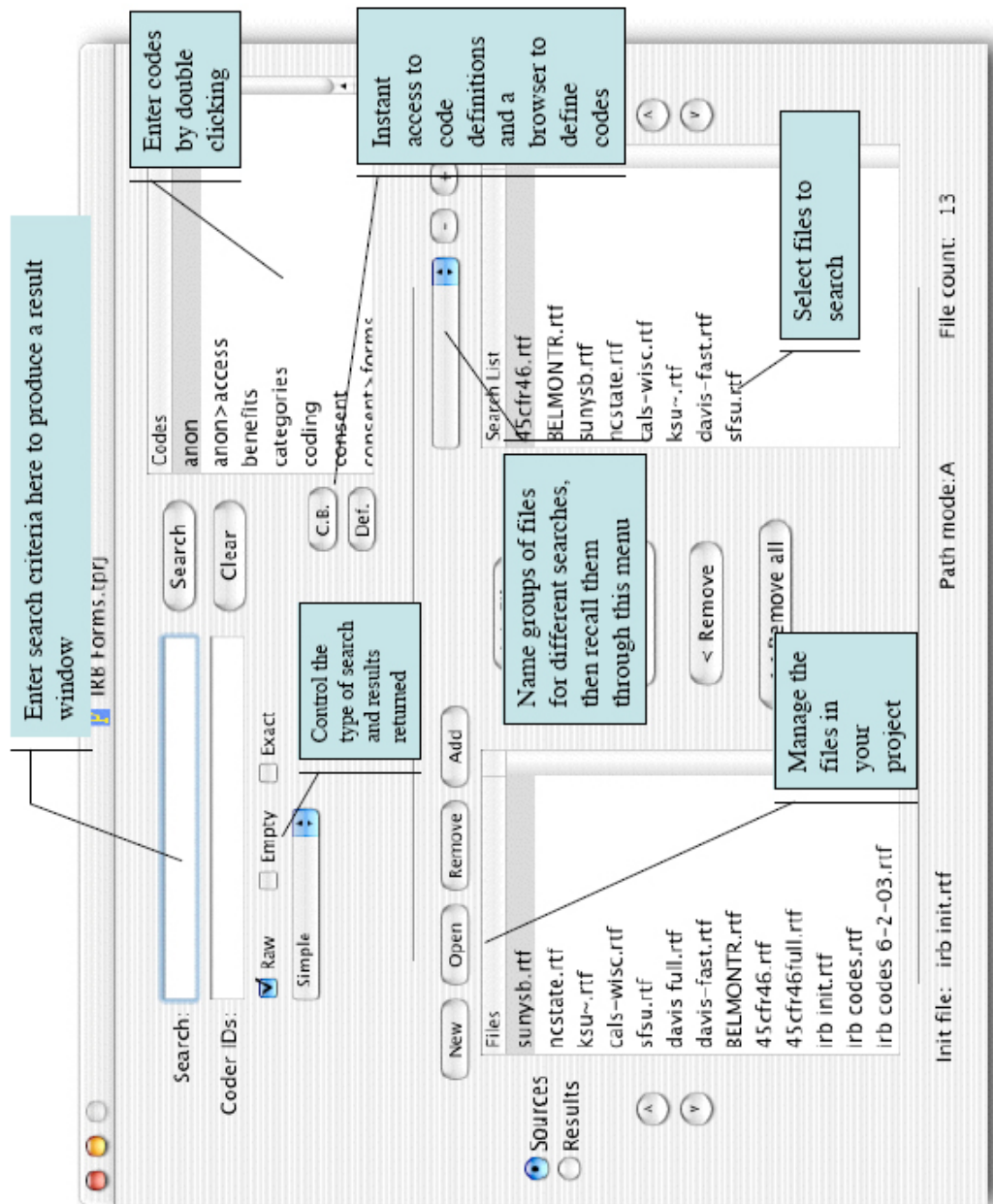
- TAMS = Text Analysis Markup System
- TAMS Analyzer is an interactive coding and analysis program using the TAMS system.
- The following pages offer pictorial introduction to the TAMS Analyzer qualitative analysis program.

File types

- There are three types of windows that a user must become familiar with
 - The project window also called the workbench which organizes the other types of files and allows you to conduct searches across files.
 - The source window which contains your interviews, observation notes, and allows you to code your documents.
 - Result windows which allow you to browse through coded passages meeting criteria you provide. This window also is used to analyze and recode sections of your source codes.

TAMS Analyzer Document Model





Project File

Frequently used codes and passages of text can be turned into 1-click button.

Codes can be hierarchical

Buttons give easy access to code definitions, creation of new codes, format ruler, and converting codes to toolbar buttons

Code by selecting text and double clicking from your code list.

Codes
 anon
 anon> access
 benefits
 categories
 coding
 consent
 consent> forms
 consent> modified
 deception
 existingRecords
 financialInfo
 food
 funding
 gender_race
 general
 location
 location> medical
 medical
 medical> dangerous
 medical> drugs
 medical> samples
 multiple_institutions
 personal

Code list:
 {populations>vulnerable>prisoners}prisoners {elderly
 {researcher>conflict} students from a class taught by principal investigator {/researcher>conflict} other vulnerable population.
 I {populations>vulnerable>children} any of the above are used, state the necessity for doing so. Please indicate the approximate age range of the minors to be involved. {populations>vulnerable>children} {/populations>vulnerable}

Code editor:
 {general} PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED
 In lay language, describe completely all procedures to be followed during the course of the experimentation. Provide sufficient detail so that the Committee is able to assess potential risks to human subjects.
 What will subjects be asked to do?
 How much time will be required of each subject?
 {/general}

Data file

This top line indicates the searches you have conducted within the results.

You can leap straight to the original text to further explore context through this button

Search pattern: Unlimited, gender: _code: race: _code
 Sort column Find Record Refresh 49/297

(populations>race){vulnerable}(populations>vulnerable){children}(populations>age under){an IRB regulatory reviews research that involves a vulnerable category of subjects, such as children, prisoners, pregnant women, or handicapped or mentally disabled persons, consideration shall be given to the inclusion of one or more individuals who are knowledgeable about and experienced in working with these subjects.}(populations>gender)

| # | site | _code | type | form | zone |
|----|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------|----------|---------|
| 1 | 45cfr46 | populations>gender | NA | document | Regulat |
| 2 | 45cfr46 | populations>gender | NA | document | Regulat |
| 3 | 45cfr46 | populations>gender | NA | document | Regulat |
| 4 | 45cfr46 | populations>gender | NA | document | Regulat |
| 5 | 45cfr46 | populations>gender | NA | document | Regulat |
| | 45cfr46 | populations>gender | NA | document | Regulat |
| | 45cfr46 | populations>gender | NA | document | Regulat |
| | 45cfr46 | populations>gender | NA | document | Regulat |
| | Stony Brook | populations>gender>father | ?? | document | Regulat |
| | Stony Brook | populations>gender>nonpregnant | ?? | document | Regulat |
| | Stony Brook | populations>gender | ?? | document | Regulat |
| | Stony Brook | populations>gender | ?? | document | Regulat |
| | Stony Brook | populations>gender | ?? | document | Regulat |
| | NCSU | populations>gender>animals | ?? | document | Regulat |
| | NCSU | populations>gender>father | ?? | document | Regulat |
| | NCSU | populations>gender>nonpregnant | ?? | document | Regulat |
| | madison | populations>gender | nonexempt | school | Midwes |
| 19 | madison | populations>gender | exempt | school | Midwes |
| 20 | KSU | populations>gender | full | school | Midwes |
| 21 | KSU | populations>gender | full | school | Midwes |

A row in this table can represent either a coded passage, a portion of text meeting a set of code criteria, a portion of text containing a particular string, or a demarcated section of the document.

Coded passages are shown in the main browser window.

Columns are provided for document wide information (universal codes), section specific information (repeat codes), attached information (comments), as well as the passage of interest.

Researcher can further search within the returned results of a search. Here through additional selections, we are examining 49 records out of a total 297 returned from the search.

