PERCEPTIONS OF NINTH THROUGH TWELFTH GRADE ADMINISTRATORS TOWARD

THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN ALABAMA PUBLIC

SCHOOLS

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the perceptions of 9th through 12th grade administrators toward inclusion of students with disabilities in Alabama public schools. Further, the study attempted to determine the effect of personal demographic information, work experience and training of secondary principals as they relate to principals' perceptions of inclusion. The study also examined the effect of the principals' school size, average class size and the number of IEPs (not including gifted). The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, which describe the characteristics of the population being surveyed. The participants were selected from an email list obtained from the Alabama State Department of Education website. The Perceptions of Inclusion Survey (POIS; adapted from Thomas, Curtis, & Shippen, 2010; Shippen, Crites, Houchins, Ramsey, & Simon, 2005; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998) was broken down into 3 sections: Section I – Inclusion Scenario, Section II –Experience and Training, and Section III – Demographic Information and was emailed to 464 9th through 12th secondary administrators. Two hundred and twenty-eight principals responded to the survey with 220 of those responses being utilized for the study. The responses to the study were somewhat similar in that a majority of principals' responses favored the inclusion students with disabilities. The results of the study indicate that when considering all of the principals' personal demographic information, work experience and training, the best predictors of the principals' perceptions were age, general and special education teaching experience and the number of special education inservice hours. The results are beneficial in

gaining a deeper understanding of how principals' perceptions affect the inclusion of students with disabilities. Principals play a vital role in establishing a climate of learning for all students. Their roles are changing from the mundane management of facilities, discipline and transportation to also include curriculum, instruction, data assessment, and human resource development. Principals are also tasked with the building of a safe, caring culture that welcomes and respects diversity where all students despite their race, gender, religion, physical and mental abilities will achieve.

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List of Abbreviations

AAIDD   American Association on Developmental Disability

AAMD   American Association of Mental Deficiency

AAMR   American Association on Mental Retardation

ADA   Americans with Disabilities Act

CCSSO   Council of Chief State School Officers

CFA   Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CGCS   Council of the Great City Schools

CMHA   Community Mental Health Act

EAHCA   Education for All Handicapped Children Act

EHA   Education of the Handicapped Act

ELL   English Language Learners

ESEA   Elementary and Secondary Education Act

GFI   Goodness of Fit Index

ICEC   International Council for Exceptional Children

IDEA   Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP   Individual Education Plans

ISLLC   Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium

LEA   Local Education Agency

LRE   Least Restrictive Environment

MANOVA   Multivariate Analysis of Variance

NCLB   No Child Left Behind Act

NFI   Normed Fit Index

NPBEA   National Policy Board for Educational Administration

OSEP   Office of Special Education Programs

OSERS   Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

PARC   Association for Retarded Citizens

POIS   Perceptions of Inclusion Survey

RIS   Response to Inclusion Survey

RMSEA   Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

SCEE   State Consortium on Educator Effectiveness

WHO   World Health Organization

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Rapid changes and continuous growth are occurring in education that has increased the diversity of the classroom and expectations of administrators, teachers and students. In 2011 nearly 50 million elementary and secondary students attended public schools. By 2023 the number of students is expected increase to 52 million. Forty-six percent of public school students are students of color. Approximately 17 percent are considered English Language Learners (ELL). Forty-three percent of public school students live with one parent, while 21 percent of students live in poverty (U. S. Department of Education, 2014). The task of transforming students into productive, functional citizens has become increasingly difficult with legislative measures and pressure from federal, state and community agencies (Council for Exceptional Children, 1993; National Association of State Boards of Education, 1992; National Education Association, 1994; National Joint Council on Learning Disabilities, 1993), especially in the area of students ages 3 to 21 with special needs which make up 6.4 million students or about 13 percent of school aged children. (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), 2012). The increasing diversity of the classroom population is a challenge for educators who are faced with raising scores and providing high standards for all students, including those students with disabilities (Urton, Wilbert, & Hennemann, 2014; World Health Organization (WHO), 2011; Ainscow, 2005; Farrell, 2004). Educators are being called on to produce greater similarity in learning outcomes despite greater diversity in student populations (Burdette, 2010; Voltz, &

Collins, 2010).

While many programs have been developed to assist with educating students with special needs, administrators have conflicting views when it comes to the implementation of a service delivery model in which there is a commitment to meet the educational needs of special education students within the regular classroom to the maximum extent appropriate known as inclusion. Controversy, concerning inclusion, stems from the various approaches to implementing inclusion in public schools (Dyal, Flynt, & Bennett-Walker, 1996). Bess Johnson, an administrator at an elementary school commented on one such approach, "Dumping a handicapped child into a pool of normal children where he must sink or swim should not be permitted until all administrators and teachers have been trained to be life savers. Teach the handicapped child to swim first" (Osgood, 2005, p. 44).

Research suggests that administrators play an essential role in establishing an educational climate (Cobb, 2015; McLeskey, Waldron, & Redd, 2014; Urton et al., 2014; Billingsley, 2012; Cherkowski, 2012; WHO, 2012; Hunter, 2006; Idol, 2006; Salisbury, 2006; Brantlinger, 2005; Fontenot. 2005; Gredler, 2005; Jaegar & Bowman, 2005; Osgood, 2005; Daane, Bierne-Smith, & Latham, 2000; Thousand & Villa, 2000; Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin, 1996a; Ayers & Meyers, 1992; Rude & Anderson, 1992; Stainback, W. & Stainback, S., 1990) that provides opportunities for interaction between students without disabilities and students with disabilities. In a study conducted by Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2003), an average performing school performed 10 percent higher when led by a highly effective principal compared to an average principal. In 2012, Branch, Hanushek and Rivkin discovered that, depending on the type of analysis conducted and based on value-added scores, a highly effective principal increased student achievement from the 50th percentile to between the 54th and 58th percentiles in one

year. Such an impact on student achievement compares to reducing class size by five students (Branch et al., 2012; Rivkin et al., 2005).

Administrators are often unprepared for the essential and influential special education roles they acquire (McLeskey & Billingsley, 2016; Ball & Green, 2014; Pazay & Cole, 2013, DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Studies conducted by Angelle and Bilton (2009), Osterman and Hafner (2009), Brownell and Pajares (1999) and Cline (1981), revealed administrators demonstrated a lack of knowledge regarding the nature and needs of students with disabilities. Such results suggest that administrators may be out of touch with the fundamentals of inclusion most directly associated with what transpires at the classroom level. Investigators have found that while administrators may receive limited training for general special education information such as characteristics of disabilities, special education law, and behavior management, specific topics that address actual strategies and processes that support inclusion are lacking (Pazey & Cole, 2013; Cusson, 2010; Powell, 2010; Angelle & Bilton, 2009; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Praisner, 2003; Brownell & Pajares, 1999).

Even though administrators are often not prepared for special education responsibilities, most are optimistic when shifting to inclusion. When surveyed, administrators were found to believe the decision to include a student with special needs in a general education classroom should typically be made on the basis of the child's needs, not those of the institution (Idol, 2006; Osgood, 2005; Praisner, 2003); others argued that integration was advisable only if convenient for the school (Idol, 2006; Ware, 2005; Center et al., 1985). Praisner (2003) discovered there were 21.1 percent of the administrators positive about inclusion while 2.7 percent were negative. The uncertain range was 76.6 percent of respondents. Praisner (2003) discovered that most administrators favored inclusion when there was room for interpretation of

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the meaning of inclusion. However, their attitudes became less favorable when the meaning of inclusion required mandatory compliance and strict guidelines for participation.

In a 1985 study similarly constructed using an earlier study (Ward, Parmenter, Riches & Hauritz, 1978) Center, Ward, Parmenter and Nash, found that administrators' individual characteristics were associated with their attitudes towards inclusion. Principals who had zero to seven years of experience and possessed a special education certification were more optimistic about the integration of students with disabilities than other principals who were not certified in special education and had worked in administration eight years or more. The majority of administrators who used pullout programs agreed that pullout was the most effective placements for a majority of most students with disabilities. When considering full-time regular class placement, they considered them to be of greater social than academic benefit and adequate support services were not likely to be provided. The idea that inclusion serves students with special needs in more of a social rather than academic aspect is problematic (Avissar, 2007). With the issue of high stakes testing and the yearly requirements of gains in progress, academic progress must be a priority. Idol (2006) found that the integration of students with disabilities was favored by administrators when additional support could be provided for general education teachers. Idol (2006) also noted that principals felt inclusion should be decided upon on a case by case basis citing that full inclusion would not be appropriate in some situations. Bain and Dolbel (1991) found administrators held positive attitudes toward the integration of students with disabilities in a study of the Australian education system. Others contend the key to inclusion in regular settings was whether the child had the intellectual ability to achieve at the level of the regular class and whether the school could provide adequate training for teachers and sufficient appropriate technology or services in the regular classroom (Osgood 2005; Hathaway, 1959;

Martin, 1940).

Educators are at both ends of the spectrum of being willing and unwilling to accept the new shift to inclusion. There are many unanswered questions and confusion as to what level of involvement they would have when providing services for students with disabilities and non-disabled students in a common setting. Their success with inclusion will depend greatly on how they perceive it. According to McGhie-Richmond (2011), "Inclusion affects us all. It's not a subject matter or a program or an approach, it's an attitude" (p. 1, emphasis in the original). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of 9th through 12th grade administrators toward inclusion of students with disabilities in Alabama public schools.

Statement of the Research Problem

The new arrangement for providing special education services within the general education classroom has created challenges for many education professionals, especially administrators whose role and relationship with special education has changed dramatically (Praisner, 2003). In numerous studies, research has shown that the administrator acts as a leader and is important to the successful implementation of inclusion (Hunter, 2006; Idol, 2006; Gredler, 2005; Jaegar & Bowman, 2005; Osgood, 2005; Praisner, 2003; Livingston, Reed, & Good, 2001; Daane et al., 2000; Thousand & Villa, 2000; Rude & Anderson, 1992; Stainback, W. & Stainback, S., 1990). Because building administrators are responsible for implementing inclusion, it is imperative that their perceptions of inclusion be taken into consideration by policy makers. Research has also suggested that administrators' attitudes toward students with disabilities are especially critical for inclusion to succeed due to the administrators' leadership role in developing and operating educational programs in their schools (Hunter, 2006; Idol, 2006; Gredler, 2005; Jaegar & Bowman, 2005; Osgood, 2005; Praisner, 2003; Daane et al.,

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2000; Ayers & Meyers, 1992). As a result, the focus of this research is the lack of knowledge related to the perceptions of secondary education administrators toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in Alabama public schools.

Need for the Study

The method of providing instruction in contained classrooms was and is successful; however, critics of contained classrooms feel students with disabilities are not receiving an "appropriate public education" (Moore, 2005; IDEA, 2004). Education critics argue that contained classrooms are in violation of the "Mainstreaming Provision of IDEA: A child with disabilities should be educated with children who are not handicapped *to the maximum extent appropriate*" (IDEA, 2004; emphasis in original). Contained classroom opponents believe students with disabilities are missing out on the necessary social development that general education classrooms can offer. Thus, educators and scholars are motivated to research and develop a new ideology that will shift students with disabilities out of their contained environments and in to one of normalcy and stimulation. According to Ware (2005), "Schools were never really meant for everyone. The more they have been called upon to include the masses, the more they have developed the technologies of exclusion and containment" (pp. 47-48) which seems to be the exact opposite of what inclusion wants to accomplish.

