

CONCERNS OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARD INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION NEEDS

by

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the concerns of middle and high school regular education teachers in the West De Pere School District regarding inclusion of students with special needs into their general education classrooms.

The study surveyed regular education middle and high school teachers in the West De Pere School District. Using a five point Likert-type scale, the twenty-item survey enabled respondents to reflect concerns about inclusion. Results were tabulated with percentages and frequencies for each response reported.

The results of this study identified areas of concern general education teachers have in accepting special education students into their classroom. The researcher's study showed that concerns exist including lack of training, knowledge, time and material resources relative to the behavioral and learning needs of special needs

students. The findings further indicated that special need students do require more attention and assistance than the regular education teacher can provide. Teachers recognize the importance of inclusion, but lack the necessary resources for success with these students.

Implications of the study reveal teachers' reluctance with the acceptance or practice of inclusion. Teachers also found improvement on all students' academic and social skills when special education students are included in the regular education classroom. The study reveals that teachers with special needs students in their classrooms need to provide more personal attention for those students than for others without special needs. Teachers conveyed frustration over limited resources needed to assist students with special needs.

Summary and recommendations from this study include: 1) General and special education teachers be given more time for collaboration in the school day; 2) Administration find financial resources to provide in-service training to general education teachers; 3) Teachers need to attend workshops to learn about different strategies for teaching students with severe disabilities.

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With the completion of my Master's Degree in Guidance Counseling close at hand, I would like to thank those individuals who made this voyage with me. Without their contributions, this adventure would not have been possible. The support and guidance of these individuals made it possible for me to complete this project.

I want to thank my advisor at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, Dr. Dennis Van Den Heuvel, who was the first professor who greeted me at my graduate interview meeting. He made me feel comfortable right from the start, influencing my selection of continuing my education at Stout. Thanks to Dr. Van Den Heuvel for taking my unrefined ideas and shaping them into something that would be suitable for this offering.

I am very grateful to my wife and guardian angel, Yvonne. She has provided me with a safe harbor where I can vent my frustrations involving some of the tough times I have encountered these past four years. Her command of the English language and proofreading skills were called upon often. Her contributions made my mediocre papers into a coherent piece of work that I could be proud to turn in.

Last, but not least, to my children, Cortney and Tyler. Of all the personal sacrifices I have had to make, being away from them was one of the hardest. My time spent away from them because of attending class or studying cannot be replaced. I hope that throughout these four years, I have demonstrated the value of following a dream.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Students with disabilities are guaranteed a free and appropriate education (IDEA) mandated through the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142, 1975). Determining the appropriate service delivery model has provided for an ongoing debate among researchers and educators.

There are arguments for both inclusion in the regular education classroom and a more restrictive environment in a self-contained classroom. In order to ascertain the prerequisites that facilitate a successful inclusionary model, the role of regular education teachers needs to be explored (Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). Pearman, Huang and Mellblom (1997) have stated the “inclusive system would require changes in how teachers are trained or retrained and in how schools are administered and financed.” There is need to document regular education teachers’ concerns regarding issues involved in educating all students with varying abilities in the regular education classroom.

The purpose of this study is to examine the concerns of middle and high school regular education teachers concerning inclusion of students with special needs in the West De Pere School District classrooms. This study surveyed middle and high school teachers in two school buildings during the Spring of 2001.

The literature is consistent regarding concerns from regular education middle and high school teachers and their apprehensions associated with inclusion of special education students. This study of teacher perceptions of special education students

being included in regular education classrooms hopefully will offer insights into causes for teacher concerns.

A better understanding of teacher concerns with inclusion might serve to benefit middle and high school students in attaining their full potential. It might also improve professional relationships between regular and special education teachers in serving special education student needs.

Parents should be aware of the benefits from inclusion for their child's successful educational experience. Hopefully, administrators will better understand the importance of providing resources so that inclusion is successful and can promote harmonious relationships with all the partners.

Definition of Terms

Special Education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to a child or the child's parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a handicapping condition (Wisconsin Administrative Code P.I. 11.02 (48)).

Inclusion refers to a process whereby students with disabilities receive their education, with necessary special education support, primarily in general classrooms alongside students without special education designations" (York, Doyle, & Kronberg, 1992).

Inclusion then, is the more popular educational term referring to the move to educate all children, to the greatest possible extent, together in a regular classroom setting. It differs from the term full inclusion in that it also allows for alternatives other than the regular classroom when more restrictive alternatives are deemed to be more appropriate (Tompkins & Deloney, 1995).

Middle School refers to grades six, seven and eight.

High School refers to grades nine, ten, eleven and twelve.

It is assumed that general educators are interested in accurately answering the survey as a means to express their anxieties over inclusion. It is also assumed that teachers responding will be reasonably representative of educators in Wisconsin. This research study could have implications for generalizations to other areas of the United States where there are similar concerns regarding inclusion practices.

Limitations

This study may not be applicable to other sections of the state or country. Policies for inclusion practices may vary.

Inclusion may be a short-lived trend because it is fueled by legislation. Generalizations to future classrooms are not guaranteed. Inclusion may not be a reality in future classrooms because of changes in federal administration.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Few issues in education generate more discussion, confusion, or apprehension than the topic of inclusion. It is an issue that has outspoken advocates on all sides, whether staunchly for, avowedly against, or somewhere in between. Certainly, for a school or district to change and accommodate a more inclusive approach to providing services to students with disabilities, as well as a host of other “at-risk” students, and do it in a way that ensures the success of all, will require significant restructuring. Inclusion is more than reconfiguring special education services. It involves an “overhaul” of the entire educational system. Special education and regular education faculty/staff roles and relationships will change, as will the traditional rules under which “things” happen within the classroom, campus, and district (Tompkins and Deloney, 1995).

Including Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms

Federal school law mandates services for children with disabilities. This law is called the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142). The Special Education law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 (PL 101-476) further supports it. These laws require that services be provided in the least restrictive environment. Past studies have argued that children are more alike than different. Hence, students with special needs should be educated in the same classroom with everyone else.

In addition, researchers state that good teachers can teach all students (Stainback and Stainback, 1984). When schools place students with special needs in their least restrictive environment, it has implications for regular education teachers.

They may feel they are not trained to meet the needs of these students (LoVette, 1996, and National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1996)

Inclusive Classrooms of Students with Disabilities: Modifying Instructional Content Delivery

Hardman, Drew, and Egan (1998) focused on the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. The authors argue that inclusive education should not be synonymous with dumping, or returning a student with a disability to general education without any support to the classroom teacher or to the student, at the expense to others in the classroom. The proponents of full-inclusion argue that general education classrooms that incorporate a partnership between general and special educators result in a diverse and rich learning environment for all students (Pugach, 1996; Webber, 1997). This position suggest that successful inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms requires collaboration and practice in modifying content delivery and materials by general education and special education teachers. Schools that are committed to making inclusion work have found that all students gain when teachers work together to support and teach all students according to Gerent (1998).

Gerent (1998) discusses three successful inclusive settings. A common theme found in this article is that all teachers, parents and school administrators are committed to making inclusion work for all students.