Result file

Example of a TAMS Coded Print-out
Division Names removed.

```
#      _code _data _comment   _coder _doc  _line_number _begin_loc
      _end_loc
1      Policy>teaching      . Suggest and supply, if possible, materials for use in
special programs in the classroom for individual or groups of children who need extra
help but are not priority cases for resource room aid.
      /Users/alison/Desktop/Newest Works/TAMS/TAMS Policies/[Division Name].rtf
      0      3455  3704
2      Policy>teaching      The Board of Education authorizes the professional staff,
after adequate determination of student abilities, interests and needs through a testing and
assessing program, will be consulted throughout the process of program development to
modify existing programs to meet independent student needs
      /Users/alison/Desktop/Newest Works/TAMS/TAMS Policies//[Division
Name].rtf  0      158  538
3      Policy>teaching      LEARNING DISABLED (Established Program Funding)
\n\n  IDENTIFICATION CRITERION \n\n  The student must meet all of the
following criterion: \n  1.  According to Age.  Students below the 20th percentile in
one of the recognized tests in an area of deficit outlined above administered within the
last six-month period .\n OR \n  Below the level normally attributed to one SD below
what might be expected as referred to with the Special Education Manual form 102/103.
\n\n  2.  Intelligence Quotient 80-120 inclusive as measured by the Wechsler
Intelligence Scale for Children - Revised (WISC-R) or the Stanford Binet 4th Education
or the Woodcock Johnson Assessment Battery.
      /Users/alison/Desktop/Newest Works/TAMS/TAMS Policies//[Division
Name].rtf  0      353  1137
4      Policy>teaching      All students who have exceptional learning needs,
including those who have been designated disabled, are eligible to receive Resource
assistance.  This is part of the philosophy that all children and youth have a right to equity
in receiving educational services and experiencing success as a learner.
      /Users/alison/Desktop/Newest Works/TAMS/TAMS Policies//[Division Name]rtf
      0      6168  6531
5      Policy>teaching      The Resource teacher may also provide consultative help to
the classroom teacher rather than direct service when appropriate.  Learning assistance
may be provided on a short term or semester basis for students who require tutorial type
help with specific courses up-grading of specific skills.  This is a flexible, "open-door"
approach and formal identification of exceptional needs is not required.
      /Users/alison/Desktop/Newest Works/TAMS/TAMS Policies//[Division
Name].rtf  0      12022 12475
```

Appendix F

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP CODES

Accountability – A statement showing who is accountable for that learning to take place.

Adaptative – The AD is always used – regardless

Alt_Ed – Students are placed in alternate ed

Assess>depart – Accommodations for departmental exams

Assess>diff – LD is more puzzling and more difficult to identify

Assess>for_PS – Assessment is done later in the program – for university supports

Assess>lack_of – Assessments are not being done – or not being shared

Assess>proper – Proper assessment to plan for the student

Communication – The PPP increase communication between key individuals

Demographics – Details of the school

Desig>LD – LD is considered a designated disability

Desig>LD_not – LD is not considered a designated disability

Exclusion>not – Practices which exclude the student from the classroom, where s/he otherwise could attend

Exclusive_setting – This setting is not inclusive

Funding – Issues related to the lack of funding

Funding>needs – Funding is needed for LD student because of costs

Funding>neg – Issues related to the lack of funding.

Funding>pos – Issues related to enough funding.

Future_planning – Plans that will occur next year, based on new policy decisions.

Goals – Statements that refer to planning based on goals for that individual.

Goals>focused – The goals are not too broad, they are focused and possible

Goals>measurable – The goals are written to change, growth can be seen.

Goals>realistic – Goals are realistic to what is possible and the student's abilities

Goals>redesign – Redesigning the PPP goals to fit the student’s needs

Goals>unfocused – Goals are not focused and specific for the student

Goals>unmeasurable – Goals are not written where they can be easily measured

Goals>unrealistic – Goals are not realistic for the student

Inclusion – The extent to which schools/classes include students with special needs

Inclusion>acceptance – The student is accepted as an equal member of the classroom

Inclusion>continuum – Inclusion which is done based on the continuum and the student’s best interest

Inclusion>full – Inclusion which is done fully - for the sake of inclusion and not the student’s best interest

Inclusion>non acceptance – The student is not accepted as an equal member of the classroom

Inclusion>not – Inclusion which is not happening

Inclusion>partial – Inclusion which is done only in non-academic classes

Individualization – Individualized to the student

Ineffective – Ineffective practices

Leadership>inclusive – Leadership is discussed as inclusive by nature

Leadership>non inclusive – Leadership is not discussed as inclusive by nature

Leadership>supportive – The admin is very supportive to the needs of the student.

Meeting>grade_level – Meetings are held by grades not by students

Meeting>staff – Meetings about the students occur at staff meetings – not specific student meetings

Meeting>transition – A transition meeting is held between the elementary and high school before moving schools

Meetings>continuous – Meetings to redesign PPP as needed

PPP – The personal program plan, or IEP

PPP>Adapt – The plan is written up with adaptations only and filed

PPP>Effective – Effective practices in SpEd programming

PPP>Inc_LD – PPPs are created for students included in the classroom who have an LD

PPP>Ineffective – Statements referring to ineffective practices

PPP>LD – A PPP less detailed as the policy PPP but made specifically for LD students

PPP>Meeting_needs – Striving to meet the needs of the students

PPP>Noninc_LD – This is information about PPPs which do not include LD students

PPP>Process – The process by which PPPs are created

PPP>Regular_meeting – Meeting regularly to update the PPP

PPP>Restrictive – The plan may be seen as restrictive

PPP>advantage – The advantages of a PPP

PPP>consensus – Everyone involved agrees on what is written in the PPP

PPP>directs_teaching – The PPP offers a plan teacher can follow and maintain – offers direction, recommendations

PPP>disadvantage – A disadvantage of a PPP

PPP>distributed – The PPP is given to each teacher involved

PPP>filed – The PPP is filed – so teachers can read them at will

PPP>follow_up – Following up on the PPP as planned

PPP>informed – Teachers are informed of what's on the PPP but not given one – possibly given a list of information

PPP>nondirect_teaching – The PPP does not offer direction nor recommendations for the classroom teacher

PPP>paperwork – Large amount of paperwork goes into the PPP – this is a disadvantage

PPP>terms – Terminology becomes confusing

PPP>undistributed – The PPP is not given to the classroom teachers

PPP_to_IEP – The PPP evolved from the IEP

Paperwork>excess – Negative attitudes toward amount of paperwork for the PPP

Parent – Parents involvement

Parent>choice – Parents choose not to be involved in the planning

Parent>disagreement – When parents disagree with the PPP

Parent>involved – Parents are involved in the planning

Parents>non-involved – Parents are not involved in the planning

Philosophy – A statement of their philosophy of inclusion/special education

Philosophy>buy_in – Everyone agrees with the philosophy of inclusion

Philosophy>continuum – Inclusion is based on the continuum and student ability/needs

Philosophy>inclusive – A statement of their philosophy of inclusion/special education

Philosophy>non inclusive – A statement of their philosophy which is not inclusion/special education.

Policy – Based on Sask Learning

Policy>based – Based on Sask Learning

Policy>unbased – Not based on Sask Learning – policy unknown.

Secondary>element – The secondary program is not as able to include these students as is the elementary levels

Sp_Ed – Special Education teacher in the main teacher

Student – Student with Special Needs

Student>abilities – Decisions based on ability

Student>attitude – The student has a negative attitude and uses this system to get through

Student>choice – Students may choose not to be included because they recognize their different needs

Student>drop_out – Students may leave school before completing the school year

- Student>failure – The student may fail as things are
- Student>focused – The school and the programs are student needs focused
- Student>frustration – Students become frustrated and behaviours change
- Student>involved – Students are involved in their planning
- Student>non_abilities – Decisions that were not made based on ability
- Student>success – Students can feel success with the goals and objectives
- Student>suffer – Top end students suffer because of the amount of time the reg ed teacher needs to give to the others
- Students>non-involved – Students are not involved in their PPP planning
- Support>loss_of – The loss of supports necessary for PPP implementation
- Support>materials – Additional materials offered for inclusive classroom
- Support>non_materials – The need for additional materials offered for inclusive classroom.
- Support>non_resources – The need for additional resource offered for inclusive classroom.
- Support>non_training – Support has not seen offered for training in sp. Needs areas
- Support>resources – Additional resource offered for inclusive classroom
- Support>time – Time is given to those who need it to prepare and plan
- Support>training – Support is offered in the area of training for inclusive settings
- TA>involved – The TA is involved in PPP planning
- TA>subject_K – The TA does not have the subject knowledge to be as helpful in the classroom
- TA>support – Has TA in an included classroom.
- TA>unsupport – The need for more TA in an included classroom
- Teacher – Regular education teacher

Teacher>AD – Teachers use the adaptive dimension in the classroom

Teacher>Neg_Atitude – Negative attitude shown or described belonging to a teacher

Teacher>Pos_attitude – A positive inclusive attitude shown or described, belong to a Reg. ed teacher

Teacher>ability – The teacher’s ability to teach student with special needs

Teacher>consistency – Teachers consistency in their teaching with that student

Teacher>frustration – Reg. Ed teachers are feeling frustrated with the current system

Teachers>inconsistency – Teacher do not have a plan of sorts and do not have consistency in teaching

Teacher>involvement – The teacher is involved in planning for the student.

