

**Missouri Middle and Junior High Principals' Perceptions of Inclusion and
Collaboration**

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Abstract

The leadership of the school principal is important to the success of any program; this holds true for inclusion of special education students in regular classrooms. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of inclusion held by Missouri middle/junior high school principals. Also investigated were the principals' perceptions of collaboration between special education and general education teachers and the relationship between principals' perceptions of collaboration and perceptions of inclusion.

The study was quantitative in nature, utilizing a survey to gather data. The survey was adapted, with permission, from Seigler's Georgia Middle School Principals' Perceptions of Inclusion survey. The survey was uploaded to Survey Monkey and delivered electronically to 315 Missouri middle level principals. The return rate for the responses was 94 or 30%. Independent samples *t* tests, one-sample *t* tests, and ANOVAs were used for hypothesis testing.

Most Missouri middle level principals tend to have a positive view of inclusion. Also revealed in the study was that principals have a positive view of the collaboration between special education and general education teachers. The findings suggest that principals who have a positive view of collaboration also have a positive view of inclusion. The findings also suggest that certain experiences and demographic factors may influence the principals' perceptions of inclusion. Among these are the specific disability of the student, the socio-economic status of the school, and the location (urban, suburban, or rural) of the school.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Kelly, my children Evan, Reese, and Owen. Thank you for helping me attain my goal.

Acknowledgements

Completion of this dissertation would not have happened without the support of many people. First, I would like to thank my family. The support of my wife, Kelly has pushed me through many difficult days in the writing of this paper. Thank you for allowing me to disappear on so many occasions so I could work. I know this process was equally difficult for you. Thank you to my children for also being by my side through this process, and for continually asking, “Dad, are you a doctor yet?” Thank you also to my parents and extended family for their continued support.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	ix
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Background	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Purpose Statement	7
Significance of the Study	7
Delimitations	8
Assumptions	8
Research Questions	9
Definition of Terms	10
Overview of the Methodology	12
Organization of Study	12
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature	14
Early Twentieth Century Education	14
Education Reform in the Middle Twentieth Century	16
Special Education Reform 1975-1990	18
Special Education Reform 1990-2012	24

Research in the Area of Inclusion.....	34
Summary.....	41
Chapter Three: Methods	43
Research Design.....	43
Population and Sample	44
Instrumentation	44
Validity	47
Data Collection and Coding Procedures	47
Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing	49
Limitations	53
Summary.....	54
Chapter Four: Results	55
Descriptive Statistics.....	55
Hypothesis Testing.....	57
Summary.....	89
Chapter Five: Interpretation and Recommendations	92
Study Summary.....	92
Overview of the Problem.....	92
Purpose Statement and Research Questions	93
Review of the Methodology.....	93
Major Findings.....	94
Findings Related to the Literature.....	96
Conclusions.....	102

Implications for Action	102
Recommendations for Future Research	103
Concluding Remarks.....	104
References.....	106
Appendices.....	121
Appendix A. IRB Request Form.....	122
Appendix B. IRB Approval	127
Appendix C. Email to Dr. Seigler.....	130
Appendix D. Email Response	132
Appendix E. Participant Survey.....	134
Appendix F. Seigler Survey	140
Appendix G. First Participant Letter.....	145
Appendix H. Second Participant Letter	147
Appendix I. Third Participant Letter.....	149
Appendix J. Fourth Participant Letter.....	151
Appendix K. Data Tables.....	153

List of Tables

Table 1. Highest Degree Earned	56
Table 2. Years Worked as a Principal.....	57
Table 3. Participant Responses to Inclusion	58
Table 4. Participant Answers to Collaboration	77
Table 5. Collaborative Planning	80
Table 6. Difficulty in Implementing Collaborative Planning	82
Table 7. Need for Collaboration	84
Table 8. Collaboration that Builds Relationships	86
Table 9. Collaboration Strengthens Instructional Strategies.....	88
Table K1. Principals' Experience with Students who are deaf or hard of hearing	154
Table K2. Principals' Experience with Students with Emotional Disturbance	155
Table K3. Principals' Experience with Students who are Mildly Mentally Retarded.....	156
Table K4. Principals' Experience with Students who are Moderately Mentally Retarded	157
Table K5: Principals' Experience with Students who are Orthopedically Disabled	158
Table K6: Principals' Experience with Students who are Severely Mentally Retarded	159
Table K7: Principals' Experience with Students who have Specific Learning Disabilities	160
Table K8: Principals' Experience with Students who have Speech Disabilities	161
Table K9: Principals' Experience with Inclusion	162
Table K10: Gender of the Participants.....	164

Table K11: Degree(s) Held.....	165
Table K12: Teaching Certification	166
Table K13: Number of Years as a Middle Level Principal	167
Table K14: Total Number of Years as a Principal.....	168
Table K15: Socio-Economic Status of the School.....	169
Table K16: Location of the School.....	170

Chapter One

Introduction

The Federal government's passage of PL 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), presented educators an important mandate: students with disabilities must be provided an appropriate education that is designed to meet their special needs in the least restrictive environment. After the passage of this law, the government, both at the federal and state levels, began implementing regulations for school districts to follow. One objective of these regulations was to assist school districts in appropriately identifying students with disabilities, specifically learning disabilities (Mellard, Deshler, & Barth, 2004). By 1990, this law had evolved into the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law that has supported the states in meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). As the federal government continues to mandate that all students, regardless of disability status, be provided an appropriate education, states have the responsibility for providing that education. No longer are all disabled students entirely educated outside of the regular classroom setting. Students with disabilities are now integrated or included in the general education classroom (Jimenez, Graf, & Rose, 2007).

Background

Before P.L. 94-142 (Education of all Handicapped Children Act) many students with specific learning disabilities were educated in the general education classroom with no special education supports in place. If the disability was deemed by local officials to be too severe, the students were educated in a state institution (Elliott & McKenney, 1998). Since the enactment of this law, the percentage of disabled students in the general

education setting has continued to rise (Burstein, Sears, Wilcox, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004). Since 1992, the percentage of special education students who spend at least 80% of their school day in the general education classroom has increased from 21% to 45% (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The U.S. Department of Education (2010) estimated that in 2008, more than 5 million students with disabilities were educated in the general education classroom for at least a part of their school day. These students are experiencing, with the regular education students, an increasingly rigorous instructional environment (Bulgren, Deshler & Lenz, 2007).

Additionally, in 2002 experts estimated that up to 6 million middle/high school age students, many of them diagnosed as learning disabled, are at risk of academic failure (Schumaker et al., 2002). Furthermore, in 2008, 95% of students with disabilities were educated in their local, or neighborhood school (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Public school districts across the United States are moving towards inclusive practice, integrating most students with disabilities into the general education classroom. This is done in order to provide the majority of students access to the core content material in the least restrictive environment (McLeskey, Henry, & Hodges, 1998; Putnam, Spiegel, & Bruininks, 1995).

Providing for the educational needs of all students can often become complicated. Administrators, general education teachers, and special education teachers, must collaborate to find common educational goals (Richardson, 1998). Collaboration between these parties is essential not only in the classroom, but in the development of each special education student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) (Burstein et al., 2004). Once a student is identified as meeting educational criteria for a disability, the district is

obligated to follow the regulations that are put forth in IDEA. The IEP team must determine the least restrictive environment (LRE) for that student (Etscheidt & Bartlett, 1999). The IEP must explain why a student is not able to fully participate in the general education classroom with non-disabled peers of the same age (Etscheidt & Bartlett, 1999). IDEA explained LRE in the following manner:

Each public agency shall insure that to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities are educated with children who are non-disabled and that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (P.L. 108-446, 2004)

Inclusive classrooms require cooperative teaching between the regular education teacher and special education teacher. Murawski and Dieker (2004) stated that cooperative teaching, or co-teaching, is a method in which two teachers, meet the educational needs of all students, especially those with disabilities, inside the general education classroom. The goal of co-teaching is to create a positive instructional environment for every student (Murawski & Dieker, 2004). The two teachers must function as a team in order for the inclusive setting to work to its full potential. The efficiency of the program is in part determined by the teachers' perceptions and experiences with inclusion (Murawski, 2008). While the teachers' perceptions are important, it is the perceptions of inclusion that are held by the building administration and their leadership towards the inclusion plan, that will determine its ultimate success or

failure (Reynolds, 2008). The leadership provided by the building principal should help direct and improve the special education services that are delivered in the classroom, as well as meet mandated district, state, and federal guidelines (Bays & Crockett, 2007).

Inclusion has been the most popular means of providing services to students with disabilities over the last 20 years (Reynolds, 2008). Research by Fisher, Shumaker, and Deshler (1995) indicated that the inclusion of disabled students into the general classroom has not been detrimental to any segment of the school population. As inclusion has become the preferred practice for educating students with disabilities, it has become necessary for principals to become strong instructional leaders and advocate for change (McGrew, 2008). Factors such as knowledge and experience with inclusion, demographics, and views of collaboration between special education and regular education teachers may affect the administrator's perceptions of the inclusion process. The perceptions held by the building principal could influence the successful implementation of the inclusion program in the school (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999; Reynolds, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Federal laws, special education litigation, and district policies have required school administrators to initiate adequate special education programs in their schools or districts. Inclusion is a method of educating all students, those with and without disabilities, in the regular classroom (Austin, 2001). The success of an inclusive program is often determined by the perceptions of those educators directly involved (Daane, Beirne-Smith, & Latham, 2000). The success of inclusion of special education students in the regular education classroom rests on the direction of the school principal (Santoli,

Sachs, Romey, & McClurg, 2008). The principal's perceptions, knowledge levels, and prior experience with inclusion may help direct its successful implementation in the school setting.

Likewise, the leadership of the principal is directly related to the success of the educators in the inclusion process (Hines & Johnston, 1996; Klingner, Arguelles, Hughes, & Vaughn, 2001; Robinson & Buly, 2007; Sindelar, Shearer, Yendal-Hoppey, & Liebert, 2006). Research has examined the leadership of the building principal as crucial in providing a successful learning environment for all students (Bertrand & Bratberg, 2007). Principals have an important role in assuring that all students are meeting strict academic requirements (Skrtic, Harris, & Shriner, 2005). Supporting students with disabilities in the general education setting requires strong direction and support from the building administrator (Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998).

In order for there to be academic success within the inclusion model, collaboration is necessary (Bulgren et al., 2007). Previous researchers, (Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998; Luseno, 2001; Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Liston, 2005) have stressed the importance of administrative support and leadership for the successful collaboration between special and general education teachers. Principals can no longer afford to ignore the academic achievement of the special education population in their buildings (Lashley, 2007). The collaboration of special education and general education teachers drives the implementation of inclusion in the general education classroom. Teachers must commit to continuous lesson planning and examination of individual student data in order to make proper instructional decisions (Burstein et al., 2004). General education teachers must collaborate with special education teachers to become

informed about the varying disabilities they see in their classrooms. The collaboration of special and general education teachers will assist the general education teacher to focus material on important learning objectives, not trivial items, as this negatively impacts special needs students (Deshler, 2005).

The building principal must insure that school policy follows the guidelines set forth in legislation. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001) mandated the academic proficiency of every student, both general and special education students (Green, 2008). Academic proficiency is, in part, accomplished by requiring school districts to become accountable to academic standards set forth by each state (Lancaster et al., 2006).

Administrators across the state of Missouri are charged with the task of delivering the most appropriate education possible to all students. In the case of special education students, there are different avenues for providing educational services. These include, from the least restrictive to most restrictive: full inclusion in the regular education classroom, resource classroom, a classroom where students are provided core academic support by a special education teacher, self-contained special education classrooms within the general education school building, and institutionalization for the most severely disabled students (Smith, Polloway, Patton, & Dowdy, 2001). As previously mentioned, the success of inclusion of special education students in the regular education classroom rests on the direction of the school principal (Cook, et al., 1999; Reynolds, 2008; Santoli, et al., 2008). A principal's perceptions of inclusion and collaboration among special education and regular education teachers will often determine the success or failure of the program (McGrew, 2008).

Purpose Statement

The researcher has worked the majority of his career in the middle school setting and wished to extend the research of an earlier study by Seigler, (2003), which focused on the perceptions of inclusion held by Georgia middle/junior high school principals. The purpose of the current study was to examine the perceptions middle and junior high school principals in the state of Missouri have regarding the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom and the collaboration of special education and general education teachers. This is accomplished by examining each principal's knowledge level of inclusion, the extent to which specific demographic factors impact their perceptions of inclusion, their views of collaboration between special and general education teachers, and the extent these views of collaboration impact their perceptions of inclusion.

Significance of the Study

Continuing research that investigates principals' perceptions of inclusion could assist principals in making appropriate leadership decisions regarding the education of students with special needs. Because administrators are the key implementers of policy in their buildings, their attitudes and perceptions are helping to drive this policy. The findings of this study may assist administrators in assessing the impact their perceptions of inclusion have on the special education programs that are currently implemented in their buildings. The results of this study may assist administrators in the examination of how their perceptions of inclusion influence the collaboration of regular and special education teachers. These factors are important for the positive implementation of

inclusion in the general education classroom. Finally, the results of this study may assist colleges and universities in relation to administrative preparation programs.

This study is also of importance to the researcher. The researcher has been a special education teacher in the resource classroom for students who required a more restrictive placement, as well as the special education teacher in the class within a class inclusion model. This research may provide data to assist the researcher in the development of improved inclusion programs in his school district.

Delimitations

Delimitations are restrictions, established by the researcher, on the scope of the study (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 134). For the purpose of this study, only middle and junior high school principals were surveyed. Furthermore, only principals from the state of Missouri were included. This population excluded principals of charter and/or private schools in the state of Missouri, as well as assistant/vice principals from public middle and junior high schools. The results of this study may not be generalized to other states or principal groups. The survey was administered during the spring semester of the 2011-2012 school year.

Assumptions

Assumptions are presumptions or acts that are perceived to be true (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p: 135). The assumptions associated with this study are as follows:

1. The Missouri middle/junior high school principals understood the survey items.
2. The participants completed the survey themselves and honestly answered each item.

3. The survey data collected was accurately downloaded from the survey software and uploaded to IBM SPSS® Statistics Faculty Pack 19 correctly.

Research Questions

In order to gain information regarding the principals' perceptions of inclusion of special education students in the regular classroom, the following research questions were examined:

1. What are the perceptions of Missouri middle/junior high school principals toward the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting?
2. What are the Missouri middle/junior high school principals' knowledge levels of inclusion?
3. To what extent does a relationship exist between Missouri middle/junior high school principals' perceptions toward the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting and their experiences with inclusion?
4. To what extent do demographic factors influence the principals' perceptions of inclusion?
5. How important do Missouri middle/junior high principals view the collaboration of regular and special education teaching staff?
6. To what extent do Missouri middle/junior high principal's views of collaboration between regular and special education teaching staffs influence their perceptions of inclusion?

Definition of Terms

It is necessary for there to be clarity and uniformity when defining terms. For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Class within a Class (CWC). A method of education delivery, developed by Floyd Hudson in 1985, in which students with mild to moderate disabilities are educated in the regular education classroom. Students, regardless of their abilities work, together co-taught by a special education teacher and general education teacher within the same classroom (Hassan, Parveen, & Nisa, 2010; Haynes, 2006,).

Collaboration. Teachers of different disciplines work together to achieve a common goal. An example would be a special education teacher working to develop lessons with a regular education teacher (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008).

General Education Teacher. A teacher certified to work with students in the general education classroom. The general education teacher is certified to work specifically with students without disabilities in the general education classroom (Sanks, 2009).

Inclusion. This is a method of educating all students, those with and without disabilities, in the regular classroom (Austin, 2001).

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The education of special education students occurs within the general education setting as much as possible (Sindelar et al., 2006).

Mainstreaming. Educational practice where disabled students were moved from specialized schools or classes to regular education classes for part of the school day. This

time in regular education was often spent in elective type of classes such as music or art (Bateman & Bateman, 2002).

Missouri Middle/Junior High School. Any Missouri public school that includes students at grades 5 - 6, 6 - 8, 7 - 8, or 7 - 9.

Professional Development. The continued education teachers receive; this is usually comprised of workshops at the school or district level (Caskey, 2007).

Professional Learning Community (PLC). This is a group of school staff, both teachers and administrators, who are unified in their commitment to student learning. There is a shared vision by all members of the team and a collaborative effort by all to achieve better results for their students (DuFour et al., 2008).

Regular Education Initiative (REI). An initiative begun in the mid 1980's which gave increased responsibilities to the regular education teacher for the instruction of students with disabilities in the regular education classroom (Bateman & Bateman, 2002).

Resource Class. A class taught by a special education teacher outside of the regular classroom (Bos & Vaughn, 1998).

Self-Contained Classroom. A program of instruction in which students receive 60% or more of their special education services outside of the regular education environment (MacMillian, 1993).

Special Education Teacher. A certified teacher who manages special education students IEP as well as teaching academic subjects to special education students (Lunenburg, & Ornstein, 2008).

Overview of the Methodology

The researcher utilized survey research to investigate the perceptions of inclusion and collaboration of Missouri middle/junior high school principals. The survey used in this research was adapted from a previous survey, constructed by Seigler (2003) for his doctoral dissertation. The current survey is comprised of three sections: (a) a demographic checklist; (b) a Likert-scaled section used to determine the individual's perceptions toward inclusion; and (c) an open-ended comment section that focuses on the individual's experiences with inclusion.

Data regarding the principals' personal and building demographic factors, their knowledge levels of inclusion, their experience with inclusion, and the principals' views of collaboration were examined. The survey link was sent via email to all Missouri middle and junior public high school principals. Data from the survey was collected online using Survey Monkey. Upon completion of the data collection, the data was exported to Excel from Survey Monkey, and then uploaded to the IBM SPSS® Statistics Faculty Pack 19 for Windows. Research questions were addressed using one and two sample *t* tests and one factor analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Organization of the Study

This chapter stated the purpose, the problem, and background of the study. Research questions were provided, as well as definition of terms, delimitations, and assumptions. Finally, an overview of research methods was provided. The historical perspective of special education is examined in the review of literature in chapter two. It is important for the reader to understand the steps made in educating students with disabilities, from no services to full inclusion. Chapter three presents the methods used to

investigate the perceptions of inclusion and collaboration held by Missouri middle/junior high school administrators. This chapter includes the research design, sampling procedures, instrumentation used, data collection and analysis, and limitations of the study. Chapter four of this study focuses on the results of the data collection and the hypothesis testing. Chapter five presents the interpretation of the study results and provides the reader with recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Inclusion of students with disabilities is based on the idea that disabled children will grow both academically and socially in a classroom setting where their placement is the same as regular students (Banerji & Dailey, 1995). This chapter examines the literature through a historical perspective of special education in the United States. The review is constructed through a discussion of the following topics: (a) early twentieth century education, (b) education reform in the middle twentieth century, (c) special education reform 1975-1990, and (d) special education reform 1991- present-day research in the area of inclusion.

Early Twentieth Century Education

The United States saw political and social change during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The immigration boom of the nineteenth century gave rise to an increasingly diverse population, especially in the larger cities. This caused new problems in education. Not only was the institution of public education contending with the issue of educating newly freed slaves, but also increased immigration continued to press the issue of adequately educating “all” as required by the Constitution (Winzer, 1993, p. 122). The swelling school age population also brought an increase of students with disabilities. It was not until the 1870s that institutions for the mentally handicapped were established. Winzer (1993) stated that these institutions were built as a means to not only protect the mentally handicapped from society, but to protect society from the mentally handicapped (p. 131).

As the construction of these institutions increased throughout the country, advocates began raising questions as to their effectiveness. These advocates felt that an institutions close proximity to an urban area would make educating indigent children more difficult; therefore, construction of new institution's in rural areas began (Dorn, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1996). As a result of this movement, students with disabilities were further isolated from not only the regular school, but mainstream society as well.