The first setting is an elementary school where the principal and the teachers created a team environment that fostered a love for learning and provided avenues of success for all students. All students on the team are assigned to their grade level

homerooms and go to art, music, physical education and lunch with their grade level peers. On the team, students are taught using developmentally appropriate practices. Materials are modified to reflect the different learning styles and learning rates of these students. Teachers divide the teaching responsibilities in the classroom. The teachers reported exciting results from this collaboration. It is more responsive to students' educational needs and greater gains are being made in reading, language arts and math.

In the second setting, a fourth grade general education teacher and a special education teacher co-teach in an inclusive classroom. All of the students are taught with the core curriculum and are prepared to take the statewide competency tests. Both teachers modify materials as needed for any student who has a special need or is having difficulty learning the lesson content. Both teachers agree that all students learn better in this collaborative setting. The paragraphs central theme describes the changing attitude from parents of the special education student's as they were initially shocked at the high expectations set for their children, now they marvel at how much their children are learning. It also conveys that parents of regular education children have been equally pleased with their children's progress.

In the third setting, a special education teacher and an instructional aide participate on two middle school teams to modify materials and to provide additional pull-out support to fifth and sixth grade students with mild to moderate special needs who receive the majority of their instruction in general education settings. This model provides services as needed, where needed. The teams meet weekly to discuss issues that arise with particular students. The middle school teachers believe that this

collaboration has benefited all students on both teams because not only are special education students being supported but general education students who often floundered are now being serviced as well.

Supporters argue the educational merits of inclusion from two perspectives, “Pro’s and Con’s”. First, there are weaknesses of special education as it is structured. Literature reviews of special education efficacy studies such as Reynolds (1998) suggest that there are “no advantages for special education placements”.

Another frequent criticism of the current special education system deals with the issue of “labeling effects” on students with disabilities (Tompkins & Deloney, 1995). Inclusion standard-bearers including Will (1986) suggest that the very act of labeling a student as “special” frequently lowers expectations and self-esteem. Further, special education placement “pull out programs“ have left many students with a fragmented education and feeling that they neither belong in the general education classroom nor the special education classroom” (National Association of School Boards of Education, 1992). The impact of such stigmas, lowered expectations and poor self-esteem on school learning is significant (Lipsky & Gartner, 1992).

The second educational argument is that “there is now substantial evidence that most, if not all, children with disabilities, including children with very severe disabilities, can be educated appropriately without isolation from peers who do not have disabilities” (Ringer & Kerr, 1988). Students with disabilities in inclusive environments “improve in social interaction, language development, appropriate behavior and self-esteem”. Inclusion supporters also suggest that as regular and special education faculty work cooperatively together in integrated settings, their coordinated work tends to raise their

own expectations for their students with disabilities, as well as student self-esteem and sense of belonging (Tompkins & Deloney 1995).

A closing argument for the pro's of inclusion is that frequently, when special education students are included in the general education classes, their peers will have opportunities to develop positive attitudes toward them. Further, growth was experienced in the tolerance of and understanding of those who are different from themselves. True friendships developed with all students. This report by Staub & Peck (1994-1995) shows that the general student population are more accepting, understanding and socially aware of differences when they are incorporated into general education class settings.

Concerns about and arguments against inclusion appear when classroom teachers are without the resources, training, and other supports necessary to teach students with disabilities in their classroom (Tornillo, 1994). It is further argued that inclusion does not make sense in light of pressures from state legislatures and the public at large to develop higher academic standards and to improve the academic achievement of students. The argument is carried further when teachers are required to direct inordinate attention to a few, thereby decreasing the amount of time and energy directed toward the rest of the class. Indeed, the range of abilities is just too great for one teacher to adequately teach. Consequently, the mandates for greater academic accountability and achievement are unable to be met (Tompkins & Deloney, 1995).

Regular educators are not the only ones concerned about a perceived wholesale move toward full inclusion. Some special educators, parents of children with disabilities and others have serious reservations about inclusive educational practices. Their

concerns are forged out of their struggles to get appropriate educational services for their children and those of others. They are concerned that, with the shift of primary responsibility for the education of these children from special education teachers to regular classroom teacher, there will be a loss of advocacy. Further, by dispersing children with special needs across the school campus and district, services and resources will be “diluted,” and programming will be watered down (Tompkins & Deloney, 1995).

What can school leaders do? Before they plunge headlong into such a major restructuring effort as inclusion, certain concerns must be met. School leaders must put careful time and effort into the planning and implementation process. The article identifies these six areas of concern that school leaders must address: developing and articulating a clear, shared vision of change, planning and providing for necessary resources, identifying and providing staff development and training to develop the skills needed to support and carry out the change, monitoring and evaluating, providing ongoing consulting, coaching, and staff development to further enhance staff capacity to accomplish the goals of the targeted change, and working to create a school context that supports change (Tompkins & Deloney, 1995).

Summary

The literature suggests that teacher concerns exist about inclusion. The documentation of previous studies indicates that teachers have a need to express their opinions on inclusion.

“Including Students With Disabilities in General Education Classrooms” (Burnette, 1996) briefly describes the provisions of individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (IDEA) related to including children with disabilities in general education classes. It then discusses the concept of inclusion, identifying trends that affecting inclusive practice and the research base for strategies and techniques that support inclusion.

Recommendations provide for teachers having more planning time, ongoing support from special education teachers, and professional development that will train them with different strategies for teaching students with severe disabilities. These students need supplemental aids and services to help them achieve. This examiner supports the cause but has found, in practice, that general education classrooms may not be the most appropriate placement for every student with disabilities. Inclusion is a work in progress. Research and practice will guide further efforts to improve teaching and learning for all our students.

Gerent (1998) describes three settings in the “Inclusive Classroom” where students with disabilities were successfully and fully included. In the first setting, a multi-age classroom has been established for first and second grade students with mild disabilities, students at risk for academic failure, and typically developing students. A general education teacher, a reading specialist, and a special education teacher collaborate to teach the students. In the second setting, a fourth grade general education teacher and a special education teacher co-teach in an inclusive setting with 28 to 30 students who are typically developing, have mild disabilities, or are considered gifted and talented. In the third setting, a special education teacher and an instructional aide participate on two middle school teams to modify materials and provide additional

pull-out support to fifth and sixth grade students with mild to moderate special needs. The importance of professional collaboration in all three settings is stressed.

Educating students in inclusive classrooms can prepare them for the challenges that they will face when they leave school to become productive members of society. The collaborative efforts practiced by those who share their knowledge and skills with each other to help students reach their full potential, whether they are typical or have special needs, should be a vital part of today's schools.

"Pros and Cons" (Tompkins & Deloney, 1995) offers a short historical synopsis of the development of special education services, followed by a clarification of terms. Philosophical, educational and legal arguments for and against greater inclusion are also presented. The paper concludes with a short discussion of implications for educational practitioners and district policy makers. The authors support the reasons for an inclusive approach to providing special educational services. It points out that full inclusion might be too extreme in that it actually does not allow for more restrictive educational alternatives for students whose educational needs may not be appropriately met in a regular classroom setting. This examiner assumes there is a widespread concern about the attitudes and capacity of teachers to provide appropriate educational services in regular classrooms.

This argument recognizes the importance of school leaders working diligently to develop a clear vision of what an inclusive classroom looks like and how it functions. Based on the work of Tompkins & Deloney, (1995), this examiner presumes that school leaders must give significant attention to providing the kinds of ongoing staff development that expands the capacity of both regular and special education teachers.