Teacher>involvementPPP – The teacher is involved in PPP meetings and planning

Teacher>noninform – The teacher is not involved nor told of students with PPPs in their classrooms

Teacher>non-involved – The teacher is not involved in planning for the student, but is given a PPP

Teacher>supported – Teachers are supported in creating inclusive settings

Teacher>timeloss – Teachers feeling less time with reg. Ed students

Teacher>unheard – The feeling of being told what to do, unheard of their needs, support, etc.

Teacher>unsupported – The need for more basic support

Teacher>used – Teacher uses the PPP to plan her teaching and inclusive setting

Teacher>willingness – Teacher’s willingness to use the PPP in classroom

Teacher>workload – Teacher workload in the regular classroom

Team – PPP teams

Team>ILC – Integrated Learning Centres

Team>SSS – The team is made up of a core group of individuals including the guidance counsellor and SpEd

Team>essential – Essential members, SpEd, Admin, parents, - possible students

Team>full – The full team is needed to properly plan for the student

Team>grade_alike – Teams are made up of the same grade level teachers – not student specific.

Team>noninterest – Members don't want to be part of the process – or work together on it

Team>partial – Special education, admin, TA, families

Training>lack_of – Statements of lack of training in special education to properly teach these students

Trust_building – Builds trust in the classroom

Appendix G
THE PPP SURVEYS

Effective Practices of the Personal Program Plan Policy

March 31, 2004

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for participating in this study, entitled [Effective Practices of the Personal Program Plan Policy]. Its focus is the effective practices for creating and implementing the Personal Program Plan (PPP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) with students who have been identified with learning disabilities at the secondary level. We are interested in your perceptions of Personal Program Plan (PPP) policies as well as the particular and current uses of PPPs (or IEPs) in your school. The surveys are designed for both principals/vice-principals, and general and special educators.

Data collected from this study will be used in a doctoral dissertation, and will be published in scholarly journals and conference presentations. Your agreement to participate will be indicated by returning the completed survey. There are no anticipated risks nor any deception in this study. You may withdraw at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, all data from your contributions will be destroyed. Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study.

The total time to complete the survey is approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Should you wish to elaborate upon any item, please do so in the written section of this survey. Please answer the questions to the best of your knowledge and base all your responses on the **last two school years**.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Alison Dollar or the research advisor, Dr. Keith Walker. This study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board on January 12, 2004. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Office of Research Services (306-966-2084). Out of town participants may call collect.

Please return your completed survey by April 9, 2004. Once you have completed this survey, please place it in the envelope, seal it, and return it to your principal. Alternatively, you may send your survey directly to me in the self-addressed envelope. To ensure anonymity, please do not put your name on the survey or envelope.

Your participation in this study is appreciated.
Thank you,

Alison Dollar, Principal Researcher
Alison.Dollar@usask.ca
306-966-7613

Dr. Keith Walker, Research Advisor
Keith.Walker@usask.ca
306-966-7623

Personal Program Plan Survey

Please completely fill in the appropriate bubble with PENCIL to correspond with your answer. Please do not use a check mark or X. Use only one rating per statement. Please do not fold or staple this survey.

Please answer the questions to the best of your knowledge and base all your answers on the last two school years.

1. Please indicate the size of the city/town where the school is located:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 100-500 | <input type="checkbox"/> 10,001-50,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 501-10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50,001 or larger |

2. Type of school:

- Public
- Separate
- Other: _____

3. Location of school:

- Urban
- Rural
- Other: _____

4. Number of secondary students in the school:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-100 | <input type="checkbox"/> 201-300 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 101-200 | <input type="checkbox"/> 301 or more |

5. Estimated number of secondary students with a PPP/IEP in the school:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-20 | <input type="checkbox"/> 31 or more |

6. Approximate number of secondary teachers (FTE) in the school

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-20 | <input type="checkbox"/> 31 or more |

7. Estimated number of qualified special education teachers in the school:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

8. Approximate number of secondary educational assistants in the school:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 or more |

9. I am:

- female
- male

10. My years of teaching experience:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 21 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 | |

11. My years of experience working with students who have a learning disability and/or emotional/behavioural disturbance:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 21 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 | |

12. I have a recognized qualification and certification in special education:

- Yes
- No

13. I am a: (current and predominant role)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Principal | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vice-principal | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education Teacher (as defined by 12) |

14. I would like to receive copies of my students' PPPs:

Yes

No

15. I find the PPP a useful tool towards the student's educational success:

Yes

No

16. PPPs contribute, at least in part, to the improvements we see in student behaviour:

Yes

No

17. Overall, I believe that PPPs in our school are being used as intended:

Yes

No

Using the scale of 1-5, 1 meaning it never occurs and 5 meaning it very frequently occurs, please answer the questions to the best of your knowledge and base all your answers on the last two school years.

| | Never - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Frequently - 5 |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 18. I receive professional development on the topic of students with special needs. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. I stay current on the PPP policies and practices in my school/division. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. I have attended workshops or seminars on the implementation of PPPs. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. I attend students' PPP meetings. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. I participate in PPP meetings. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. In my experiences, all PPP team members participate effectively in PPP meetings. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. Based on the PPP meetings I have attended, the students have opportunity to participate. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. Parents attend their child's PPP meetings. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | Never - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Frequently - 5 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 26. Students attend their PPP meetings. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27. During meetings, I feel comfortable discussing my questions and concerns. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28. I am provided with (or provide) the necessary support needed to meet the recommendations of the PPP. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 29. I am provided with (or provide) the necessary resources needed to meet the recommendations of the PPP. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 30. My suggestions and ideas are considered as we develop the PPP. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31. In my opinion, PPP meetings are a team effort. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32. I am well informed on the ways that PPPs are used in our school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 33. To my knowledge, all members of the PPP team are well informed on the ways that PPPs are used in our school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 34. Based on the PPP meetings I have attended, we thoroughly discuss the students's individual needs before decisions are made. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 35. At PPP meetings, I understand the technical aspects being discussed. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 36. In my experience, PPP meetings are scheduled at a mutually convenient time for both school staff and parents/guardians. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 37. I receive current copies of my students' PPPs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 38. Our PPPs clearly identify personalized accommodations/adaptations for each student. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 39. In our PPPs, teaching strategies are personalized to meet the student's needs. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 40. Goals and objectives are personalized to the student's needs. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 41. I refer to the PPP to ensure that accommodations/adaptations recommended are carried out for each student. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 42. I refer to the PPP to ensure that the goals and objectives recommended are carried out for each student. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 43. In our school, PPPs are kept up-to-date. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 44. The PPP teams in our school use explicit criteria for determining services and accommodations/adaptations for student with special needs. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Thank you for your cooperation.

50. What specific skills training have you had in PPP design and practice (i.e. formal education, specific workshops, or other professional development)?

51. From your experience, what have been the advantages of using a PPP for a student?

52. What would you say have been the disadvantages of using a PPP for a student?

53. Please share any thoughts you may have on what might make PPPs more effective in your classroom or school.

Appendix H
RESEARCH AND SURVEY QUESTIONS

Survey Questions as they relate to research questions:

- 1. In what ways do school division policies align with the Provincial PPP policy in *The Children's Services Policy Framework (2002)*?**

This question will be an open-ended question in the survey.

This will be answered through demographics and comparisons of surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

- 2. In what ways do the design and implementation of PPPs in various secondary programs across Saskatchewan reflect division and provincial policy?**

This question will be answered through the following yes-no-statements:

- I attend students' PPP meeting.
- I participate in PPP meetings.
- In my experiences, all PPP team members meaningfully participate in PPP meetings.
- Based on the PPP meetings I have attended, the students are given the opportunity to participate.
- Parents attend their child's PPP meetings.
- During meetings, I feel comfortable discussing my questions and concerns.
- I receive professional development on the topic of students with special needs.
- I stay current on the PPP policies and practices in my school/division.
- I have attended workshops or seminars in implementation of PPPs.