As for the general education population, there is a push for more well-rounded students, which inclusion should help to provide. As a result the students, as well as the teachers, of the twenty-first century will be required to be culturally diverse, bilingual, and sensitive to disabilities. Students will need these experiences that, as a result, schools will be required to provide. Years ago, children received character education in the home, whereas now there is state legislation, 1975 Code of Alabama, Section 16-6B-2(h); 1995 Accountability Law, Act 95-

313, that provides for and requires at least 10 minutes of each day to be dedicated to character education (Alabama State Department of Education, 2007). Schools are once again experiencing a shift from an institution of academic learning to an institution of preparing individuals for life.

As educational researchers attempt to fit the meaning of equity and inclusion "into conceptual boxes" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 5), participants in their adventures, namely teachers and administrators, are reminded they "may have to relinquish the notion, explicit or implicit, that changes of paradigm carry scientists and those who learn from them closer and closer to the truth" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 171). While it may be difficult to "buy in" to the newest educational ideology, specifically inclusion, it is important for children and their futures. As schools are increasingly including students with special needs, the administrators' and teachers' perceptions of inclusion, belief in the inclusive philosophy, and knowledge of special education are factors that should be examined to a much greater extent in order for the inclusion paradigm shift to occur and be successful.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of 9th through 12th grade administrators toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in Alabama public schools. The purpose is further delineated by the following research questions.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for this study.

1. What are Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education public school administrators' perceptions of inclusion?

2. To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and personal demographics: (a) age

and (b) gender?

3. To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and personal experience: (a) years of experience in a general education classroom, (b) years of experience in a special education classroom, and (c) years of experience as an administrator?

4. To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and special education training: (a) amount of formal special education training and (b) amount of special education inservice hours?

5. To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and school demographics: (a) campus size, (b) average class size, and (c) number of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) (not including gifted)?

Statement of Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for this study.

1. There is no statistically significant relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and personal demographics: (a) age and (b) gender.

2. There is no statistically significant relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and personal experience: (a) years of experience in a general education classroom, (b) years of experience in a special education classroom, and (c) years of\ experience as an administrator.

3. There is no statistically significant relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and special education training: (a) amount of formal special education training and (b) amount of special education inservice hours.

4. There is no statistically significant relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and school demographics: (a) campus size, (b) average class size, and (c) number of students with IEPs (not including gifted).

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following definitions are provided to promote uniformity of understanding.

Accommodation: An accommodation in instruction is a change in instruction that does not result in a change in the standards or instructional goals for that student compared to others in the same grade (Ysseldyke, 2001).

Attitude: A personal view of something: an opinion or general feeling about something (Encarta World English Dictionary, 2007). Latent or deferred psychological processes that are present in all people and are given expression or form when evoked by specific referents (Antonak & Livneh, 2000).

*Full Inclusion: "*All students, regardless of disability condition or severity, will be in a regular classroom/program full time. All services must be taken to the child in that setting*"* (Stout, 2001, para. 9). "Full inclusion is when a student with special learning and/or behavioral needs is educated full time in the general education program. Essentially, full inclusion means that the student with special education needs is attending the general school program, and

enrolled in age-appropriate classes 100 percent of the school day" (Idol, 2006, p. 15).

Inclusion: The use, and consequently the meaning, of this term vary widely depending on the user, the context, and the purposes involved (Osgood, 2005). A clear definition appears to be a problem when attempting to define inclusion since nowhere in federal legislation is it defined (Lombardi & Woodrum, 2000). Inclusion allows for the full access of the social and education opportunities offered to their peers without disabilities (Praisner, 2003). In the inclusive school, all students are educated in a general education programs that work cooperatively with special education to provide a quality learning environment for all students. All students are accepted and supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community (Stainback, W. & Stainback, S., 1990). For the purpose of this study inclusion is defined as a service delivery model in which there is a commitment to meet the educational needs of special education students within the regular classroom to the maximum extent appropriate.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): Sections 300.320 through 300.324 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines an IEP as a plan tailored to the needs of students with disabilities that states the level of academic achievement and establishes measurable annual goals to determine the progress made in the general education classroom. The IEP includes program modifications and supplementary services that will assist the student with achieving the annual goals, successfully participating in the general education classroom, and participating in nonacademic activities with other students who have disabilities and students that are not disabled. The plan also defines transitional services that will go into effect at the age of 16 (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A) and (d)(6)).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Act that was created to "protect the rights of students to have access to a free appropriate education designed to meet the unique

needs of students with disabilities within the least restrictive environment" (20 U.S.C. 1400(d)).

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): IDEA defines the Least Restrictive Environment as *"*an environment where students with disabilities participate in the general education environment to the maximum extent appropriate. Removal from the LRE should only occur when the disability inhibits the student from using supplemental aids and services for learning" (20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(5)(A)).

Mainstreaming: Providing opportunities for students with disabilities to receive academic instruction in age appropriate student groups in which expectations are commensurate with their peers without disabilities (National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 2004).

Modification: A change in instruction that result in a student working toward a different standard or goal to the others in the same grade (Ysseldyke, 2001).

Perception: An impression based on an attitude or understanding based on what is observed or thought. The process by which individuals interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world (Encarta World English Dictionary, 2007).

*Regular or General Education: "*The program of education that typically developing children should receive, based on state standards and evaluated by the annual state educational standards test" (Webster, 2015).

Special Education: IDEA defines special education as "specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability" (20 U.S.C. 1401(a)(16)).

Students with disabilities: Students with disabilities is defined by IDEA as students with "mental retardation, hearing impairments including deafness, speech or language impairments, visual impairments including blindness, serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments,

autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, specific learning disabilities, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities and who because of those impairments need special education and related services" (20 U.S.C. 1401(a)(1)).

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were identified for this study:

1. The information that will be gathered in this study is confined to Alabama 9th through 12th secondary public school administrators.

2. Results will be limited to the extent that Alabama 9th through 12th secondary public school administrators will respond with their honest feelings.

Assumptions of the Study

1. Alabama 9th through 12th secondary public school administrators will respond to items on the survey instrument in a manner that reflects their true feelings.

2. Alabama 9th through 12th secondary public school administrators will have some previous knowledge of the rights of students with disabilities according the federal guidelines of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended in 2004.

3. Alabama 9th through 12th secondary public school administrators will have some previous experience interacting with a student with a disability in a public school setting.

4. The survey instrument will be sensitive to administrators' attitudinal characteristics.

Method and Procedure for Analyzing the Data

The study surveyed Alabama administrators of 9th through 12th secondary level education in public school. The study was designed to identify the perceptions of inclusion of secondary level administrators at the 9th through 12th grade in the state of Alabama. The study

identified to what extent there is a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level administrators' perceptions of inclusion and their: age, gender, number of special education college credits earned, number of special education inservice hours earned, amount of special education training. The survey was broken down into three categories: Section I – Inclusion Scenario, Section II –Experience and Training, and Section III – Demographic Information. The survey was conducted using Qualtrics email services, contacts through school websites and paper surveys distributed during MEGA conference.

This was a quantitative study that utilized survey methodology to collect data. The study incorporated a nonexperimental, descriptive research design. Survey responses, the general commentary, and demographic information were categorized and tabulated, frequency counts, repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance and pairwise comparison were generated via *Statistical Package for the Social Science Version 23* (SPSS version 23)*, (2015)*. Each Likert-scaled question response was assigned numeric values to establish a code for each variable. Quantitative and descriptive data such as item sums, frequency distributions, mean scores, and standard deviations were analyzed from the data collected. The statistical assumptions associated with the parametric tests (e.g. independent samples *t*-tests and multiple regression) and confirmatory factor analysis were tested in order to ensure the statistical conclusion validity of the data. Statistical significance was determined by an alpha of .05. This study used an independent-measures design.

Organization of the Study

Chapter one presented the introductory statement, statement of the research problem, need for the study, purpose of the study, research questions, statement of the null hypotheses, definition of terms, limitations of the study, assumptions of the study, method and purpose for

analyzing the data, organization of the study, and the significance of the study. Chapter two contains the review of literature and research related to administrators' perceptions of inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Chapter three will describe the methodology and procedures used for the study. Chapter four will report the results of analyses and findings of the study. Chapter five will include a summary of the study, findings, and conclusions. Chapter five will also contain discussion and recommendations for further study. Chapters one, two, three and five will be presented in narrative. Chapter four will encompass narrative, tables (statistical and others), illustrative figures and graphs.

Significance of the Study

With the increase of legislation regulating education and educational practices, public schools are experiencing an increase in inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes. As the leader in the school, the administrator directly influences resource allocations, staffing, structures, information flows, and operating processes that determine what will and will not be done by faculty and staff (Nanus, 1992). An administrator's leadership position and perception of inclusion could affect efforts made to offer opportunities for students with disabilities to become more integrated in to general education classrooms. A principal's expression of commitment for the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes through a positive attitude is integral to the success of the inclusion program (Urton et al., 2014; Forlin, Earle, Loremann, & Sharma, 2011; Bruns & Mogharreban, 2007; Dyal et al., 1996; Evans, Bird, Ford, Green, & Bischoff, 1992; Rude & Anderson, 1992).

An assessment of the administrators' current perceptions of inclusion may prove beneficial in planning, designing and implementing inclusion programs within their schools and professional development programs to prepare faculty to work with and serve students with

disabilities efficiently and effectively. Responses of Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level public school administrators on the survey may assist public school administrators with creating positive corresponding beliefs and skills about inclusion so that students with disabilities can succeed with their peers. The findings from this research may be useful for future descriptive as well as comparative studies, to assist professional education personnel in developing specialize programs to address the needs of students with disabilities, and to design appropriate services and accommodation

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout history, persons with disabilities and their advocates have supported and campaigned for the rights of individuals with disabilities to be included as equals in social and economic aspects of society. Author Pearl S. Buck and actor Dale Evans Rogers used their public persona to bring awareness to the needs of individuals with disabilities when they opened their hearts and homes to the world through articles in *Ladies' Home Journal* (1950 and 1953) that shared the struggles their families faced living with their child's disability. President John F. Kennedy was also very open about his sister's condition which led to an increased role of the federal government in special education during the 1960s.The disabled individuals' and their advocates' desires for basic rights was the spark that ignited the special education movement that brought about change that resulted in a paradigm shift from one educational ideology to another.

As early as the sixteenth century through the mid twentieth century, society was reluctant to recognize the need to educate individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities were viewed as limited and lacked the ability to move beyond their disabilities (Smart, 2009). In situations where students with disabilities were allowed to attend public schools, the courses were inferior, opportunities were limited, and resources scant, causing achievement gaps to occur (Hewitt, 2011). These educational deficiencies alerted advocates to greater problems that existed below the surface of what was consistently being observed in the public schools that delivered services to students with disabilities (Hardman & Dawson, 2008; Orfield, Kim, Sunderman, & Greer, 2004; Ysseldyke, Nelson, Christenson, Johnson, Dennison, & Trienzenburg, 2004). In

response to the insufficiencies, special education advocates fought for the rights of children with special needs and as a result, the federal government established Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, enacted Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA) in 1975 and implemented it in 1977, and enacted Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 (Bartlett, Weisenstein, & Etscheidt, 2002, p.4). The EHA later became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The original legislation has been revised several times, most notably with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), passed in 1990. Further revisions of IDEA, combined with the extensive reach of the ADA (also passed in 1990); have contributed to today's complex and ambitious approach to special education. As of 2002, federal law recognized 13 categories of disability, and persons with disabilities under the age of twenty-two are entitled to a wide variety of educational programs and support services through public schools. Consequently, special education has become a significant and highly visible component of American education, directly or indirectly affecting the lives of virtually every student and teacher in the nation's public education system (Osgood, 2005, p. 1).