As the twentieth century approached, progressivism began to change the social institutions of the country, especially education (Osgood, 2010). Mandatory school attendance laws were established in 1911. While these laws may have been seen as an improvement in education, they further isolated those students with handicaps. Segregated classrooms in the public schools were begun to house those who were perceived as unfit for society. Educators of the time, such as Ayres (1909), looked down upon the issue of educating students with disabilities. In his book, *Laggards in Our Schools*, Ayers stated the following:

During the past decade it has been increasingly realized that the education of children who are defective in body, mind, or morals is a matter of great importance to the future of the state...but the crux of the matter does not lie in the care of these unfortunates. At most, they do not constitute more than from one to two per cent of the school population, and it does not appear that any considerable fraction of them can ever be educated to become independent members of the community. (p. xiii)

This mindset toward educating the disabled in America would continue for the next half of a century.

Education Reform in the Middle Twentieth Century

Very little change occurred in the education of students with disabilities during the first half of the twentieth century. Students whose mental capacities left them unable to succeed in the regular classroom were educated in separate classrooms in the public schools. However, attitudes in the United States would soon change. On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States decided the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* case. While this decision was made in regard to racial segregation in the public schools, it effectively abolished the “separate but equal” doctrine set forth in the 1896 case of *Plessy vs. Ferguson* (Skiba, Simmons, Ritter, Gibb, Rausch, Cuadrado, & Chung, 2008).

The *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* case helped to spark the civil rights movement in the United States. The Supreme Court had stated that the idea of (separate but equal) was no longer applicable in public education. Chief Justice Warren, in his decision stated, “We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of “separate but equal” has no place. Separate education facilities are inherently unequal” (*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 1954). This wording inspired the parents and advocates of mentally disabled students across the country (Skiba et al., 2008). These advocates began to argue that the idea of “separate but equal” no longer applied to students with mental disabilities.

The first legislation dealing with the education of handicapped students was enacted in 1958 by the Eisenhower administration (Pace, 2002). P.L. 85-926 was enacted to provide financial assistance for colleges and universities to prepare future educators to work with the disabled student. This legislation would be the extent of federal

involvement in education of the handicapped student until the middle part of the 1960's (Zettel, 1977).

The Johnson administration commenced reform in the area of education. In 1965, Congress passed P.L. 89-313. This law amended Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), providing federal funding to assist state schools in the education of handicapped students. These schools were previously ineligible to receive federal funding under the ESEA (Hadley & Rentfrow, 1984). The next year Congress passed P.L. 89-750. This law allowed the states to use federal money to begin or improve upon existing special education programs (Zettel, 1977). A further provision of this law established the Bureau of the Education of the Handicapped (BEH), which provided further resources for those who desired to work in educational programs for the handicapped student.

During the 1960's, despite more federal awareness of handicapped students in the public school, most were still educated in separate classrooms. Prominent educators of the time argued both for and against the self-contained concept. Johnson (1962) claimed the separate class had advantages over the regular class, including lower teacher to student ratios, highly specialized teachers, individualized instruction, and a focus on vocational skills. However, others, such as Dunn (as cited in Osgood, 2005) found the separate class unacceptable and questioned its legitimacy, in turn bringing the question of special education placement to the center of discussion. Dunn (as cited in Osgood, 2005) compared the segregated special education classroom with that of racially segregated schools, claiming they were unequal to those of the general education setting. Special

education advocates began adopting Dunn's views, raising concerns of the self-contained classroom (Skiba et al., 2008).

The final federal legislation in the civil rights era was written in April 1970 in response to continued special education advocacy (Pace, 2002). This amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act eliminated Title VI and created The Education of the Handicapped Act (Zettel, 1977). This act provided education benefits to individuals with disabilities, allowing individual states the ability to provide education to handicapped students (Pace, 2002).

Special Education Reform 1975-1990

Until 1975, the federal government made few direct mandates to the states concerning the education of the handicapped. The federal government, the 1958 authorization of P.L. 85-926, had provided little more than funding to the states to establish and improve upon the education of the handicapped student. In fact, before 1975, the majority of disabled children in the United States were not educated in the public schools, partly due to the expense involved. Instead, the Department of Public Welfare arranged for the education of these disabled students in settings outside of the public school system (Rudd, 2002).

The education of students with disabilities took further steps in 1972 with the case of the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In this case, parents of children with mental retardation desired their children to have access to the public school system (Equity in Education Legal Database, 2007). The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania believed that the cost to educate these students was beyond what they could have afforded and thus deemed that their placement

outside of the regular school setting was appropriate. The court found that, like the civil rights cases a decade before, the Equal Protection Clause was being violated. The court found that these students had the right to a free and appropriate education (FAPE) within the school (Blankenship, Boon, & Fore, 2007). The court also ruled that parents had the right of due process if they disagreed with the placement decisions of the local school district (Kirp & Jensen, 1983; Rapp, 1994).

In the same year, another case further solidified the direction of educating students with disabilities. The *Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* (1972) case reaffirmed the decision of the PARC case (Blankenship et al., 2007). The court found, like in the PARC case, that the District of Columbia had to provide a free and appropriate education to all children as well as due process (Blankenship et al., 2007).

Public response to these two cases in 1972 helped shape the belief that the 14th Amendment to the Constitution also applied to the rights of the handicapped as well (Rapp, 1994). Gilhool, an attorney for the plaintiffs in the PARC case, declared that this case would transform education (Kirp & Jensen, 1983). His prophetic statement became reality, as these two landmark court cases would spark Congress to begin a three-year debate about the educational rights of children with disabilities (Kirp & Jensen, 1983; Rudd, 2002).

In 1975, the United States Congress passed P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. P.L. 94-142 sought to support students who were previously excluded from the public school system by providing a free and appropriate education to all students with disabilities from ages 3 to 21 in the least restrictive environment (LRE)

(U.S. Department of Education, 2010). This law sought to not only improve upon the education of disabled students, but also to aid in the identification of students with disabilities, to provide due process, to assist the states financially to provide a free and appropriate education, and to assess the effectiveness of the education being provided (Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 1975). P.L. 94-142 required that the public school systems in the United States develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each student with disabilities by 1978. This plan was to include a present level of academic achievement, annual goals for the student to meet, description and duration of special education services, as well as evaluation procedures (Zettel, 1977).

A major provision of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act is the requirement to educate disabled students in the LRE. By the early 1970s, nearly 70% of the states had adopted laws focused on the education of students with disabilities. Many school districts complied with these laws through mainstreaming (Rapp, 1994). With mainstreaming, disabled students were usually educated in specialized classrooms, with special education teachers. These students would then filter in predominately non-core classes or nonacademic activities (Bateman & Bateman, 2002). In contrast, P.L. 94-142 mandated an equal education opportunity for special education students.

To the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular

classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (P.L. 94-142, Sec. 612 (5) (B))

Identification of students with disabilities was an integral part of P.L 94-142 legislation. In order to insure students with disabilities were educated in the least restrictive environment, rules and regulations were established by the federal government. These regulations required detailed evaluation requirements for identifying students with specific learning disabilities. Among these disabilities are oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading, reading comprehension, math calculation, and math reasoning (Schrag, 2000). However, the federal government allowed the states flexibility in the use of discrepancy formulas to aid in identification of students with learning disabilities (Mellard et al., 2004). The U.S. Department of Education set guidelines that the states use aptitude and achievement discrepancy formulas but let the individual states determine an appropriate formula to use for identification (Mellard et al., 2004). This flexibility resulted in inconsistent methods in the identification of special needs children (Bateman & Chard, 1995).

Several formulas for identification of students with disabilities were used across the country. Among these early formulas was the Myklebust formula established in 1968. This formula added the student's mental age, taken from IQ testing, life age, and grade age then divided the sum by 3. If a score was less than 90 it would indicate the student had a learning disability (Bateman & Chard, 1995). Additional formulas used grade level deviations. In this case, a student's expected grade level scores on aptitude and achievement tests were compared to actual scores achieved by the student (Mellard et al., 2004). The expectancy formula consisted of a combination of IQ, actual age, mental

age, years in school, and current grade (Mellard et al., 2004). The standard score formula was used to compare the intellectual ability and academic achievement of the student (Elliot, 1981). Finally, the regression formula was used to examine measurement errors with IQ and the student's achievement (Reynolds, 1985). Each formula used provided a method for educators to make educational programming decisions regarding students with disabilities.

While the Education for All Handicapped Children Act 1975 provided a free and public education to millions of students otherwise overlooked by the public education system, objections to the flexibility of the states' use of discrepancy models began to arise (Rutter & Yule, 1975). Many IQ tests require a substantial amount of reading. Many students struggle with reading and do not possess adequate decoding and comprehension skills. In time, this gap grows; causing the "Matthew Effect," the student's reading ability may lead to an inadequate estimation of the IQ score (Siegel, 1989). Researchers became concerned that school districts would encounter difficulties in identifying learning-disabled students with low reading abilities simply through the discrepancy model (Fletcher et al., 1994). Additional concerns were raised about school districts not looking at learning issues students may have had in early grades (Fletcher et al., 1998).

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act 1975 has not required that a student with disabilities be educated in the general education classroom. It provides a free and appropriate public education and due process. The initiation of the IEP and the teaming of parents and educators in the placement decisions of the student brought early tests to the term "appropriate" (Blankenship et al., 2007). The United States Supreme

Court decision of Board of Education in the Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley (1982) sought to provide a resolution. In this case, the parents of a deaf student sought services beyond that which the public school system felt was appropriate (Blankenship et al., 2007). The Supreme Court sided with the school district, stating that the Education for All Handicapped Children Act 1975 does define the term “appropriate.” Justice Rhenquist in his opinion stated the following:

The term “free appropriate public education” means special education and related services which (A) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge, (B) meet the standards of the state agency, (C) include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school education in the state involved, and (D) are provided in conformity with the individualized education program. (Board of Education v. Rowley, 1982)

This case provided some clarity as to what was deemed appropriate education for students with disabilities. However, school districts during this time began shifting their thought from free and appropriate education to one where the placement of the student came before the quality of education the student was to receive (Austin, 2001). School districts began to seek appropriate education placements that were the least financial burden on the district (Johnson, 2003).

In 1986, Madeline Will, the Assistant Secretary in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services proposed a new direction to the education of students with disabilities in the public school system (Santoli et al., 2008). Her proposal, called the Regular Education Initiative (REI) was introduced to change the traditional approach of educating students with disabilities in the public schools and merge special education and

general education students in the same classroom (Whitworth, 1994; Santoli et al., 2008). The REI movement highlighted the concept of mainstreaming, placing students with disabilities in the regular classroom, which was born from the passage of P.L. 94-142 (Santoli et al., 2008).

With the passage of P.L. 94-142 in 1975 school districts began to mainstream students with disabilities in mainly elective classes such as art and physical education (Chiang, 1999). The goal of REI was to advance that thought to include the general education classroom as well. Will (as cited in Kauffman, 1989) felt that the general education class should be modified to fit the needs of special education students, citing the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that separate is not equal, in order to promote REI.

Will based REI on the premise that separate education classrooms for student with disabilities was not meeting their needs (as cited in Santoli, et al., 2008). Good teachers should be able to teach all students and manage all students without segregation (Kavale, 2000). Therefore, specialized instruction was not required. Disagreements began to surface over the definition of REI. Since it was not a law, but rather an initiative, individual states and school districts were left to interpret its meaning. This led to individual school districts interpreting REI and the concept of mainstreaming differently (Whitworth, 1994).

Special Education Reform 1990-2012

In the years since the passage of P.L. 94-142, the U.S. Congress and the Department of Education began paying closer attention to special education advocacy groups (Horn & Tynan, 2001). Advocacy groups continued to raise concerns about the

education of students with disabilities in settings outside of the regular education classroom (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994). These advocacy and special interest groups continued to focus on the rights of not only the special education student, but the parent/guardian as well. In 1990, Congress amended the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975, renaming it the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (May, 2009). The passage of IDEA was seen by many as an accomplishment in the fight for civil rights of the special needs student (Wolfe & Harriott, 1998).

While the main pieces of P.L. 94-142 remained intact with the passage of IDEA, changes were made to expand and improve upon the law (Department of Education, 1998). Special education services were now stretched further across the spectrum of disabilities to help meet the education needs of more students (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996). There are four main purposes set forth by Congress with the passage of IDEA. The first is to grant all students a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), the second, to insure the rights of not only disabled students but also parents of these students. Third, IDEA grants monetary assistance from the federal government to assist the states in the education of students with disabilities. Finally, IDEA has required assessments to monitor the effectiveness of education of students with disabilities (Department of Education, 1995).

A key provision in IDEA required public school districts to seek out disabled students living within their borders (Pace, 2002). Through this requirement, school districts sought to identify children ages 3-5 residing in their districts who may be disabled, and evaluate them for special education services (Horn & Tynan, 2001). In order to aid the states in this endeavor, the federal government allocated money to

districts who provided a free and appropriate public education to all students with disabilities (May, 2009).

Once a student was identified as having a potential disability, IDEA required an initial evaluation to determine eligibility of special education services (Horn & Tynan, 2001). Under the provisions of IDEA, a student's disability had to adversely affect his educational performance in the general education curriculum (May, 2009). Identifiable educational disabilities included mental retardation, hearing and vision impairments, speech or language impairments, emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, specific learning disabilities, and other health impairments (May, 2009, p. 176). In 1991, attention deficit disorder, (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactive disorder, (ADHD) were included with other health impairments (Horn & Tynan, 2001).

During the 15 years after the passage of P.L. 94-142 in 1975, more special education students were included in the general education classroom. The passage of IDEA in 1990 required that disabled students be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (Horn & Tynan, 2001). The trend of educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom, that began in 1975, continued to grow (Sailor, 1991). By 1997 only 8% of students with disabilities across the United States received special education services outside of the regular classroom for the entire school day (Department of Education, 2000). The LRE requires that school districts follow a process of educating each student in the general education classroom as much as possible. In order to assist in this process, a continuum of services was established for school districts. In the continuum of services, the regular education classroom was the least restrictive environment to place the student. The resource classroom, a class where the regular

curriculum was taught by a special educator in a class of only special education students was next on the continuum. A more restrictive placement is the self-contained classroom, a class in the public school, but designed for the student to receive a much more modified curriculum. Finally, the most restrictive placement, the separate school, was established for those student whose needs cannot be met by the public school (McLeskey, Henry, & Axelrod, 1999).

On June 4, 1997, the Clinton administration reauthorized IDEA. This reauthorization of legislation shifted the focus from strictly FAPE, to that of the students getting needed curriculum supports (Wolfe & Harriott, 1998). With the focus turning from simply providing FAPE, more attention needed to be given to assessment, as well as the Individual Education Plan. The 1997 reauthorization also made a dramatic change in the evaluation of students with disabilities. No longer were school districts required to initiate testing in order to determine if a student continued to qualify for special education services. The school districts were now allowed to examine previous testing, as well as academic progress, in order to determine if a student continued to meet eligibility criteria (Wolfe & Harriott, 1998). Through this change, school districts were able to save money and time spent in testing procedures.

Under the 1997 reauthorization, the IEP began to focus more on the general education curriculum and the student's ability to function in general education. The emphasis of these amendments focused on special needs students having access to the regular education classroom (Santoli et al., 2008). The IEP began to turn from just a document outlining the disability, to how the disability impacted progress in the regular curriculum. Several new pieces of the student's individual plan were now required. The

IEP was to not only require a statement of the individual student's present level of functioning but also a statement as to how the student's disability affected "his" progress in the general education curriculum (Wolfe & Harriott, 1998). The IEP was to also include a statement of how the individual student would access the regular education curriculum and the accommodations and modifications needed in order to access that curriculum (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

As had been required the previous two decades, the IEP is to contain student goals. However, the IEP goals under the 1997 reauthorization were to be related to the general education curriculum (Wolfe & Harriott, 1998). Concerns had been raised since the passage of IDEA about lower academic expectations for IEP goals (Ysseldyke, Thrulow, Kozleski, & Reschly, 1998). The 1997 amendments to IDEA increased the standards used in creating IEP goals, mandating their alignment with regular education expectations (Department of Education, 2000). The alignment of IEP goals to the general education curriculum required the special education teacher to become very well versed in the general education curriculum (Martin & Williams, 1999).

IDEA 1997 outlined new requirements in the assessment of students with disabilities. IDEA 1997 does not specify how the states are to assess students with disabilities (Heumann & Warlick, 2000); however, it does state that all students with disabilities were now required to take the same state assessment as the regular education students (Karvonen, Wakeman, Browder, Rogers, & Flowers, 2011). If a student's disability was more severe, an alternative assessment would be administered. However, the alternative assessment was required to be related to the regular education grade level standards (Karvanen et al., 2011; U.S. Department of Education 2000).

In order to assist students with disabilities in taking state assessments, specific accommodations and modifications were to be included in the IEP. These accommodations and modifications were to focus on changes in the format of the test, the response, setting, or timing of the test. While the accommodations and modifications were to assist the student they were not designed to change what was measured by the test (Heumann & Warlick, 2000).

The U.S. Department of Education noted that participation of students with disabilities in state assessments rose to 97% by 1999 (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Heumann and Warlick (2000) stated that all students taking the state exam leads to a higher quality education for all students and improves educator quality as well, as districts use the data to improve and revise instruction. However, Ysseldyke et al. (1998) pointed to issues with the assessment requirement by stating that the lack of specificity by the federal government may lead to inconsistencies between the states in their assessment methods.

One of the most controversial, yet important revisions in the 1997 amendments of IDEA, deals with special education student discipline (Wolf & Harriott, 1999). IDEA 1997 placed limits on suspensions of special education students, putting safeguards in place to maintain special education services and guard against school administrators changing placements for disciplinary reasons (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000). The law states that discipline rules and FAPE must work together. Special education students must be required to follow the same rules as regular education students. There must be provisions to remove students who are not following the behavioral expectations of the school, and

in the case of special education students, there must be a continuation of services when disciplined (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).

Under IDEA 1997 discipline was viewed in two categories, short term and long term. While the law provides the means to remove special education students from the learning environment for behavioral reasons, they are restricted to ten cumulative days out of school before safeguards are enacted (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000). At this point, a change of placement is considered to have taken place and special education services must be provided.

IDEA 1997 requires two documents to be completed when behaviors cause a special education student to be out of school 10 days. The first is the manifestation review. This requires a meeting of the IEP team, including parent/guardian, to be held within ten days of the discipline action that resulted in ten days of suspension. During this meeting the behavior and disability of the student are examined. If the behavior is due to the student's disability they must be allowed to return to the classroom. If the behavior is found not to be related to the disability, the suspension is upheld, and the IEP team devises a plan to provide special education services during the suspension (Wolf & Harriott, 1999). The second document is the Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). This document provides a means for the IEP team to examine the variables that could be causing problem behaviors in the school setting. Relationships between the behaviors, antecedents, and events are examined in order to not only find why problem behaviors are occurring, but also what could be done to prevent these behaviors (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).

The behavioral provisions in IDEA 1997 provide continued special education support to suspended students. While the law provides school administrators the means to suspend special education students, it provides continued support to those same students. It also provides a way for educators to respond to behaviors. Through the examination of the relationship between behaviors and antecedents, educators would have the ability to promote behavior interventions, which should aid in the success of students with behavior issues.

Focus on education reform continued into the next decade. In 2001, among fears of lower academic achievement, the Bush administration passed P.L. 107-110, The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This purpose of this Act was to improve the quality of the nation's educational system. The guiding purpose of NCLB states, "The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments" (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

The main principle of NCLB became educator quality; highly trained educators would foster academic growth in the students. Both educator quality and academic growth would be examined through the school districts' state assessment results. Under NCLB, all states were mandated to provide a rigorous academic exam that would gauge not only student academic proficiency but also teacher quality (National Center for Learning Disabilities, [NCLD], 2006). School districts were held accountable for results on their state exams and were required to make progress each academic year (NCLD, 2006).