3. What factors may be influencing the classroom implementation of provincial PPP policy?

- I am provided with (or provide) the necessary support needed to meet the recommendations of the PPP.
- I am provided with (or provide) the necessary materials needed to meet the recommendations of the PPP.
- My suggestions and ideas are considered as we develop the PPP.
- In my opinion, PPP meetings are a team effort.
- I am well informed of the ways PPPs are used in our school.
- In your opinion, what are the factors that determine how many students with PPPs can be taught effectively in your classroom?
- In the last two years, what is the largest number of students with a PPP you have placed or taught in a given classroom?
- Based on your experience, if a PPP cannot be implemented as originally written, what happens?
- From your experience, what are the advantages of using a PPP?
- What would you say are the disadvantages of using a PPP?
- Please share any thought you may have on what might make PPPs more effective in your classroom or school.

4. To what extent do principals, vice-principals, special educators, teachers, parents or guardians of students with learning disabilities, and students with learning disabilities perceive that PPPs are used effectively in Saskatchewan secondary programs based on current provincial policy?

This question will be answered through the following yes-no statements:

- To my knowledge, all members of the PPP team are well informed of the ways PPPs are used in our school.
- Based on the PPP meetings I have attended, we thoroughly discuss the student's individual needs before decisions are made.
- At PPP meetings, I understand the technical aspects being discussed.
- In our school, PPP meetings are scheduled at a mutually convenient time for both school staff and parents or guardians.
- I receive current copies of my students' PPPs.
- Our PPPs clearly identify personalized accommodations/adaptations for each student.
- In our PPPs, teaching strategies are personalized to meet the student's needs.
- In our PPPs, goals and objectives are personalized to meet the student's needs.
- I refer to the PPP to ensure that accommodations/adaptations recommended are carried out for each student.
- I refer to the PPP to ensure that the goals and objectives recommended are carried out for each student.
- In our school, PPPs are kept up-to-date.
- The PPP teams in our school use explicit criteria for determining services and accommodation/adaptations for students with special needs.

As well as the following open-ended questions will be asked:

- Do you find the PPP a useful tool towards the students' educational success?
- PPPs contribute, at least in part, to the improvements we see in student

behaviour.

- From your experience, what are the advantages of using a PPP?
- What would you say are the disadvantages of using a PPP?
- Please share any thought you may have on what might make PPPs more effective in your classroom or school.

Appendix I

TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORMS

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Alison Dollar. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Alison Dollar to be used in the manner described in the consent form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Participant

Date

Researcher

Date

Appendix J

**APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH,
PROTOCOL AND APPROVAL LETTER**

Application for Approval of Research Protocol

Submitted to

University of Saskatchewan, Behavioural Research Ethics Board

1. Name of supervisor Dr. Keith Walker,
Department of Educational Administration,
College of Education,
University of Saskatchewan.

Name of student Alison L. Dollar, Ph.D. Candidate.
Department of Educational Administration,
College of Education,
University of Saskatchewan.

Anticipated start date: December 2003

Expected completion date: June 2004

2. Title of Study: [Effective Practices of the Personal Program Plan Policy]

3. Abstract – Purpose of Study

Presently, the primary source of the educational needs for all students has been increasingly transferred to the general education teacher (Cook, 2001), and without written policies on inclusive education, there is a risk of limiting efforts that promote change, initiate reform, and improve educational practice (Roach, Salisbury, & McGregor, 2002).

Issue 4.1 (p. V.4.1i) of the Saskatchewan special education policy manual, *The Children's Services Policy Framework 2002*, discusses the need for individualized education and a Personal Program Plan (PPP) for each student whose needs limit their success in the general classroom. The PPPs are based on a process of comprehensive

assessments, planning and consulting involving educators, parents or guardians, student and support personnel. Even with the special education policies in place, the question remains of how these are implemented (Bricker, 2000). This study will explore what is perceived to be effective and ineffective practices of the PPP in Saskatchewan secondary classrooms in hopes of offering insight toward educational planning and policy practices.

Problem Statement

To what extent do principals, teachers, special educators, students, and parents or guardians perceive that personal program plans (PPP) are used effectively in Saskatchewan secondary programs?

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to clarify the problem statement and guide this study:

1. What are the processes by which PPPs are created?
2. Who are the secondary school PPP team members; how and why are these members selected?
3. In what ways are PPPs used differently in relation to particularities of various school population and contexts?
4. What effective or ineffective PPP practices are in evidence as perceived by principals, special educators, teachers, parents or guardians, and students?
5. What are the perceptions of the principals, special educators, teachers, parents or guardians, and students toward the PPPs in reference to:
 - a. Academic and/or behavioural expectations of the students?
 - b. Effectiveness of the cooperation and involvement of PPP team members?
6. In what ways are PPP's used relative to the Saskatchewan policy and guidelines in *The Children's Services Policy Framework 2002*)?

4. Funding

The graduate researcher will fund the study.

5. Participants

This study aims to investigate the creation and use of personal program plans (PPP) in the classroom. The study will include principals, vice-principal, teachers of inclusive classrooms, special education teachers, students with special needs, and parents or guardians of students with special needs. The schools involved will be six to ten Saskatchewan secondary programs; three to five in the northern half of the province and three to five in the southern half.

Requests for participation will include classroom observations, interviews, focus group participation, and document collection. With respect to confidentiality, school and participant names will not be used. If necessary for clarity in writing, pseudonyms will be used. Participants will be given the opportunity to read the transcripts that pertain to the focus groups as well as field observations to clarify, add, or delete their words, thoughts, ideas, or opinions in order to maintain the most accurate description of the information shared. Participants may contact the researcher at any time by email or telephone with any concerns or questions. Participants in the survey phase will be those who voluntarily complete and return the surveys.

6. Consent

Individuals will become participants of this study through invitation, nomination, and consent. School administrators will be asked to identify potential participants. The researcher will contact each of the participants to inform them about the research study, explain consent protocol, and assure them that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout the study.

A number of participants will be under the age of 18, therefore the respective parents or guardians will also be contacted to inform them about the research study, explain consent protocol, obtain consent for their child to be involved in this study, and assure them that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout the study. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, and in the case of students, from their parents as well (Appendices A-H).

7. Methods/ Procedures

This study will include multiple case studies, document collection (policies), and survey.

Demographic information

Demographic information collected from participants will include gender, age, years of teaching experience, special education training (teachers and principals), years of administrative experience (principals), years on the special education caseload (students), school location and environment (urban, rural), and population of schools.

Method

Phase One: Document Analysis. Faxes will be sent to each school division in Saskatchewan requesting a faxed, emailed or mailed copy of the PPP policy for that division. During this time, I will also conduct a web search of Saskatchewan school division policies available publicly online.

There will not be a specific selection procedure for participation, only those who respond to requests or have policies publicly available through web sites will be included. These policies will then be used to compare the guidelines for creating a PPP, the expected PPP team members, and expectations of practices among Saskatchewan secondary programs.

School policies collected will also be compared to each other based on the provincial policy and guidelines. Categories will be produced based on similarities and differences in order to explore and describe themes that may influence effective and ineffective practices of the policies.

Phase Two: multiple case study. This second phase of the study will involve a multiple case study of secondary programs in the province and will require more detailed explanation than the other phases. These case studies will contribute information through interviews, focus groups, and observations of the general classroom and school environment that will furnish depth to the other three phases.

School and participant selections. Three to five secondary programs in the

northern half of the province and three to five secondary programs in the south will be invited to participate. The purpose for this equal distribution across the province is to gain a deeper understanding of the practices of PPPs in Saskatchewan and remove the suggestion that effective or ineffective practices are based on school or community size.

School selection will be based on permission to conduct the research and school nomination from school division directors. Because the aim of this study is to investigate the perceptions of the effective and ineffective use of personal program plans in the classroom based on policy guidelines, those individuals selected to participate will be those most involved in the creation and practices of PPPs. These individuals will include principals, vice-principals, teachers of inclusive classrooms, special educators, parents or guardians of students with special needs, and students with special needs. Individual participant selection will be conducted through nomination by the principal of each school visited, and only those who consent to be involved in the study will participate.

Principals, vice-principals, and the special educator will be interviewed individually during each school visit. Two separate focus groups will be conducted, one with general and special educators and the other with parents of and students with an identified learning disability and/or behavioural disturbance.