Special education is comprised of students who have a disability whether it is physical, intellectual or emotional. At the dawn of the twentieth century, the nation had about 15 million students enrolled in K-12 public schools; at the dawn of the twenty-first century, that number approached 47 million. In 1900, only 6.4 percent of 17-year-olds were graduating from high school. A century later, that figure rose to more than 72 percent (Cross, 2004, p. 1). "The world population of persons with disabilities has been estimated to include as many as 550 million, nearly twice the entire population of the United States. In the United States alone, 54 million people have a disability" (Jaeger & Bowman, 2005, p. ix). Even though disabilities are a part of our everyday life, individuals with disabilities do not receive the appropriate attention.

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Theoretical Foundation

Idealistically, inclusion education best reflects all students' rights to an education and equal opportunities. Theoretically, inclusion education refers to full-time placement of all students, in the age-appropriate grade, located at the students' neighborhood school, no matter what the degree of disability may be (Hausstatter & Connolley, 2012; Kavale & Forness, 2000; Idol, 1997a; Lipsky & Gartner, 1996; National Study of Inclusive Education, 1995). If the general education classroom is not considered to be the LRE for a student with disabilities, then that student will be allowed to receive supplemental services outside of the general education classroom. Allowing a student with disabilities to leave the general education classroom, in theory, violates the concept of inclusive education, perpetuating the earlier practice of segregation.

There are numerous theories, beliefs and models that address a student's learning environment which, for students with disabilities, must be the LRE. When considering one's environment, the social aspect moves to the forefront. While some argue that viewing inclusion as more of a social rather than an academic benefit is problematic (Avissar, 2007), Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory should not be disregarded. Festinger's (1954) theory links the nature of people's social comparisons to their self-evaluations. Hence, the social comparison theory provides a useful framework for investigating the impact of school on young people's relative view of self which could have a beneficial or detrimental effect on how well one performs in school. Inclusion education suggests the need for a shift from segregation from the general education environment to full interaction with students in a general education classroom in order to develop relationships that can influence learning and behavior. According to

Bronfenbrenner and Morris' (1998) model, a child's development results from multiple interactions with his immediate environment, for example his family and school. Bronfenbrenner and Morris' (1998) model suggests that a shift in the child's environment can greatly affect their development in a negative or positive manner. Riehl (2000) takes a position between two theoretical trends: first, a sociological theory that considers the school to be an institutionalized organization and, second, a theory about organizational sense-making, a framework that considers the school to be both a cognitive and social construction. Riehl's (2000) framework goes a step further and addresses the importance of the role of administrators and their influence on the learning environment. At the core of Riehl's theory is the significance of understanding students, faculty, and community values. The theories of Festinger, Bronfenbrenner, Morris and Riehl encourage and allow for administrators to have the possibility of modifying the social and academic environments of their schools by establishing practice, procedure and routines that promotes an environment that embraces inclusive education.

In the field of social sciences, researchers are provided with a wealth of knowledge to assist with developing new theories of how individuals learn. In the late nineteenth century, William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead, all supported a philosophical movement of functionalism – belief in adapting - in conjunction with pragmatism. Their theories were accepted and practiced until the 1920's, when John Watson and B. F. Skinner developed the theory of behaviorism which "was both the child of functionalism and throwback to tough-minded empiricism" (Bredo, 1997, p. 16). Their theory withstood criticisms until the early 1960's when, yet again, another shift occurred when Noam Chomsky, Jerome Bruner, and Herbert Simon developed the cognitivist theory which involved "the goal of learning shifting from getting the right answer to using the right process" (Bredo 1994, p. 27). While the

cognitivist theory may have appeared to be superlative to all other theories, the theory's reign was limited to a period of approximately 20 years.

During the 1980's the cognitivists' ideas quickly gave way to situated learning which made the "assertion that thinking and learning are fundamentally dependent for their proper functioning on the immediate situation of action" (Bredo, 1997; Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). Hubert Dreyfus, Lev Vygotsky, and Jean Lave, although very different, revived some of the functionalists' ideas through their studies. Each theory allowed for further research while providing an existing, scientifically-grounded body of knowledge for new future research. The learning theories shifts experienced over the last 100 years are typical of paradigm shifts which "gained their status because they were more successful than their competitors in solving a few problems" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 23).

Inclusion Paradigm Shift

No matter what the latest remarkable discovery is, human nature drives us to continue to look for a deeper meaning of life. Human nature demands further understanding of why occurrences manifest in the way they do. Historical data offers researchers, scientists, educators, scholars, and even enthusiasts answers to today's problems. One key to finding answers is to analyze and associate solutions of the past to problems of the present. In *The Structure of Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* Thomas Kuhn (1996) shows that throughout history, scientists have worked with a knowledge base provided by their predecessors. Scientists pat and present strive to "force nature into conceptual boxes" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 5), so that they may explain natural phenomena. Nature, however, is wild and open, and rarely conforms to human restrictions.

Kuhn (1996) refers to the body of knowledge used by researchers as "'normal science'"

(p. 10; emphasis in original). "'Normal science' means research firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 10; emphasis in original). A key element to understanding normal science is that the scientific community accepts the achievement, or "'paradigm'" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 10; emphasis in original), for a period of time.

According to the rules of paradigms, individuals accept what is discovered until something, or someone else, comes along and changes the scientific community's ideology. Linda Ware (2005) summarized Althusser's (1971, 1974/1976) explanation of an ideology as being "a system of representations (images, myths, ideas, beliefs) that, in profoundly unconscious ways, mediate understanding of the world" (p. 20). When an ideology changes, Kuhn (1996) refers to the change as a shift, a phenomenon he coined as the "paradigm shift". In order for the shift to occur, the achievement, or paradigm, must meet two specific criteria: the "achievement is sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity", while "simultaneously, it was sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 10). "It is precisely through this process that a body of knowledge develops" (Kunc, 2000, p. 77).

Due to the pursuit of equality in education and an inclusive environment, special education offers scholars infinite opportunities for research in the areas of paradigm shifts and new ideologies. The original ideology of educating students with disabilities was students were best served in classrooms with other children with disabilities. Researchers have argued that educating students with disabilities within the general education classroom has caused many difficulties to arise (Guetzloe, 1999) and separate settings often better address the students' needs

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(Kauffman, Mantz, & McCullough, 2002) even though exclusionary practices are contradictory

to the goals of inclusion and special education (Obiakar, Harris, Mutua, Rotatori, & Algozzine,

2012). This ideology allowed for students to receive individualized attention, special materials

and a curriculum designed for their needs which became a hallmark for special education.

However, inconsistencies in the delivery of services for students with disabilities brought

awareness to the validity of segregating individuals with disabilities from their non-disabled

peers. These inconsistencies led to the demand of new paradigms which included Tomko's

(1996) idea that "instead of getting the children ready for the regular class, the regular class gets

ready for the child" (p. 1). Educators are continuously searching for a new ideology that will

make the learning process easier and more successful (Samson, 2011). With the latest legislation

of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 emphasizing the educating of an increasing

number of secondary students with exceptional needs in inclusive environments and including 99

percent of students in state-standardized assessments, administrators and both general and special

educators are examining the feasibility of and responsibility for providing individualized

instruction to students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Paradigm shifts can

offer the new ideologies they are searching for with the hopes of finding the solutions to their

problems. However, the solutions are focused on a limited area which in effect allows for other

researchers to begin the cycle of improving upon existing knowledge and introducing a new

ideological shift.

History of Special Education

Long before the most prominent special education legislation - the Elementary and

Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act

(EAHCA) Public Law 94-142 of 1975, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education

Act (IDEA) reauthorized in 2004, and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 reauthorized in 2015 - educating students with special needs and disabilities stimulated much debate over how to address the needs of students with disabilities (Bartlett et al., 2002). In Europe, as early as the sixteenth century, people lived in a culture of fear and superstitions which led to the seclusion and institutionalization of individuals with disabilities. Thus, seclusion and institutionalization, that was designed to isolate and segregate disabled and/or despised individuals or groups, had a long history in Europe prior to and even concurrent with the colonization of North America. In colonial North America, these traditional views and practices regarding the disabled and other marginalized groups took root. Conditions such as deafness, blindness, abject poverty, "unusual" behavior, mental illness, and intellectual disability certainly existed, and persons exhibiting one or more of these qualities were typically stigmatized, ostracized, or otherwise isolated from the mainstream (Osgood, 2005, p. 19; emphasis in original). Fear of the unusual ignited the eugenics movement, where individuals were falsely educated that a disability was hereditary and led to criminal behavior. In 1909, Fernald (2012) wrote, "Every imbecile, especially the high-grade imbecile, is a potential criminal, needing only the proper environment and opportunity for the development and expression of his criminal tendencies" (p. 314). Consequently, this type of belief was ingrained in the early education policies and practices of educating students with disabilities. For the most part, individuals established patterns of response grounded in fear, suspicion, contempt, and cruelty. Disabilities and their interpretations by society created a minority group that was neglected and isolated for centuries. The lack of clarity and understanding of the nature of the conditions themselves, the frequent ascription of the cause of such conditions to demonic or satanic possession, and the fundamental realities of a universal existence lived mostly in chronic poverty, disease,

malnutrition, and debasement ensured that social responses to such individuals would rarely elicit tolerance or compassion (WHO, 2011; U. S. Department of Education, 2008; Orfield & Lee, 2005; Osgood, 2005; Safford, P. & Safford, E., 1996; Winzer, 1993; Scheerenberger, 1983; Sigmon, 1983; Windle & Scully, 1976; Kanner, 1964). Society's attitudes and perceptions of students with special needs, such as those mentioned above, have hindered efforts towards inclusion and constant agitatation causing unrest among everyone involved.

Since the nineteenth century, the question of whether children with disabilities should be taught alongside, or separate from, children not so identified has generated tremendous heated discussion (Algozzine & Ysseldyke, 2006; Artiles, Harris-Murri, & Rostenberg, 2006; King, 2003; Kauffman, 2002; Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995). At the center of the discussion lies the fundamental issue of just how special or exclusive the education of students with disabilities should be. Without deep and total ideological conversion among those with the power to shape schools, schooling will always be "at risk" for having unfair, inequitable, humiliating, and painful practices (Brantlinger, 2005). Throughout the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, efforts were made to assist individuals with disabilities, nevertheless, individuals with disabilities remained firmly entrenched at the margins of society, and those who were publicly identified as disabled held and were offered little if any hope of an equitable education (Osgood, 2005; Winzer 1993). As a result, a disabled child was treated as a patient rather than a student.

In 1902, the annual meeting of the National Education Association formally introduced the term "special education" to America's professional educators. The term reflected the advent of what at the time was a new yet undeniably significant trend in public schools: the establishment and support of a multitude of specialized, segregated classes and programs that

assumed responsibility for most, and usually all, of the instruction of students identified as disabled. A child with disabilities was viewed as a problem for the teacher and less likely to learn anything of academic value. Segregated classes for students with disabilities were the norm and viewed as the best method of delivering basic skills for daily living. Combined with the school programs of the residential institutions for deaf, blind, and mentally disabled persons, these settings established a tradition of segregated instruction for exceptional children (Osgood, 2005). Historically, special education was considered advancement in education. In fact, paradoxically, special education has proved to be a reversal in the trend toward inclusion (Villa & Thousand, 2000). Wallin (1924/1976) reflected on what he considered to be the reasons underlying the permanence of special classes in public schools:

> On the one hand, great relief was afforded the normal pupils and the regular class teachers by the removal of the flotsam and jetsam, the hold back and rags, who retard the progress of the class and often created difficulty problems of discipline. On the other hand, the deficient pupils themselves began to respond in the special class as they had never responded before, under the influence of individual attention and guidance, deferential training adapted to individual needs and the personal touch of a sympathetic, understanding, and properly trained teacher (p. 41).