Under the mandates of NCLB, all students and school districts, were required to reach academic proficiency by 2014 (Lancaster et al., 2006). Through the assessment mandate, it became clear that NCLB was designed to not only improve the educational outcomes of regular education students, but also special education students (Handler, 2006). All students, regular and special education, were to be measured by the same evaluation methods, and taught by highly qualified teachers (Handler, 2006). Teachers, principals, superintendents, boards of education became accountable for the academic progress of all students within the district, not just the regular education students (Santoli et al., 2008; NCLD, 2006). Under NCLB, new roles were created for building leadership. No longer could the principal completely ignore academic progress of special education students. While more focus had been given to the academic progress of special needs students since the passage of P.L. 94-142, districts had not been held accountable for that progress. NCLB required principals to focus on reaching academic proficiency among all students in their building (Lashley, 2007).

In 2004, the Bush administration continued its push for academic proficiency by reauthorizing IDEA in order to incorporate it into NCLB (May, 2009). A major provision of IDEA 2004 was early academic intervention. Early intervention, or Response to Intervention (RTI), provided intense academic supports to struggling students. RTI was implemented to not only provide additional supports to struggling learners, but also to reduce the number of students identified as learning disabled (NCLD, 2006). IDEA 2004 allowed school districts to use up to 15% of their federal special education funds for the purpose of early intervention (NCLD, 2006). These funds were

to be spent on educator training and materials to provide increased academic supports to struggling students.

IDEA 2004 brought about changes to the identification of students with specific learning disabilities. Until this amendment, school districts had used the discrepancy model to identify students with a specific learning disability. Under this model, students had to demonstrate a severe discrepancy between their intellectual ability and their academic achievement. This process could take an extensive amount of time, thus requiring students to fail before being provided special education services (NCLD, 2006). The removal of this requirement to receive special education services, coupled with RTI, would allow districts to quickly meet the academic needs of struggling learners.

Both NCLB and IDEA 2004 mandated that all students meet rigorous academic standards. While both pieces of legislation provide specific mandates for the states in order to provide quality education, they provide flexibility for the states to go beyond those mandates (NCLD, 2006). This flexibility became evident in the mandate that students be taught by highly qualified teachers and presented school districts with potential issues (Handler, 2006). Under the federal mandate, highly qualified teachers meant that the teacher held at least a bachelor's degree, held full state certification and licensure, and was competent in the core subject being taught (R&D Alert, 2004). The final requirement became a major issue for special education teachers as they were not experts in individual core subject areas.

Debate ensued in the interpretation of the highly qualified teacher mandate of IDEA 2004 (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Individual states began to develop ways to ensure that all students would be taught by highly trained teachers. One method was to increase

the number of co-taught classrooms. Special education teachers and regular education teachers would teach together, in the same classroom, to both regular and special education students (Handler, 2006). The method of co-teaching would provide a way to meet the highly qualified teacher mandate and still provide the academic support to the special education students (Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010). This method of co-teaching required not only collaboration on the part of the special and regular education teachers but also a shared accountability for the education of the special education students in the classroom (Elliot, 2003).

In September 2011, President Obama sought to improve upon the NCLB legislation passed a decade earlier. A new initiative in education called Race to the Top eased the strict proficiency requirements under NCLB and created an incentive for school districts to quickly strive for academic achievement. In remarks on NCLB and the introduction of Race to the Top, President Obama (2011) stated, “And to all 50 states, to Governors, to school districts, we said show us the most innovative plans to improve teacher quality and student achievement, we’ll show you the money” (p. 2). Race to the Top sought to reform NCLB standards and create a new method for school districts to attain academic proficiency, one not simply based on academic test results, but on innovation and competition.

Research in the Area of Inclusion

Educating students with disabilities has dramatically improved since the civil rights movement, specifically, over the last twenty years. During this time inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom has become the preferred method utilized by school districts. The mandates of least restrictive environment and highly

qualified instructors have made inclusion of special education students in the regular education classroom even more ideal.

Banjeri and Dailey (1995) have the view that inclusion is based on the thought that special education students will profit academically and socially when placed in the regular education classroom. Critics to this thought have claimed that inclusion of special needs students creates a “one size fits all” approach to their education, not individualizing as required by law (NCERI, 1996). Proponents of inclusion point out that co-taught classrooms can meet the individual needs of all students in the classroom, not just the special education students (NCERI, 1996).

Banjeri and Dailey (1995) administered a three part study on the effects of inclusion in grades 2-5. The study focused on academic and affective outcomes of 5th grade students who were normal achieving, regular education students, students who were diagnosed as learning disabled, and teacher/parent perceptions of normal achieving and learning disabled students in the class. Their findings provided evidence that students with learning disabilities made academic progress, most making academic gains at the same rate as normal achieving students. The results of the parent/teacher survey indicated that students with learning disabilities showed improved self-esteem and improved motivation.

Keefe, Moore, and Duff (2004) focused on the issue of collaboration between the regular education and special education teacher. Their research examined the roles of both teachers in a co-taught classroom. They conducted focus groups of elementary and high school teachers in co-teaching settings. The results of their research indicate that general and special educators, across grade levels, shared concerns about administrative

support, planning time, professional development related to inclusion, resources, and the overall motivation of the teachers involved. Their findings further indicate that high school teachers felt that larger class sizes, having more students during the day, and unclear teaching roles as obstacles in the co-teaching classroom. Unclear teaching roles were found to be the major obstacle in the high school setting. They pointed out that general education teachers often perceive themselves as content experts, not trusting the special educator in the delivery of the material. This resulted in the alienation of the special education teacher, causing a feeling of inadequacy. For the co-taught classroom to function properly, both the regular education and special education teachers must function as if the class is equally theirs.

Sindelar et al. (2006) stated that inclusion is often a concept that is misunderstood by teachers and administrators alike. Sindelar et al. addressed inclusion's sustainability in the public school. Faculty from the University of Florida worked with a specific middle school in Florida, collaborating with administrators and teachers, to build an inclusion program within the school. Six years into the collaboration, the researchers removed themselves in order to observe the sustainability of the inclusion program. A case study approach was used to address their research. Individual interviews were conducted with teachers and administrators at the school over a five year period, 1998-2002. Sindelar et al. (2006) found that the inclusion program was not sustained after the University of Florida staff removed themselves. Factors contributing to the inclusion program's decline were changes in building leadership, teacher turnover, and state and district policy changes. The findings showed that inclusion programs will suffer without adequate support from building administrators and teachers alike.

Recent research has focused on the perceptions of inclusion held by public school principals. Seigler (2003) focused his research on the perceptions of inclusion held by middle school principals in the state of Georgia. Seigler surveyed 389 middle level principals across the state of Georgia. The survey was developed by Seigler and mailed to 389 middle level principals in the state of Georgia. Two hundred principals responded to his survey. The results of Seigler's survey indicated that there was no relationship between knowledge levels of inclusion, experience with inclusion, and the principals' perceptions towards inclusion. Seigler did find that male principals tended to have a slightly more negative view of inclusion. He also found that the higher the degree held and more years of administrative experience, the more positive the principals' perceptions of inclusion.

Praisner (2003) conducted research on the attitudes of elementary principals towards the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. Praisner developed a survey entitled the Principals and Inclusion Survey (PIS) to measure the extent variables such as demographics, training, experience, and school characteristics impacted the principals attitudes of inclusion. The survey was mailed to 750 elementary principals, randomly selected in the state of Pennsylvania. Praisner's research showed that most of the principals surveyed were unsure of their feelings towards special education inclusion. Unlike Seigler, Praisner's research found that prior experience lead to more positive attitudes towards inclusion. The more positive a principal viewed inclusion, the less restrictive the placement of the special education student.

Ramirez (2006) followed Praisner's research and examined the attitudes and perceptions of inclusion held by elementary principals in the state of Texas. He randomly selected 360 of the 4,123 elementary principals in the state of Texas. Ramirez based the survey instrument on Praisner's (PIS). The survey was emailed to 360 participants with 110 completing it. Ramirez found that most principals held positive perceptions of inclusion. He also found that principals with special education teaching experience held more positive perceptions of inclusion. Likewise, principals with more experience working with special education tended to place students with disabilities in less restrictive placements.

Lindsey (2009) researched middle school principals' attitudes towards inclusion in relation to their background, training, and experience. He surveyed 189 middle level principals in the state of Tennessee. Like Ramirez, Lindsey adapted Praisner's (PIS) survey. He found that most principals surveyed held positive attitudes towards inclusion, however, most felt that students with mental retardation, autism, multiple disabilities, emotional disturbance, and traumatic brain injury would be better served in a special education resource setting. Lindsey's research found that most principals felt that inclusion enhanced the learning experience of the special education students. However, the more years the principal had worked in the middle level, the more negative they viewed inclusion and felt that only those with high levels of special education training could work with special education students.

Farris (2011) also expanded on the work of Praisner. He examined the attitudes of high school principals in the state of Texas towards inclusion. Farris adapted Praisner's (PIS) survey and emailed to 1211 high school principals in the state of Texas.

He found there to be a positive correlation between the attitudes of inclusion held by the principal and their personal experiences with inclusion. Like Ramirez and Lindsey, Farris's research showed that the majority of principals felt that students with severe disabilities were better served in a more restrictive special education placement.

Horrocks, White, and Roberts (2008) studied principals' attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with autism in the general education classroom. This study targeted a random sample of all public school principals, elementary, middle, and high school across the state of Pennsylvania in 2005. In all, 1500 surveys were mailed with 571 principals responding. The researchers developed a survey entitled The Principals' Perspective Questionnaire (Horrocks, et al., 2008). This survey contained four parts. The first contained demographic information, followed by questions on placement decisions related to autism, attitudes of inclusion, and attitudes toward inclusion. Their findings reveal that those principals, across all levels, who felt students with autism could be included in the general education class tended to recommend higher levels of inclusion. These same principals also felt strongly about including students with other disabilities in the general education setting.

Johnson (2011) examined how the perceptions of inclusion held by the principal determine the success of inclusion in the school. Johnson included elementary principals in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and South Dakota during the 2010-2011 school year in the study. Johnson found that the pull out model of inclusion, one where the student is placed in the special education classroom no more than 21% of the school day was the method preferred by most principals. Conversely, full inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom was the least utilized method of inclusion.

Most principals surveyed agreed that their leadership was important in the implementation of the inclusion program. However, this study showed opposite results than the Ramirez study in regards to perceptions of inclusion and number of years as a principal. Johnson's research indicates that principals who have worked as administrators five years or less tend to have more positive views of inclusion, specifically full inclusion.

Lorio (2011) also examined principal attitudes towards inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. Lorio studied the attitudes of high school principal's in the state of Louisiana and their attitudes towards inclusion, specifically how their attitudes of inclusion relate to demographic profiles. Lorio modified Bailey's Principals' Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education (PATIE) survey and emailed through Survey Monkey to 207 high school principals across the state. Lorio had a low response rate of 52. Lorio found that the majority of participants held positive attitudes of inclusion. However, most principals held negative attitudes about the inclusion of students who were physically aggressive or severely disabled, and with professional training regarding inclusion. Female principals in this study tended to view inclusion more positively than their male counterparts, especially when including students with more severe disabilities. Lorio found that principals with special education teaching backgrounds held more positive perceptions of inclusion, but principals of more affluent schools held more negative views of inclusion.

Similar research by Demeris, Childs, and Jordan (2007) came to the same conclusion. Their research focused on special education students in the third grade in Canada and their scores in reading, writing, and math on Ontario's yearly exam,

compared with classmates without special needs. The results of their research found that all segments of the school population benefit from the inclusion of special education students in the regular classroom as average class scores that contained students with disabilities were slightly higher. Their study suggests that all students benefit from the efficiency of the teachers in the inclusive classroom.

Often, there is the thought that inclusion of special needs students harms the education of the regular education students. Fisher, Shumaker, and Deshler (1995) reviewed studies of six inclusion programs, peer tutoring, cooperative learning, teaching devices, content enhancement, curriculum revision, and strategies instruction. The goal of their study was to provide educators with information as to which inclusion program(s) can have a positive impact in the classroom without negating the academics in the classroom. Each study had to be conducted in a general education classroom of at least 15 students where students with specific learning disabilities, behavior disorders, or mild mental retardation were present. Their findings showed that the inclusion of peer tutoring, cooperative learning, teaching devices, and content enhancement improved the academics of students with mild disabilities. Curriculum revision and strategies instruction show smaller, but positive gains in achievement of students with mild disabilities. Further, their study found the inclusion of special education students in the regular education to be of no harm to any segment of the school population.

Summary

The review of this literature served as a historical view of special education. Early twentieth century education, educational reform in the middle twentieth century, special education reform 1975-1990, and special education reform 1990-2012 were

examined. Research in the area of inclusion was also discussed. Chapter three presents research design, population sample, and instrumentation. Additionally, the validity and reliability, data collection procedures, and data analysis and hypothesis testing, and limitations are discussed.

Chapter Three

Methods

The purpose of this study was to examine the current perceptions middle and junior high school principals in the state of Missouri have regarding the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom and the collaboration of special education and regular education teachers. This chapter focuses on the research methodology, with subsections of research design, population sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis and hypothesis testing, and limitations.

Research Design

Quantitative methods of research were utilized in this study. The data was collected using a cross-sectional descriptive survey of Missouri middle/junior high principals. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated that a cross-sectional descriptive study requires that data be collected from individuals who represent a cross section of the population. In this case, Missouri middle/junior high administrators across the state of Missouri represented that cross-section. The survey method of research is a non-experimental method of research.

For the purposes of this study, the dependent variables were defined as the perceptions of inclusion held by Missouri middle/junior high school principals and the importance of collaboration held by Missouri middle/junior high school principals. The independent variables included the principal's prior experiences with inclusion, knowledge of inclusion, perceptions of collaboration, gender, years as a middle/junior high principal, and degree earned. Additional independent variables are the socio-economic status and location of the school.

Population and Sample

In order to gain insight into the perceptions of Missouri middle/junior high principals' towards inclusion, all Missouri middle/junior high principals during the 2011-2012 school year were included in this research study. This population excluded principals of charter and private schools in the state of Missouri, as well as assistant/vice principals. The population was diverse, including principals of schools in urban, suburban, and rural areas across the state of Missouri, and including schools of all socio-economic status. The Missouri middle/junior high school principals who chose to complete the survey comprised the sample for this survey.

Instrumentation

The instrument administered in this study was a survey, which was delivered electronically to Missouri middle/junior high school principals. The researcher modified a survey developed by Seigler (2003) for his doctoral thesis. Seigler granted the researcher permission to adapt the survey. Email correspondence seeking permission to adapt the survey is found in Appendix C. Email correspondence granting permission to adapt the survey is found in Appendix D. The researcher designed the survey to collect data regarding principal perceptions of inclusion, as well as factors that influence principals' perceptions of inclusion, such as knowledge and experiences with inclusion, demographic factors, and views of collaboration between special education and regular education teachers

Both the current survey (Appendix E) and original survey (Appendix F) begin with demographic items. However, the current researcher's survey did not include a definition of inclusion. This was purposely omitted from the original so the participant

would answer the survey items based on their own definition of inclusion. The current researcher's survey begins with the identification of gender, followed by the identification of the highest degree earned. This item differs in the Seigler survey with the omission of the 4-year degree option, as Missouri principals are required to have at minimum a Master's degree. The current researcher's survey excludes items 6a, and 6b of the Seigler survey, as they did not pertain to the current study. Demographic items concerning number of years in current position, years as a middle/junior high principal, and total years as administrator were added to the current researcher's survey. In addition, items seeking the location of the school and socio-economics were included. The demographic items were used to measure variables in research question 4. Items 1-5 of the Seigler survey were re-ordered in the current researcher's survey to follow a chronological sequence.

Section two of both surveys contains Likert-scaled items. The Seigler survey contains 25 items divided into four sections: Types of disabilities, policy, collaborative planning between special educators and general educators, and student reaction. Participants were given choices of SD (strongly disagree), D (disagree), A (agree), and SA (strongly agree).

The current researcher's survey contains 17 items, not separated into separate sections. Participants are given choices of *SD (strongly disagree)*, *D (disagree)*, *N (neutral)*, *A (agree)*, and *SA (strongly agree)*. The first 12 items focus on principal perceptions of inclusion, as well as its relation to the disability type and severity of the disability. These items were used to measure inclusion for research questions one, three, four, and six. The final five items in the current researcher's survey focus on the

principal's views of teacher collaboration between special education and general education teachers. These items were used to measure collaboration for research questions five and six. The Seigler survey contains five items focused on policy. These items are not included in the current researcher's survey, as policy is not part of the current study.

The third, and final, section of both surveys allow the participant the opportunity to respond to four open-ended items. The Seigler survey begins by asking the participant to provide experiences with inclusion. The second item is focused on experiences with specific types of disabilities, providing eight disability areas, and asks the participant to circle all that apply. The option of other is provided with space to explain. The third item provides opportunity for the participant to state the ways their knowledge of inclusion was gained. The fourth item allows opportunity for the participant to provide policy recommendations. Item 5 provides space for the participant to share any other thoughts on inclusion. Item 6 allows the participant the opportunity to provide a statement on how their school system defines inclusion.

The current researcher's survey contains four of the original six open-ended items, excluding items 4 and 6. Item 4 is focused on policy recommendations concerning inclusion. Policy is not part of this study, thus was omitted. Item 6 provides the opportunity for the participant to explain how their school system defines inclusion. The current study is on principal perceptions of inclusion; therefore, this item was not included in this study.

The survey allows the participant the opportunity to respond to each item in a non-intrusive manner. Open-ended items were written in order to obtain additional

information from the selected participants. The participants were provided a list of disabilities. From this list, the participants were asked to mark those with which they had work experience. Additionally, participants were given the opportunity to provide the source(s) of their knowledge of inclusion, their specific teaching/administrative experiences with inclusion, as well as space to provide additional thoughts. The use of open-ended questioning in the survey permits the participant the opportunity to respond in a method of their choosing (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

Validity

The validity and reliability of the survey instrument allow the survey results to be generalized. In order to ensure the validity of the survey, Seigler (2003) sought input from experts, in Georgia, in the area of special education. Seigler provided each expert a copy of the survey for review and recommendations. Modifications to the survey were made according to the expert recommendations.

Johnson and Christensen (2008) state that when taking a survey the participant may respond to items in a specific pattern. In order to avoid these patterns and assure internal consistency, certain items in the survey are reverse worded/coded (Seigler, 2003). For these items, lower scores indicate a more positive perception. Reverse worded/coded items 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 23, and 24 are located in section 2 of the participant survey.

Data Collection and Coding Procedures

The researcher sought approval from the Baker University Institutional Review Board to administer the instrument (Appendix A). Upon receiving approval (Appendix B), the researcher entered the survey instrument into Survey Monkey. The use of Survey

Monkey assured anonymity and allowed ease of response. Participant email addresses were obtained through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education web site. The researcher then uploaded the email address of each Missouri middle/junior high school principal into the system. An email was sent to each participant. This email contained an introduction, the researchers contact information in the case the participant had questions or concerns and/or wanted to see the results of the research, explanation of the purpose of the study, and informed the participant of the link containing the web address to the participant survey (see Appendix G). Participants were notified in the email that completing the survey indicated voluntary consent to participate in the study. The Survey Monkey software allowed the researcher to monitor the number of responses as surveys were completed. In order to achieve maximum participation, a follow up email, which included the web address for the online survey (see Appendix H), was sent to all participants two weeks after the original email. Two additional emails, 13 days after the follow up email and again seven days later, were sent to the participants in order to achieve maximum participation (see Appendices I and J).