Phase Three: Surveys. Once permission to research is obtained, surveys will be sent to principals, vice-principals, general educators, and special educators in twenty secondary programs in Saskatchewan. Schools that participated in the multiple case studies will not be asked to participate in this survey phase. Selection will then be based solely on agreement to participate by returning the completed survey.

Phase Four: Synthesis of information. Once data collection is completed and analyzed, the fourth phase of this study will be the synthesis of information gathered.

8. Storage of Data

During the study, all data collected will be securely stored with the researcher in the Department of Educational Administration. Dr. Keith Walker, research supervisor, will ensure that data are stored in a secure location for a minimum of five

years after the completion of the study.

9. Dissemination of Results

Participants will be informed that the data collected and results from this study will be used in my doctoral dissertation and will later be published in scholarly journals and conference presentations.

10. Risk or Deception

There is no anticipated risk or deception in this study. Participants will be aware of the purpose and why they are participating and may withdraw at any time without penalty. If an individual chooses to withdraw, the tape recordings and data from their contributions will not be used.

11. Confidentiality

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study. Confidentiality will be preserved by use of pseudonyms for real names in transcripts, analysis, and any document that results from this study.

12. Data/Transcript Release

Participants will review the final transcript to ensure it accurately reflects what they said or intended to say. Participants have the right to clarify, add, or remove any or all of their responses.

13. Debriefing/Feedback

Feedback will be given to participants through the course of this study. Information gained from interviews, focus groups, and observations will be returned to the participants in the form of written transcripts.



**UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD**

<http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics.shtml>

NAME: Keith Walker (Alison Dollar)
Educational Administration

BSC#: 03-1340

DATE: January 12, 2004

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the Application for Ethics Approval for your study "Effective Practices of the Personal Program Plan" (03-1340).

1. Your study has been APPROVED.
2. Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Committee consideration in advance of its implementation.
3. The term of this approval is for 5 years.
4. This approval is valid for one year. A status report form must be submitted annually to the Chair of the Committee in order to extend approval. This certificate will automatically be invalidated if a status report form is not received within one month of the anniversary date. Please refer to the website for further instructions <http://www.usask.ca/research/behavrsc.shtml>

I wish you a successful and informative study.

Dr. David Hay, Acting Chair
University of Saskatchewan
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

DH:ck

Appendix K
EXTERNAL AUDIT LETTER

Letter of Attestation

This letter of attestation is in relation to the inquiry audit of the Ph.D. dissertation written by Alison Dollar entitled "The Personal Program Plan in Secondary Programs: A Study of Effective Practice".

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the perceptions of individuals most influential in the development and classroom practices of the personal program plan (PPP) among Saskatchewan secondary programs pertaining to effective or ineffective Practices of PPP/IEPs based on the current PPP policy.

This study was structured according to a four-phase design. Phase one began this study with a document collections and analysis of available PPP/IEP policies for 25 secondary programs in the province. In the second phase of this study, the multiple case study process was chosen as an appropriate method to understand the perceptions of effective and ineffective procedures in policy implementation through the shared understandings and experiences of principals, vice principles, teachers, special educators, students and parents/guardians. This design utilized methods of interviews, and focus groups to construct a comprehensive understanding of what is perceived as effective and ineffective special education PPP/IEP policy practices. The third phase of this study entailed surveying secondary programs, which were used to gain a wider understanding of effective and ineffective PPP/IEP practices throughout Saskatchewan schools.

The Audit Procedure—Verification and Accuracy of Transcripts and Tapes

1. Consent and Data/Transcript release forms

All of the school division and school district authorization forms for the 11 school divisions and 19 schools are reviewed for signatures and completion. The forms:

- a) list the school participants of the study provided for the audit and
- b) are signed, or
- c) are attested to by senders' e-mail addresses.

2. Selection of Samples for Verification and Accuracy of Tapes to Transcripts:

a) Procedure and Observations for Tapes to Transcripts Tests:

There are 11 audio-cassette tapes for the interviews. Four of the 11 are randomly chosen for testing. The first page of the transcript in each case and then four times during fast-forwarding the tapes were paused to compare audio statements to the transcripts to note any discrepancies.

b) Accuracy of Quotations in Relation to Data Sources

All comparisons between tapes and transcripts were positive. The words spoken on tape were the words that appeared in transcripts.

3. Accuracy of Dissertation Chapter Four References to Transcripts:

No tests were carried to verify references to working papers.

A CD with TAMS analysis will be placed in storage with other study materials should a more detailed verification of quotations and categories of analysis be indicated.

4. Inspection of Ethics Proposal and Certificate

I have reviewed the candidate's application for approval by the Research Ethics Board and the Ethics Certificate provided by that Board. The procedures used by researcher and the protocols followed in the research are consistent with this approval. An analysis of the data reduction and interpretation of data was not considered by this audit. It remains for the researcher to turn the materials, above, over to the University for secure storage for a five-year period.

5. Summary

Despite minor omissions the transcripts are accurate transcriptions of the taped interviews. The transcripts in the dissertation represent a faithful record of the taped interviews.

As a result of the audit, I as auditor, testify that the transcripts which I have examined in relation to Alison Dollar's dissertation are true and accurate.

Eric Campbell (signature)

Eric Campbell, B.Comm., M.B.A. (Queens) (retired member Institute of Internal Auditors and Association of College and University Auditors)

2005-02-19
(Date)

Appendix L
DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Saskatchewan Policies Consulted

| School Division | Address |
|---|---|
| Battlefords School Division No 118 | 1022 102 nd Street, North Battleford S9A 1E6 |
| Broadview School Division No 18 | Box 130, Broadview, S0G 0K0 |
| Buffalo Plains School Division No 21 | 3080 Albert St N, Regina, S4P 3E1 |
| Crystal Lakes School Division | 113 1 st Avenue East, PO Box 869, Canora, S0A 0L0 |
| Eston-Elrose S.D. No 33 | Box 430, 220 4 th Avenue East, Elrose, S0L0Z0 |
| Golden Plains School Division No 124 | Box 280, 38 2 nd Avenue West, Lafleche, S0H2K0 |
| Gull Lake School Division | Box 30, 1182 Conrad Avenue, Gull Lake, S0N 1A0 |
| Herbert School Division | Box 100, 501 Herbert Avenue, Herbert, S0H 2A0 |
| Humboldt R.C.S.S.D. No 15 | Box 2830, Highway #5 East, Humbolt, S0K 2A0 |
| Kindersley School Division | Box 1209 112 5 th Avenue East, Kindersley, S0L 1S0 |
| Lloydminster School Division | 5017 46 th Street Lloydminster, Alberta, T9V 1R4 |
| Outlook School Division | Box 280, 305 Saskatchewan Avenue, Outlook, S0L 2N0 |
| Regina Public School Division | 1600 4 th Avenue, Regina, S4R 8C8 |
| Regina R.C.S.S.D. | 2160 Cameron Street, Regina, S4T 2V6 |
| Rosetown School Division No 43 | Box 700 501 First Street West, Rosetown, S0L 2V0 |
| St. Henry's R.C.S.S.D. NO. 5 | Box 1177 234 3 rd Avenue West, Biggar, S0K 0M0 |
| Saskatchewan Learning | 1st Floor, 2220 College Avenue, Regina |
| Saskatchewan Rivers School Division No. 119 | 545 11 th Street East, Prince Albert, S6V 1B1 |
| Saskatchewan Valley School Division | Box 809 121 Klassen Street East, Warmen, S0K 4S0 |
| Saskatoon School Division No. 13 | 310 21 st Street East, Saskatoon, S7K 1M7 |

| School Division | Address |
|---|---|
| Saskatoon RCSD | 19 Fraser Crescent, Saskatoon, S7H 3G9 |
| Saskatoon East School Division | 620 Heritage Lance, Saskatoon, S7H 5P5 |
| Scenic Valley School Division No. 117 | 415 Main Street, PO Box 100, Neudorf, S0A 2T0 |
| Shaunavon School Division | Box 10 499 Centre Street, Shaunavon, S0N 2M0 |
| Souris Moose Mountain School Division | Box 327 509 Main Street, Arcola, S0C 0G0 |
| Thunder Creek School Division | #1-15 Thatcher Drive East, Moose Jaw, S6J 1L8 |
| Tisdale School Division No. 53 | Box 400 1010 102 nd Avenue, Tisdale, S0E 1T0 |
| Turtleford School Division No. 65 | Box 280 (Railway Avenue), Turtleford, S0M 2Y0 |
| Wadena School Division | 245 Main Street North, Wadena, S0A 4J0 |
| Yorkton Catholic School Division No. 86 | 259 Circlebrooke Drive, Yorkton, S3N 2S8 |

Appendix M
EDUCATION ACT REFERENCED IN
SASKATCHEWAN PPP POLICY

References to the Education Act, 1995

Right to education

141(1) Subject to sections 154, 155 and 157, no teacher, trustee, director or other school official shall, in any way deprive, or attempt to deprive, a pupil of access to, or the advantage of, the educational services approved and provided by the board of education or the conseil scolaire.