During the first half of the twentieth century human rights began to gain greater attention resulting in a review of guidelines and procedures used when educating individuals with disabilities. The federally mandated compulsory attendance law that excluded students with disabilities in the early twentieth century began to receive criticism (Stainback, W. & Stainback, S., 1995). The lack of community services for children with disabilities caused parents to grow frustrated and vocal in their desires for reform. Policy makers began to listen and preparations

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were made to modernize polices that restricted the rights of individuals with disabilities. Educators, interest groups that supported the rights of individuals with disabilities and child advocates seized the opportunity to scrutinize and redefine the rights granted to students with disabilities. Even though it took several years for true reform, the government responded with passing more than 100 federal laws to improve the quality of life for all people (Croser, 2002).

During the 1950s and 1960s, attention was drawn to the discrepancies between students with disabilities and general education students. Students with disabilities were not given the same freedom as their non-disabled peers to pursue an education. The awareness of these discrepancies began laying the groundwork for dramatic changes in the education of students with disabilities. Special interest groups took the initiative to educate the public on the issues people with disabilities were facing, while legislation was passed with the intent to assist those individuals. The movement for civil rights and the support of John F. Kennedy's administration also contributed to the continued heightened awareness of the rights of individuals with disabilities (Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997).

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled in the case of Brown v. Topeka Board of Education, that "separate but equal" did not equate to an "equal" education for students whose race was other than Caucasian. The court's ruling constituted a significant step towards removing the racial barriers that existed within the educational environment between the education of Caucasian and African-American students. Increasing awareness of the need to provide equal opportunities for all students regardless of their differences influenced the court's decision. The court further delineated that these differences should not serve as an opportunity for persecution or alienation in education. State governments were pressed to end segregation and begin the process of ending seclusion by establishing an integrated learning environment within their

school systems and welcoming different types of students within the classroom.

The Congressional Joint Commission regarding mental health and mental illness was established when Congress passed the Mental Health Study Act in 1955 (Croser, 2002). The 1960 election of President John F. Kennedy also aided the crusade for the rights of individuals with disabilities. President Kennedy was especially fond of his oldest sister Rose, who was born with an intellectual disability. At age 15, she was sent to the Sacred Heart Convent in Elmhurst, Providence, Rhode Island where she was educated separately from other students. As she grew older, she became more assertive and rebellious, which prompted her father to allow doctors to perform a lobotomy. The lobotomy failed and as a result left her further incapacitated. The family always hid Rose from the public's eye until her brother honored her by using her story as motivation to reduce the confinement of people with mental illness. He established programs that provided services to allow disabled and mentally ill individuals to live at home or in a facility located in or near their hometown. He demanded an increase in community services and the process of deinstitutionalization was reviewed and refined. President Kennedy's affection for his sister inspired him to make considerable advancements in the rights for all people with disabilities. Rose's disability also motivated her father to establish and endow philanthropies for people with developmental disabilities, inspired her sisters, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, to establish the Special Olympics and Jean Kennedy Smith to start Very Special Arts and her nephew, Anthony Shriver, to found Best Buddies (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, 2015).

The first half of the 1960's produced an abundance of federal laws in an attempt to assist and support individuals with disabilities. Public Law 88-64, also known at the Community Mental Health Act (CMHA), was passed in 1963, to allow federal funding for mental health

facilities. That same year, mothers with no to low-income who had children that were at risk of mental disabilities were provided financial and educational assistance in accordance with Public Law 88-156. A year later, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Public Law 88-352, introduced Title IV, which specifically addressed the desegregation of public education. The title stated that all people "without regard to their race, color, religion, sex or national origin" had access to elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions. (PL 88-352). The Act ended racial segregation, outlawed most forms of discrimination in the workplace, school, public facilities, and separate requirements based on racialized distinctions. This legislation also clarified some of the rights of women. The idea that no one could be denied services based on race, color, religion, national origin and gender, stimulated conversations and later legislation based on the idea that also one could not deny services on the basis of a disability (Croser, 2002). Public Law 89-313 was passed a year later and became known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Amendments of 1965, it provided funding for the education of and assistance to students with disabilities. Two years later the Mental Retardation Amendments of 1967, Public Law 90-170, created funding and services for community-based retardation services and facilities (Croser, 2002; Browning, 1997). Special education activists and parents now had the legislation to aide their goal of including students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Overcoming individuals' attitudes, however, was an entirely different battle.

Prior to 1975 more than one million students with disabilities (cognitive, emotional, sensory, and physical) were denied a public education (Lasky & Karge, 2006). Between 1970 and 1975, however, the number of school districts implementing pilot efforts in the integration of special education and regular education, and the literature describing and interpreting these efforts, increased dramatically. According to a 1974 study, four factors proved instrumental in

stimulating these efforts: the failure of research to establish the effectiveness of special classes; the recognition of the cultural bias and consequent inappropriate diagnosis of children as disabled, especially those from minority and/or disadvantaged backgrounds; the counterproductive, even debilitating effects of labeling; and court litigation establishing the right of disabled children to an equitable and appropriate education in regular education settings to the maximum extent possible (Wessels, 1991; Blatt, 1986).

In the 1960's, Congress passed several pieces of legislation aimed at assimilating children with disabilities into the general classroom; in the early 1970's, however, segregation of individuals with disabilities was still pervasive. Efforts were made in the past decade to end the segregation of certain groups which sparked the need to include people with disabilities. Courts continued to pass legislation concerning the rights of individuals and began to include "the world's largest (multicultural) minority" (Anderson, 2003, p. 5), individuals with disabilities. Legal actions affirmed and courts recognized the rights of students with disabilities to a free, public education as being encompassed by their civil rights (McCarthy, Weiner, & Soodak, 2012). Antidiscrimination laws were established to allow persons with disabilities access to "education, employment, the political system, the judicial system, and many other major parts of society" (Jaeger & Bowman, 2005, p. 1). In 1970, Congress modified the CMHA by adding language that introduced the term "developmental disability" and expanded the population covered under the law beyond individuals with mental retardation to include individuals with cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and certain other neurological conditions that originate before the age of 18 (U.S. Department of Human and Health Services, 2015). As a result, CMHA Public Law 88-64 became known as Public Law 91-517, the Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Amendments.

As federal legislation grew in magnitude, states began to follow suit with passing

legislation that expanded services to include people with disabilities. Between 1971 and 1975, at

least 46 "right to education" cases, stemming from the 1954 civil rights case *Brown v. Topeka*

Board of Education, were decided in 28 states; together they helped determine that the right of a

handicapped child to participate in a publicly supported educational program was not to be

questioned. Children with mental retardation, a term used frequently for that time period, were

routinely denied access to public school, based on their "ineligibility" which was guided by the

American Association of Mental Deficiency (AAMD) standards. The dogmatic doctrine of

determining eligibility, or rather ineligibility, was a practice found in many states prior to 1975

with students being classified mentally retarded if they had an IQ less than 85. The AAMD,

which became known as the American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR) and

currently is referred to as the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental

Disabilities (AAIDD), responded to the growing concern for the rights of individuals with

special needs and revised their guidelines in 1973, with numerous states ignoring them until two

years later. The standards determined that students were classified educable – IQ 50-55 to

approximately 70, trainable – IQ 35-40 to 50-55, or custodial – IQ below 35. The students who

were categorized as custodial were considered incapable of benefitting from training or

educational programs and excluded from public schools (Colker, 2006). Parents of custodial

children were limited to the following options: they could send their child to private school,

keep their children at home and provide care without sending them to school, hire a private tutor,

or institutionalize their child (Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia, 2015). Students who

were considered to be educable or trainable were educated but usually in isolation from general

education students where most, if not all, of the instruction would occur in isolation, either in

separate schools or classrooms (McCarthy et al., 2012). In other states where students with disabilities were allowed to attend public schools, they attended school in separate facilities, away from their general education peers (Mayberry & Lazarus, 2002). The state of Alabama, with a budget of 50 cents a day per patient, was ranked 50th out of 50 states for expenditures for the care of individuals with mental illness or mental retardation in public institutions. In 1971, a U. S. District Court in Alabama determined that individuals in institutions for the disabled could no longer be dumped and left behind, but must be given the opportunities to be rehabilitated, treated, and educated (Carr, 2004).

Prior to 1975, Pennsylvania state law, like many states, allowed public schools to deny services to children who did not meet the AAMD requirement of an IQ greater than 84 or who did not have a mental age of five years by the start of first grade. As a result of continued prejudicial determination of ineligibility, the Pennsylvania chapter of the Association for Retarded Citizens (PARC, a group initially started by parents) brought a class action lawsuit in federal district court on behalf of children ages 6 to 21 with mental retardation in the state of Pennsylvania against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The case referenced the Fourteenth Amendment − Equal Protection of the Laws clause of the U. S. Constitution which stated:

> No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws (*PARC v. Pennsylvania*, 1972).

The case also cited the Fifth Amendment, which accounts for due process in the U. S. Constitution. Due process provided protection for the legal rights of individuals by establishing guidelines for conducting federal legal proceedings which grew to include state governmental

activities. PARC argued that the state's statutes violated due process because they lacked

provision for notice and a hearing before a child with retardation was excluded from public

school. The plaintiffs based their argument on the premise that the state's statutes randomly

denied educational rights to children with retardation. They believed that the Commonwealth of

Pennsylvania could not deny students with mental retardation their right to a free education due

to their obligation to provide a free, public education and training for all children. The plaintiffs

were enraged with Pennsylvania's uneducated deduction that children with mental retardation

were uneducable and untrainable. PARC believed that children with mental retardation could

experience progress with the appropriate education and develop skills by providing them with

training opportunities. PARC also proved with research that the earlier that students with mental

retardation are afforded an education, a greater extent of learning could be predicted. The

defendants countered PARC's arguments by praising the efficacy of the state statutes that

determined ineligibility which relied heavily on school administrators and certified personnel

assessments and perceptions of the student. The defendants also argued against the

administrative and financial burden on schools systems that would follow the legal changes,

which continues to remain an encumbrance in present day. However, the Commonwealth of

Pennsylvania's defense failed to sway the court. Consequently, individuals up to age 21 were

allowed the right of entry to free, public schools "appropriate to his learning capacities" (*PARC

v. Pennsylvania*, 1972) in accordance with the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth

Amendment. Based on the Fifth Amendment's definition of due process, parents of students with

mental retardation would receive notification of any modification to the student's educational

status and allowed a due process hearing before any change was finalized. PARC was resolved

by consent decree, which was classified in 1975 on a national level as the Education for All

Handicapped Children Act, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The court ordered school districts to start the process of providing free, public education to "severely handicapped children" (*PARC v. Pennsylvania*, 1972). The process included the identification of students in need of services, development of individualized education plans for each student, and the incorporation of related therapeutic services. Teachers, aides, related services providers, support personnel and parents were provided training in the area of educating a severely handicapped child to secure effective involvement. The Commonwealth Department of Education began evaluating budgets for federal funding of the program process and sustained program services. They also monitored the implementation and effectiveness of the education program, training and related services being provided. The court's decree of *PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (1972) laid the foundation for the establishment of the right to an education for all children with disabilities. The case also established the standard that each child must be offered an individualized education. The case further stipulated that whenever possible, students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms rather than segregated from the general education population, therefore placing them in the LRE (Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia, 2015; Horrocks, White & Roberts, 2008).

  PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1972) ended quickly with a consent decree, while simultaneously giving life to another similar case in the District of Columbia that reached the Supreme Court under the same principles of which *PARC* (1972) case was brought. *Peter Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* (1972) addressed the issue of students with disabilities (behavior problems, mental retardation, hyperactivity, epilepsy, and physical impairments) that were not allowed to attend school because of the undue burden their disability would place on the school district to educate them. This case explored the issue of the District of

Columbia's violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. It also addressed whether or not the district was in violation of the stipulations governing ESEA Title VI federal program funds, and if these funds were being misused. The plaintiffs cited the Fourteenth Amendment, Fifth Amendment and the District of Columbia's Code of Education, which contained the requirements to provide education to all members of the district. They argued that constitutional law provided for all children with the right of equal protection and due process and that preventing them access to public schools, whether by exclusion, expulsion or transferal, violated their civil liberties. The defendants countered by providing proof of an effort to provide services, but a lack of funding to maintain those services resulted in the removal of the students. The District of Columbia's defense failed when it was found the district was not budgeting federal funding correctly, resulting in the misuse of funds. In accordance with the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, the court determined that students would be provided access to public schools. No changes to services or access would occur without a due process hearing based on the Fifth Amendment's definition of due process.

The outcome of *Peter Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* (1972), had a direct influence on the development of Public Law 94-142. It broadened the scope of the *PARC* (1971) case to include all disability categories and established the "zero reject" principle of Public Law 94-142, therefore establishing the fundamental constitutional right to education of all children with disabilities. *Mills* (1972) became known as the origin in Public Law 94-142 for labeling, placement, and exclusionary stages of decision making and parental right to a hearing, appeal, and records access. (University of Michigan Law School, 2015). The cases addressed not only the right of children with disabilities to attend public school – a practice routinely ignored by school districts unwilling or unable to accept them – but also helped establish the principle

that these children had the right to be taught in settings alongside their "normal" classmates (Osgood, 2005; Johnson, 1962, pp. 65-66). The Rehabilitation of Act of 1973's Section 504 directly confronted the discrimination of people with disabilities in public agencies or agencies receiving public funds including public elementary and secondary schools. Section 504 offered further protection of the rights of students with disabilities to have the same opportunities as non-disabled peers. Furthermore, the legislation offered a broader definition of disability than IDEA, allowing for a wider range of individuals to seek and receive special educational services. The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, Public Law 93-380 was reauthorized in 1974 to require states to develop procedures insuring that students with disabilities were given equal access to educational opportunities, transportation, information on federal impact aid programs, and consolidation of certain education program including the national reading improvement program. Provisions were made that required due process guaranteed in student placement, handicapped children be mainstreamed with the nonhandicapped to the maximum extent, that nondiscriminatory test and evaluation procedures be utilized, that confidentiality be preserved, and that the State plan be made available to parents and the general public (U. S. Congress, 1974).

Even though the Public Law 93-380 provided for a framework for inclusion, the most important policy change concerning education occurred in 1975 with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) Public Law 94-142, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Cross, 2004, p.149). IDEA provided funding for Public Law 93-380, however, its greatest accomplishment shifted the onus of assuming the primary responsibility of educating all children in the same general education setting to the public schools. The principle of "normalization" guided the development of the

federal legislation (Mayberry & Lazarus, 2002, p. 5). Public Law 94-142 was passed requiring

all children of school age, ages three through 21, to receive a free, appropriate public education

(FAPE) in the LRE (U. S. Department of Education, 2007b; Jaeger & Bowman, 2005; Moore,

2005; Osgood, 2005; Ware, 2005; Cross, 2004; IDEA, 2004; Bartlett et al., 2002; Mayberry &

Lazarus, 2002; Villa & Thousand, 2000; Safford, P. & Safford, E., 1996; Winzer, 1993; Blatt,

1986; Scheerenberger, 1983). Public Law 93-380, Public Law 94-142, Public Law 101-476, and

Public Law 105-17 – reflected Congress' preference for educating students with disabilities in

general classrooms with their peers; specifically, under Section 612.

> To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in
>
> public or private institutions and other care facilities, are educated with children who are
>
> not disabled, and 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 of the child is such that education in regular classes with the use
>
> of supplementary aid and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (IDEA, PL 101-476,
>
> § 612 [a][5]).

Public Law 94-142 mandated that students be educated, to the maximum extent appropriate, with

their typically developing peers in general education classrooms in their neighborhoods

(Mayberry & Lazarus, 2002; Yell & Drasgow, 1999). To establish a regimen of placement rather

than a mass exodus of special education students from special education classes and an invasion

in to general education classrooms, a continuum was established to define the types of supports

children with special needs would receive according to their specific circumstances. The degree

of need would then be used to determine the type of restrictive environment to which the child

would have access and in which environment the specific need could be met. Children whose

needs characterized them as being on the profound level were more often placed in a self-contained classroom which does not include any children without special needs. Children could no longer be excluded from public education solely on the basis of their disability; they were entitled to identification, diagnosis, and classification procedures that were free of bias and that used multiple sources of information; they were assured the right to the LRE, an instructional setting that was as close to that established for their regular education peers as feasible; they were granted the right to receive an education that was appropriate for their needs and abilities, as stipulated in an individual education program (IEP); and they were guaranteed due process of law in all aspects of implementing those rights. The law did not use the terms *integration, mainstreaming,* or *inclusion;* it did, however, challenge every school district in the country to render its schools significantly more accommodating and accepting of children with special needs, doing so in integrated settings to a much greater extent than ever before (Osgood, 2005, pp. 105-106; Dunn, 1968). The basic foundation of implementation was for administrators and teachers to systematically plan curriculum and instruction that meet the needs of academically diverse learners by honoring each student's learning needs and maximizing each student's learning capacity forever impacting the practice of teaching in the modern classroom. (Nevin, Falkenberg, Nullman, Salazar, & Silio, 2013; Tomlinson & Edison, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999). The law pushed schools to plan for the changes by allowing them a period of three years to prepare for the inclusion of all children (Villa & Thousand, 2000). However, even after laws were passed, the extent of interactions among special education and general education students, in many schools, occurred on the bus, in the lunchroom, on the playground, and in non-academic courses such as physical education and career technical education (Giangreco & Putnam, 1991).

The 1980s provided an extension of rights for individuals with disabilities by

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implementing programs to include newborns born with disabilities. These programs were put in

place in response to a medical case in which a newborn down syndrome baby was denied

medical care and allowed to starve because it was determined his life was not worth living and is

was in his family's best interests to allow him to die (Constable, Wallis, & Gribben, 1983). The

programs were instituted to safeguard the civil rights of newborns and was later intensified

prompting the passage of the Child Abuse and Treatment Act Amendments of 1984, Public Law

93-247, after a similar situation occurred.

The EAHCA of 1975 also experienced growth during the 1980s when it was amended

two different times. The first time occurred in 1983 when Public Law 98-199 reauthorized and

advanced programs that assisted with the transition from one phase of education to the next for

students with disabilities. Changes to the transition program were only reflected in demonstration

sites but were put into full effect in the 1990 reauthorization that mandated transition plans for

students with disabilities. Today, the transition plan is a fundamental element of a student with

disabilities IEP (Smart, 2009; Croser, 2002).

Public Law 99-457 was passed in 1986 with the intent to provide benefits to infants and

toddlers with disabilities. Funding was allotted to states who provided preschool programs for

students with disabilities ages three to five. Unfortunately, issues arose when programs were not

compliant with the federal legislation. Even though they knew from *Smith v. Robinson* (1984)

that they would have to bear the burden of court costs, child activists and parents of children with

disabilities began taking legal action against school systems that did not provide students with

disabilities appropriate and equitable services. The plaintiffs' voices resounded, and in 1986 not

only were school systems found legally responsible for providing inadequate services, but

Congress passed the Children's Protection Act, Public Law 99-372, allowing courts the ability

and authority under the law to force school systems to pay the legal fees of the parents of students with disabilities in legal actions and due process hearings.

The mid-1990s produced Public Law 103-239, or the School to Work Opportunities Act, and Public Law 103-227, or the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. The laws provided a methodical system for evaluating and restructuring state facilitated special education services. The legislation also improved initiatives to include work-based, school-based and connecting activities aimed at using applied academics and real work experiences to get students ready for the world of work. A third law was passed in the mid-1990s to reauthorize the ESEA and transfer the powers of the ESEA to IDEA to avoid duplicating services. The legislation became known as the Improving America's Schools Act, Public Law 103- 382 (Croser, 2002).

In 1997, IDEA was reauthorized and reaffirmed that students with disabilities have a right to education in the LRE, which, for the majority of students, meant the general education classroom. IDEA also further specified that the education to which they were entitled included access to the general education curriculum and participation in state assessments "whenever possible" (IDEA, 1997). Just as previous legislation left inclusion undefined, the law left the definition of "possible" unclear and up to the judgment of local education teams. This was later corrected in the 2001 reauthorization of the ESEA (1965), whose original purpose was to provide additional federal funds to improve the education of certain categories of children, including children with disabilities and was later amended in 1966 to provide funds for grants for programs for children with disabilities. ESEA was reauthorized and became known as No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which stated that all children in public education were general education children (U. S. Department of Education, 2001).

The NCLB legislation of 2001 (and the reauthorization of 2015) implemented a

standards-based education program that was established to improve the overall achievement of

all students. NCLB was not grounded in protecting rights for students with disabilities, however,

it resulted in furthering efforts to assist students in special education and related services. NCLB

required that 99 percent of students with disabilities receive standards-based curricula,

participate in state standardized assessments and be considered a separate subgroup when

reporting their performance during high-stakes testing. Prior to NCLB students with disabilities

were not included in statewide or national assessments (MacQuarrie, 2009). These new reforms

weighed heavy on administrators and teachers, particularly at the middle- and high-school level

due to significant content demands and the implications of high-stakes testing (Stodden,

Galloway, & Stodden, 2003). Educators and researchers posed numerous concerns with the dual

implementation of IDEA and NCLB. There was widespread concern over the presently existing

underachievement of students with disabilities and African American, Latino, Native American

and some Asian American students (Banks, 2002; Gay, 2000; Stodden et al., 2003) as well as the

disproportionate representation of students from ethnically and linguistically dissimilar groups in

special education (Donovan & Cross, 2002). The convergence of existing problems along with

new NCLB legislation found administrators and teachers struggling with implementation (Hall,

Strangman, & Meyer, 2003). There was added concern for the level of stress students with

disabilities would feel to perform which could possibly undermine educators' efforts to adapt the

general education setting for disabled individuals. A study conducted by the Indiana Institute of

Disability and Community noted that since NCLB efforts were put in place there has been a

higher drop-out rate for students with disabilities (Indiana University, 2006, p. 4). In response to

the concerns, in 2008, the National Council on Disability submitted a progress report to the

President of United States reflecting the level of support of NCLB. The support ranged from

desiring higher expectations for all students to debate over why special education was causing

controversy. The Council also questioned the compatibility of IDEA and NCLB and the overall

effectiveness of NCLB. The Council submitted six recommendations for improvements:

1. Maintain high expectations for students with disabilities and continue to
   disaggregate outcome data by subgroups.

2. Develop the capacity of teachers to provide differentiated instruction and more
   rigorous curricula.

3. Create incentives to attract, recruit, and retain special education teachers.

4. Align NCLB and IDEA data systems and definitions.

5. Ensure that students with disabilities are measured on more than just academic
   skills attainment.

6. Increase funding for special education.

(National Council on Disability, 2008).

Even though IDEA and NCLB required a huge shift in almost every aspect of education,

both laws worked well together to provide a more purposeful experience for students with

disabilities in the general education classroom setting. IDEA expected schools to rapidly shift to

a full inclusive education environment, however, the lack of a concise definition of inclusion left

room for interpretation which impeded the acceptance and change it expected. It was in the years

following the passage of NCLB that significant numbers of students with disabilities finally

gained access to general education. NCLB's accountability measures pressured schools to

guarantee and verify that necessary adjustments in instruction and services were made to include

students with disabilities. Although some data suggest that secondary students with disabilities

have shown improvement on standardized assessment, their performance does not correspond

with that of their typical peers (Stodden et al., 2003).