Data from the survey was exported to Excel from Survey Monkey and then uploaded to IBM SPSS® Statistics Faculty Pack 19 for Windows. In order to analyze the data obtained through the survey numerical weights were assigned to each response option. These weights were as follows: *Strongly Disagree (SD)* = 1 point; *Disagree (D)* = 2 points; *Neutral (N)* = 3 points; *Agree (A)* = 4 points; *Strongly Agree (SA)* = 5 points. As previously mentioned, reverse coded items were used. In these cases, a lower score would indicate a more positive perception towards inclusion. With the remaining items, a higher score represents a positive perception towards inclusion. Therefore, items 12,

13, 14, 17, 18, 23, and 24 of section 2 were re-coded, *Strongly Disagree (SD)* 5 points, *Disagree (D)* 4 points, *Neutral (N)* 3 points, *Agree (A)* 2 points, *Strongly Agree (SA)* 1 point. Information obtained from the participants concerning demographic data, answers on Likert-scaled questions, and open-ended items were used to answer the research questions of this study.

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The data analyzed for this study came from responses to the participant survey emailed to Missouri middle/junior high school principals. For each research question there is a discussion of data analysis from responses to items on the participant survey.

Research Question 1. What are the perceptions of Missouri middle/junior high school principals toward the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting?

H1: The perceptions Missouri middle/junior high school principals toward the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting are positive.

Research question one was addressed by conducting a one-sample *t* test for each of the items (10-21) of part II of the participant survey. The mean was tested against a null value of 3, which indicated a neutral response ($\alpha = .05$).

Research Question 2. What are the Missouri middle/junior high school principals' knowledge levels of inclusion?

H2: Missouri middle/junior high school principals have knowledge levels of inclusion.

A one-sample *t* test was conducted using the participants' responses to item 28 of the participant survey. Responses were assigned to one or more of the following

categories: Teaching in the inclusive classroom, special education resources, administrative experience, and higher education. Categories were assigned numerical weights, teaching (4), administration (2), resources (1), and higher education (1).

Participants could score between 1 and 8. The sample mean was compared against the null hypothesis ($\mu = 2$) to determine the principals' knowledge level of inclusion.

Research Question 3. To what extent does a relationship exist between Missouri middle/junior high school principals' perceptions toward the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting and their experiences with inclusion?

H3: There is a relationship between a principal's experience with specific disabilities and the principal's perception of inclusion.

In order to test H3, 12 *t* tests were conducted for each of the eight disability areas listed in item 27, in which the participant indicated experienced or did not experience. Independent samples *t* tests were conducted to test for differences in perceptions of inclusion, as measured by items 10-21, between principals who had experience with each disability and those who had not.

H4: There is a relationship between a principal's experience with inclusion and the principal's perception of inclusion.

Twelve one factor ANOVAs were conducted using responses to item 29 of the participant survey in order to test for differences in perceptions of inclusion based on the type of experience the principal had with inclusion (teacher, administrator, program experiences, or teacher/administrator).

Research Question 4. To what extent do demographic factors influence the principals' perceptions of inclusion?

H5: Gender of the principal (male or female) influences the perceptions of inclusion.

Male and female principals' survey responses were compared. An independent samples *t* test was conducted to compare the responses of the male and female principals using responses to each of the items 10-21 of the survey in order to determine the differences between males' and females' perceptions.

H6: The degree(s) held by the principal affect the perceptions of inclusion.

Participants were divided into 3 groups, Master's Degree, Specialist Degree, and Ph.D./Ed.D. according to answers provided on item 2 of the survey. Twelve one factor ANOVAs were used to analyze for difference in perceptions of inclusion among the 3 groups of principals.

H7: The teaching certification held by the principal influences perceptions of inclusion.

Principals holding a special education teaching certificate and those who do not were compared, according to answers provided to item 3 of part 1 of the survey. Independent samples *t* tests using responses to items 10-21 of the participant survey were conducted in order to compare perceptions of inclusion between principals with special education teaching certification and principals without special education teaching certification.

H8: The number of years employed as a middle/junior high school principal influences perceptions of inclusion.

Participants were divided into three groups, 1-5 years as a middle/junior high school principal, 6-10 years as a middle/junior high school principal, and 11 years or

more as a middle/junior high school principal, according to responses provided to item 5 of the participant survey. Twelve one factor ANOVAs were used to analyze for differences in perceptions of inclusion among the three groups of principals.

H9: The number of years employed as a principal influences on perceptions of inclusion.

Participants were divided into three groups, 1-5 years as a principal, 6-10 years a principal, and 11 years or more as a principal, according to responses provided to item 6 of the participant survey. Twelve one factor ANOVAs were used to analyze for differences in perceptions of inclusion among the three groups of principals.

H10: Socio-economic status (SES) of the school influences the principal's perceptions of inclusion.

Participants were divided into four groups, principal of school with 0-25% free and reduced lunch, principal of school with 26-50% free and reduced lunch, principal of school with 51-75% free and reduced lunch, and principal of school with 76-100% free and reduced lunch, according to responses provided to item 9 of the participant survey. Twelve one factor ANOVAs were used to analyze for differences in perceptions of inclusion among the four groups of principals.

H11: Location of the school, (rural, urban, sub-urban), influences the principals' perceptions of inclusion.

Participants were divided into three groups, principal of an urban school, principal of a suburban school, and principal of a rural school, according to responses provided to item 7 of the participant survey. Twelve one factor ANOVAs were used to analyze for differences in perceptions of inclusion among the three groups of principals.

Research Question 5. How important do Missouri middle/junior high principals view the collaboration of regular and special education teaching staff?

H12: Missouri middle/junior high principals perceive collaboration between general education and special education teaching staffs to be important.

Research question five was addressed by conducting a one-sample *t* test of the mean for each of the items 22-26 the participant survey. Means were tested against a null value of 3, which indicated a neutral response ($\alpha = .05$).

Research Question 6. To what extent do Missouri middle/junior high principals' views of collaboration between special education and general education teaching staffs influence their perceptions of inclusion?

H13: There is a relationship between the principals' view of collaboration between general education and special education teaching staff and the principals' perceptions of inclusion.

Research question six was addressed through correlations of items 10-21 and 22-26 of the participant survey. Correlation coefficients were calculated between each of the inclusion items, 11-21, and each of the collaboration items, 22-26, of the participant survey. The statistical significance of each correlation was tested using a *t* test ($\alpha = .05$).

Limitations

The following limitations could potentially affect the generalization of this study:

1. The research is dependent on the participation of middle/junior high principals in the state of Missouri.

2. All principals surveyed may not actively participate in the implementation of inclusion model in their building. This may present a lack of knowledge or bias in completing the survey.
3. Varying district policies regarding the implementation of special education services may affect participants' answers in the survey.

Summary

This chapter restated the purpose of the research and the major research questions. The research design was examined. The study incorporated quantitative methods in gathering of research data. All Missouri middle/junior high school principals were asked to complete a survey consisting of demographic data, 17 Likert - scaled questions, and four open-ended questions. Validity and reliability of the survey as well as data collection procedures were discussed. The methods of data analysis for each of the research questions and the limitations of the study were presented. Results of the data analysis are reported in chapter four.

Chapter Four

Results

This study determined the perceptions of Missouri middle/junior high school principals towards the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. Principals' perceptions of collaboration between special education and general education teachers were also analyzed. Results for the principals surveyed (N = 94) are organized according to the research questions presented in this study.

Descriptive Statistics

Three hundred thirty-six Missouri middle/junior high school principals received the participant survey link through Survey Monkey during the 2011-2012 spring semester. Ninety-four principals voluntarily completed the survey related to principals' perceptions of inclusion and collaboration. Participant demographic data was categorized in the following manner: (a) gender, (b) highest degree earned, (c) teaching certification, (d) number of years in current position, (e) number of years as a middle/junior high school administrator, (f) total years as an administrator at other levels, (g) location of school, (h) socio-economic level of school, and (i) currently have an inclusion program in my school.

The survey sample consisted of 55 male participants and 39 female. Table 1 displays the highest degree earned by each participant. Slightly over half of the participants surveyed had obtained a specialist degree, while only 16% had obtained the minimal Missouri requirement of a master's degree. The remaining participants earned a doctor's degree.

Table 1

Highest Degree Earned

	Frequency	Percent
Master's Degree	15	16.0
Specialist Degree	50	53.1
Ph.D./Ed.D.	29	30.9

Of the 94 participants, 14 possessed teacher certification in special education, and 80 did not possess special education certification. Table 2 displays the number of years the participants have been in their current position, number of years as a middle/junior high principal, and total years as a principal at other levels. Just over half of the participants surveyed had been in their current administrative position five years or less, 29 between 6-10 years, and 11 over 11 years. The numbers of years as a middle/junior high school principal with 1-5 years was the largest group, followed by those that have been middle/junior high principals for 6-10 years. The largest group when examining total number of years worked as a principal was those who had worked 1-5 years, followed by a nearly even split between those who had worked a total of 6-10 years as a principal and those who had worked 11 years or more as a principal.

Table 2

Years Worked as Principal

	1-5	6-10	11+
Current position	54	29	11
Middle/Junior High	42	37	15
Total Years as Principal	41	27	26

Of the 94 principals surveyed, 47 stated that the school was located in rural communities in the state of Missouri, 33 indicated the school was in a suburban community, and 14 indicated the school was in an urban setting. The socio-economic status of the school was measured using the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch. Of the 94 principals surveyed 14 indicated that 0-25% of the students in the school received free and reduced lunch, 40 indicated between 26 and 50%, 32 indicated between 51 and 75%, and 8 indicated between 76 and 100% of the students in the school received free and reduced lunch. The majority of principals, 85, stated that the school currently had an inclusion program; nine stated the school currently did not have an inclusion program.

Hypothesis Testing

Research Question 1. What are the perceptions of Missouri middle/junior high school principals toward the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting?

H1. The perceptions Missouri middle/junior high school principals toward the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting are positive.

In order to test research question one, a one-sample t test of the mean was used with items 10-21 of the participant survey to determine principals' perceptions of inclusion. Table 3 displays the mean and standard deviation of inclusion items 10-21 of the participant survey. Of the 94 participants' survey, only 88 opted to respond to items 10-21 of the participant survey.

Table 3

Participant Responses to Inclusion Items

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	88	2.7955	1.18573
Item 11	88	3.3523	1.08320
Item 12	88	4.3977	.73563
Item 13	88	2.9205	1.05287
Item 14	88	3.4545	.82920
Item 15	88	4.0682	.94438
Item 16	88	3.7614	.80221
Item 17	88	3.5114	.88401
Item 18	88	2.3523	.71180
Item 19	88	3.8864	.61461
Item 20	88	4.1250	.60991
Item 21	88	4.1364	.60991

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 10 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = -1.62$, $df = 87$, $p = .11$) indicated the mean ($M = 2.80$) was not significantly different from 3. The principals did

not respond differently from neutral about whether or not students with physical disabilities only can learn at the same pace as their general education peers when placed in the general education classroom.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 11 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 3.05$, $df = 87$, $p = .00$) indicated the mean ($M = 3.4$) was significantly different from 3. The principals responded that they agree or strongly agree that the type of disability would affect perceptions of inclusion.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 12 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). Item 12 was reverse coded. The results of the analysis ($t = 17.82$, $df = 87$, $p = .00$) indicated the mean ($M = 4.4$) was significantly different from 3. Principals responded that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom is not a concern for general education teachers.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 13 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = -.71$, $df = 87$, $p = .48$) indicated the mean ($M = 2.9$) was not statistically different from 3. The principals did not respond differently from neutral about whether or not placing students with emotional or behavioral disorders in the general education classroom decreases the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 14 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 5.14$, $df = 87$, $p = .00$) indicated the mean ($M = 3.5$) was significantly different from 3. Item 14 was reverse

coded; therefore, the principals disagreed or strongly disagreed that placing students with low cognitive ability in the general education classroom decreases the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 15 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 10.61, df = 87, p = .00$) indicated the mean ($M = 4.1$) was significantly different from 3. The principals responded that they agreed or strongly agreed that general education teachers should feel obligated to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 16 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 8.9, df = 87, p = .00$) indicated the mean ($M = 3.8$) was significantly different from 3. The principals responded that they agreed or strongly agreed that students with disabilities learn better when included with their general education peers.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 17 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 5.4, df = 87, p = .00$) indicated the mean ($M = 3.5$) was significantly different from 3. Item 17 was reverse coded. The principals responded that they agreed or strongly agreed that general education students are not distracted when students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 18 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = -8.5, df = 87, p = .00$) indicated the mean ($M = 2.4$) was significantly different from 3. The principals

responded that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that students with disabilities did not become frustrated with the curriculum, when placed in the general education classroom.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 19 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 13.5, df = 87, p = .00$) indicated the mean ($M = 3.9$) was significantly different from 3. The principals responded that they agreed or strongly agreed that general education students easily accept students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 20 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 16.9, df = 87, p = .00$) indicated the mean ($M = 4.1$) was significantly different from 3. The principals responded that they agreed or strongly agreed that general education students benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 21 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 17.5, df = 87, p = .00$) indicated the mean ($M = 4.1$) was significantly different from 3. The principals responded that they agreed or strongly agreed that the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom allows the general education students to experience diversity in their classroom.

Research Question 2. What are the Missouri middle/junior high school principals' knowledge levels of inclusion?

H2: Missouri middle/junior high school principals have a high knowledge level of inclusion.

A one sample t test was conducted using the principals' responses to item 28 of the participant survey ($\alpha = .05$) The sample mean was compared against the null hypothesis value ($\mu = 2$) to determine the principals' knowledge level of inclusion. Item 28, *I gained my knowledge of inclusion from the following sources*, is an open-ended question. The sample size was 84. Answering this survey question was not mandatory; therefore, ten participants opted not to provide an answer.

Principals' responses to item 28 of the survey were placed into four categories: teaching experience in the inclusive classroom, special education resources, administrative experience, and higher education. Teaching experience included teaching as either a special education teacher or regular education teacher in a class-within-a-class setting. Special education resources included gaining knowledge from special education staff members, workshops, and in-services. Administrative experience included knowledge gained from working with special education students and staff members as an administrator. Higher education included knowledge gained through undergraduate or graduate level course work. Weights were assigned to participant answers. Teaching experience was assigned the numerical weight of 3, administrative experience was assigned the numerical weight of 2, special education resources and higher education were both weighted at 1. Scoring a 2 out of a possible 7 would indicate knowledge of inclusion. The results of the analysis ($t = 4.89$, $df = 83$, $p = .00$) indicated the mean ($M = 2.8$) was statistically different from 2. The principals responded that they have at minimum a basic knowledge of inclusion.

Research Question 3. To what extent does a relationship exist between Missouri middle/junior high school principals' perceptions toward the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting and their experiences with inclusion?

H3: There is a relationship between a principals' experience with specific disabilities and the principal's perception of inclusion.

In order to test H3, 12 hypothesis tests were conducted for each of the eight disability areas listed in item 27.

Independent samples *t* tests of the means, using items 10-21, for measurement of perceptions of inclusion and item 27 to group the principals into two groups, those who had worked with students who are deaf and hard of hearing and those who had not, were conducted ($\alpha = .05$). Table K1 (see appendix K) displays the results for item 27; *my experience with students with special needs includes students who are deaf and hard of hearing*. The results of the analysis for all hypothesis tests, except item 15, did not provide evidence for a statistically significant difference between the two means. The results of the analysis for item 15, ($t = -2.27$, $df = 86$, $p = .03$) indicated there was a statistically significant difference. Principals who worked with students who are deaf or hard of hearing ($M = 3.9$) responded differently that those who had not worked with students who are deaf or hard of hearing ($M = 4.5$). The principals who had not worked with students who are deaf or hard of hearing responded more positively that general education teachers should feel obligated to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom.

Independent samples *t* tests of the means, using item 10-21, for measurement of perceptions of inclusion and item 27 to group the principals into two groups, those who

had worked with students who have emotional disturbance and those who had not, were conducted ($\alpha = .05$). Table K2 (see appendix K) displays the results for item 27; *my experience with students with special needs includes students who have emotional disturbance*. The results of the analysis for all 12 tests, items 10-21, did not provide evidence for a difference. Principals who had experience did not respond differently than those who did not.

Independent samples t tests of the means, using item 10-21, for measurement of perceptions of inclusion and item 27 to group the principals into two groups, those who had worked with students with mild mental retardation and those who had not, were conducted ($\alpha = .05$). Table K3 (see appendix K) displays the results for item 27; *my experience with students with special needs includes students with mild mental retardation*. The results of the analysis of the 12 hypothesis tests, except for items 14, 15, and 17, did not provide evidence for significant difference. The results of the analysis for item 14 ($t = 2.42$, $df = 86$, $p = .02$) indicated there was a statistically significant difference. Principals who had experience with students with mild mental retardation ($M = 3.5$) responded differently than those who had not worked with students with mild mental retardation ($M = 2.5$). The principals who had experience working with students with mild mental retardation responded more positively that placing students with low cognitive ability in the general education classroom does not decrease the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction. The results of the analysis for item 15 ($t = -2.06$, $df = 86$, $p = .04$) indicated there was a statistically significant difference. Principals who worked with students with mild mental retardation ($M = 4.0$) responded differently than those who had not worked with students with mild mental retardation (M

= 5.0). The principals who had not worked with students with mild mental retardation responded more positively that general education teachers should feel obligated to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom. Though not statistically significant, the results of the analysis to item 17 ($t = 1.79$, $df = 86$, $p = .08$) was marginally significant. Principals who worked with students with mild mental retardation ($M = 3.5$) responded somewhat differently than those who had not worked with students with mild mental retardation ($M = 2.8$). This provides some evidence that having the experience of working with students with mild mental retardation influences the belief that general education students are often distracted when students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom.

Independent samples t tests of the means, using item 10-21, for measurement of perceptions of inclusion and item 27 to group the principals into two groups, those who had worked with students with moderate mental retardation and those who had not, were conducted ($\alpha = .05$). Table K4 displays the results of item 27; *my experience with students with special needs includes students with moderate mental retardation*. The results of the analysis of the 12 hypothesis tests, except items 15 and 17, did not provide evidence for statistically significant differences. Means and standard deviations can be found in Table K4 (see appendix K). Though not statistically significant, the result of the analysis of item 15 ($t = -1.77$, $df = 86$, $p = .08$) was marginally significant. Principals who worked with students with moderate mental retardation ($M = 4.0$) responded somewhat differently than those who had not worked with students with moderate mental retardation ($M = 4.6$). This provides some evidence that the principal's lack of experience in working with students with moderate mental retardation influences the

belief that general education teachers should feel obligated to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom. The results of the analysis of item 17 indicated there was a statistically significant difference ($t = 2.18$, $df = 86$, $p = .03$). Principals who worked with students with moderate mental retardation ($M = 3.6$) responded differently than those who had not worked with students with moderate mental retardation ($M = 2.9$). This provides evidence that having the experience of working with students with moderate mental retardation influenced the belief that general education students are often distracted when students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom more so than principals without experience.

Independent samples t tests of the means, using item 10-21, for measurement of perceptions of inclusion and item 27 to group the principals into two groups, those who had worked with students with orthopedic disabilities and those who had not, were conducted ($\alpha = .05$). Table K5 (see appendix K) displays the results of item 27; *my experience with students with special needs includes students with orthopedic disabilities*. The results of the analysis for all 12 tests, items 10-21, did not provide evidence for significant difference. Principals who had experience did not respond differently than those who did not.

Independent samples t tests of the means, using item 10-21, for measurement of perceptions of inclusion and item 27 to group the principals into two groups, those who had worked with students with severe mental retardation and those who had not, were conducted ($\alpha = .05$). Table K6 (see appendix K) displays the results for item 27; *my experience with students with special needs includes students with severe mental retardation*. The results of the analysis for the 12 hypothesis tests, except items 11, 20,

and 21, did not provide evidence for significant difference. The results of the analysis of item 11 ($t = 2.07$, $df = 86$, $p = .04$) indicated there was a statistically significant difference. Principals who worked with students with severe mental retardation ($M = 3.5$) responded differently than those who had not worked with students with severe mental retardation ($M = 3.0$). This provides evidence that having the experience of working with students with severe mental retardation influenced the belief that the type of disability would affect their perceptions of inclusion. Though not statistically significant, the results of the analysis for item 20 ($t = -1.74$, $df = 86$, $p = .09$) were marginally significant. Principals who worked with students with severe mental retardation ($M = 4.0$) responded somewhat differently than those who had not worked with students with severe mental retardation ($M = 4.3$). This provides some evidence that the principals who had no experience working with students with severe mental retardation tended to agree more than those principals who had experience working with students with severe mental retardation that general education students' benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. The results of the analysis for item 21 ($t = -2.05$, $df = 86$, $p = .04$) indicated there was a statistically significant difference. Principals who worked with students with severe mental retardation ($M = 4.0$) responded differently than those who had not worked with students with severe mental retardation ($M = 4.3$). The principals who did not have experience working with students with severe mental retardation had the highest mean. These principals responded that their experiences influenced belief that the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom allows the general education students to experience diversity in their classroom.