The current study hopes to better understand the West De Pere middle and high school general education teacher concerns about inclusion.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine the concerns of regular education teachers toward students with special needs who are included in regular education classes. It is important to determine if similar concerns exist and find potential solutions that increase success for all students. The proposed study assumes that concerns are prevalent within the population to be investigated. Based on the work of Huang, Melblom, Pearman, (1997), it can be reasoned that concerns are prevalent within the population to be investigated.

Description of Subjects

The subjects for this study will be regular education teachers from West De Pere Middle and High Schools. The West De Pere School District is located in the northeastern part of Wisconsin. It is approximately one mile South of the city of Green Bay. The school district has a student population nearing two thousand. The teacher participants for this study will range in years of professional teaching experience from first year new teacher to thirty-year veteran teacher. The high school has potentially fifty general education teachers who can take the survey. The middle school potentially has twenty-seven general education teachers who can take the survey. The teachers in each building were asked to participate in the study. They were given an overview of the study and told what their involvement will entail. The researcher used a survey method to collect data that reflects teacher opinions about inclusion in the regular

education classroom. The study design will be a survey of all middle and high school teachers (77) in the West De Pere School District. (See appendix I).

Special education teachers and administrators were not included in this study. Fifty-six percent or twenty-eight (28) of the high school teachers responded and fifty-two percent or fourteen (14) of the middle school teachers responded. The over fifty percent return rate could be due to the fact that inclusion is an important issue with some teachers. Sixty-seven percent of the responses received were from the high school teachers and thirty-three percent of the responses received were from the middle school teachers.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used was a twenty-question survey with a Likert-type response scale (See Appendix I). Respondents indicated whether they strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. Questions are not selected in order of difficulty. The survey instrument was constructed using a series of questions developed by the researcher based on teacher concerns about inclusion reflected in the literature.

Research Procedure

The following process was used for sending and calculating surveys. Surveys were placed in teachers' mailboxes in the two respective school buildings. Completed surveys were returned to a designated collection box provided by the examiner at each school. The returned survey forms were coded and tabulated. Each category response for each question was totaled and frequencies and percentages were determined.

Teacher concerns about inclusion were examined as well as concern differences between middle and high school teachers.

Limitations of the Present Study

The survey was conducted late in the school year when teachers were busy finalizing grades, filling out reports, doing inventories and wrapping up their classrooms, this might have hampered the return. The findings are limited to teacher concerns in one school district. The five point Lickert Scale on the survey was clumsy limiting the capacity to draw conclusions from the findings. In particular the word “neutral” appeared to have many responses but offered no significant analytical value or meaning to the examiner.

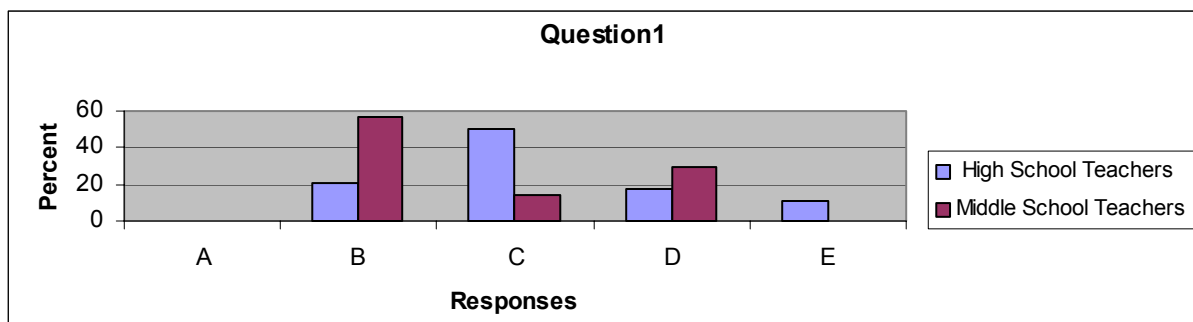
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to identify the concerns of middle and high school teachers toward inclusion of students with exceptional educational needs enrolled in the regular education classrooms in the West De Pere School District.

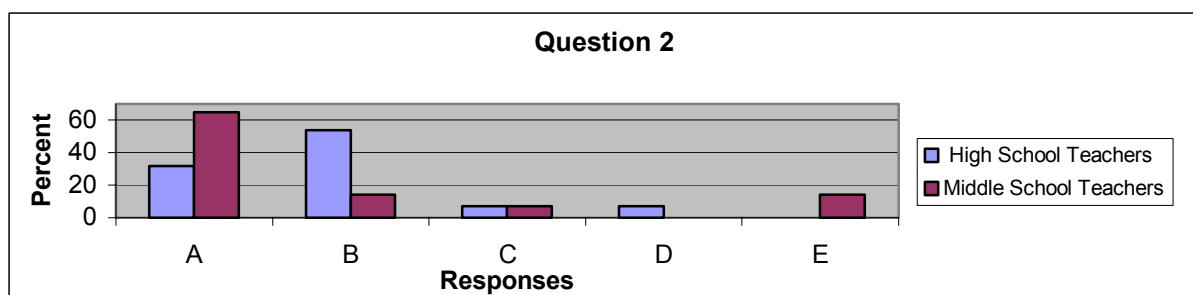
The following twenty questions and the tabulated data is from the survey instrument used in this study. Frequencies and percentages are reported in Appendix B. The tabulation of these survey results revealed a difference in teacher perceptions of inclusion concerns from middle and high school buildings in this school district. Results from each school building are reported in Table 4.1. Respondents indicated whether they: A - strongly agree, B - agree C - are neutral, D – disagree, or E - strongly disagree.

Table 4.1 Teachers Responses in Chronological Order

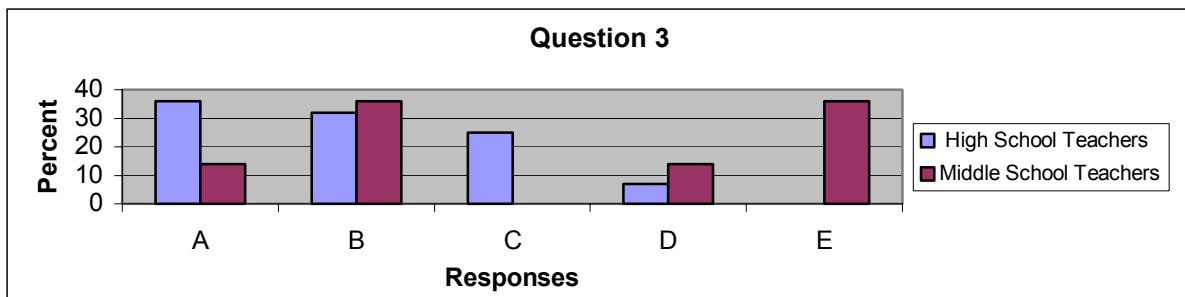
1. Regular education teachers have the instructional skills and educational background to teach students with special needs.