Defining Inclusion

Following in the footsteps of integration and mainstreaming, the much discussed and debated paradigm shift of inclusion is becoming more relevant in the education arena. The greatest debate is the use, and consequently the meaning, of this term varying widely depending on the user, the context, and the purposes involved (Osgood, 2005). Reaching an agreement on a strict legal definition that will apply to all situations has not been accomplished by special education federal legislation. The general goal of inclusion is to provide more opportunities for students with and without disabilities to spend time together (Rice, 2006). Recent research has shown that peer interaction and peer instruction increases the performance and learning of all students (Allison, 2012). Inherent in many definitions of inclusion is the notion of change, specifically in regard to restructuring the ways in which schools are currently organized (Tomko, 2006; Pugach & Johnson, 2003; Sailor, 2002). The goal of restructuring a school should be to ensure that all students can experience the entire spectrum of academic opportunities and social interactions. Administrators and teachers are not the only stakeholders in the process of restructuring and providing equal opportunities within the school. Parents, families, peers and community volunteers also have a responsibility to support the reformation by exhibiting and supporting a commitment to and good will for individuals with disabilities.

The idea of inclusion is thought to have derived from the civil rights movement. The civil rights movement followed the principle of equity, access, and opportunity for students of different racial backgrounds. Inclusion united with that principle to encompass students with disabilities (Bilken, 1992; Rizvi & Lingard, 1995). Denying a student full inclusion is essentially a civil rights violation (Stainback, S. & Stainback, W., 1992). In the field of education, those

human rights are recognized when strategies are developed to equalize the opportunities for students with disabilities. Education is considered to be the great equalizer; therefore strategies have been developed that seek to provide equal opportunities within general education classrooms where all students will receive an equal and quality education. Inclusion is also viewed as having to do with the politics of recognition (Tomko, 2006; Armstrong, Armstrong, & Barton, 2000; Corbett & Slee, 2000); for instance, Corbett and Slee viewed inclusion as a "political and social struggle to enable the valuing of difference and identity" (p. 134). Still other interpretations of inclusion remind educators that the goal of inclusion is to create welcoming contexts for *all* students in school (Lipsky & Gartner, 1996; National Study of Inclusive Education, 1995). Such a stance differs from "integration" or "mainstreaming" in that these processes focus on assimilating students into the already existing tracks of general and special education

The term *inclusion*, if left up to the educator, may mean full participation in general education classrooms to one administrator, while for another it may mean simply allowing them to participate in social activities such as sports and clubs. Idol (1997b) defined inclusion as:

When a student with special learning and / or behavioral needs is educated full-time in the general education program. Essentially, inclusion means that a student with special education needs attends the general school program, enrolled in age appropriate classes 100 percent of the school day. There are no levels or degrees of inclusion. There is no such thing as partial inclusion as this is simply more of what has been done for a long time in the name of mainstreaming (p. 384).

The National Study of Inclusive Education (1995) defined inclusion as the:

Provision of services to students with disabilities, including those with severe disabilities,

in the neighborhood school, in age - appropriate general education classes, with the

necessary supports and supplementary aids (for the child and the teacher) both to assure

the child's success – academic, behavioral, and social – and to prepare the child to

participate as a full and contributing member of society (p 3).

Inclusion may take place at different levels and under different circumstances throughout the

school day depending on the individual needs of the learners and the obtainability of school

resources (Kimbrough & Mellen, 2012). Some classrooms are set up so that students with

disabilities are placed in the classroom and then sent to the back of the room to work one-on-one

with a paraprofessional or a special education teacher on something else less demanding. This

practice not only segregates students with special needs within the general education classroom

but also creates a distraction that has a negative effect on general education students and students

with special needs. One-on-one instruction could be considered suitable if offered to all students

rather than only students with disabilities. Determining just how special – or exclusive – the

education of exceptional children is a fundamental issue in determining the LRE.

When considering the meaning of *inclusion* "it wields far-reaching repercussions on

issues of school organization and administration; classroom management; teacher recruitment,

training, and retention; and especially on planning and implementing instruction for all students,

not just those identified as disabled" (Osgood, 2005, p. 2). McLeskey and Waldron (2000) define

inclusion as having the following components:

- "Students with disabilities attend their neighborhood schools or the school they
  would attend if they were not disabled."

- "Each child has an age-appropriate general education classroom."

- "Every student is accepted and regarded as a full and valued member of the class

- "Special education supports are provided within the context of the general education classroom."

- "All students receive an education that addresses their individual needs."

- "A natural proportion of students with disabilities attend any school and classroom."

- "No child is excluded on the basis of type and degree of disability."

- "The school promotes cooperative/collaborative teaching arrangements."

- "There is a building-based planning, problem solving, and ownership of all student and programs". (p. 50)

To summarize McLeskey and Waldron's perspective, special education should no longer be viewed as a separate class for students with disabilities but rather a cluster of services that will follow the disabled student into the general education classroom in the neighborhood school setting. The critical feature of successful inclusion is what happens (i.e., services and evidence-based practices provided) more than where it occurs (i.e., placement or setting in which instruction is provided) (Obiakor, Harris, Mutua, Rotatori, & Algozzine, 2012).

Due to the constant evaluation and assessment of special education, terms associated with special education are constantly redefined. Consequently, the descriptors, nomenclature, and labels that describe theory, purpose, and practice related to disability have undergone considerable alteration – even when describing similar phenomena. The shifts from one meaning to another have been significant because they reflect not only dissatisfaction or discomfort with previously accepted terms and their implications but also anticipation of the possibilities and promise that new ones suggest. Such changes are common in the development of an idea such as

inclusion, where a multiplicity of intellectual, social, practical, and ethical concerns interact with human experience to create disequilibrium and generate reinvention (Osgood, 2005, p. 5).

An individual's or education system's understanding of inclusion will greatly affect their definition of inclusion, therefore, their definition should be considered when evaluating their impact on program development, student outcomes and policy implementation. In an attempt to comply with IDEA, school systems developed their meaning of inclusion, devised a plan that welcomed students with disabilities and began to provide individualized instruction for students with special needs. Disabled students, whether physically, intellectually or emotionally disabled, were placed in separate classrooms from the general population where they were provided specialized instructors, paraprofessionals and medical aides if necessary. States also went so far as to develop a diploma specifically designed for students with special needs. In an effort to assist with the completion of school work, states developed an occupational diploma which was geared for special education students who might not have received a diploma otherwise. The mission behind the occupational diploma was to train students with disabilities in "life" education which equips them with the tools needed to count money, establish and maintain a checking account, how to cook, wash clothes, hygiene, sex education and many other topics that would assist students with day-to-day life. The diploma also required the student to receive some form of occupational training, to obtain employment in their occupational training area and work a minimum of 270 hours to earn their diploma (Alabama State Department of Education, 2005).

When reviewing the missions of school systems, the statement, or a similar statement, that refers to the production of responsible citizens is often present. What better way to be a responsible citizen than to work and pay taxes? The goal behind the occupational diploma was to do just that by producing responsible citizens who can obtain employment, support themselves,

and provide support to the government through their taxes. This goal sounds very similar to that of all diplomas. It seems that we want all students to leave our schools and universities with the knowledge of an occupation, of how to obtain employment and of how to maintain their status of a responsible citizen by supporting their government through taxes. This notion led advocates and educators to the question the wisdom of dividing the classroom and providing separate services for general education students and special education students when the intended end result is the same. The idea of inclusion was thus born and the inclusion paradigm shift led to restructuring of school systems.

Administrators' Perceptions of Inclusion

Research suggests that administrators are wary of inclusive programs (Billingsley & McLeskey, 2014; Garrison-Wade, Sobel, & Fulmer, 2007; Salisbury, 2006; Praisner, 2003). Administrators have argued against inclusion on the grounds that students will not receive the specialized instruction that they require in general education classrooms. Data collected from school records reinforce the administrators' sentiments as the data reflected that students with disabilities experienced isolation from the general education classroom. They incurred more discipline referrals than their non-disabled peers. Students with disabilities were more likely to be retained, which led to lower graduation rates and consequently low participation in post-secondary programs (Hardman & Dawson, 2008; Orfield et al., 2004; Ysseldyke et al., 2004). Other administrators simply feel they are not responsible for educating students with special needs (Lashley, 2007). In contrast, there is a growing body of literature that addresses administrators' commitment to include students with disabilities by creating the environment necessary to implement inclusion (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxen, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Salisbury & McGregor, 2002; Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999).

Although there are laws to protect disabled individuals against discrimination, there is no law that can govern individuals' attitudes towards disabled persons. A study designed by Hasazi Johnston, Liggett & Schattman (1994) looked at the implementation of the LRE policy in six states and found that how the leadership at each school site chose to look at LRE was crucial to how, or even whether much would be accomplished beyond the status quo. When change is necessary in the education setting, it is school personnel who are the ones who make change happen; We therefore must take into consideration the school personnel's perceptions of inclusion (Gous, Eloff & Moen, 2014, 2014; Bandura, 2012; Ferretti & Eisenman, 2010; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Hill, 2009; Horrocks et al., 2008; Jull & Minnes, 2008; Reynolds, 2008; Valeo, 2008; Idol, 2006). For more than two decades researchers have reinforced the observation that a principal's perception of students with disabilities and their place in general education is a critical prerequisite for successful inclusion (Gous et al., 2014; Bandura, 2012; Ferretti & Eisenman, 2010; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Hill, 2009; Horrocks et al., 2008; Jull & Minnes, 2008; Reynolds, 2008; Valeo, 2008; Idol, 2006; Villa et al., 1996a). In a study conducted by Cindy Praisner (2003), research results indicated that one in five elementary principals' attitudes were positive towards inclusion, while most attitudes resulted in uncertainty. A 1985 study by Center et al., also resulted in mixed findings: some administrators had low expectations of inclusion, while others stressed the benefits of inclusion. Forlin (1995) discovered in Australia that administrators' attitudes were often more positive than that of teachers. Jaeger and Bowman (2005) found that the continued natural discrimination towards individuals with disabilities limited the capacity of school personnel to view students with disabilities with compassion and understanding of their needs and rights.

Even though administrators play an essential role in establishing an educational climate

that provides opportunities for interaction between students without disabilities and students with disabilities, a study conducted by Cline (1981) revealed administrators demonstrated a lack of knowledge regarding the nature and needs of students with disabilities. Cooner, Tochterman and Garrison-Wade (2005) also came to the same conclusion that many administrators feel inadequately prepared in their roles as a leaders in special education. Dyal et al. (1996) discovered 3.5 percent of their respondents felt that they had excellent training relating to inclusion. Fifty-two percent perceived their training as adequate, while 44.5 percent felt that their training was inadequate. Bailey's 2004 study revealed that while administrators viewed training as a barrier to inclusion, they ranked it low on a scale of importance. Hirth (1988) in Tennessee and Davidson (1999) and Copenhaver (2005) in North Carolina implied in their studies of administrators' knowledge of special education law that administrators were considerably deficient in their knowledge of educational services for students with disabilities and of the bureaucratic safety measures defined in the law. Praisner (2003) revealed that while administrators may receive training for general special education, information such as characteristics of disabilities, special education law, and behavior management, specific topics that address actual strategies and processes that support inclusion are lacking. Consequently, many of the administrators who are considered essential in leading the inclusion initiative are doing so while uneducated about the laws they must follow.