Independent samples t tests of the means, using item 10-21, for measurement of perceptions of inclusion and item 27 to group the principals into two groups, those who had worked with students who have specific learning disabilities and those who had not, were conducted ($\alpha = .05$). (Table K7, see appendix K) displays the results for item 27; *my experience with students with special needs includes students who have specific learning disabilities*. The results of the analysis for all hypothesis tests, except Items 14, and 17 did not provide evidence for significant difference. Though not statistically significant, the results of the analysis to item 14 ($t = 2.02, df = 86, p = .05$) were marginally different. Principals who worked with students who have specific learning disabilities ($M = 3.5$) responded somewhat differently than those who had not worked with students who have specific learning disabilities ($M = 2.9$). This provides some evidence that principals who have worked with students who have specific learning disabilities feel that their experience influence the belief that placing students with low cognitive ability in the general education classroom decreases the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction. The results of the analysis for item 17 ($t = 2.57, df = 86, p = .01$) indicated there was a statistically significant difference. Principals who worked with students who have specific learning disabilities ($M = 3.6$) responded differently than those who had not worked with students who have specific learning disabilities ($M = 2.7$). The principals who have experience working with students with specific learning disabilities respond that their experience influences the belief that general education students are not distracted when students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom.

Independent samples *t* tests of the means, using item 10-21, for measurement of perceptions of inclusion and item 27 to group the principals into two groups, those who had worked with students who have speech disabilities and those who had not, were conducted ($\alpha = .05$). Table K8 (see appendix K) displays the results for item 27; *my experience with students with special needs includes students who have speech disabilities*. The results of the analysis for all hypothesis tests, items 10-21, did not provide evidence for significant difference. Principals did not respond differently from neutral on items 10-21 about whether or not their experience with students who have speech disabilities influenced their perceptions of inclusion.

H4: There is a relationship between a principals' experience with inclusion and the principal's perception of inclusion.

In order to test hypothesis 4, twelve ANOVAs were conducted using responses to item 29 of the participant survey. The categorical variable used to group principals' perception of inclusion was the type of experience the principal had with inclusion (teacher, administrator, program experiences, or teacher/administrator). The results of the analysis indicated there was not a statistically significant difference between at least two of the four means for any of the items 10-21. Table K9 (see appendix K) for the means and standard deviations for this analysis. A follow up post hoc was unwarranted.

Research Question 4. To what extent do demographic factors influence principals' perceptions of inclusion?

H5: Gender of the principal (male or female) influences the perceptions of inclusion.

Independent samples *t* tests of the means using items 10-21, for measurement of perceptions of inclusion, to group the principals into male and female were conducted ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis for all hypothesis tests, except item 21, did not provide evidence for statistically significant differences. Means and standard deviations can be found in Table K10 (see appendix K). The results of the analysis for item 21 ($t = -2.54$, $df = 86$, $p = .01$) indicated there was a statistically significant difference. Male principals ($M = 4.0$) responded differently than female principals ($M = 4.3$). Female principals tended to agree more than male principals that the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom allows the general education students to experience diversity in the classroom.

H6: The degree(s) held by the principal influences the perceptions of inclusion.

In order to test hypothesis 6, 12 ANOVAs were conducted using responses to item 2 of the participant survey. The categorical variable used to group principals' perception of inclusion was the degree held by the principal (Masters, Specialist, or Ph.D./Ed.D.). The results of the analysis indicated there was not a statistically significant difference between at least two of the four means in items 10-21. Findings indicate that the degree held does not significantly influence the principal's perceptions of inclusion. Table K11 (see appendix K) contains the means and standard deviations for this analysis. Follow up post hocs were unwarranted.

H7. The teaching certification held by the principal influences perceptions of inclusion.

Hypothesis seven was tested by conducting independent sample *t* test of items 10-21 of the participant survey. Results were compared for those with a special education teaching certificate and those without a special education teaching certificate.

Table K12 (see appendix K) contains the means and standard deviations for all of the items. The results of the analysis for all hypothesis tests, except items 10 and 14, did not provide evidence for statistically significant differences. The results of the analysis of item 10 ($t = -1.78$, $df = 86$, $p = .08$) indicated there was a marginally significant difference. Principals without special education teaching certification ($M = 2.9$) responded differently than principals with special education teaching certification ($M = 2.3$). Principals without special education teaching certification tended to agree that students with physical disabilities only, can learn at the same pace as their general education peers when they are placed in the general education classroom. Principals without special education teaching certification reported no opinion. The results of the analysis of item 14 ($t = -1.91$, $df = 86$, $p = .06$) indicated there was a marginally significant difference. Principals without special education teaching certification ($M = 3.5$) responded differently than principals with special education teaching certification ($M = 3.0$). Principals without special education teaching certification tended to agree. Principals with special education teaching certification showed no opinion.

H8. The number of years as a middle/junior high school principal influences perceptions of inclusion.

In order to test hypothesis 8, 12 ANOVAs were conducted using responses to item 5 of the participant survey, number of years as a middle/junior high school principal. Responses were compared to items 10-21 of the participant survey in order to test for a relationship between the number of years as a middle/junior high school principal and perceptions of inclusion. The categorical variable used to group principals' perception of inclusion was the number of years as a middle/junior high school principal (1-5 years, 6-

10 years, and 11 years or more). The results of the analysis indicated there was not a statistically significant difference between at least two of the four means for items 10-21. Findings indicated that the number of years as a middle/junior high school principal does not significantly influence the principal's perceptions of inclusion. Table K13 (see appendix K) contains the means and standard deviations for this analysis. A follow up post hoc was unwarranted.

H9: The number of years as a principal has an influence on principals' perceptions of inclusion.

In order to test hypothesis 9, 12 ANOVAs were conducted using responses to item 6 of the participant survey, total number of years as a principal. The ANOVAs were conducted to test for differences in perceptions of inclusion, as measured by items 10-21, among principals who had 1-5 years total years of administrative experience, 6-10 years total of administrative experience, and 11 years or more of administrative experience. The results of the analysis indicated there was not a statistically significant difference between at least two of the four means in all items except items 19 and 20. Table K14 (see appendix K) contains the means and standard deviations for this analysis. The results of the analysis on item 19, general education students easily accept students with disabilities in the general education classroom, indicated there was a statistically significant difference between at least two of the four means ($F = 4.06$, $df = 2, 85$, $p = .021$). A follow up post hoc was conducted. Principals with 6-10 years' experience ($M = 3.6$) agreed less than principals with 1-5 years ($M = 4.0$) or 11 years or more ($M = 4.0$) of experience that general education students easily accept students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Though not statistically significant, the differences in the

responses to item 20 were marginally significant ($F = 2.18$, $df = 2, 85$, $p = .119$) and so provided some evidence for differences. Principals with 6-10 years of total administrator experience ($M = 3.9$) responded with the least amount of agreement that general education students benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Principals with 11 years or more of total administrator experience ($M = 4.2$) responded with the highest level of agreement that general education students benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

H10: Socio-economic status (SES) of the school influences the principal's perceptions of inclusion.

In order to test hypothesis 10, 12 ANOVAs were conducted using responses to item 9 of the participant survey, percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch. The ANOVAs were conducted to test for differences in perceptions of inclusion, as measured by items 10-21, among principals who worked in schools with 0-25% free and reduced lunch, principals' who worked in school with 26-50% free and reduced lunch, principals who worked in schools with 51-75% free and reduced lunch, and principals who worked in schools with 76-100% free and reduced lunch. The results of the analysis indicated there was not a statistically significant difference between at least two of the four means in all items except items 11 and 19. Table K15 (see appendix K) contains the means and standard deviations for this analysis. Though not statistically significant, the differences in the responses to item 11 were marginally significant ($F = 2.0$, $df = 3, 84$, $p = .114$) and so provide some evidence for differences. Principals of schools with a socio-economic status of 76-100% free and reduced lunch ($M = 2.6$) responded with the least

amount of agreement that the type of disability would affect perceptions of inclusion. Principals of schools with a socio-economic status of 51-75% free and reduced lunch ($M = 3.6$) responded with the highest level of agreement that the type of disability would affect perceptions of inclusion. Though not statistically significant, the differences in the responses to Item 19 were marginally significant ($F = 2.62$, $df = 3, 84$, $p = .056$) and so provide some evidence for differences. Principals of schools with a socio-economic status of 76-100% free and reduced lunch ($M = 3.4$) responded with the least amount of agreement that general education students easily accept students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Principals of schools with a socio-economic status of 0-25% free and reduced lunch ($M = 4.0$) responded with the highest level of agreement that general education students easily accept students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

HIII: Location of the school, (rural, urban, sub-urban), influences the principals' perceptions of inclusion.

In order to test hypothesis 11, 12 ANOVAs were conducted using responses to item 7 of the participant survey, the location of the school. The ANOVAs were conducted to test for differences in perceptions of inclusion, as measured by items 10-21, among principals who worked in urban schools, principals who worked in suburban schools, and principals who worked in rural schools. The results of the analysis indicated there was not a statistically significant difference between at least two of the four means in Items 10-11 and 14-18. Table K16 (see appendix K) contains the means and standard deviations for this analysis.

Though not statistically significant, the results of the analysis for item 12 indicated a marginally significant difference between at least two of the three means ($F = 2.42$, $df = 2, 85$, $p = .095$) and so provided some evidence for differences. Principals of rural schools, ($M = 4.5$) responded with the lowest level of agreement that meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom was a concern for general education teachers.

Though not statistically significant, the results of the analysis for Item 13 indicated a marginally significant difference between at least two of the three means ($F = 3.10$, $df = 2, 85$, $p = .05$) and so provided some evidence for differences. Principals of suburban schools, ($M = 3.3$) responded with the highest amount of agreement that placing students with emotional or behavioral disorders in the general education classroom decreases the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction. Principals of urban and rural schools responded with the same amount of agreement ($M = 2.7$).

The results of the analysis for item 19 indicated a statistically significant difference between at least two of the three means ($F = 3.51$, $df = 2, 85$, $p = .034$). A follow up post hoc test was conducted to determine which pairs of means were different. The Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) indicated that principals of suburban schools, ($M = 4.1$) responded with the highest amount of agreement that general education students easily accept students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Principals of rural schools, ($M = 3.7$) responded with the least amount of agreement.

The results of the analysis for item 20 indicated a statistically significant difference between at least two of the three means ($F = 5.19, df = 2, 85, p = .007$). A follow up post hoc test was conducted to determine which pairs of means were different. The Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) indicated principals of urban schools, ($M = 4.5$) responded with the highest amount of agreement that general education students benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Principals of rural schools ($M = 3.9$) responded with the least amount of agreement.

The results of the analysis for Item 21 indicated a statistically significant difference between at least two of the three means ($F = 3.36, df = 2, 85, p = .039$). A follow up post hoc test was conducted to determine which pairs of means were different. The Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) indicated that principals of urban schools, ($M = 4.4$) responded with the highest amount of agreement that the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom allows the general education students to experience diversity in their classroom. Principals of rural schools ($M = 3.9$) responded with the least amount of agreement.

Research Question 5. How important do Missouri middle/junior high principals view the collaboration of regular and special education teaching staff?

H12: The view Missouri middle/junior high principals have of collaboration between general education and special education teaching staffs are positive.

In order to test research question five, a one-sample t test of the mean was used with items 22-26 of the participant survey to determine principals' perceptions of collaboration between special education teachers and general education teachers. Table 4

displays the means and standard deviations of inclusion items 22-26 of the participant survey.

Table 4

Participant Answers to Collaboration

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 22	88	4.1364	.80490
Item 23	88	3.5568	1.03788
Item 24	88	4.5227	.56685
Item 25	88	4.7386	.44190
Item 26	88	4.5455	.62347

To test hypothesis 12, a one sample *t* test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 22 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 13.24$, $df = 87$, $p = .00$) indicated there was a statistically significant difference ($M = 4.1$). The principals responded that they agreed or strongly agreed that the collaborative planning between general and special education teachers increases the amount of time teachers can spend working with students.

A one sample *t* test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 23 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 5.03$, $df = 87$, $p = .00$) indicated there was a statistically significant difference ($M = 3.6$). Item 23 was reverse coded, therefore, the principals responded that they agreed or strongly agreed that collaborative planning among teachers is not difficult to implement because special educators' goals for students are individualized while general educators' goals focus on all students.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 24 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 25.20$, $df = 87$, $p = .00$) indicated there was a statistically significant difference ($M = 4.5$). Item 24 was reverse coded, principals responded that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that there is little need for collaboration due to the fact that special education teachers are only working with a small number of students.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 25 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 36.91$, $df = 87$, $p = .00$) indicated there was a statistically significant difference ($M = 4.7$). The principals responded that they agreed or strongly agreed that collaboration helps build strong professional relationships among the staff.

A one sample t test was conducted against a null value of 3 using the responses to item 26 on the survey ($\alpha = .05$). The results of the analysis ($t = 23.25$, $df = 87$, $p = .00$) indicated there was a statistically significant difference ($M = 4.5$). The principals responded that they agreed or strongly agreed that collaboration between general and special education staff helps to strengthen the instructional strategies used in the general education classroom, benefiting all students.

Research Question 6. To what extent do Missouri middle/junior high principal's views of collaboration between special education and general education teaching staff influence their perceptions of inclusion?

H13: There is a relationship between the principal's view of collaboration between special and general education teaching staff and the principals' perceptions of inclusion.

A Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was calculated for each of the survey items 10-21 to test the hypothesis that principals' view of collaboration, as measured by collaboration item 22, *collaborative planning between general and special education teachers increases the amount of time teachers can spend working with students, are related to their views of inclusion*. The results indicated five statistically significant correlations ($p < .05$) and two marginally significant correlations. The correlations for items 13, 16, 17, 20, and 21 were statistically significant correlations. The correlations for items 18 and 19 were marginally significant. Table 5 contains the correlations between items 10-21 and item 22, collaborative planning. Response to all items in the participant survey was not mandatory; 6 participants opted not to answer items 10-21.

Table 5

Collaborative Planning

	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>N</i>
Item 10	.018	.871	88
Item 11	-.122	.259	88
Item 12	.063	.562	88
Item 13	.311	.003	88
Item 14	.096	.376	88
Item 15	.109	.314	88
Item 16	.371	.000	88
Item 17	.224	.036	88
Item 18	.196	.067	88
Item 19	.194	.070	88
Item 20	.448	.000	88
Item 21	.407	.000	88

Note: Bold indicates a statistically significant correlation or marginally significant

Responses to inclusion item 13, *placing students with emotional or behavioral disorders in the general education classroom does not decrease the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 22, *collaborative planning between general and special education teachers increases the amount of time teachers can spend working with students, are related to their views of inclusion*. Responses to inclusion item 16, *students with disabilities learn better when included with their general education peers*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 22. Responses to inclusion item 17,

general education students are not distracted when students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 22. Responses to inclusion item 20, *general education students' benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 22. Responses to inclusion item 21, *the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom allows the general education students to experience diversity in their classroom*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 22. Responses to inclusion item 18, *students with disabilities can become frustrated with the curriculum, when placed in the general curriculum*, were marginally related to responses to collaboration item 22. Responses to inclusion item 19, *general education students easily accept students with disabilities in the general education classroom*, were marginally related to responses to collaboration item 22.

A Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was calculated for each of the survey items 10-21 to test the hypothesis that principals' views of collaboration, as measured by collaboration item 23, *collaborative planning among teachers is difficult to implement because special educators' goals for students are individualized while general educators' goals focus on all students*, are influenced by their views of inclusion. The results indicated five statistically significant correlations ($p < .05$) and three marginally significant correlations. Correlations for items 12, 13, 14, 17, and 20 are statistically significant; correlations for items 10, 16, and 21 are marginally significant. Table 6 contains the correlations between items 10-21 and item 23, difficulty in implementing

collaborative planning. Responses for all items on the survey were not mandatory; six participants opted not to answer items 10-21.

Table 6

Difficulty in Implementing Collaborative Planning

	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>N</i>
Item 10	-.187	.082	88
Item 11	-.033	.758	88
Item 12	.218	.041	88
Item 13	.325	.002	88
Item 14	.263	.013	88
Item 15	.078	.470	88
Item 16	.189	.078	88
Item 17	.250	.019	88
Item 18	.136	.207	88
Item 19	.154	.151	88
Item 20	.229	.032	88
Item 21	.187	.080	88

Note: Bold indicates a statistically significant correlation or marginally significant correlation

Responses to inclusion item 10, *students with physical disabilities only can learn at the same pace as their general education peers when placed in the general education classroom*, were negatively related to collaboration item 23, *collaborative planning among teachers is difficult to implement because special educators' goals for students are individualized while general educators' goals focus on all students*. Responses to inclusion item 12, *meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general*

education classroom is a concern for general education teachers, were positively related to collaboration item 23. Responses to inclusion item 13, *placing students with emotional or behavioral disorders in the general education classroom does not decrease the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 23. Responses to inclusion item 14, *placing students with low cognitive ability in the general education classroom does not decrease the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 23. Responses to inclusion item 16, *students with disabilities learn better when included with their general education peers*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 23. Responses to inclusion item 17, *general education students are not distracted when students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 23. Responses to inclusion item 20, *general education students' benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 23. Responses to inclusion item 21, *the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom allows the general education students to experience diversity in their classroom*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 23.

A Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was calculated for each of the survey items 10-21 to test the hypothesis that principals' views of collaboration, as measured by collaboration item 24, *there is little need for collaboration due to the fact that special education teachers are only working with a small number of students*, are influenced by their views of inclusion. The results indicated six statistically significant

correlations ($p < .05$) and three marginally significant correlations. Correlations for items 11, 13, 15, 16, 20, and 21 are statistically significant. Correlations for items 12, 14, and 19 are marginally significant. Table 7 contains the correlations between items 10-21 and item 24, the need for collaboration. Responses for all items on the survey were not mandatory; six participants opted not to answer items 10-21.

Table 7

Need for Collaboration

	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>N</i>
Item 10	.093	.391	88
Item 11	-.266	.012	88
Item 12	.185	.085	88
Item 13	.244	.022	88
Item 14	.198	.065	88
Item 15	.255	.017	88
Item 16	.227	.033	88
Item 17	.126	.243	88
Item 18	.108	.316	88
Item 19	.205	.055	88
Item 20	.334	.001	88
Item 21	.257	.016	88

Note: Bold indicates a statistically significant correlation or marginally significant correlation

Responses to inclusion item 11, *I feel that the type of disability would affect my perceptions of inclusion*, were negatively related to responses to collaboration item 24.

Responses to item 12, *meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities in the*

general education classroom is a concern for general education teachers, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 24, there is little need for collaboration due to the fact that special education teachers are only working with a small number of students. Responses to inclusion item 13, *placing students with emotional or behavioral disorders in the general education classroom does not decrease the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction,* were positively related to responses to collaboration item 24. Responses to inclusion item 14, *placing students with low cognitive ability in the general education classroom does not decrease the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction,* were positively related to collaboration item 24. Responses to inclusion item 15, *general education teaches should feel obligated to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom,* were positively related to responses to collaboration item 24. Responses to inclusion item 16, *students with disabilities learn better when included with their general education peers,* were positively related to responses to collaboration item 24. Responses to inclusion item 19, *general education students easily accept students with disabilities in the general education classroom,* were positively related to responses to collaboration item 24. Responses to inclusion item 20, *general education students benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom,* were positively related to responses to collaboration item 24. Responses to inclusion item 21, *the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom allows the general education students to experience diversity in their classroom,* were positively related to responses to collaboration item 24.

A Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was calculated for each of the survey items 10-21 to test the hypothesis that principals' views of collaboration, as measured by collaboration item 25, *collaboration helps build strong professional relationships among the staff*, are influenced by their views of inclusion. The results indicated one statistically significant correlation ($p < .05$) and two marginally significant correlations. The correlation for item 21 was a statistically significant. Correlations for items 12 and 20 were marginally significant. Table 8 contains the correlations between items 10-21 and item 25, collaboration that builds relationships. Responses for all items on the survey were not mandatory; six participants opted not to answer items 10-21.

Table 8

Collaboration that Builds Relationships

	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>N</i>
Item 10	-.059	.583	88
Item 11	-.118	.275	88
Item 12	.182	.090	88
Item 13	.004	.969	88
Item 14	.046	.673	88
Item 15	.153	.154	88
Item 16	-.016	.884	88
Item 17	-.066	.542	88
Item 18	.004	.972	88
Item 19	-.026	.810	88
Item 20	.204	.057	88
Item 21	.262	.014	88

Note: Bold indicates a statistically significant correlation or marginally significant correlation

Responses to inclusion item 12, *meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom is a concern for general education teachers*, were positively related to collaboration item 25, *collaboration helps build strong professional relationships among the staff*. Responses to inclusion item 20, *general education students' benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 25. Responses to inclusion item 21, *the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom allows the general education students to experience diversity in their classroom*, were positively related to collaboration item 25.

A Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was calculated for each of the survey items 10-21 to test the hypothesis that principals' view of collaboration, as measured by collaboration item 26, *collaboration between general and special education staff helps to strengthen the instructional strategies used in the general education classroom, benefiting all students*, are influenced by their views of inclusion. The results indicated three statistically significant correlations ($p < .05$), for items 11, 15, and 20. Table 9 contains the correlations between items 10-21 and item 26, *collaboration strengthens instructional strategies*. Responses for all items on the survey were not mandatory; six participants opted not to answer items 10-21.

Table 9

Collaboration Strengthens Instructional Strategies

	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>N</i>
Item 10	.168	.117	88
Item 11	-.237	.026	88
Item 12	-.002	.983	88
Item 13	-.003	.977	88
Item 14	.004	.970	88
Item 15	.327	.002	88
Item 16	.125	.245	88
Item 17	-.074	.494	88
Item 18	.080	.458	88
Item 19	.014	.900	88
Item 20	.267	.012	88
Item 21	.165	.125	88

Note: Bold indicates a statistically significant correlation or marginally significant correlation

Responses to inclusion item 11, *I feel that the type of disability would affect my perceptions of inclusion*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 26, *collaboration between general and special education staff helps to strengthen the instructional strategies used in the general education classroom, benefiting all students*. Responses to inclusion item 15, *general education teachers should feel obligated to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom*, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 26. Responses to inclusion item 20, *general education students benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities*

in the general education classroom, were positively related to responses to collaboration item 26.

Summary

In this chapter, frequency data regarding participant demographics were provided. Demographics included the number of participants, gender of the participant, the highest degree earned by the participant, the participant's teaching certification, years worked years worked as a school principal, total years worked as a principal, the location of the school, the socio-economic status of the school, and currently utilizing an inclusion program. This chapter also presented the results of the statistical analyses using *t* test and ANOVA hypothesis testing.

Research question one examined the perceptions of inclusion held by Missouri middle/junior high school principals. Results of the analysis indicated ten statistically significant differences. Overall, the perceptions of inclusion held by the principals surveyed were positive.

Research question two examined the knowledge levels of inclusion held by Missouri middle/junior high school principals. Results of the analysis indicated that Missouri middle/junior high principals have a minimum knowledge level of inclusion. Most principals gained this knowledge through direct teaching or administrative experience.

Research question three examined the relationship between the Missouri middle/junior high school principals' experiences with inclusion and their perceptions of inclusion. Results of the analysis indicated that direct experience with students with disabilities had a marginal impact on perceptions of inclusion. Results of the analysis

also indicated that a principals' work related experience as a teacher, principal, any program experiences, or teacher/principal held no impact on the principals' perceptions of inclusion.

Research question four examined demographic factors that may influence perceptions of inclusion. Results of the analysis indicated gender to have at most a minimal influence on the principals' perceptions of inclusion. Findings indicated that the degree held did not significantly influence perceptions of inclusion. Results of the analysis indicated minimal significance that the teaching certificate held influenced perceptions of inclusion. The results of the analysis indicated the number of years as a middle level principal had no influence on principal perceptions of inclusion. Results of the analysis indicated the total number of years as a principal had minimal influence on the principal's perceptions of inclusion. Results of the analysis indicated that the socio-economic status of the school minimally influenced perceptions of inclusion. Findings suggest that the location of the school influenced the principals' perceptions of inclusion more than other demographic factors.

Research question five and six examined the principals' perceptions of collaboration between general education and special education teachers and the relationship between the principals' views of collaboration and inclusion. Results of the analysis for research question five indicated that principals' tend to have a positive perception towards collaboration. Results of the analysis for research question six indicated several significant correlations and several marginally significant correlations.

Chapter five summarizes the study, provides an overview of the problem and research questions, presents major findings, and explores findings related to the literature.

Implications for action, recommendations for further research, and concluding remarks are also included.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

The principals' perceptions of inclusion are incredibly important in the successful delivery of an inclusion program in the public school. This study provided evidence that specific factors may influence the Missouri middle/junior high school principal's perceptions of inclusion. The first section of this chapter includes a summary of the study. This is followed by an overview of the problem, purpose statement, and review of the methodology. Major findings and findings related to the literature follow. Implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks close the chapter.

Study Summary

The current study focused on the perceptions of inclusion held by Missouri middle/junior high school principals. Perceptions of collaboration between special education and regular education teachers were also examined. This section will present an overview of the importance of the principal's leadership to the success of inclusion. Next, the purpose statement is presented, followed by a brief review of the methodology used. The final section presents major findings of the study.

Overview of the Problem. Principals across the nation are responsible for the delivery of instruction to all students. Federal laws, litigation, and school district policies require the school principal to ensure that special education students are educated in the least restrictive environment. For students across the state of Missouri, specific to the current study of middle level students, the least restrictive environment is the general education classroom. While the success of the inclusive classroom is often determined

by the perceptions of the teachers (Daane, Beirne-Smith, & Latham, 2000), the leadership of the principal is instrumental to the success of those teachers (Hines & Johnson, 1996; Klingner, Arguelles, Hughes, & Vaughn, 2001; Robinson & Buly, 2007; Sindelar, Shearer, Yendal-Hoppey, & Liebert, 2006). The ultimate success of an inclusion program rests on the direction of the school principal (Santoli, Sachs, Romey, & McClurg, 2008).

Purpose Statement and Research Questions. The purpose of this study was to examine Missouri middle/junior high school principal's perceptions of inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. Additionally, the Missouri middle/junior high principal's view of collaboration between special education and regular education teachers, and the extent to which these views impact their perceptions of inclusion were also examined. The knowledge levels of inclusion, and experiences with inclusion were observed, along with demographic factors of the principal and school in which the principal worked.

Review of the Methodology. Middle/junior high school principals across the state of Missouri ($n = 94$) provided responses to the participant survey for this study in the spring of 2012. Participants were emailed a link to the survey via Survey Monkey. Data from the survey was exported to Excel from Survey Monkey and then uploaded to IBM SPSS® Statistics Faculty Pack 19 for Windows. Research question one was analyzed by conducting a one-sample t test for items 10-21 of the participant survey in order to determine the principals' perceptions of inclusion. For research question two, a one-sample t test was conducted to determine the principals' knowledge level of inclusion. In order to address research question three, 12 independent samples t tests

were conducted for each of the eight disability areas listed in item 27 of the participant survey, also 12 ANOVAs were conducted using responses to item 29 of the participant survey to determine the relationship between the principals experience with inclusion and perceptions of inclusion. Research question four addressed demographic influences to perceptions of inclusion. Gender of the participant, degree held, teaching certification, number of years as a middle/junior high school principal, total number of years as a principal, the socio-economic status of the school, and location of the school were tested. Independent samples *t* tests of the means for items 10-21 were utilized to test for the influence gender and teaching certification had on perceptions of inclusion. The influence degrees held, number of years as a middle/junior high school principal, total number of years as a principal, the socio-economic status of the school, and location of the school had on perceptions of inclusion, were analyzed by conducting 12 ANOVAs for each. To address research question 5, one-sample *t* tests of the mean were conducted using items 22-26 of the participant survey in order to determine the perceptions of collaboration between special education teaching staff and general education teaching staff. Research Question six was analyzed by calculating a Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient for each of the survey items 10-21 and 22-26 of the participant survey.

Major Findings. The data analysis for research question one yielded ten significant results. The principals tended to agree or strongly agree with ten of the twelve survey items focused on inclusion. This would indicate that the principals hold a positive view of the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom.

Data for research question two indicated that the principals have, at minimum, a basic knowledge level of inclusion. The majority of principals surveyed indicated they gained their knowledge of inclusion through direct classroom experience as teachers and/or through direct experience as principals.

The impact that eight specific disability areas have on the perceptions of inclusion were examined for research question three. Three of the eight disability areas revealed no significance towards perceptions of inclusion. Of the remaining five disability areas, principals' experiences with students who have mild mental retardation and severe mental retardation yielded the highest influence related to the principals' perceptions of inclusion. Additionally, the twelve ANOVAs conducted indicated that prior work related experiences with inclusion do not influence perceptions of inclusion.

The results of the analyses for research question four indicated that gender of the principal held no significant influence on the perceptions of inclusion, although female principals did tend to agree more than males that inclusion allows general education students the opportunity to experience diversity in the classroom. Findings indicate that the degree held by the principal held no influence on the perceptions of inclusion. The teaching certification held by the principal held only marginally significant influence on the perceptions of inclusion, suggesting that principals with a special education teaching certificate view inclusion slightly more positively than those with other teaching certifications. The twelve ANOVAs conducted to examine the influence that the number of years as a middle/junior high school principal held on perceptions of inclusion indicated no significant influence. The twenty-four ANOVAs conducted to examine the influence that the total number of years as a principal had on inclusion, and the influence

that socio-economic status of the school had on perceptions of inclusion indicated only a minimal influence on the perceptions of inclusion. Results of the analysis for the location of the school, however, indicated a stronger influence in the perception of inclusion. Five of the twelve ANOVAs conducted indicated a significant difference, indicating that the location of the school, whether urban, suburban, or rural, influenced the principals' perceptions of inclusion more than other demographics surveyed. Of the five significant differences, urban and suburban principals tended to respond with the highest amount of agreement.

Results of the analyses used to address research question five indicated five significant results. The principals tended to agree or strongly agree with all five survey items focused on collaboration. This would indicate that the principals hold a positive view of collaboration among special education teachers and regular education teachers.

The analysis for research question six, with regard to the relationship, indicated mixed results between the principals views of collaboration between special education teachers and general education teachers and perceptions of inclusion. This would indicate, with regard to the relationship, that for some aspects of inclusion and collaboration, principals with a positive view of collaboration also tend to hold a positive view of inclusion.

Findings Related to Literature

Over the previous decade, inclusion has become the most popular method to educate the majority of students with special needs. Multiple studies have been published that focus on principals' attitudes and perceptions of the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. Research question one of the current study

focused on the perceptions of inclusion held by Missouri middle/junior high school principals. Lindsey (2009) examined the perceptions of inclusion held by middle school principals in the state of Tennessee. Lindsey concluded that most middle school principals in the state of Tennessee hold a positive perception of inclusion. However, the majority of these principals felt that those students with severe disabilities, including mental retardation, autism, emotional disturbance, and traumatic brain injury would be better served in a more restrictive resource setting. Ramirez (2006) examined the attitudes of elementary principals in the state of Texas. Ramirez concluded that elementary principals in Texas have a positive view of inclusion. Horrocks, White, and Roberts (2008) focused their study on principals' attitudes on the inclusion of students with autism. While their study focused on the inclusion of students with autism, Horrocks, White, and Roberts concluded that principals who have a positive attitude of the inclusion of students with autism also hold a positive view of inclusion in relation to other disability areas. Lorio (2011) studied Louisiana high school principals' attitudes towards inclusion and concluded that the majority of principals held a positive view of inclusion. The current study is in agreement with the previous research, finding that the majority of middle/junior high school principals in the state of Missouri tend to hold a positive view of inclusion. However, the principals did not respond differently from neutral about whether or not students with only physical disabilities can learn at the same pace as their general education peers when placed in the general education classroom. The principals also did not respond differently from neutral about whether or not placing students with emotional or behavioral disorders in the general education classroom decreases the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction.

The current researcher examined the relationship between a principal's experience with specific disability areas and his perception of inclusion. In the current study, eight specific disabilities were examined. The researcher found that for most principals, their experience or lack of experience with specific disability areas did not influence their perception of inclusion. However, principals did respond that their experience with students who have mild and severe mental retardation marginally influenced their perceptions of inclusion. In addition to the examination of the influence of specific disabilities on perceptions of inclusion, working experience was examined. The researcher found that the experience a principal gains as an administrator, teacher, through program experiences, or teacher/administrator yielded no significant influence on the perceptions of inclusion. Seigler (2003) concluded that prior experience, either direct experience or experience by position, yielded no relationship with perceptions of inclusion for Georgia middle school principals. However, Praisner (2003) found that a principal's prior experiences with students with disabilities led to more positive attitudes towards inclusion. Farris (2011) studied the attitudes of inclusion held by high school principals in the state of Texas. Farris concluded that there is a positive correlation between prior experience with inclusion and perceptions of inclusion. According to these findings, prior experience plays a mixed role in the influence on perceptions of inclusion.

Research question four of the present study examined the extent that demographic factors have on principals' perception of inclusion. Several of the previously mentioned studies also examined demographic influences on the principal's perception of inclusion. Seigler (2003) found that male principals held a slightly more negative view of inclusion. Seigler also found that the higher the degree held by the principal, the more positive their

view of inclusion. Finally, Seigler found that more years of administrative experience led to more positive views of inclusion. Praisner (2003), however, did not find evidence that either gender or years of experience as an administrator influenced the principal's perceptions of inclusion. In contrast to Seigler, Lindsey (2009) found that the more years a principal worked at the middle school level, the more negative his view of inclusion. Johnson (2011) also found a correlation between the number of years as an administrator and perceptions of inclusion. The findings from Johnson's study suggested that principals who have worked five years or less tend to hold a more positive view of inclusion than principals who have worked over five years. Lorio (2011) found that female principals tended to hold a more positive view of inclusion than male principals did. Both Ramirez (2006) and Lorio concluded that principals who held a special education teaching certificate held a more positive view of inclusion than those who did not. The results of the present study include minimal evidence that gender influences perceptions of inclusion. However, the results did indicate that female principals tend to agree more than males that inclusion allows general education students the opportunity to experience diversity in the classroom. In contrast to Seigler (2003), the present study did not find evidence that the degree held by the principal influenced perceptions of inclusion. The results of the present study also agreed with Ramirez and Lorio, finding that principals who hold special education teaching certification have a more positive view of inclusion than principals who do not hold special education teaching certification. In contrast to the Lindsey study, the current study did not find evidence that the number of years as a middle school principal influenced perceptions of inclusion. The current study, however, did provide marginal evidence that the total number of years

as a principal influences perceptions of inclusion. Principals with 1-5 years of experience and 11 or more years of experience agreed more than principals with 6-10 years of experience that general education students easily accept students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Additionally, principals with 11 years or more of experience agreed more than others that general education students benefit socially from the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. The current study presents mixed support of prior research findings that gender, degree held, teaching certification, number of years as a middle/junior high school teacher, and total years as a principal influence perceptions of inclusion.

Previous studies reviewed in chapter two did not focus on the socio-economic status of the school in regard to the principal's perceptions of inclusion. The findings in the present study suggest that there were marginal influences. Principals of schools with 51-75% of their students receiving free and reduced lunch responded with the greatest degree of agreement that the type of disability would affect their perceptions of inclusion. Principals of schools with 0-25% of their students receiving free and reduced lunch responded with the highest amount of agreement that general education students easily accept students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

Previous studies reviewed in chapter two did not focus on the location of the school (urban, suburban, or rural) in regards to the principals' perceptions of inclusion. The findings in the present study suggest that the location of the school influences perceptions of inclusion more than other demographic factors. Principals of rural schools responded with the highest amount of agreement that meeting the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom was a concern for general education

teachers. Principals of suburban schools responded with the highest amount of agreement that placing students with emotional or behavioral disorders in the general education classroom decreases the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction. Principals of suburban schools responded with the highest amount of agreement that general education students easily accept students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Principals of urban schools responded with the highest amount of agreement that general education students benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Principals of urban schools responded with the highest amount of agreement that the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom allows the general education students to experience diversity in the classroom.

Collaboration was minimally addressed in the previous studies in chapter two. Seigler (2003) found that principals tended to agree that collaborative planning between special education and general education teachers was important. The findings of the present study provide evidence that agrees with Seigler. Missouri middle/junior high school principals tend to view the collaboration of special education and general education teachers positively. Previous research did not focus on the principals' views of the collaboration of special education teachers and general education teachers influencing perceptions of inclusion. The findings of the current study suggest that the principals' views of collaboration of special education and general education teachers influenced perceptions of inclusion. Principals tended to respond that positive views of collaboration led to positive views of inclusion.

The findings of the current study presented mixed support of previous research. Missouri middle/junior high school principals tend to have an overall positive view of inclusion, as did principals surveyed in previous research. However, the degree to which their knowledge level of inclusion, experiences, and demographic factors impact the principals' perceptions of inclusion was mixed. Previous research did little to address the collaboration of special education and general education teachers. Previous research did not address the influence that views of collaboration have towards the views of inclusion.

Conclusions

As mentioned in the first chapter, school principals have an important role in the successful implementation of an inclusion program. The principals' positive perception of not only inclusion but also of collaboration between special education and general education teachers leads to the successful implementation of an inclusion program. The findings of this study could influence not only middle level administrators but also district-level administrators, and policy makers at the state level. The following section outlines implications for action for those stakeholders.

Implications for Action. The principal's perception of inclusion is important to the implementation of a successful inclusion program. Positive perceptions of inclusion, if observed, serve as an example to staff members and help in the implementation of a successful inclusion program. Principals at all levels of education may find this study helpful in determining their own perception of inclusion. While the study concluded that most principals surveyed did view inclusion favorably, the findings of this study, as well as previous research, indicate that more severe disabilities influence the principals' perception of inclusion in a negative manner. Principals could benefit from this

knowledge, and analyze the inclusion program in their school in order to determine if students with more severe disabilities are not only being successful in the inclusive setting, but also analyze the social benefits to general education students by including students with more severe disabilities in the general education classroom. District administrators could focus on the socio-economic status of the school, location demographic factors, and their influence on principal perceptions of inclusion. District leadership and building principals alike could benefit from the collaboration piece of this study by determining their perceptions of the collaboration between special education and regular education teachers.

Finally, college level educators could reference findings of this research in administrative preparation courses. College course work could highlight the importance that the principal's leadership plays on not only the inclusion program itself, but the collaboration between special education and general education teachers. Socio-economics and location of the school tend to play a role in the principals perception of inclusion. College course work could help to prepare future principals to prepare for these factors, in order to implement a successful inclusion program.

Recommendations for Further Research. Findings from the current study warrant further research in the following areas.

- Researchers could replicate the present study. Replication of the study in elementary, middle, and high school settings would further research by providing additional data about the perceptions of inclusion held by principals.