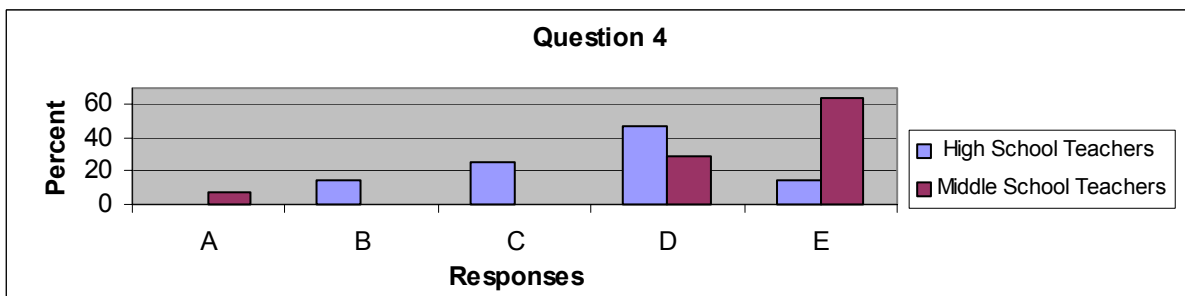
2. Special education and regular education teachers should demonstrate collaboration with all students with special needs in the regular education classroom.



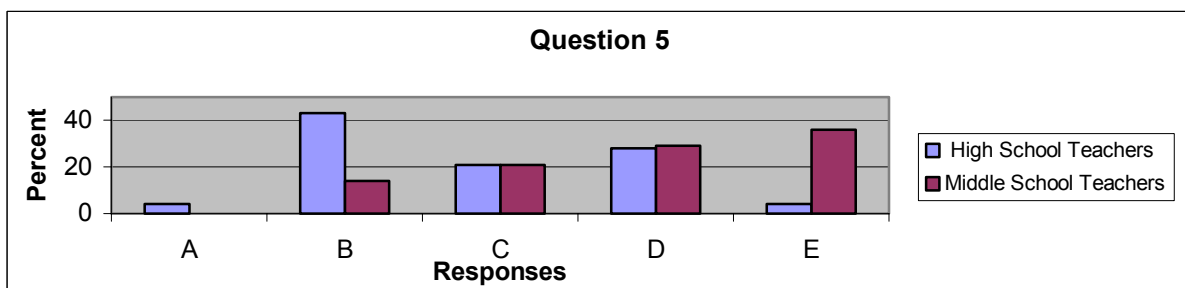
3. The regular education teacher receives little assistance from special education teachers in modifying instruction for students with special needs.



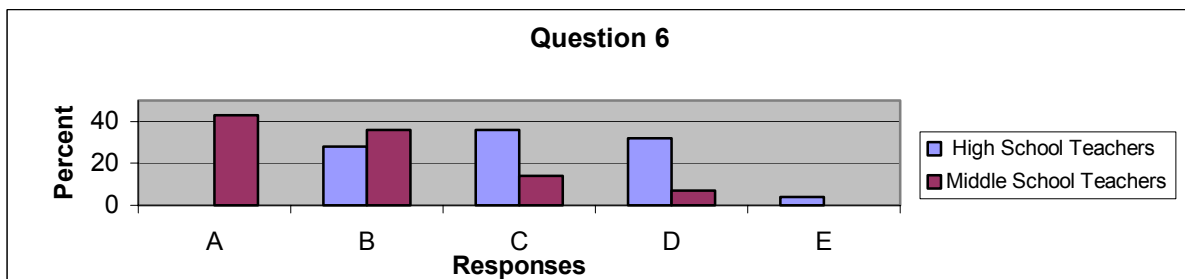
4. Bringing special education teachers into regular education classrooms can cause serious difficulties in determining “who is in charge.”



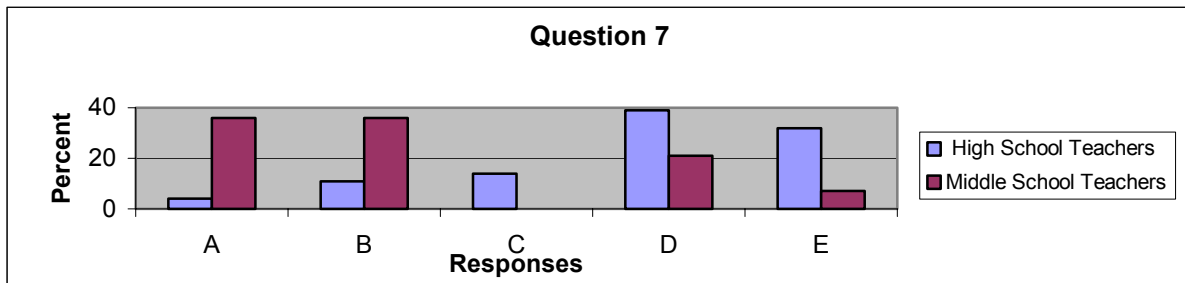
5. Regular education teachers prefer sending students with special needs to special education teachers to deliver services in their classroom.



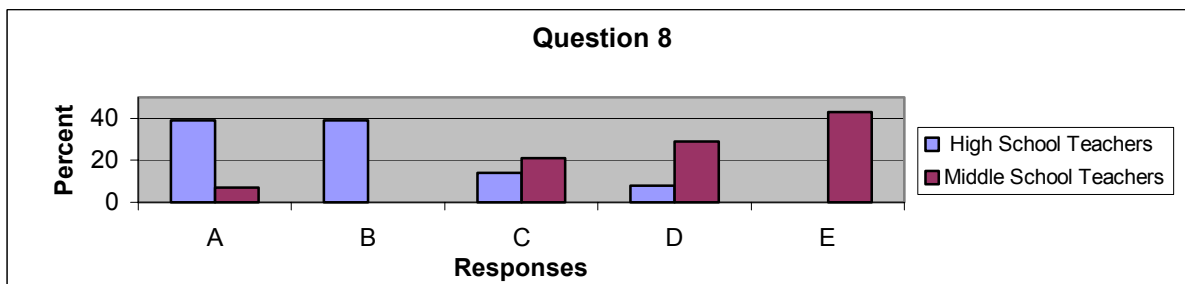
6. Regular education teachers are comfortable co-teaching content areas with special education teachers.



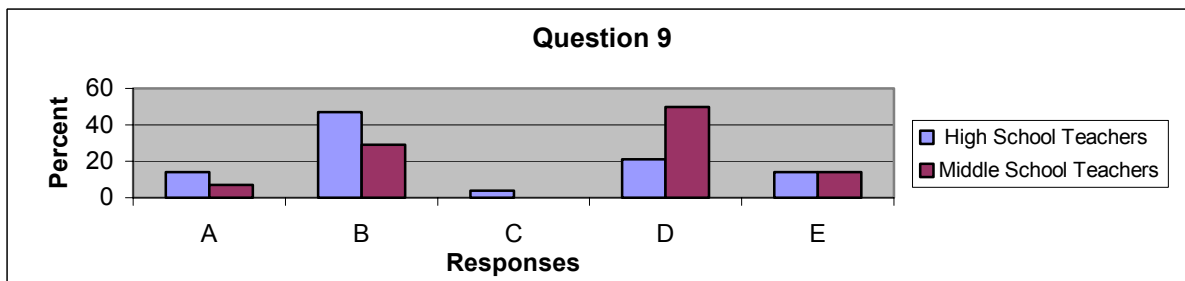
7. Special education teachers provide educational support for all students.