Administrators have conflicting views when it comes to the implementation of inclusion within their schools. Ramirez's 2006 study reported that a statistically significant difference was found in administrators' attitudes of implementing inclusion if they had special education experience. Fontenot (2005) reported similar findings when she found attitude scores of administrators who had experience as general education teachers were more negative towards

inclusion versus the more positive attitudes scores of administrators with special education teaching experience. The willingness of administrators to promote inclusive placements can be greatly affected by their personal interactions with students with disabilities (Gous et al., 2014; Livingston et al., 2001). Horrocks et al., 2008 study found that an overall positive experience with inclusion resulted when positive attitudes toward inclusion were present prior to implementation. Administrators' background experience and knowledge form their ability to design the learning process and establish an inclusive learning environment in their schools (Fullan, 1993, 2006; Foriska, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1995). In order for administrators to be instructional leaders; they must design programs that are all-encompassing for the students served in the school's inclusive environment (Council for Exceptional Children, 1998; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001) while at times working in areas with which they may not be familiar with or lack in-depth knowledge. Controversy concerning inclusion stems from the various approaches to implementing inclusion in public schools (Dyal et al., 1996). Bess Johnson, an administrator at an elementary school stated, "Dumping a handicapped child into a pool of normal children where he must sink or swim should not be permitted until all administrators and teachers have been trained to be life savers. Teach the handicapped child to swim first" (Osgood, 2005, p. 44). While there are some administrators who implement inclusion with great caution about whether or not to segregate a child or group of children, others seem to enter with eyes closed. Some administrators believe the decision to include a student with special needs in a general education classroom should typically be made on the basis of the child's needs, not those of the institution (Idol, 2006; Osgood, 2005; Praisner, 2003); others argued that integration was advisable only if convenient for the school (Idol, 2006; Ware, 2005; Center et al., 1985). Researchers have hypothesized that individuals' perceptions of inclusion vary according

to their involvement in implementing inclusion (Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991).

School administrators may present the inclusion policies, but almost never are they the

individuals who interact with students with disabilities in a classroom setting. The lack of

administrative hands-on involvement with students with disabilities leads us to believe there are

more positive attitudes about inclusion among administrators than there are among general

education and special education teachers because of the lack of interaction. In Brown's 2007

study, she discovered that administrators with fewer years of experience felt that general

education teachers were prepared and adequately trained to handle the responsibility of educating

students with disabilities within a general education classroom. However, veteran administrators

with seven years or more experience felt less confident in the training and preparedness of their

general education teachers. Dyal et al. (1996) indicated 60 percent of their respondents favored

an inclusive school that provides a continuum of special services in both regular and special

education classes. Only 2.6 percent indicated that they wanted full inclusion for their schools,

while the remaining 37.4 percent favored continuing special education courses that confined

students with moderate, mild, severe, and profound disabilities to special education classrooms.

Praisner (2003) discovered that 21.1 percent of the administrators expressed positive sentiments

about inclusion while 2.7 percent relayed negative attitudes. Administrators who were uncertain

about inclusion accounted for 76.6 percent of the respondents. Praisner (2003) discovered that

most administrators favored inclusion when there was room for interpretation of the meaning of

inclusion. However, their attitudes became less favorable when the meaning of inclusion

required mandatory compliance and strict guidelines for participation. Administrators are also

less favorable when the topic of funding inclusion arises (Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997). The shortage

of funding weakens many administrators' desire to include students with disabilities in general

education classrooms (Bailey, 2004). In a 1999 study conducted by Cook, Semmel, and Gerber, 77.56 percent of administrators believed that students with mild disabilities would increase academic achievement if placed full time in the general education classroom with a consultant. However, when administrators were surveyed concerning protecting mandated resources for students with special needs, only 32.65 percent were in favor of doing so. Though many of the administrators' responses indicated a favorable opinion of inclusion, several of the same individuals were not in favor of funding it. If administrators lead under the influence of their perceptions of inclusion, inclusion restructuring in many schools may not be functioning in the manner it was intended.

In a 1985 study similarly constructed using an earlier study (Ward et al., 1978) Center et al., revealed that administrators' individual characteristics were associated with their attitudes towards inclusion. An administrator's experience, tenure and seniority tend to affect the level of compliance when practicing inclusive measures. The more experience and seniority an administrator had, the less support for inclusion (Avissar, 2007; Barnet & Monda-Amaya, 1998; Villa et al., 1996a; Center et al., 1985; Ward et al., 1978). A 2008 study conducted by Horrocks et al. reinforced the theory of administrator experience and perception of inclusion when they reported that the administrators' length of service in their current district was negatively correlated with the administrators' positive attitudes toward inclusion. Administrators with less than seven years of experience and those with special education qualifications expressed more positive attitudes toward integration of students with disabilities than administrators with more years of experience and no special education qualifications (Center et al., 1985). In a 2007 study, Brown reported that school administrators with fewer years of administrative experience tended to agree more with the inclusion of students with disabilities. Avissar (2007) discovered:

- The higher the level of education of the administrators, the more severe the problem of implementing inclusion.

- Administrators with a higher level of education practiced more pull-out programs where a child with disabilities studies in a regular class but is pulled out in order to receive individual help.

- The older the administrators, the fewer full-inclusion practices were implemented while more pull-out programs were used.

- Administrators with more in-service in the area of inclusion practiced more pull-out programs.

The majority of administrators in Barnet and Monda-Amaya's (1998) study also agreed that pullout programs were the most effective placements for most students with disabilities.

When considering fulltime regular class placement, administrators considered them to be of greater social than academic benefit (Avissar, 2007; Center et.al., 1985). The administrators in Avissar's (2007) and Maricle's (2001) studies were supportive of inclusive practices in their schools, however, findings suggested that their support also depended on the severity of the students' disability and their view of the success of inclusion was more social than academic. The findings regarding the emphasis by administrators on social success rather than on academic success is problematic. Learning and academic progress are critical for success in school and in society. Idol (2006) found similar results when surveying secondary administrators' perceptions of inclusion. The results revealed participants were in favor of inclusion, however, some felt full inclusion would not be appropriate. All of the administrators felt extra support for classroom teachers was a must when considering inclusion. Bain and Dolbel (1991) also found administrators held positive attitudes toward the integration of students with disabilities in a

study of the Australian education system. Russell and Bray (2013) discovered that principals whose attitudes favored inclusion were more likely to place students in general education classrooms. Other administrators maintain that the key to inclusion in regular settings was whether or not the child had the intellectual ability to achieve at the level of the regular class and whether the school could provide adequate training for teachers and sufficient appropriate technology or services in the regular classroom (Osgood 2005; Hathaway, 1959; Martin, 1940).

Roles and Responsibilities of Administrators

Leading schools, whether they are small or large, rural or urban, public or private, general education or special education, is a challenging endeavor. Educational leaders are increasingly being held accountable for the academic success and personal well-being of every student. The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act in 2004 and the reauthorization of NCLB in 2015 led to the need of amplified content for students with special needs in order to meet the requirements of high-stakes standardized testing and school accountability. Specifically, IDEA legally requires educators to move toward the LRE, to the maximum extent appropriate, by placing students with disabilities, including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities, in general education classrooms with students without disabilities. The act also states that "removal of children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplemental aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily" (20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(5)(A)). IDEA also requires that students with special needs engage in learning the same standards-based curriculum and participate in the same standardized, nationally based assessment system as their peers without disabilities (U. S. House

of Representatives, 2006b; Moll, 2005). This presents many policy challenges for schools and their administrators which leave leaders feeling unsure of how to maintain a balance between achieving satisfactory test scores on standardized, nationally based assessments and providing equal opportunities to student with disabilities (Nichols, J, Dowdy, & Nichols, A., 2010; Howe & Welner, 2002; Florian & Rouse, 2001). Specifically, IDEA requires school districts, to the maximum extent appropriate, to enable students with disabilities. It is as important as it is difficult to prepare administrators to work in an inclusive system given that at the building level, administrators have many responsibilities (Servatius, Fellows, & Kelley, 1992).

As a result of shifts in education, "a new vision of leadership is required, one that goes beyond management and asks leaders to maintain a laser-like focus on student learning as they pursue a course of continuous improvement in their day-to-day work" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015). Educational administrators find themselves performing the archaic duties of developing and implementing policies, keeping the campus safe, maintaining school buildings, addressing personnel issues, extinguishing public relations flare ups, ordering supplies, signing paperwork, developing budgets, making sure that the lunch line is flowing, the buses are running on schedule and managing afterschool athletic events. Educational leaders are also required to have a strategic and sustained effort to ensure that all students are engaged in learning at high levels and graduate from high school college- and career-ready (Canole & Young, 2013). Leaders are also to embrace the role of an instructional leader who is expected to have extensive knowledge in data-driven decision making, understand and address standards and assessment, implore the community to buy in to the vision and mission of the school (McLeskey et al., 2014; Billingsley, 2012), consider race, class, and the achievement gap, and acquire knowledge of special and gifted education, specifically in the area of inclusion (DiPaola &

Walther-Thomas, 2003). Preservice and inservice preparation of administrators to work in inclusive schools is needed to reconceptualize the discipline of school administration, from a technology of school management to a craft in which an administrator's personal vision of what a school should do is important (McLeskey et al., 2014, Billingsley, 2012; Fullan1996; Servatius et al., 1992).

Shifts in education have often occurred due to the motivations of reformers and what they perceived as being the best approach. Often times, this approach has led to even more changes rather than continuity. However, more recent reform has aimed to restructure existing systems by providing clear and consistent standards that will provide a framework for educational leaders to follow. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) recognized the need for nationwide educational leadership standards that focused on instructional leadership responsibilities. As a result, in the mid-1990s, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) was formed and commissioned with developing national standards for educational leaders. The Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO), a facilitator of ISLLC, re-conceptualized the ways school leaders, who directly impact teaching and learning, are prepared, recruited, inducted into the profession, developed, evaluated, and supported (Canole & Young, 2013). Karen Seashore-Louis, Kenneth Leithwood, Kyla Wahlstrom and Stephen Anderson precisely describe the work of educational leaders today that links effective school leadership to school achievement in their 2010 report *Investing the Links to Improved Student Learning*:

> Leadership is all about organizational improvement; more specifically, it is about establishing agreed-upon and worthwhile directions for the organization in question, and doing whatever it takes to prod and support people to move in those directions. Our

general definition of leadership highlights these points: It is about direction and influence. Stability is the goal of what is often called management. Improvement is the goal of leadership (p. 3).

The original ISLLC standards were developed in 1996. Twelve years later the standards were reviewed and minor updates were made. In 2015, the standards received a facelift and adopted a new name, Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. The motivation for the updated standards was to allow for change and growth with administrators as they grew within their professions. Over the last twenty years, education has experienced numerous changes. The characteristics of students are changing with new standards of what constitutes a family unit while also increasing diversity in the classroom. The advancements made by technology on a daily basis are personally and professionally overwhelming. The political and public view of educators and education are broadcast in the news and across social media, facilitating increased criticism of the education system. Decreases in funding in all aspects of education continue to be made while higher levels of accountability for educators and students are expected. The countless changes occurring pose challenges but also opportunities to go beyond the everyday management of faculty, staff and students. Every challenge is an opportunity to improve schools, to use innovative approaches and inspire others to achieve at higher standards. The educational leader is a vital member in cultivating the learning environment. The 2015 standards assists with positive effective leadership by equipping leaders with guidelines to leading in every aspect of education including: vision, ethics, equity, curriculum, instruction, support for students and families, professional support, and school improvement.