(2) Where any of the persons mentioned in subsection (1) contravenes the provisions of that subsection, that person is disqualified from holding his or her office or position.

Right to attend school at cost of school division

142(1) Subject to the other provisions of this Act, every person who has attained the age of six years but has not yet attained the age of 22 years has the right:

- (a) to attend school in the school division where that person or that person's parents or guardians reside; and
- (b) to receive instruction appropriate to that person's age and level of educational achievement.

(2) A person's right to receive instruction mentioned in clause (1)(b) is the right to instruction in courses of instruction approved by the board of education:

- (a) in the schools of the school division; or
- (b) subject to the stated policies, requirements and conditions of the board of education, in any schools or institutions outside the school division with which the board of education has made arrangements to provide certain services to pupils of the school division.

(3) Except as otherwise provided in this Act, the educational services provided pursuant to this section are to be provided at the cost of the school division, and no fees for tuition, transportation or any other expenses with respect to attendance at school are to be charged with respect to a pupil who is resident in the school division or whose parent or guardian is a resident in the school division.

(4) Notwithstanding subsection (3), the board of education may require payment in whole or in part of costs incurred with respect to transportation pertaining to

special projects or special equipment or supplies not ordinarily furnished to pupils under the policies of the board of education.

Attendance of others at fransaskois school

144 A person who has attained the age of six years but has not yet attained the age of 22 years and whose parent is not a minority language adult may attend a fransaskois school in any francophone education area that exists or becomes established if the attendance of that person at a fransaskois school in the francophone education area is agreed to by:

(a) the board of education of the school division where the person would otherwise attend school; and (b) the conseil scolaire.

Access to high schools

145(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, any person who is a resident of a city in which a public school division and a separate school division have been established may declare his or her intention to enrol one or more of his or her children who are eligible to register in Grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 in a school in either the public school division or the separate school division.

(2) A declaration of intention pursuant to subsection (1) is to be given in writing to the boards of education of the school divisions affected prior to June 1 in any year and is effective from the commencement of the next following school year.

(3) Where a declaration of intention is made pursuant to this section, the maker of the declaration is entitled, on behalf of his or her eligible children, to access without tuition to a public high school or a separate high school in the school divisions affected.

(4) Where a board of education has a general attendance area policy, the board of education shall apply that policy equally to pupils attending its high schools as a result of the making of a declaration of intention pursuant to this section.

(5) Notwithstanding subsection 182(3), where a pupil attends a public high school or a separate high school as a result of the making of a declaration of intention pursuant to this section, the pupil shall abide by all policies of the board of education of the school division in which that high school is situated, including any policies relating to religious instruction, religious activities and other

programs conducted by the high school.

(6) Where the boards of education of the school divisions affected by a declaration of intention made pursuant to this section consider it expedient, they may:

- (a) enter into fee-for-service agreements to make payments for tuition to recover the cost of services provided to pupils in accordance with this section;
- (b) mutually agree that no charge will be made to recover the cost of services provided to pupils in accordance with this section; or
- (c) where no agreement is made pursuant to clause (a) or (b), charge tuition fees in the amounts prescribed in the regulations, but in no case are those tuition fees to be charged to the pupil or to his parent or guardian.

Right to special services without charge or fee

146 Except as otherwise provided in this Act, services approved by a board of education or the conseil scolaire with respect to pupils who are eligible for the special programs mentioned in section 186 or who are otherwise entitled to services of benefit to their general health and well-being, are to be provided without cost to those pupils or their parents or guardians.

Classification of pupils

169(1) Pupils are to be classified according to the grade of the Level in which they are enrolled so that:

- (a) those enrolled in the Elementary Level are to be classified as engaged in studies of grade 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 of that Level;
- (b) those enrolled in the Middle Level are to be classified as engaged in studies of grade 6, 7, 8 or 9 of that Level; and
- (c) those enrolled in the Secondary Level are to be classified as engaged in studies of grade 10, 11 or 12 of that Level.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the director may authorize any variations in the classification of pupils as the director considers necessary in the circumstances of one or more of the schools in the director's jurisdiction.

Instruction limit

170(1) A board of education or the conseil scolaire may limit instruction to one or two grades in a Level where it is impracticable or prejudicial to the well-being of the pupils in any school to provide instruction in all grades in that Level because of:

- (a) the size and composition of the enrolment;
- (b) the availability of classroom and instructional facilities; or
- (c) any other special necessity or unusual circumstance.

(2) Where a board of education or the conseil scolaire limits instruction pursuant to subsection (1), the board or the conseil scolaire, as the case may be, shall make provision for the pupils affected to complete the work of that Level in another school within the jurisdiction of the board or the conseil scolaire, or elsewhere.

1995, c.E-0.2, s.170; 1998, c.21, s.74.

Recovery of costs

171 Subject to the regulations, where a board of education provides educational services to persons other than those mentioned in section 142, it may recover the costs of those services.

1995, c.E-0.2, s.171.

Duties of principal

175(1) Subject to the stated policies of the board of education or the conseil scolaire and to the regulations, a principal, under the supervision of the director, shall be responsible for the general organization, administration and supervision of the school, its program and professional staff and for administrative functions that pertain to liaison between the school and the board of education or the conseil scolaire and its officials.

(2) The principal shall:

- (a) organize the program of courses and instruction approved by the board of education or the conseil scolaire for the school;
- (b) assign, in consultation with members of the staff, the duties of each member of the teaching staff;
- (c) prescribe the duties and functions of assistants and support staff;
- (d) exercise general supervision over the work of:

- (i) all members of his or her staff; and
- (ii) other employees of the board of education or the conseil scolaire whose duties relate directly to the care and maintenance of the school building and its facilities;
- (e) exercise general supervision over the well-being and good order of pupils while the pupils are at school or participating in school activities;
- (f) provide leadership for enhancement of the professional development of staff;
- (g) co-operate with the universities in programs for the education and training of teachers;
- (h) conduct, in co-operation with the staff, a continuing program of planning and evaluation with respect to the objectives, curriculum, pedagogy and effectiveness of the instructional program of the school;
- (i) define and prescribe the standards of the school with respect to the duties of pupils and give direction to members of the staff and to pupils that may be necessary to maintain the good order, harmony and efficiency of the school;
- (j) administer or cause to be administered any disciplinary measures that are considered proper by him or her and that are consistent with this Act;
- (k) establish, in consultation with the staff, the procedures and standards to be applied in evaluation of the progress of pupils and in making promotions;
- (l) develop, in co-operation with the staff, procedures for preparation of reports to parents or guardians on the progress of pupils and establish mutually acceptable and beneficial channels for communication between the school and parents or guardians of pupils;
- (m) maintain regular liaison with the director with respect to all matters pertaining to the well-being of the school, the staff and the pupils;
- (n) advise and make recommendations to the director with respect to the staffing of the school;
- (o) prepare and furnish to the director, the board of education or the

conseil scolaire and the department any reports and returns that may be required from time to time with respect to the school; and

(p) exercise leadership in co-operation with the director and the board of education or the conseil scolaire in the promotion of public involvement in educational planning directed towards the improvement of education in the school and in the school division or the francophone education area.

Referral of pupil with special needs

178(1) Subject to subsections (2) to (5), every pupil shall be provided, insofar as is practicable within the policies and programs authorized by the board of education or the conseil scolaire, with a program of instruction consistent with the pupil's educational needs and abilities.

(2) Where a pupil is considered by the principal, by reason of disability, handicap or any other disabling personal attribute, to be unable to profit from the instruction ordinarily provided, the principal shall, subject to subsection 184(5), refer the matter to the director, or to the supervisory officer assigned the responsibility for pupils with special needs, for any study and evaluation that the circumstances warrant.

(3) Where a parent or guardian considers that a pupil under his or her control and custody is unable, by reason of disability, handicap or other disabling personal attributes, to profit from instruction ordinarily provided in the school, or where for similar reasons a pupil has not been enrolled in school, the parent or guardian may request the principal to refer the matter to the director, or to the appropriate supervisory officer, for any study and evaluation as the circumstances warrant.