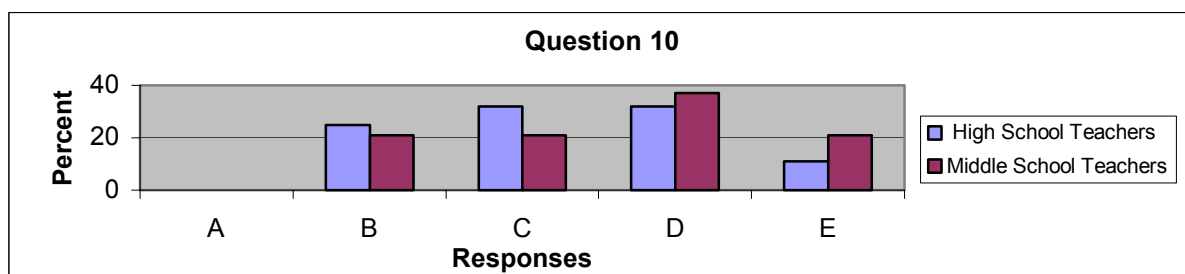
8. The special education teacher only provides assistance to those students with special needs.



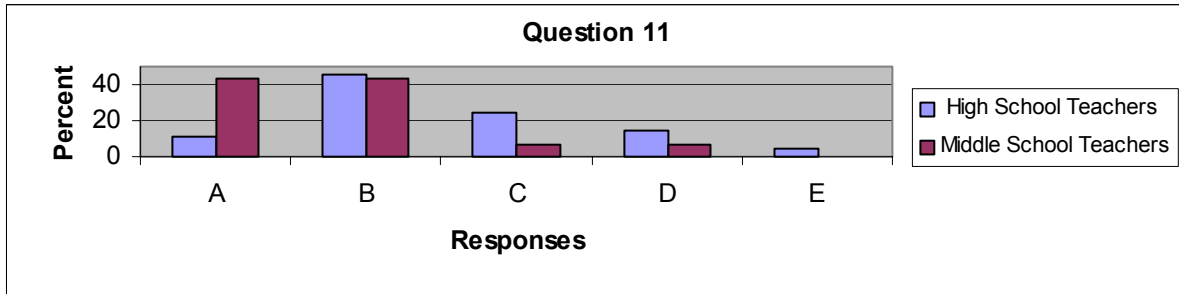
9. Regular education teachers have the primary responsibility for the education of students with special needs in their classrooms.



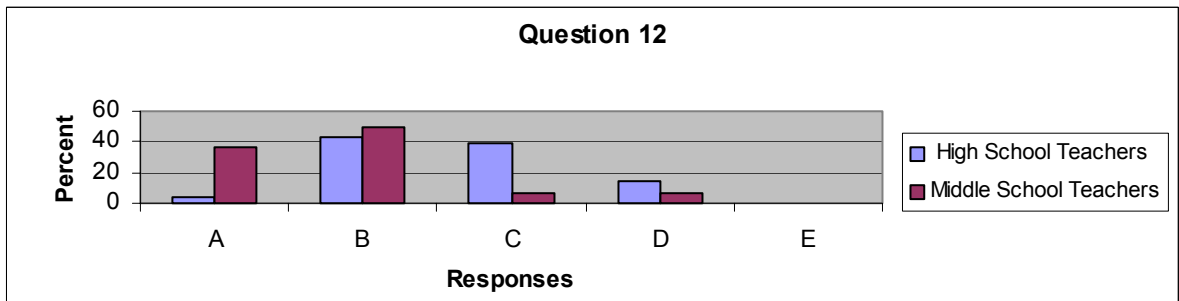
10. The redistribution of special education resources into the regular education classroom decreases the instructional load of the regular education students.



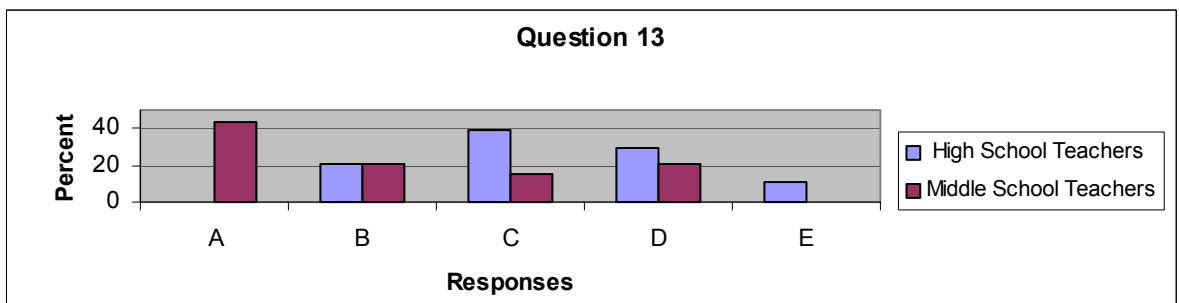
11. Students with special needs have a basic right to receive their education in the regular education classroom.



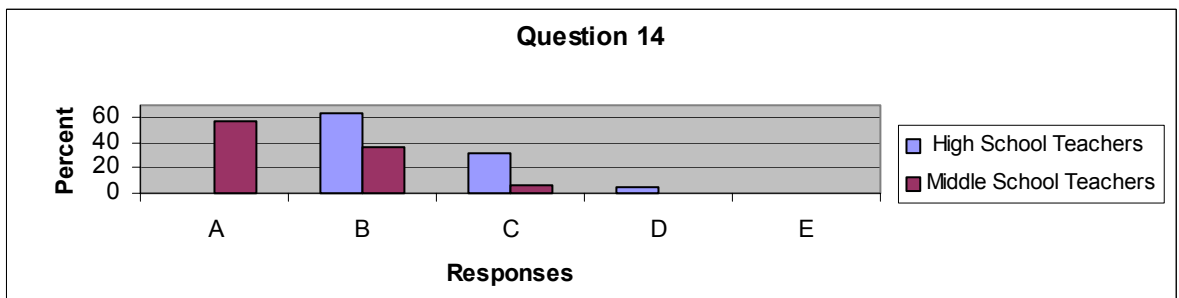
12. Students with special needs improve their social skills when placed in a regular education classroom.



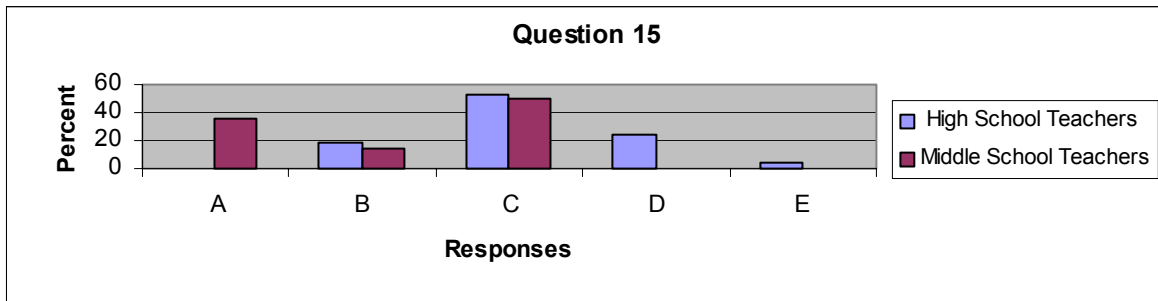
13. Students with special needs lose the label of being “stupid,” “strange,” or “failures” when placed in the regular education classroom.