- Researchers could conduct this study within a specific school district. An analysis of this nature would allow district leadership to examine the perceptions of inclusion held by its administrators at elementary, middle, and high school levels.
- The current study was conducted across the state of Missouri. A study that is focused on specific school districts that met socio-economic demographic criteria could investigate the perception of inclusion held by principals in school districts of low, middle, and high economic standing.
- Conduct a correlation study to determine whether there is a relationship between the achievement of special education students on state assessments and the principals' perceptions of inclusion.
- Since research in this area is minimal, district administrators could replicate the present study, focusing on the demographic factors presented in this study. Once data is gathered, district administrators would have a knowledge base as to how these factors influenced principals' perceptions of inclusion. In-service opportunities could then be provided to educate the principals' in the district on the inclusive classroom and the importance their leadership plays in its successful implementation.

Concluding Remarks. The results of this study indicated that most Missouri middle/junior high school principals have a positive view of inclusion. The study also revealed that most Missouri middle/junior high school principals have a positive view of the collaboration between special education and general education teachers. There is a correlation between the two findings. Principals who have a positive view of inclusion

also have a positive view of the collaboration between special education and general education teachers. With a positive perception of inclusion, principals will be effective in their leadership, spreading their positive views to their staff. This is the all-important role in their leadership and the underlying message of this study. The principal must hold a positive view of inclusion, but for inclusion to be successful; the principal must make sure that all involved in the process hold an equally positive view. Without this leadership, the inclusion program will struggle to meet the needs of students with disabilities, thereby limiting their academic potential.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Request Form

BAKER
UNIVERSITY


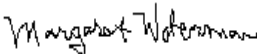
Date:3-5-12

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
GRADUATE DEPARTMENTIRB PROTOCOL NUMBER _____
(IRB USE ONLY)

IRB REQUEST
Proposal for Research
Submitted to the Baker University Institutional Review Board

I. Research Investigator(s) (Students must list faculty sponsor first)

Department(s) School of Education Graduate Department

Name	Signature	
1. Dr. Susan Rogers		Major Advisor
2. Margaret Waterman		Research Analyst
3. Marlin Stanberry		University Committee Member
4.		External Committee Member

Principal Investigator: Michael Minter _____
 Phone: 816 838 8149
 Email: mikeaminter@gmail.com
 Mailing address: 504 NE Agate Dr.
 Lee's Summit, MO 64064

Faculty sponsor: Dr. Susan Rogers
 Phone: 913-344-1226
 Email: Susan.Rogers@bakeru.edu

Expected Category of Review: ___Exempt X Expedited ___Full

II: Protocol: Missouri Middle/Junior High Principals' Perceptions of Inclusion

Summary

In a sentence or two, please describe the background and purpose of the research.

The success of a special education inclusion program is related to the leadership of the building principal. The focus of the research is on middle/junior high school principals' perceptions of inclusion. The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between the principals' previous perceptions and experiences with inclusion.

Their knowledge levels of inclusion, demographic factors, and views of collaboration between special and general education teachers are also examined.

Briefly describe each condition or manipulation to be included within the study.

There will be no manipulation within this study.

What measures or observations will be taken in the study? If any questionnaire or other instruments are used, provide a brief description and attach a copy.

Participants will be asked to complete a survey that includes demographic information, Likert style questions, and several open-ended questions.

Will the subjects encounter the risk of psychological, social, physical or legal risk? If so, please describe the nature of the risk and any measures designed to mitigate that risk.

Participants will not encounter the risk of psychological, social, physical or legal risk.

Will any stress to subjects be involved? If so, please describe.

Subjects involved in the study will not experience stress.

Will the subjects be deceived or misled in any way? If so, include an outline or script of the debriefing.

The subjects involved in the study will not be deceived or misled in any way.

Will there be a request for information which subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive? If so, please include a description.

The subjects involved in the study will be asked to provide personal demographic information. This demographic information includes; gender, highest degree earned, number of years as a middle/junior high principal, number of years as a principal, and their area of teaching certification. The subjects will also be asked to share experiences with inclusion and by what means they gained their knowledge of inclusion. Information gathered in this study will not be used to identify individual participants.

Will the subjects be presented with materials which might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading? If so, please describe.

The subjects involved in the study will not be presented with materials which might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading.

Approximately how much time will be demanded of each subject?

The survey will require approximately 20 minutes in order to complete.

Who will be the subjects in this study? How will they be solicited or contacted? Provide an outline or script of the information which will be provided to subjects prior to their volunteering to participate. Include a copy of any written solicitation as well as an outline of any oral solicitation.

State of Missouri middle/junior high principals will be the subjects in this study. Each subject will receive initial contact via email (see attached letter).

What steps will be taken to insure that each subject's participation is voluntary? What if any inducements will be offered to the subjects for their participation?

Completion of the survey indicates willingness of the subject to voluntarily participate. Participants will be informed, in the initial introductory email, of their opportunity to obtain a copy of the results of the study.

How will you insure that the subjects give their consent prior to participating? Will a written consent form be used? If so, include the form. If not, explain why not.

Completion of the survey will indicate consent of the subject. Participants will be informed of this consent in the initial contact email.

Will any aspect of the data be made a part of any permanent record that can be identified with the subject? If so, please explain the necessity.

Data from this survey will not be made part of any permanent record.

Will the fact that a subject did or did not participate in a specific experiment or study be made part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher or employer? If so, explain.

No data from this survey will be made part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher, or employer.

What steps will be taken to insure the confidentiality of the data?

Individual names are will not be recorded or reported in the results of this study. All results will be reviewed by the researcher and will remain confidential.

If there are any risks involved in the study, are there any offsetting benefits that might accrue to either the subjects or society?

There are no risks involved in this study. This study will add to the knowledge gained from earlier studies that focused on principal perceptions of inclusion. This research will encourage principals, in both primary and secondary settings, to focus on the inclusion program in their school. The findings of this study will allow school administrators, in

all areas, to examine the importance of their leadership roles to the success of an inclusion program.

Will any data from files or archival data be used? If so, please describe.

No archival data will be used in this study. All data gathered will be provided by the subjects through their responses on the survey.

Appendix B: IRB Approval



March 9, 2012

Mr. Michael Minter
504 NW Agate Dr.
Lee's Summit, MO 64064

Dear Mr. Minter:

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your research project application (E-0131-0305-0309-G) and approved this project under Expedited Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

The Baker University IRB requires that your consent form must include the date of approval and expiration date (one year from today). Please be aware of the following:

1. At designated intervals (usually annually) until the project is completed, a Project Status Report must be returned to the IRB.
2. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
3. Notify the OIR about any new investigators not named in original application.
4. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported to the IRB Chair or representative immediately.
5. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity. If you use a signed consent form, provide a copy of the consent form to subjects at the time of consent.
6. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.

Please inform Office of Institutional Research (OIR) or myself when this project is terminated. As noted above, you must also provide OIR with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If your project receives funding which requests an annual update approval, you must request this from the IRB one month prior to the annual update. Thanks for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carolyn Doolittle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'C'.

Carolyn Doolittle, EdD
Chair, Baker University IRB

Appendix C: Email to Dr. Seigler

From: **mike minter** <mikeaminter@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 2, 2010 at 2:02 PM
Subject: doctoral study
To: seiglmy@rcboe.org

Dr. Seigler,

My name is Mike Minter. I am a special educator in the Kansas City area and a doctoral student at Baker University. Over the past ten years I have seen many shifts in my own school as well as school district regarding the inclusion of special education students in the general curriculum. Inclusion is an interesting topic and one I wish to research. In discussing this with my university advisor we decided to focus the study on administration perceptions of inclusion. I teach at the middle/junior high level, we discussed the possibilities of conducting this research across the state of Missouri at that level. While beginning my research I came across the study you conducted in the state of Georgia. I was very impressed with your survey and would like to seek your permission to adapt this survey for my study in the state of Missouri. I am in the beginning stages (sic) of writing, most likely will not administer a survey until next fall. If you are willing I would be more than happy to provide you with a copy of the survey, before administering it to administrators across the state, for your approval.

Thank You,

Mike Minter

Appendix D: Email Response

From: **Seigler, Myrel** <SeiglMy@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us>

Date: Tue, Nov 2, 2010 at 2:13 PM

Subject: RE: doctoral study

To: mike minter <mikeaminter@gmail.com>

Mr. Minter,

I am always happy to help others continue in their education as others helped me. Please provide me with a copy of your survey as a courtesy. Otherwise, best of luck and I hope my work will be of some help to you as you pursue an advanced degree.

Take care,

Myrel Seigler

Appendix E: Participant Survey

Part 1. Please mark the appropriate response.

1. Gender M F
2. Highest Degree Earned:
 Master's Degree
 Specialist Degree
 Ph.D./Ed.D
 Other (specify)_____
3. Teaching certification in the area of special education: Y N
4. Number of years in current position:_____
5. Number of years as a middle/junior high school administrator:_____
6. Total years as an administrator at other levels:_____
7. My school would be considered:
 Urban Suburban Rural
8. My school's percentage of students who receive free and reduced lunch?_____
9. My school currently has an inclusion program? Y N

Part II: Please respond to the following statements

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

10. Students with physical disabilities only can learn at the same pace as their general education peers when placed in the general education classroom.

SD D N A SA

11. I feel that the type of disability would affect my perceptions of inclusion.

SD D N A SA

12. Meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom is not a concern for general education teachers.

SD D N A SA

13. Placing students with emotional or behavioral disorders in the general education classroom decreases the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction.

SD D N A SA

14. Placing students with low cognitive ability in the general education classroom decreases the amount of time the general education teacher spends on instruction.

SD D N A SA

15. General education teachers should feel obligated to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom.

SD D N A SA

16. Students with disabilities learn better when included with their general education peers.

SD D N A SA

17. General education students are often distracted when students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom.

SD D N A SA

18. Students with disabilities can become frustrated with the curriculum, when placed in the general curriculum.

SD D N A SA

19. General education students easily accept students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

SD D N A SA

20. General education students benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

SD D N A SA

21. The inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom allows the general education students to experience diversity in their classroom.

SD D N A SA

22. Collaborative planning between general and special education teachers increases the amount of time teachers can spend working with students.

SD D N A SA

23. Collaborative planning among teachers is difficult to implement because special educators' goals for students are individualized while general educators' goals focus on all students.

SD D N A SA

24. There is little need for collaboration due to the fact that special education teachers are only working with a small number of students.

SD D N A SA

25. Collaboration helps build strong professional relationships among the staff.

SD D N A SA

26. Collaboration between general and special education staff helps to strengthen the instructional strategies used in the general education classroom, benefiting all students.

SD D N A S

Part III. Please respond freely to the following statements:

27. My experiences working with students with special needs include students with the following disabilities: Please mark all that apply.

____ Deaf and Hard of Hearing Impairments

____ Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

____ Mild Intellectual Disabilities

____ Moderate Intellectual Disabilities

____ Orthopedic Impairments

____ Severe/Profound Intellectual Disabilities

____ Specific Learning Disabilities

____ Speech/Language Impairments

____ Other (please list) _____

28. I gained my knowledge of inclusion from the following sources:

29. My teaching/administrative experiences with inclusion are as follows:

30. Please share any other thoughts on inclusion you wish to add:

Appendix F: Seigler Survey

Georgia Middle School Principals' Perceptions of Inclusion

For the purpose of this research, please refer to the following definition.

Inclusion: A method of serving those students identified with disabilities and special education needs in the general classroom setting for the full day or part of the day, with both the general education teacher and the special education teacher providing instruction.

Part I. Please mark the appropriate response.

1. Number of years in current position: _____
2. Gender _____M _____F
3. Does your school currently have an inclusion program? _____Yes _____No
4. Highest Degree Earned:
 _____ 4-year Degree (BA/BS) _____ Specialist Degree _____ Other (Specify)
 _____ Master's Degree _____ Doctor's Degree _____
5. Area(s) of Teaching Certification:
 _____ Special Education _____ Other
- 6a. Have you ever participated in any classes/training related to educating students with disabilities?
 _____ Yes _____ No
- 6b. If yes, check all type(s) of training that apply and indicate the number taken.
 College course work (# taken _____)
 System/school staff development (# taken _____)
 RESA training classes (# taken _____)
 RESA workshops (# taken _____)
 Professional conference sessions (# taken _____)
 Other (Describe) _____

Types of Disabilities

7. Students with physical disabilities placed in the general education classroom can learn at the same pace as their general education peers.
8. Degree of student disability affects my perceptions of inclusion in that the more severe the disability, the more likely I would recommend self-contained placement for those children.

9. Meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom is not a concern for general educators.
10. Students with physical disabilities lose the specialized service they need in the general education classroom.
11. Teaching students with severe emotional or behavioral disorders in the general education classroom decreases the amount of time the general education teacher can devote to academic instruction.
12. I am in favor of segregating students with sever/profound intellectual disabilities from the general classroom.

Policy

13. Students with disabilities benefit from the inclusion of general educators in the decision-making process regarding policy.
 14. School leaders are limited in the strategies they may use for students with disabilities when their school system has policies that have specific guidelines to go by when implementing and inclusion program.
 15. General education teachers with an interest in teaching students with disabilities may have limited opportunities if there are policies requiring specific educational training prior to teaching in an inclusive classroom.
 16. Including parents in the decision making process for policy regarding inclusion provides a necessary perspective to benefit students.
 17. Students with disabilities may have limited opportunities for placement in general education classrooms if there are policies for inclusion that are specific to the different categories of disabilities.
 - 18.
-

Collaborative Planning between Special Educators and General Educators.

19. Collaborative planning helps increase the amount of time teachers can spend working with students.

20. Collaborative planning among teachers is difficult to implement because special educators' goals for students are individualized while general educators' goals focus on all students.
 21. In relation to academics, collaborative planning benefits only students with disabilities.
 22. Collaborative planning helps build professional relationships among the staff in a school.
 23. Collaborative planning allows for the sharing of instructional strategies that might not otherwise be considered when planning as an individual teacher.
-

A. Student Reaction

24. Students with disabilities learn best when they are included in classrooms with their general education peers.
 25. General education students are distracted by the presence of students with disabilities in their class.
 26. Inclusion helps students with disabilities develop friendships with general education students.
 27. Students with disabilities who are in inclusive classrooms experience failure and frustration.
 28. General education students benefit academically from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.
 29. General education students ridicule students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.
 30. Students with disabilities will be embarrassed by their placement in the general education classroom.
 31. General education students benefit socially from the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.
 32. The inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom allows the general education students to experience diversity in their classroom.
-

Part III. Please respond freely to the following statements:

1. My experiences with inclusion are as follows:
2. My experiences working with students with special needs include students with the following types of disabilities: Circle all that apply.

Speech/Language Impairments

Mild Intellectual Disabilities

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Impairments

Orthopedic Impairments

Moderate Intellectual Disabilities

Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

Specific Learning Disabilities

Other (please list)_____

Severe/Profound Intellectual Disabilities

3. I gained my knowledge of inclusion in the following ways or from the following sources:
 4. Policy recommendations, which should be considered for all inclusion programs are as follows:
 5. Please share any thoughts on inclusion you might wish to add:
 6. How does you school system define inclusion?
-

Appendix G: First Participant Letter

3-27-12

Dear Colleague,

My name is Mike Minter. I am a special educator in Raytown, Missouri and a doctoral student at Baker University. I am conducting a research study that investigates the perceptions Missouri middle/junior high school principals' have of inclusion. I am surveying all Missouri middle/junior high school building principals. Since you have attained the position of principal at your current middle/junior high school, I would like to ask for your participation. I have a survey available online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KM9X3NC>. I realize that you are very busy; the survey should take no more than 20 minutes of your time to complete. The survey is completely anonymous. It will ask you for demographic information and your experience with and knowledge levels of inclusion.

Your privacy is important; your answers will be combined with other participants and reported in summary form. Information reported will not indicate individual participants or school districts. There is no penalty should you choose not to participate or answer all of the questions. Your completion and submission of the survey will indicate your consent to participate and permission to use the information that you have provided in my study.

If you have any questions or if you would like a copy of the results of this study, you may contact me via email at mikeaminter@gmail.com.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Minter

Appendix H: Second Participant Letter

4-10-12

Dear Colleague,

A couple of weeks ago you received an email asking for your participation in a survey. This survey is designed to investigate the perceptions Missouri middle/junior high school principals have of inclusion. Since you have attained the position of principal at your current middle/junior high school, I would like to ask for your participation. I realize that you are very busy; the survey should take no more than 20 minutes of your time to complete. The survey is completely anonymous. It will ask for demographic information and your experience with and knowledge levels of inclusion. The survey is available online at (*insert survey link here*).

Your privacy is important; your answers will be combined with other participants and reported in summary form. Information reported will not indicate individual participants or school districts. There is no penalty should you choose not to participate or answer all of the questions. Your completion and submission of the survey will indicate your consent to participate and permission to use the information that you have provided in my study.

If you have any questions or if you would like a copy of the results of this study, you may contact me via email at mikeaminter@gmail.com.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Minter

Appendix I: Third Participant Letter

4-23-12

Dear Colleague,

A couple of weeks ago you received an email asking for your participation in a survey about inclusion programs in Missouri middle/junior high schools. This survey could be of importance to educators across the state, as it could be used to provide insight about inclusion programs. Through the data collected, educators would have an opportunity to study important components of an inclusion program that could aid in its success. I would like to request your assistance in gathering this essential data.

This survey is designed to investigate the perceptions Missouri middle/junior high school principals have of inclusion. Since you have attained the position of principal at your current middle/junior high school, I would like to ask for your participation. I realize that you are very busy; the survey should take no more than 20 minutes of your time to complete. The survey is completely anonymous. It will ask for demographic information and your experience with and knowledge levels of inclusion. The survey is available online at (*insert survey link here*).

Your privacy is important; your answers will be combined with other participants and reported in summary form. Information reported will not indicate individual participants or school districts. There is no penalty should you choose not to participate or answer all of the questions. Your completion and submission of the survey will indicate your consent to participate and permission to use the information that you have provided in my study.

If you have any questions or if you would like a copy of the results of this study, you may contact me via email at mikeaminter@gmail.com.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Minter

Appendix J: Fourth Participant Letter

4-30-12

Dear Colleague,

My name is Mike Minter. I am a doctoral student at Baker University. A couple of weeks ago you received an email asking for your participation in my research study about inclusion programs in Missouri middle/junior high schools. I need 25 additional participants in order to have a viable study. I am writing to request your participation in my research, by completing the survey linked to this email.

This survey could be of importance to educators across the state, as it could be used to provide insight about inclusion programs. Through the data collected, educators would have an opportunity to study important components of an inclusion program that could aid in its success. I would like to request your assistance in gathering this essential data. This survey is designed to investigate the perceptions Missouri middle/junior high school principals have of inclusion. Since you have attained the position of principal at your current middle/junior high school, I would like to ask for your participation. I realize that you are very busy; the survey should take no more than 20 minutes of your time to complete. The survey is completely anonymous. It will ask for demographic information and your experience with and knowledge levels of inclusion. The survey is available online at (*insert survey link here*).

Your privacy is important; your answers will be combined with other participants and reported in summary form. Information reported will not indicate individual participants or school districts. There is no penalty should you choose not to participate or answer all of the questions. Your completion and submission of the survey will indicate your consent to participate and permission to use the information that you have provided in my study.