(4) Where a request is made pursuant to subsection (3), the principal may, in his or her discretion, determine the nature of the action to be taken on that request.

(5) Where a teacher or a parent or guardian considers that the ordinary program of instruction is insufficient to employ the superior capabilities, talents and interests of a pupil, the teacher or parent or guardian may confer with the principal with a view to determining what action the principal may consider appropriate, including referral to the director for further study and evaluation.

(6) Where a referral has been made pursuant to this section, the director or designate supervisory officer shall:

- (a) direct any studies, evaluation and diagnostic procedures that may be appropriate and practicable and in conformity with the policies of the board of education or the conseil scolaire; and
- (b) confer with the principal, teacher, parent or guardian, pupil or any of them with respect to the results of the investigations and with respect to recommendations for alterations in the educational program of the pupil concerned.

Citizenship education

184(1) Subject to the regulations, every school shall provide for the display of the flag of Canada outside and inside the school building.

- (2) Every school shall make provision for any instruction in Canadian citizenship and participation in patriotic observances and exercises that may be considered appropriate by the board of education or the conseil scolaire and the staff of the school, in accordance with the curriculum guidelines issued by the department.

Vocational education

185(1) Subject to the regulations, courses of vocational education and occupational training may be provided where it is considered advisable by the board of education or the conseil scolaire.

- (2) A board of education or the conseil scolaire may enter into agreements with a regional college established or continued pursuant to *The Regional Colleges Act* or with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology for the development and provision of vocational, industrial and occupational training courses for youth.

Education of pupils with a disability

186(1) In this section, “**pupil with a disability**” includes a pupil who, pursuant to criteria prescribed in the regulations, is deemed to be unable to participate at an optimal level in the benefits of the ordinary program of the school by reason of personal limitations

attributable to physical, mental, behavioral or communication disorders.

(2) Subject to the regulations, a board of education or the conseil scolaire shall provide educational services to pupils with disabilities, but:

(a) where it is considered advisable, the board of education or the conseil scolaire may exclude from attendance in a specific curricular program any pupil who, in the opinion of the director, is incapable of responding to instruction in that program or whose presence is detrimental to the education and welfare of other pupils in attendance in that program; and

(b) where, on investigation by and in the opinion of the director, a pupil is so seriously disabled as to be unable to benefit from any of the instructional services provided by the board of education or the conseil scolaire, the board of education or the conseil scolaire shall:

(i) consult with that pupil's parent or guardian;

(ii) make available any of its consultant services that may be of assistance; and

(iii) clarify and arrange other services appropriate to the needs and circumstances of the pupil.

(3) Where a pupil is excluded from attendance pursuant to clause (2)(a), the exclusion must not deprive the pupil of access to alternative educational services provided by boards of education or the conseil scolaire to pupils with disabilities pursuant to this section.

(4) A board of education may discharge its responsibilities pursuant to subsection (2) by:

(a) providing those services within the school or in other facilities in its control; or

(b) entering into agreements with another board of education, the conseil scolaire or an agency or any other person to make those services available.

Gifted pupils

187 Where the ordinary programs of instruction of the school are considered by the board of education or the conseil scolaire to be insufficient to meet the educational needs of

certain pupils of superior natural ability or exceptional talent, the board of education or the conseil scolaire may make provision for any special programs that it considers feasible and appropriate.

Health of pupils

190(1) Subject to subsection (3), a board of education or the conseil scolaire, or any combination of two or more of them jointly on any terms that are mutually agreed on, may provide for medical and dental examination and treatment of pupils and of children under the age of seven years in the school division or division scolaire francophone.

(2) Subject to the regulations, and for the purposes of subsection (1), a board of education or the conseil scolaire may employ any personnel that may be determined to be necessary by the board of education or the conseil scolaire.

(3) No treatment mentioned in subsection (1) shall be given without the consent of the parent or guardian of the pupil or child.

(4) Notwithstanding subsections (1) and (3), a board of education or the conseil scolaire may:

(a) enter into arrangements directly with the Department of Health or any agency of that department for the provision of any of the services mentioned in this section; or

(b) participate in health service programs for schools that are conducted or co-ordinated co-operatively by the department and the Department of Health.

(5) Every school shall observe all laws and any regulations with respect to the maintenance of standards concerning sanitation, lighting and communicable diseases.

(6) A school may make provision for safety patrols for the protection of pupils in the vicinity of the schools.

(7) No action lies or shall be instituted against a board of education, trustee, officer, agent of a board of education, pupil, parent or volunteer involved with a safety patrol established pursuant to the authority of this Act or the regulations, for any loss or damage suffered by a person by reason of anything in good faith

done, caused, permitted or authorized to be done, attempted to be done or omitted to be done, by any of them, pursuant to or in the exercise or supposed exercise of any power conferred by this Act or the regulations respecting safety patrols or in the carrying out or supposed carrying out of any duty imposed by this Act or the regulations respecting safety patrols.

(8) No action lies or shall be instituted against the conseil scolaire, trustee, officer, agent of the conseil scolaire, pupil, parent or volunteer involved with a safety patrol established pursuant to the authority of this Act or the regulations, for any loss or damage suffered by a person by reason of anything in good faith done, caused, permitted or authorized to be done, attempted to be done or omitted to be done, by any of them, pursuant to or in the exercise or supposed exercise of any power conferred by this Act or the regulations respecting safety patrols or in the carrying out or supposed carrying out of any duty imposed by this Act or the regulations respecting safety patrols.

General duties of teachers

231(1) A teacher is responsible, in co-operation with staff colleagues and administrative authorities, for:

- (a) advancing the educational standards and efficiency of the school;
- (b) participating in educational planning by the staff and the board of education or the conseil scolaire; and
- (c) advancing his or her personal professional competence.

(2) A teacher shall:

- (a) diligently and faithfully teach the pupils in the educational program assigned by the principal;
- (b) plan and organize the learning activities of the class with due regard for the individual differences and needs of the pupils;
- (c) co-operate with colleagues and associates in program development and teaching activities pertaining to the class and individual pupils;
- (d) maintain, in co-operation with colleagues and with the principal, good order and general discipline in the classroom and on school premises;

- (e) conduct and manage assigned functions in the instructional program in accordance with the educational policies of the board of education or the conseil scolaire and the applicable regulations;
- (f) keep a record of attendance of the pupils for statistical purposes in the form that the department may prescribe or in any other form that may be recommended by the principal and approved by the minister;
- (g) report regularly, in accordance with policies of the school approved by the board of education or the conseil scolaire to the parent or guardian of each pupil with respect to progress and any circumstances or conditions that may be of mutual interest and concern to the teacher and the parent or guardian;
- (h) participate, under the leadership of the principal, in developing cooperation and co-ordination of effort and activities of members of the staff in accomplishing the objectives of the school;
- (i) exclude any pupil from the class for overt opposition to the teacher's authority or other gross misconduct and, by the conclusion of that day, report in writing to the principal the circumstances of that exclusion;
- (j) furnish, on request, to the board of education or the conseil scolaire, the director, the principal or the minister, any data or information in the teacher's possession respecting anything connected with the operation of the school or in any way affecting its interests or well-being;
- (k) deliver up any school records or other school property or property of the school division or conseil scolaire in the teacher's possession when leaving the employment of the board of education or the conseil scolaire or when requested in writing by the board of education or the conseil scolaire to do so;
- (l) exclude from the teacher's classroom any pupil suspected to be suffering from, or of being convalescent from or in contact with, a communicable disease and immediately report that exclusion to the principal who shall give notification of the exclusion and the reasons for it to the medical health officer;

(m) re-admit to the classroom, on production of a written certificate from the medical health officer, any pupil who has been excluded pursuant to clause (l);

(n) co-operate with the colleges of education of the universities in the education and training of teachers in accordance with the regulations and any policies of the board of education or the conseil scolaire with respect to access to the school and its facilities for that purpose;

(o) attend regularly all meetings of the staff convened by the principal or the director;

(p) advance or promote pupils in their work in accordance with the promotion policies of the school and under the general supervision of the principal; and

(q) co-operate with supervisors, consultants and other personnel, and undertake personal initiatives in activities intended or designed to enhance in-service professional growth and the development of professional competence and status.