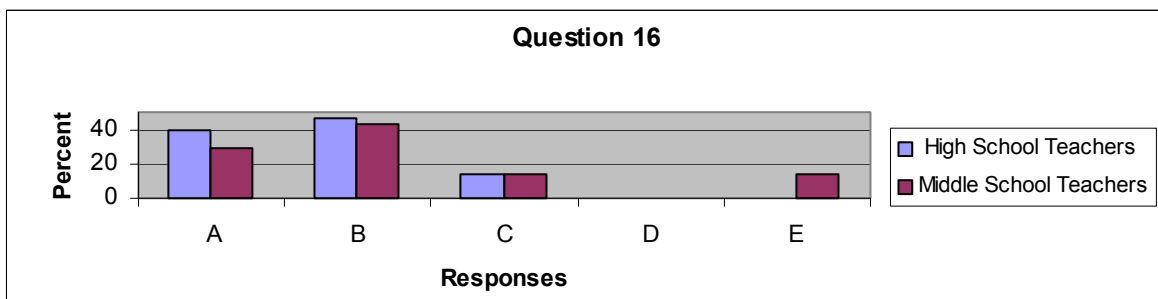
14. Students with special needs benefit from inclusion in regular education classroom.



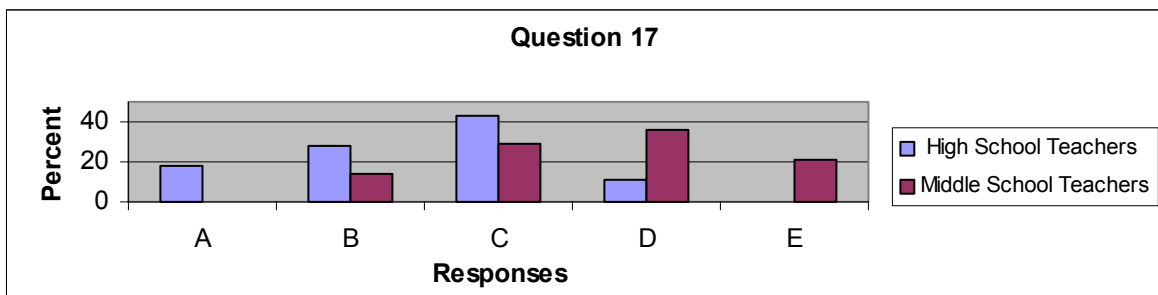
15. Students with special needs do better academically in inclusive classrooms.



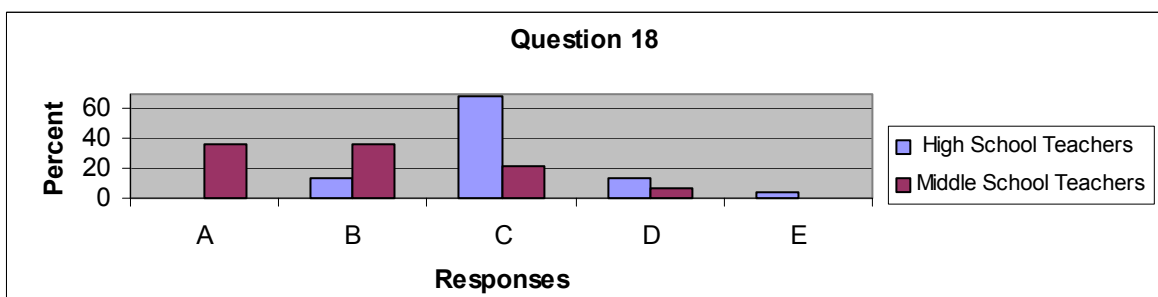
16. Students with special needs require more attention and assistance than the regular education teachers can provide.



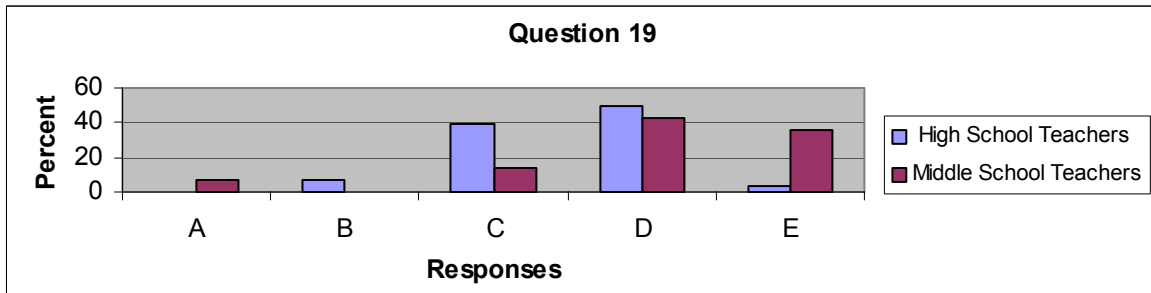
17. Students with special needs demonstrate more behavioral problems than regular education students.



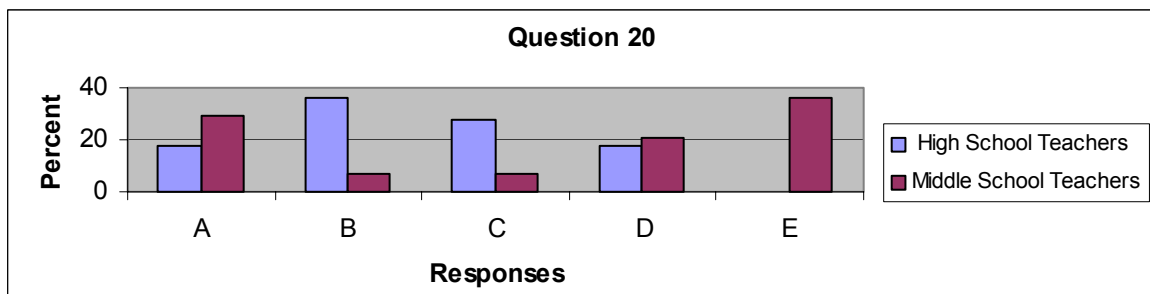
18. Students with special needs adjust well when placed in regular education classrooms.



19. Peers are not accepting of students with special needs in the classroom.



20. Although inclusion of students with special needs is important, the necessary resources are not available for it to succeed.



Successful inclusion requires collaboration in modifying content delivery and material by general and special education teachers. Although inclusion of students with special needs is important, the necessary resources are not available for it to succeed. The results from the high school supports the examiner's second premise, which states that teachers have concerns pertaining to a lack of training, knowledge, time and material resources. Survey question one (1) reveals that teachers in both the high school and middle school only agree or are neutral in their instructional skills and educational background to teach students with special needs. This is supported by the study that was done on a mid-sized school in Colorado, where it was found through survey research that restructuring and training of school staff needed to be addressed.

Using a 5-point Likert-type scale, Pearman, Huang and Melblom (1997) determined that the greatest concerns of middle and high school teachers included the following: training or retraining of staff, pre-service teacher training, training teachers and administration to modify curriculum, make classes smaller, provide more planning time and make additional paraprofessionals available for regular education classrooms.