If you have any questions or if you would like a copy of the results of this study, you may contact me via email at mikeaminter@gmail.com.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Minter

Appendix K: Data Tables

Table K1

Principal Experience with Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	66	2.7727	1.21270
	2	22	2.8636	1.12527
Item 11	1	66	3.4242	1.06786
	2	22	3.1364	1.12527
Item 12	1	66	4.4242	.80500
	2	22	4.3182	.47673
Item 13	1	66	2.8939	1.03966
	2	22	3.0000	1.11270
Item 14	1	66	3.5000	.76962
	2	22	3.3182	.99457
Item 15	1	66	3.9394	1.02099
	2	22	4.4545	.50965
Item 16	1	66	3.7879	.81364
	2	22	3.6818	.77989
Item 17	1	66	3.5455	.89755
	2	22	3.4091	.85407
Item 18	1	66	2.3939	.69898
	2	22	2.2273	.75162
Item 19	1	66	3.9394	.60457
	2	22	3.7273	.63109
Item 20	1	66	4.1818	.65420
	2	22	3.9545	.48573
Item 21	1	66	4.1212	.66830
	2	22	4.1818	.39477

Note: 1 = have experience with; 2 = do not have experience with

Table K2

Principals' Experience with Students with Emotional Disturbance

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	86	2.7791	1.17224
	2	2	3.5000	2.12132
Item 11	1	86	3.3721	1.08516
	2	2	2.5000	.70711
Item 12	1	86	4.3953	.74010
	2	2	4.5000	.70711
Item 13	1	86	2.9302	1.03799
	2	2	2.5000	2.12132
Item 14	1	86	3.4651	.82173
	2	2	3.0000	1.41421
Item 15	1	86	4.0465	.94442
	2	2	5.0000	.00000
Item 16	1	86	3.7674	.80695
	2	2	3.5000	.70711
Item 17	1	86	3.5233	.87752
	2	2	3.0000	1.41421
Item 18	1	86	2.3372	.69639
	2	2	3.0000	1.41421
Item 19	1	86	3.8721	.60966
	2	2	4.5000	.70711
Item 20	1	86	4.1279	.62866
	2	2	4.0000	.00000
Item 21	1	86	4.1279	.60966
	2	2	4.5000	.70711

Note: 1= have experience with; 2 = do not have experience with

Table K3

Principals' Experience with Students who are Mildly Mentally Retarded

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	84	2.8095	1.16656
	2	4	2.5000	1.73205
Item 11	1	84	3.3690	1.07300
	2	4	3.0000	1.41421
Item 12	1	84	4.4048	.74638
	2	4	4.2500	.50000
Item 13	1	84	2.9405	1.04537
	2	4	2.5000	1.29099
Item 14	1	84	3.5000	.79910
	2	4	2.5000	1.00000
Item 15	1	84	4.0238	.94392
	2	4	5.0000	.00000
Item 16	1	84	3.7738	.81183
	2	4	3.5000	.57735
Item 17	1	84	3.5476	.86991
	2	4	2.7500	.95743
Item 18	1	84	2.3452	.70273
	2	4	2.5000	1.00000
Item 19	1	84	3.8690	.61663
	2	4	4.2500	.50000
Item 20	1	84	4.1190	.62873
	2	4	4.2500	.50000
Item 21	1	84	4.1190	.60926
	2	4	4.5000	.57735

Note: 1 = have experience with, 2 = do not have experience with

Table K4

Principals' Experience with Students who are Moderately Mentally Retarded

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	80	2.8125	1.18101
	2	8	2.6250	1.30247
Item 11	1	80	3.3500	1.06854
	2	8	3.3750	1.30247
Item 12	1	80	4.4125	.75797
	2	8	4.2500	.46291
Item 13	1	80	2.9375	1.02307
	2	8	2.7500	1.38873
Item 14	1	80	3.4750	.79516
	2	8	3.2500	1.16496
Item 15	1	80	4.0125	.96119
	2	8	4.6250	.51755
Item 16	1	80	3.7750	.81092
	2	8	3.6250	.74402
Item 17	1	80	3.5750	.82332
	2	8	2.8750	1.24642
Item 18	1	80	2.3625	.71589
	2	8	2.2500	.70711
Item 19	1	80	3.8750	.62389
	2	8	4.0000	.53452
Item 20	1	80	4.1125	.63632
	2	8	4.2500	.46291
Item 21	1	80	4.1125	.61611
	2	8	4.3750	.51755

Note: 1=have experience with, 2=do not have experience with

Table K5

Principals' Experience with Students who are Orthopedically Disabled

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	63	2.7302	1.19416
	2	25	2.9600	1.17189
Item 11	1	63	3.3333	1.12163
	2	25	3.4000	1.00000
Item 12	1	63	4.4127	.81587
	2	25	4.3600	.48990
Item 13	1	63	3.0317	1.06208
	2	25	2.6400	.99499
Item 14	1	63	3.5397	.79971
	2	25	3.2400	.87939
Item 15	1	63	3.9683	1.01550
	2	25	4.3200	.69041
Item 16	1	63	3.8413	.84637
	2	25	3.5600	.65064
Item 17	1	63	3.5714	.87463
	2	25	3.3600	.90738
Item 18	1	63	2.4127	.75423
	2	25	2.2000	.57735
Item 19	1	63	3.8889	.57111
	2	25	3.8800	.72572
Item 20	1	63	4.1587	.65270
	2	25	4.0400	.53852
Item 21	1	63	4.1429	.61846
	2	25	4.1200	.60000

Note: 1= have experience with, 2 = do not have experience with

Table K6

Principals' Experience with Students who are Severely Mentally Retarded

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	61	2.6885	1.16248
	2	27	3.0370	1.22416
Item 11	1	61	3.5082	1.02669
	2	27	3.0000	1.14354
Item 12	1	61	4.4262	.76287
	2	27	4.3333	.67937
Item 13	1	61	2.8689	1.04044
	2	27	3.0370	1.09128
Item 14	1	61	3.4754	.76608
	2	27	3.4074	.97109
Item 15	1	61	4.0000	.93095
	2	27	4.2222	.97402
Item 16	1	61	3.7869	.79822
	2	27	3.7037	.82345
Item 17	1	61	3.5574	.82714
	2	27	3.4074	1.00992
Item 18	1	61	2.2787	.60913
	2	27	2.5185	.89315
Item 19	1	61	3.9180	.61360
	2	27	3.8148	.62247
Item 20	1	61	4.0492	.61715
	2	27	4.2963	.60858
Item 21	1	61	4.0492	.61715
	2	27	4.3333	.55470

Note: 1= have experience with, 2 = do not have experience with

Table K7

Principals' Experience with Students who have Specific Learning Disabilities

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	81	2.7901	1.18021
	2	7	2.8571	1.34519
Item 11	1	81	3.3704	1.08909
	2	7	3.1429	1.06904
Item 12	1	81	4.4074	.75462
	2	7	4.2857	.48795
Item 13	1	81	2.9506	1.05950
	2	7	2.5714	.97590
Item 14	1	81	3.5062	.80814
	2	7	2.8571	.89974
Item 15	1	81	4.0617	.89925
	2	7	4.1429	1.46385
Item 16	1	81	3.7901	.81725
	2	7	3.4286	.53452
Item 17	1	81	3.5802	.83463
	2	7	2.7143	1.11270
Item 18	1	81	2.3580	.71254
	2	7	2.2857	.75593
Item 19	1	81	3.8765	.62014
	2	7	4.0000	.57735
Item 20	1	81	4.1235	.63997
	2	7	4.1429	.37796
Item 21	1	81	4.1235	.62014
	2	7	4.2857	.48795

Note: 1 = have experience with, 2 = do not have experience with

Table K8

Principals' Experience with Students who have Speech Disabilities

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	81	2.8025	1.18764
	2	7	2.7143	1.25357
Item 11	1	81	3.3951	1.08027
	2	7	2.8571	1.06904
Item 12	1	81	4.4074	.75462
	2	7	4.2857	.48795
Item 13	1	81	2.9136	1.07468
	2	7	3.0000	.81650
Item 14	1	81	3.4938	.80814
	2	7	3.0000	1.00000
Item 15	1	81	4.0370	.96753
	2	7	4.4286	.53452
Item 16	1	81	3.7778	.82158
	2	7	3.5714	.53452
Item 17	1	81	3.5062	.88209
	2	7	3.5714	.97590
Item 18	1	81	2.3333	.68920
	2	7	2.5714	.97590
Item 19	1	81	3.9012	.58320
	2	7	3.7143	.95119
Item 20	1	81	4.1235	.63997
	2	7	4.1429	.37796
Item 21	1	81	4.1605	.62163
	2	7	3.8571	.37796

Note: 1 = have experience with, 2 = do not have experience with

Table K9

Principal Experience with Inclusion

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	14	2.7857	1.18831
	2	18	2.6667	1.02899
	3	23	2.6522	1.30065
	4	27	3.0370	1.15962
Item 11	1	14	3.5714	.85163
	2	18	3.3889	1.14475
	3	23	3.6087	.89133
	4	27	3.1111	1.28103
Item 12	1	14	4.5714	.51355
	2	18	4.2222	1.00326
	3	23	4.4348	.50687
	4	27	4.4815	.70002
Item 13	1	14	2.6429	.84190
	2	18	2.9444	1.05564
	3	23	3.0435	.97600
	4	27	3.0370	1.22416
Item 14	1	14	3.4286	.75593
	2	18	3.7222	.46089
	3	23	3.2174	.95139
	4	27	3.5556	.89156
Item 15	1	14	4.0714	.47463
	2	18	4.2222	1.00326
	3	23	3.6957	1.06322
	4	27	4.2963	.91209
Item 16	1	14	3.9286	.73005
	2	18	3.6111	.91644
	3	23	3.8696	.86887
	4	27	3.7037	.72403
Item 17	1	14	3.7143	.82542
	2	18	3.6111	.91644
	3	23	3.5652	.84348
	4	27	3.3333	.91987
Item 18	1	14	2.3571	.74495
	2	18	2.4444	.85559
	3	23	2.3043	.63495
	4	27	2.2593	.65590

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 19	1	14	3.8571	.66299
	2	18	3.9444	.53930
	3	23	3.6957	.63495
	4	27	3.9630	.64935
Item 20	1	14	4.0714	.47463
	2	18	4.1667	.61835
	3	23	3.9130	.66831
	4	27	4.2963	.66880
Item 21	1	14	4.0000	.00000
	2	18	4.0000	.90749
	3	23	4.0435	.56232
	4	27	4.3704	.56488

Note: 1=teacher, 2=administrator, 3=program experiences, 4=teacher/administrator

Table K10

Gender of the Participants

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	Male	51	2.9608	1.14823
	Female	37	2.5676	1.21428
Item 11	Male	51	3.4118	1.02326
	Female	37	3.2703	1.17020
Item 12	Male	51	4.4510	.70182
	Female	37	4.3243	.78365
Item 13	Male	51	2.8627	1.00039
	Female	37	3.0000	1.13039
Item 14	Male	51	3.4510	.78266
	Female	37	3.4595	.90045
Item 15	Male	51	3.9608	.95835
	Female	37	4.2162	.91697
Item 16	Male	51	3.7647	.70960
	Female	37	3.7568	.92512
Item 17	Male	51	3.6078	.85037
	Female	37	3.3784	.92350
Item 18	Male	51	2.3137	.67794
	Female	37	2.4054	.76229
Item 19	Male	51	3.9412	.67563
	Female	37	3.8108	.51843
Item 20	Male	51	4.0392	.63121
	Female	37	4.2432	.59654
Item 21	Male	51	4.0000	.60000
	Female	37	4.3243	.57995

Table K11

Degree(s) Held

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	15	2.6000	1.12122
	2	47	2.8298	1.14814
	3	26	2.8462	1.31734
Item 11	1	15	3.2667	1.16292
	2	47	3.3404	1.06886
	3	26	3.4231	1.10175
Item 12	1	15	4.3333	.48795
	2	47	4.4255	.65091
	3	26	4.3846	.98293
Item 13	1	15	3.1333	1.12546
	2	47	2.7234	1.09747
	3	26	3.1538	.88056
Item 14	1	15	3.4000	.98561
	2	47	3.4468	.77484
	3	26	3.5000	.86023
Item 15	1	15	4.4000	.50709
	2	47	4.0000	.95553
	3	26	4.0000	1.09545
Item 16	1	15	3.5333	.63994
	2	47	3.7234	.77184
	3	26	3.9615	.91568
Item 17	1	15	3.4667	1.12546
	2	47	3.4043	.79836
	3	26	3.7308	.87442
Item 18	1	15	2.2667	.79881
	2	47	2.2979	.58662
	3	26	2.5000	.86023
Item 19	1	15	3.9333	.70373
	2	47	3.8298	.56411
	3	26	3.9615	.66216
Item 20	1	15	4.0000	.37796
	2	47	4.0851	.68619
	3	26	4.2692	.60383
Item 21	1	15	4.0000	.53452
	2	47	4.0851	.65374
	3	26	4.3077	.54913

Note: 1=Master's Degree, 2=Specialist Degree, 3 = Ph.D./Ed.D

Table K12

Teaching Certification

		N	M	SD
Item 10	Yes	14	2.2857	.99449
	No	74	2.8919	1.20009
Item 11	Yes	14	3.5714	1.34246
	No	74	3.3108	1.03269
Item 12	Yes	14	4.1429	1.02711
	No	74	4.4459	.66501
Item 13	Yes	14	2.9286	1.07161
	No	74	2.9189	1.05670
Item 14	Yes	14	3.0714	1.07161
	No	74	3.5270	.76253
Item 15	Yes	14	4.3571	.63332
	No	74	4.0135	.98611
Item 16	Yes	14	3.7143	.82542
	No	74	3.7703	.80320
Item 17	Yes	14	3.5000	.94054
	No	74	3.5135	.87965
Item 18	Yes	14	2.1429	.36314
	No	74	2.3919	.75521
Item 19	Yes	14	3.7857	.80178
	No	74	3.9054	.57740
Item 20	Yes	14	4.1429	.77033
	No	74	4.1216	.59571
Item 21	Yes	14	4.2143	.57893
	No	74	4.1216	.61828

Note: Yes = special education teaching certification, No = no special education teaching certification

Table K13

Number of Years as Middle Level Principal

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	50	2.8600	1.16075
	2	28	2.6786	1.21879
	3	10	2.8000	1.31656
Item 11	1	50	3.3400	1.06157
	2	28	3.3214	1.05597
	3	10	3.5000	1.35401
Item 12	1	50	4.3600	.72168
	2	28	4.5357	.50787
	3	10	4.2000	1.22927
Item 13	1	50	2.9400	1.13227
	2	28	2.9286	1.05158
	3	10	2.8000	.63246
Item 14	1	50	3.5600	.81215
	2	28	3.3571	.86984
	3	10	3.2000	.78881
Item 15	1	50	4.1600	.86567
	2	28	3.7857	1.13389
	3	10	4.4000	.51640
Item 16	1	50	3.8200	.84973
	2	28	3.6429	.73102
	3	10	3.8000	.78881
Item 17	1	50	3.5400	.86213
	2	28	3.3571	.91142
	3	10	3.8000	.91894
Item 18	1	50	2.4000	.69985
	2	28	2.2500	.70053
	3	10	2.4000	.84327
Item 19	1	50	3.8800	.55842
	2	28	3.8214	.77237
	3	10	4.1000	.31623
Item 20	1	50	4.1800	.56025
	2	28	4.0000	.66667
	3	10	4.2000	.78881
Item 21	1	50	4.2200	.61578
	2	28	4.0000	.54433
	3	10	4.1000	.73786

Note: 1=1-5 years, 2=6-10 years, 3=11 years or more

Table K14

Total Number of Years as Principal

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	37	2.5405	1.16892
	2	25	3.0400	1.05987
	3	26	2.9231	1.29377
Item 11	1	37	3.3243	1.13172
	2	25	3.4400	1.04403
	3	26	3.3077	1.08699
Item 12	1	37	4.4595	.69100
	2	25	4.4000	.50000
	3	26	4.3077	.97033
Item 13	1	37	3.0541	1.15340
	2	25	2.6800	1.10755
	3	26	2.9615	.82369
Item 14	1	37	3.5676	.83468
	2	25	3.4400	.86987
	3	26	3.3077	.78838
Item 15	1	37	4.1892	.96718
	2	25	3.9600	.67577
	3	26	4.0000	1.13137
Item 16	1	37	3.5676	.72803
	2	25	3.7600	.92556
	3	26	4.0385	.72004
Item 17	1	37	3.4324	.95860
	2	25	3.4000	.86603
	3	26	3.7308	.77757
Item 18	1	37	2.4054	.68554
	2	25	2.1600	.47258
	3	26	2.4615	.90469
Item 19	1	37	4.0000	.52705
	2	25	3.6000	.76376
	3	26	4.0000	.48990
Item 20	1	37	4.1622	.64608
	2	25	3.9200	.64031
	3	26	4.2692	.53349
Item 21	1	37	4.1081	.77401
	2	25	4.1200	.43970
	3	26	4.1923	.49147

Note: 1 = 1-5 years, 2 = 6-10 years, 3 = 11 years or more

Table K15

Socio-Economic Status of School

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	14	2.5000	1.09193
	2	37	3.0270	1.25801
	3	30	2.6667	1.12444
	4	7	2.7143	1.25357
Item 11	1	14	3.2143	1.18831
	2	37	3.3243	1.13172
	3	30	3.6333	.92786
	4	7	2.5714	.97590
Item 12	1	14	4.2857	.82542
	2	37	4.5135	.65071
	3	30	4.3667	.85029
	4	7	4.1429	.37796
Item 13	1	14	3.0000	.87706
	2	37	3.0000	1.10554
	3	30	2.9000	1.02889
	4	7	2.4286	1.27242
Item 14	1	14	3.2857	.82542
	2	37	3.4865	.80352
	3	30	3.5667	.81720
	4	7	3.1429	1.06904
Item 15	1	14	4.2143	.89258
	2	37	4.0000	1.05409
	3	30	4.0667	.90719
	4	7	4.1429	.69007
Item 16	1	14	4.1429	.53452
	2	37	3.7297	.80445
	3	30	3.6333	.80872
	4	7	3.7143	1.11270
Item 17	1	14	3.3571	.84190
	2	37	3.5135	.96095
	3	30	3.6000	.85501
	4	7	3.4286	.78680
Item 18	1	14	2.4286	.64621
	2	37	2.3784	.82836
	3	30	2.3333	.66089
	4	7	2.1429	.37796
Item 19	1	14	4.0000	.55470
	2	37	4.0270	.55209
	3	30	3.7667	.62606
	4	7	3.4286	.78680
Item 20	1	14	4.4286	.51355
	2	37	4.1081	.61390
	3	30	4.0333	.66868
	4	7	4.0000	.57735
Item 21	1	14	4.2857	.46881
	2	37	4.1081	.61390
	3	30	4.1333	.68145
	4	7	4.0000	.57735

Note: 1 = 0-25%, 2 = 26-50%, 3 = 51-75%, 4 = 76-100%

Table K16

Location of the school

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Item 10	1	13	2.9231	1.44115
	2	31	2.8065	1.10813
	3	44	2.7500	1.18371
Item 11	1	13	2.8462	1.14354
	2	31	3.3548	1.11201
	3	44	3.5000	1.02299
Item 12	1	13	4.0000	.81650
	2	31	4.4194	.92283
	3	44	4.5000	.50578
Item 13	1	13	2.6923	1.03155
	2	31	3.2903	.86385
	3	44	2.7273	1.12815
Item 14	1	13	3.6154	.76795
	2	31	3.5161	.81121
	3	44	3.3636	.86511
Item 15	1	13	4.0769	1.03775
	2	31	4.2903	.82436
	3	44	3.9091	.98402
Item 16	1	13	4.0769	.75955
	2	31	3.8710	.76341
	3	44	3.5909	.81606
Item 17	1	13	3.6923	.75107
	2	31	3.7419	.81518
	3	44	3.2955	.92960
Item 18	1	13	2.6923	.94733
	2	31	2.2903	.69251
	3	44	2.2955	.63170
Item 19	1	13	3.9231	.49355
	2	31	4.0968	.59749
	3	44	3.7273	.62370
Item 20	1	13	4.4615	.51887
	2	31	4.2581	.57548
	3	44	3.9318	.62497
Item 21	1	13	4.3846	.65044
	2	31	4.2581	.51431
	3	44	3.9773	.62835

Note: 1= urban, 2= suburban, 3= rural