Appendix N
EDUCATION REGULATIONS REFERENCED
IN SASKATCHEWAN PPP POLICY

Special Education

48 In this Part:

- (a) **“developmental centre program”** means an educational program that is offered in a classroom setting for pupils with severe multiple disabilities;
- (b) **“high-cost disabled pupil”** means a pupil with a moderate to severe disabling condition who:
 - (i) requires appropriate special educational services;
 - (ii) meets the criteria specified in section 49; and
 - (iii) is identified as a high-cost disabled pupil pursuant to section 50 or 51;
- (c) **“low-cost disabled pupil”** means a pupil with a mild to moderate disabling condition who requires appropriate special educational services but who does not meet the criteria set out in section 49 for identification as a high cost disabled pupil.

Criteria for designation of high-cost disabled pupil

49 For the purposes of the Act and these regulations, a pupil is a high-cost disabled pupil if he is:

- (a) visually impaired, that is when assessment by a certified practitioner acceptable to the minister affirms that visual acuity is 20/200 or less in the pupil’s better eye with proper correction or that the pupil’s field of vision is so limited that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle of 20° or less;
- (b) hearing impaired, that is when audiological assessment by a provincial assessment service acceptable to the minister affirms that the pupil’s decibel loss in the speech range is greater than 34 decibels in both ears;
- (c) trainable mentally retarded, that is when the pupil has:
 - (i) an intelligence quotient below 50 plus 5, as measured by an approved individual test; and
 - (ii) a significant deficit in adaptive behaviour, as measured by an approved individual test or confirmed by an observer who is, in the opinion of the minister, competent;

(d) in Divisions I to IV and is severely learning disabled, that is when assessment by qualified personnel acceptable to the minister affirms that:

- (i) the pupil has an intelligence quotient of 85 or higher, as measured by an approved individual test;
- (ii) there is significant discrepancy, one standard deviation or greater, between aptitude and achievement; and
- (iii) the pupil's average rate of progress in the skill subjects, including reading, is not greater than half that of average pupils as measured by an approved achievement test;

(e) orthopedically disabled, that is when assessment by a duly qualified medical practitioner certifies that the pupil's physical limitations adversely affect his educational performance, seriously restrict his mobility within the school, seriously limit self-help activities or limit his use of conventional transportation to the extent that special educational services are required;

(f) chronically health impaired, that is when assessment by a duly qualified medical practitioner certifies that the pupil's physical health:

- (i) does not permit school attendance and that hospital or home placement is required for at least three months; or
- (ii) adversely affects his educational performance at school to the extent that ongoing special educational services are required;

(g) socially, emotionally or behaviourally disabled, that is when a thorough diagnostic study by medical and educational personnel acceptable to the minister affirms that the pupil exhibits excessive, chronic deviant behaviour which adversely affects educational performance; or

(h) severely multiple disabled, that is when medical and psychological assessment acceptable to the minister affirms that the pupil has severe concomitant disabilities of the types described in clauses (a) to (g).

Identification of high-cost disabled pupil

50(1) The superintendent or director of education for the school division in which a pupil resides is responsible for identifying the pupil as a high-cost disabled pupil in accordance

with the criteria set out in section 49 and for placing that pupil in a special education program.

(2) On the request of a parent or guardian of a child who is three years of age or older but less than school age, the Regional Co-ordinator of Special Education may identify that child as a high-cost disabled pupil and place that pupil in a special education program.

(3) Before a child or pupil is identified as a high-cost disabled pupil and placed in a special education program, the superintendent, director of education or Regional Co-ordinator of Special Education, as the case may be, shall consult with the child's or pupil's parent or guardian and with any medical, psychological, social services, guidance and special education staff that the superintendent, director of education or Regional Co-ordinator of Special Education considers appropriate.

(4) The identification of a child or pupil as a high-cost disabled pupil in accordance with the criteria set out in clause 49(d) or (g) is required annually using current psychometric information related to that child or pupil.

(5) The special education provision for each child or pupil is to be reviewed annually.

Reviews

50.1 For the purposes of clause 186.1(1)(b) of *The Education Act, 1995*, the right to a review does not apply where the disagreement with respect to the placement of the child is based on:

- (a) parental preference as to the location of the delivery of the program;
- (b) parental convenience;
- (c) other factors unrelated to the impact of the location of the educational instruction on the child's education and development;
- (d) location within an educational institution;
- (e) any other reason that relates to or is similar in nature to those listed in clauses (a) to (d); or
- (f) an allegation of discrimination pursuant to the Human Rights Code or the Canadian

51 Repealed. 2 Jan 98 SR 107/97 s5.

Special education services

52(1) A board of education shall:

- (a) make available at no cost to their parents or guardians, special education services for disabled pupils, that are, in the opinion of the minister, appropriate, including special schools, special classrooms, resource rooms and itinerant and tutorial programs, and may provide those services for pre-school age disabled children identified pursuant to subsection 50(2), in order that disabled pupils and children can benefit from the most appropriate and least restrictive program;
- (b) ensure that the services described in clause (a) are provided by staff with special training acceptable to the minister;
- (c) provide special instructional materials and any modified facilities and reduced pupil-teacher ratio that, in the opinion of the board of education, is appropriate; and
- (d) ensure that the costs of the services described in clause (a) generally reflect the expenditures which are prescribed in these regulations.

(2) A board of education that decides to discharge its responsibilities under subsection 184(2) of the Act by entering into an agreement may enter into an agreement only with:

- (a) an agency that:
 - (i) is an association with a board of directors;
 - (ii) has been incorporated or continued under *The Non-profit Corporations Act*; and
 - (iii) provides an approved educational service;
- (b) an approved institution that provides an educational service to disabled children;
- (c) an approved person who is a specialist in providing educational services to disabled children; or

(d) another board of education.

(3) A board of education that enters into a joint agreement pursuant to subsection (2) shall:

(a) subject to subsection (4), pay the actual tuition fees on behalf of the disabled pupil; and

(b) pay the actual costs of room and board and transportation on behalf of the disabled pupil.

(4) A board of education that:

(a) has entered into a joint agreement pursuant to subsection (2) with another board of education; and

(b) has entered into an agreement with that other board of education to provide special educational services reciprocally; is not required to pay the actual tuition fees on behalf of the disabled pupil.

(5) Notwithstanding subsection (3), if a high-cost disabled pupil is placed in an approved developmental centre program, a board may decide not to make expenditures for tuition, transportation and room and board on behalf of the pupil.

(6) A board of education that provides special education services for a disabled pupil outside the attendance area of the school district in which the pupil resides but within the division shall provide either transportation or accommodation allowances or both, as the case may require, on behalf of the pupil.

(7) A board of education may provide transportation for high-cost disabled pupils who attend school in the attendance area in which they reside.

(8) The board of education is not responsible for the cost of educational services provided for a disabled pupil who is placed in a public institution by an authority other than an educational authority.

(9) Notwithstanding clause 61(b), on and after September 1, 1981 no high-cost recognized per pupil expenditures are to be approved unless the board of education employs teachers and support staff with qualifications acceptable to the minister.

Appendix O

**SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL PPP POLICY
GUIDELINES WITH INDICATORS FOR TABLE 4.2**

4.1 PERSONAL PROGRAM PLANS

1. PPP are written for:

- 1a. A student who requires continuing special education interventions and individualized supports to participate in and benefit from the educational program;
- 1b. or has been identified for individual incremental funding recognition.

Guidelines:

- 2. The personal program planning process includes:
 - 2a. identification of student abilities, needs and interests;
 - 2b. establishment of goals and objectives;
 - 2c. selection of appropriate strategies and activities; and
 - 2d. ongoing evaluation and revision of the plan.
- 3. It is suggested that the written Personal Program Plan include:
 - 3a. pertinent personal and educational data, which may include baseline assessment data;
 - 3b. identification of the student's strengths and needs;
 - 3c. long-term goals and short-term objectives;
 - 3d. instructional strategies and resources including participation in classroom activities and instruction with adaptations;
 - 3e. assessment methods;
 - 3f. the process for reporting of student progress;
 - 3g. assignment of responsibility for carrying out the plan;
 - 3h. provision of appropriate support services by qualified personnel;
 - 3i. implementation of appropriate technology and equipment;
 - 3j. transition planning; and
 - 3k. process for review, evaluation and updating of the plan.
- 4. School division personnel collaborate with parents in the development, implementation, evaluation and revision of the Personal Program Plan. The collaborative team includes those individuals directly involved with the student. For students who require a PPP in only one or two areas of instruction, key participants may be the classroom teacher, learning assistance/resource teacher and parents. (pp. V.4.1i- V.4.1iii).