The finding in question two (2) revealed that middle school teachers are receiving the collaborative assistance necessary for their inclusive environment. A concern with this finding causes this researcher to wonder why a cohesive collaborative experience is not happening at the high school. The West De Pere Administration, Student Services Coordinator and Special Education Staff should make this an issue. They can use the research data from this study to analyze the feedback from the general education faculty. They should study the responses carefully to decide if the annual school budget could include moneys for teacher in-services, other training and workshops necessary to improve classroom instruction. New teacher materials needs to be purchased, modified and adjusted to include all types of learning styles. These adjustments would better facilitate the growing and changing needs of inclusion. Developing new teaching material to help all students in West De Pere schools reach their potential is a benefit from this research project.

The middle school teacher survey revealed different results on these items. The results do support the research found in the second educational argument from the Pro's and Con's study. It reports "there is now substantial evidence that most, if not all, children with disabilities, including children with very severe disabilities, can be educated appropriately without isolation from peers who do not have disabilities"

(Ringer & Kerr, 1988). Students with disabilities in inclusive environments “improve in social interaction, language development, appropriate behavior and self-esteem”. Inclusion supporters also suggest that as regular and special education faculty work cooperatively together in integrated settings, their coordinated work tends to raise their own expectations for their students with disabilities, as well as student self-esteem and sense of belonging (Tompkins & Deloney 1995). Why is this not being done at the high school building? The question rises again and needs to be addressed by those in charge of these programs.

The survey questions ten (10) and twenty (20) indicate that teachers recognize the importance of inclusion, but show a discrepancy between the high school and middle school in lacking the necessary resources for success with these students. Meanwhile, question three (3) from this study reveals a concern from high school general education teachers about receiving minimum assistance from special education teachers when trying to modify instruction for students with special needs. This supports the literature from Pugach (1996) and Webber (1997), which states that teachers do have concerns pertaining to a lack of training, knowledge, time and material resources. The concern here focuses on why money and resources are not being spent on improving inclusion efforts especially in the high school building.

Question four (4) results suggest that teachers in both schools agree that “who is in charge” is not a serious concern and they are comfortable co-teaching content areas. This agrees with the Pugach (1996) and Webber (1997) research findings that state when classrooms incorporate teachers from both general and special education a diverse and rich learning environment can exist for all students. The philosophy and

practice of team teaching should expand and continue. The findings in question nine (9) appear controversial as it reveals a strong position of the middle school supporting inclusion efforts while the high school appears to be less committed.

The results of the survey for question five (5) reveal that high school teachers prefer sending special education students out of the classroom to receive services that middle school general education teachers provide. The high school is continuing an outdated practice according to the literature from the National Association of School Boards, who, in 1992, found that “pull out programs” left too many students with a fragmented education. The high school needs to get in line with today’s trends and stop the “pull out” process. The middle school faculty needs to collaborate with the high school faculty on “what works” so the high school can smoothly implement inclusion.

The findings in questions six (6) and eleven (11) demonstrate that West De Pere Schools agree that regular and special education teachers should team teach subject matter. According to the research, these teachers are following the law, which states that all special needs students have a right to receive and benefit from instruction in the regular education classroom. The literature further advocates that social and academic skills are enhanced when special needs students are placed in the least restrictive environment (LoVette, 1996, and National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1996). This practice should extend beyond the agreement stages and into actual practice at the high school.

The findings in question seven (7) reflect a definite difference in the perception of middle and high school teachers on how they view special education as it provides support and assistance for all students. The middle school appears to be in line with

the literature of Gerent (1998), who reported that schools committed to making inclusion work have found that all students gain when teachers work together to support and teach all students. For question eight (8), the survey results show that special education teachers are not found frequently in the general education classes at the high school. Perhaps more staff needs to be brought on board to better facilitate this practice benefiting all students regardless of the degree of academic achievement. This agrees with the research of Topkin & Deloney (1995) who say that coordinated teaching efforts raises student self-esteem and sense of belonging. Results from survey questions twelve (12), thirteen (13), fourteen (14) and nineteen (19) lends support to this research as it agrees with general education teachers at both schools. The high school faculty needs to be more receptive with this practice so all students experience a better education in the West De Pere School District.

Two findings from this study show “students with special needs require more attention and assistance than the regular education teachers can provide.” This supports the premise of this study, that concerns do exist in regard to students with special education needs who are included in regular education classrooms. The results of survey questions sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) suggest that special needs students require more attention and demonstrate more behavior problems which supports the research. Tompkins & Deloney (1995) argue that when teachers are required to direct inordinate attention to a few it decreases the amount of time and energy directed toward the rest of the class. Indeed, the range of abilities is just too great for one teacher to adequately teach. Consequently, the mandates for greater academic accountability and achievement are unable to convene. A question this

researcher has concerns itself with the sense inclusion makes in light of pressures from state legislatures and the public at large to develop higher academic standards and improve the academic achievement of students.

The results of this study have identified the concerns of general education teachers who have to accept special education students into their classroom. This supports and confirms that concerns do exist regarding students with special education needs who are included in regular education classrooms.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the concerns of middle and high school regular education teachers concerning inclusion of students with special needs in the West De Pere School District classrooms.

Implications and Recommendations from the Research

Consistent with current literature, results of this study confirm teacher concerns about inclusion in the West De Pere School District. More communication concerning inclusion needs to exist between the high school and the middle school teachers. At the present time, this communication is fueled with hostility and jealousy. Hopefully, the results of this study might be the driving force for tearing down barriers and allowing a fresh approach on how to better deliver inclusion to the entire West De Pere School District. If this is successful, perhaps a steering committee could be organized to assist with the delivery of teacher staff development designed to cover inclusion topics.

Suggestions for Further Study

The outcomes of this study revealed that: (1) Teachers are reluctant to accept the practice of inclusion; (2) Teachers will convey frustration over limited resources to assist students with special needs; and (3) High school regular education teachers will show a preference for students to receive services in a special education resource room. The study shows that students with special needs have an adverse affect on performance of regular education students, and teachers with special needs students in their classrooms will have to provide more personal attention for those students than for

others without special needs. If this study is to be replicated in the future the outcomes addressed here will need further investigation.

The first recommendation would be for the West De Pere Administration, Student Services Coordinator and School Faculties get together so they can agree on what inclusion is. At present time, an obscure climate exists between the different school buildings over a definition of inclusion. After a definition is identified, a steering committee could be organized to assist with a smooth transition of inclusion into all classrooms across the West De Pere School District. Future studies of inclusion might include elementary general education teachers, special education teachers and parents. All of these parties have a vested interest in our students and the outcome of what needs to be learned in our classrooms.

A timeline could be developed so progress can be measured, or to identify those short-comings that might hinder success over a period of time. The survey used in this study could be expanded to examine concerns in greater detail, allowing a depth where this study may have only scratched the surface. The research from a new study could also ask for feedback about the negative aspects of inclusion and changes that teachers see as improvements on instructional delivery. With this information, all teachers and administrators could update instruction and more precisely meet the needs of their students.

A second recommendation for further study would be to provide all subjects with a definition of inclusion. This provision would furnish teachers with a familiar unvarnished base so they can feel comfortable answering the survey questions.

A third recommendation would be to refine the questions on the survey instrument narrowing them to a smaller number. Ten questions might have revealed the same information about inclusion and supported the premise of the problem studied. The teacher concerns raised in this study might serve as a foundation for a further study on inclusion in the West De Pere School District.

All education needs standards by which to measure performance. With the recommendations from the data gathered, the West De Pere School District can use this study as a tool to improve its education delivery process. They can share the data to improve the dialogue with the general and special education staff so a stronger, more inclusive educational environment can exist.

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APPENDIX A

Inclusion Survey

Disclaimer: You have been selected to participate in this survey. This survey will reflect the perception of inclusion of children with special needs into the regular education classroom. Please complete and return this survey to my mailbox. Responses will be collected and examined in anonymity. Thank you for your cooperation.

Survey of Teacher Concerns toward Inclusion in the West De Pere Middle and High School buildings. Please circle the choice that indicates your opinion for each statement.

A = STRONGLY AGREE

B = AGREE

C = NEUTRAL

D = DISAGREE

E = STRONGLY DISAGREE

1. Regular education teachers have the instructional skills and educational background to teach students with special needs.

A B C D E

2. Special education and regular education teachers should demonstrate collaboration with all students with special needs in the regular education classroom.

A B C D E

3. The regular education teacher receives little assistance from special education teachers in modifying instruction for students with special needs.

A B C D E

4. Bringing special education teachers into regular education classrooms can cause serious difficulties in determining "who is in charge."

A B C D E

5. Regular education teachers prefer sending students with special needs to special education teachers to deliver services in their classroom.

A B C D E

6. Regular education teachers are comfortable co-teaching content areas with special education teachers.

A B C D E

7. Special education teachers provide educational support for all students

A B C D E

8. The special education teacher only provides assistance to those students with special needs.

A B C D E

9. Regular education teachers have the primary responsibility for the education of students with special needs in their classrooms.

A B C D E

10. The redistribution of special education resources into the regular education classroom decreases the instructional load of the regular education students

A B C D E

11. Students with special needs have a basic right to receive their education in the regular education classroom.

A B C D E

12. Students with special needs improve their social skills when placed in a regular education classroom.

A B C D E

13. Students with special needs lose the label of being “stupid,” “strange,” or “failures” when placed in the regular education classroom.

A B C D E

14. Students with special needs benefit from inclusion in regular education classroom.

A B C D E

15. Students with special needs do better academically in inclusive classrooms.

A B C D E

15. Students with special needs require more attention and assistance than the regular education teachers can provide.

A B C D E

16. Students with special needs demonstrate more behavioral problems than regular education students.

A B C D E

17. Students with special needs adjust well when placed in regular education classrooms.

A B C D E

19. Peers are not accepting of students with special needs in the classroom.

A B C D E

20. Although inclusion of students with special needs is important, the necessary resources are not available for it to succeed.

A B C D E

Additional Comments:

APPENDIX B

The following twenty questions and the tabulated data is from the survey instrument used in this study. The tabulation of these survey results revealed a difference in teacher perceptions of inclusion concerns from one building to the next in this school district. Therefore, results from both schools are reported. The lower case “f” represents the frequency for each teacher response reported and the “%” is used to indicate the percent of each. Respondents indicated whether they: A - strongly agree, B - agree C - are neutral, D – disagree, or E - strongly disagree.

1. Regular education teachers have the instructional skills and educational background to teach students with special needs.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	0/0	6/21	14/50	5/18	3/11
Middle School	0/0	8/57	2/14	4/29	0/0

2. Special education and regular education teachers should demonstrate collaboration with all students with special needs in the regular education classroom.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	9/32	15/54	2/7	2/7	0/0
Middle School	9/65	2/14	1/7	0/0	2/14

3. The regular education teacher receives little assistance from special education teachers in modifying instruction for students with special needs.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	10/36	9/32	7/25	2/7	0/0
Middle School	2/14	5/36	0/0	2/14	5/36

4. Bringing special education teachers into regular education classrooms can cause serious difficulties in determining "who is in charge."

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	0/0	4/14	7/25	13/47	4/14
Middle School	1/7	0/0	0/0	4/29	9/64

5. Regular education teachers prefer sending students with special needs to special education teachers to deliver services in their classroom.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	1/4	12/43	6/21	8/28	1/4
Middle School	0/0	2/14	3/21	4/29	5/36

6. Regular education teachers are comfortable co-teaching content areas with special education teachers.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	0/0	8/28	10/36	9/32	1/4
Middle School	6/43	5/36	2/14	1/7	0/0

7. Special education teachers provide educational support for all students.

	A	B	C	D	E
	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %
High School	1/4	3/11	4/14	11/39	9/32
Middle School	5/36	5/36	0/0	3/21	1/7

8. The special education teacher only provides assistance to those students with special needs.

	A	B	C	D	E
	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %
High School	11/39	11/39	4/14	2/8	0/0
Middle School	1/7	0/0	3/21	4/29	6/43

9. Regular education teachers have the primary responsibility for the education of students with special needs in their classrooms.

	A	B	C	D	E
	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %
High School	4/14	13/47	1/4	6/21	4/14
Middle School	1/7	4/29	0/0	7/50	2/14

10. The redistribution of special education resources into the regular education classroom decreases the instructional load of the regular education students.

	A	B	C	D	E
	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %	<u>f</u> / %
High School	0/0	7/25	9/32	9/32	3/11
Middle School	0/0	3/21	3/21	5/37	3/21

11. Students with special needs have a basic right to receive their education in the regular education classroom.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	3/11	13/46	7/25	4/14	1/4
Middle School	6/43	6/43	1/7	1/7	0/0

12. Students with special needs improve their social skills when placed in a regular education classroom.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	1/4	12/43	11/39	4/14	0/0
Middle School	5/36	7/50	1/7	1/7	0/0

13. Students with special needs lose the label of being “stupid,” “strange,” or “failures” when placed in the regular education classroom.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	0/0	6/21	11/39	8/29	3/11
Middle School	6/43	3/21	2/15	3/21	0/0

14. Students with special needs benefit from inclusion in regular education classroom.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	0/0	18/64	9/32	1/4	0/0
Middle School	8/57	5/36	1/7	0/0	0/0

15. Students with special needs do better academically in inclusive classrooms.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	0/0	5/18	15/53	7/25	1/4
Middle School	5/36	2/14	7/50	0/0	0/0

16. Students with special needs require more attention and assistance than the regular education teachers can provide.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	11/39	13/47	4/14	0/0	0/0
Middle School	4/29	6/43	2/14	0/0	2/14

17. Students with special needs demonstrate more behavioral problems than regular education students.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	5/18	8/28	12/43	3/11	0/0
Middle School	0/0	2/14	4/29	5/36	3/21

18. Students with special needs adjust well when placed in regular education classrooms.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	0/0	4/14	19/68	4/14	1/4
Middle School	5/36	5/36	3/21	1/7	0/0

19. Peers are not accepting of students with special needs in the classroom.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	0/0	2/7	11/39	14/50	1/4
Middle School	1/7	0/0	2/14	6/43	5/36

20. Although inclusion of students with special needs is important, the necessary resources are not available for it to succeed.

	A	B	C	D	E
	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %	f/ %
High School	5/18	10/36	8/28	5/18	0/0
Middle School	4/29	1/7	1/7	3/21	5/36