The CCSSO wanted to assist states in constructing and implementing aligned, coherent, and comprehensive state systems of educator effectiveness that are based on high standards of

performance, are accountable for results, and support, develop, and reward educators across the career continuum (Canole & Young, 2013). Numerous states adopted the standards, others added to or modified the standards while others separately developed leadership standards that aligned with the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (formerly ISSLC standards). In 2004, Alabama Governor Bob Riley convened the Governor's Congress that established a task force charged with developing the standards for preparing and developing principals as instructional leaders. The task force adopted, adapted, and modified the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders and developed the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders. The task force presented the standards to the Alabama Department of Education School Board who adopted the standards in July 2005. The following is a cross-correlation of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (2015) and the Alabama Governor's Congress (2005) Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders.

Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders	2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders
Standard 1: Planning for Continuous Improvement Engages the school community in developing and maintaining a shared vision; plans effectively; uses critical thinking and problem-solving techniques; collects, analyzes, and interprets data; allocates resources; and evaluates results for the purpose of continuous school improvement. *Key Indicators:* 1. Knowledge to lead the articulation, development, and implementation of a shared vision and strategic plan for the school that places student and faculty learning at the center. 2. Ability to lead and motivate staff, students, and families to achieve the school's vision.	**Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values** Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student. *Effective leaders*: A. Develop an educational mission for the school to promote the academic success and well-being of each student. B. In collaboration with members of the school and the community and using relevant data, develop and promote a vision for the school on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such success. C. Articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school's culture and

3. Knowledge to align instructional objectives and curricular goals with the shared vision.
4. Knowledge to allocate and guard instruction time for the achievement of goals.
5. Ability to work with faculty to identify instructional and curricular needs that align with vision and resources.
6. Ability to interact with the community concerning the school's vision, mission, and priorities.
  7. Ability to work with staff and others to establish and accomplish goals.
7. Ability to relate the vision, mission, and goals to the instructional needs of students.
8. Ability to use goals to manage activities.
9. Ability to use a variety of problem-solving techniques and decision-making skills to resolve problems.
10. Ability to delegate tasks clearly and appropriately to accomplish organizational goals.
11. Ability to focus upon student learning as a driving force for curriculum, instruction, and institutional decision-making.
12. Ability to use a process for gathering information to use when making decisions.
13. Knowledge to create a school leadership team that is skillful in using data.
14. Ability to use multiple sources of data to manage the accountability process.
15. Ability to assess student progress using a variety of techniques and information.
16. Ability to monitor and assess instructional programs, activities, and materials.
17. Knowledge to use approved methods and principles of program evaluation in the school improvement process.
18. Ability to use diagnostic tools to assess, identify, and apply instructional improvement.

stress the imperative of child-centered education; high expectations and student support; equity, inclusiveness, and social justice; openness, caring, and trust; and continuous improvement.
D. Strategically develop, implement, and evaluate actions to achieve the vision for the school.
E. Review the school's mission and vision and adjust them to changing expectations and opportunities for the school, and changing needs and situations of students.
F. Develop shared understanding of and commitment to mission, vision, and core values within the school and the community.
G. Model and pursue the school's mission, vision, and core values in all aspects of leadership.

Standard 10: Continuous School Improvement

Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
Effective leaders:
A. Seek to make school more effective for each student, teachers and staff, families, and the community.
B. Use methods of continuous improvement to achieve the vision, fulfill the mission, and promote the core values of the school.
C. Prepare the school and the community for improvement, promoting readiness, an imperative for improvement, instilling mutual commitment and accountability, and developing the knowledge, skills, and motivation to succeed in improvement.
D. Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement.
E. Employ situationally-appropriate strategies for improvement, including transformational and incremental, adaptive

	approaches and attention to different phases of implementation.
19. Ability to use external resources as sources for ideas for improving student achievement.	F. Assess and develop the capacity of staff to assess the value and applicability of emerging educational trends and the findings of research for the school and its improvement.
	G. Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation.
	H. Adopt a systems perspective and promote coherence among improvement efforts and all aspects of school organization, programs, and services.
	I. Manage uncertainty, risk, competing initiatives, and politics of change with courage and perseverance, providing support and encouragement, and openly communicating the need for, process for, and outcomes of improvement efforts
	J. Develop and promote leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation and innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement.
Standard 2: Teaching and Learning Promotes and monitors the success of all students in the learning environment by collaboratively aligning the curriculum; by aligning the instruction and the assessment processes to ensure effective student achievement; and by using a variety of benchmarks, learning expectations, and feedback measures to ensure accountability. *Key Indicators:* 1. Knowledge to plan for the achievement of annual learning gains, school improvement goals, and other targets related to the shared vision. 2. Ability to use multiple sources of data to plan and assess instructional improvement.	**Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment** Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being. *Effective leaders*: A. Implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school, embody high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and are culturally responsive. B. Align and focus systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and across grade levels to promote student academic success, love of learning, the

3. Ability to engage staff in ongoing study and implementation of research-based practices. 4. Ability to use the latest research, applied theory, and best practices to make curricular and instructional decisions. 5. Ability to communicate high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of students. 6. Ability to ensure that content and instruction are aligned with high standards resulting in improved student achievement 7. Ability to coach staff and teachers on the evaluation of student performance 8. Ability to identify differentiated. instructional strategies to meet the needs of a variety of student populations 9. Ability to develop curriculum aligned to state standards. 10. Knowledge to collaborate with community, staff, district, state, and university personnel to develop the instructional program. 11. Knowledge to align curriculum, instructional practices, and assessments to district, state, and national standards. 12. Ability to focus upon student learning as a driving force for curriculum, instruction, and instructional decision-making. 13. Ability to use multiple sources of data to manage the accountability process 14. Ability to assess student progress using a variety of formal and informal assessments. 15. Ability to monitor and assess instructional programs, activities, and materials. 16. Ability to use the methods and principles of program evaluation in the school improvement process.	identities and habits of learners, and healthy sense of self. C. Promote instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of child learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student. D. Ensure instructional practice that is intellectually challenging, authentic to student experiences, recognizes student strengths, and is differentiated and personalized. E. Promote the effective use of technology in the service of teaching and learning. F. Employ valid assessments that are consistent with knowledge of child learning and development and technical standards of measurement. G. Use assessment data appropriately and within technical limitations to monitor student progress and improve instruction.
Standard 3: Human Resources Development Recruits, selects, organizes, evaluates, and mentors faculty and staff to accomplish school and system goals. Works collaboratively with the school faculty and staff to plan and implement effective	**Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel** Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being. *Effective leaders*: A. Recruits and hires instructionally effective teachers and other professional staff and

professional development that is based upon student needs and that promotes both individual and organizational growth and leads to improved teaching and learning. Initiates and nurtures interpersonal relationships to facilitate teamwork and enhance student achievement.

Key Indicators:

1. Knowledge to set high expectations and standards for the performance of all teachers and staff.
2. Ability to coach staff and teachers on the evaluation of student performances.
3. Ability to work collaboratively with teachers to plan for individual professional development.
4. Ability to use a variety of supervisory models to improve teaching and learning
5. Ability to apply adult learning strategies to professional development.
6. Knowledge to use the accepted methods and principles of personnel evaluation.
7. Knowledge to operate within the provisions of each contract as well as established enforcement and grievance procedures.
8. Ability to establish mentor programs to orient new teachers and provide ongoing coaching and other forms of support for veteran staff.
9. Ability to manage, monitor, and evaluate a program of continuous professional development tied to student learning and other school goals.
10. Knowledge to hire and retain high-quality teachers and staff.
11. Ability to provide high-quality professional development activities to ensure that teachers have skills to engage all students in active learning.
    12. Ability to provide opportunities for teachers to reflect, plan, and work collaboratively.
12. Ability to create a community of learners among faculty and staff.

form them into an educationally effective faculty.

B. Plan for and manage staff turnover and succession, providing opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of new personnel.
C. Develop teachers' and staff members' professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth, guided by understanding of professional and adult learning and development.
D. Foster continuous improvement of individual and collective instructional capacity to achieve outcomes envisioned for each student.
E. Deliver actionable feedback about instruction and other professional practice through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation to support the development of teachers' and staff members' knowledge, skills, and practice.
F. Empower and motivate teachers and staff to the highest levels of professional practice and to continuous learning and improvement.
G. Develop the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community.
H. Promote the personal and professional health, well-being, and work-life balance of faculty and staff.
I. Tend to their own learning and effectiveness through reflection, study, and improvement, maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff

Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Functions:

13. Ability to create a personal professional development plan for his/her own continuous improvement. 14. Ability to foster development of aspiring leaders, including teacher leaders.	A. Develop workplace conditions for teachers and other professional staff that promote effective professional development, practice, and student learning. B. Empower and entrust teachers and staff with collective responsibility for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student, pursuant to the mission, vision, and core values of the school. C. Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole child; high expectations for professional work; ethical and equitable practice; trust and open communication; collaboration, collective efficacy, and continuous individual and organizational learning and improvement. D. Promote mutual accountability among teachers and other professional staff for each student's success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole. E. Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders, faculty, and staff to promote professional capacity and the improvement of practice. F. Design and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for professional learning collaboratively with faculty and staff. G. Provide opportunities for collaborative examination of practice, collegial feedback, and collective learning. H. Encourage faculty-initiated improvement of programs and practices.
Standard 4: Diversity Responds to and influences the larger personal, political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context in the classroom, school, and the local community while addressing diverse student needs to ensure the success of all students.	**Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness** Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being. *Functions*:

Key Indicators:

1. Knowledge to involve school community in appropriate diversity policy implementations, program planning, and assessment efforts.
2. Ability to conform to legal and ethical standards related to diversity.
3. Ability to perceive the needs and concerns of others and is able to deal tactfully with them.
4. Knowledge to handle crisis communications in both oral and written form.
5. Ability to arrange for students and families whose home language is not English to engage in school activities and communication through oral and written translations.
6. Knowledge to recruit, hire, develop, and retain a diverse staff.
7. Knowledge to represent the school and the educational establishment in relations with various cultural, ethnic, racial, and special interest groups in the community.
8. Knowledge to recognize and respond effectively to multicultural and ethnic needs in the organization and the community.
9. Ability to interact effectively with diverse individuals and groups using a variety of interpersonal skills in any given situation.
10. Ability to promote and monitor the delivery of instructional content that provides for diverse perspectives appropriate to the situation.

A. Ensure that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of each student's culture and context.
B. Recognize, respect, and employ each student's strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning.
C. Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success.
D. Develop student policies and address student misconduct in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner.
E. Confront and alter institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status.
F. Promote the preparation of students to live productively in and contribute to the diverse cultural contexts of a global society.
G. Act with cultural competence and responsiveness in their interactions, decision making, and practice.
H. Address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.

Standard 5: Community of Care for Students

Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

Effective leaders:

A. Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets that the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student.
B. Create and sustain a school environment in which each student is known, accepted and valued, trusted and respected, cared for, and encouraged to be an active and responsible member of the school community.

	C. Provide coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student. D. Promote adult-student, student-peer, and school-community relationships that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development. E. Cultivate and reinforce student engagement in school and positive student conduct. F. Infuse the school's learning environment with the cultures and languages of the school's community.
Standard 5: Community and Stakeholder Relationships Identifies the unique characteristics of the community to create and sustain mutually supportive family-school-community relations ***Key Indicators:*** 1. Ability to address student and family conditions affecting learning. 2. Ability to identify community leaders and their relationships to school goals and programs. 3. Ability to communicate the school's vision, mission, and priorities to the community. 4. Knowledge to serve as primary school spokesperson in the community. 5. Ability to share leadership and decision-making with others by gathering input 6. Ability to seek resources of families, business, and community members in support of the school's goals. 7. Ability to develop partnerships, coalitions, and networks to impact student achievement. 8. Ability to actively engage the community to share responsibility for student and school success. 9. Ability to involve family and community in appropriate policy implementation, program planning, and assessment efforts. 10. Knowledge to make parents partners in their student's education.	**Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community** Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being. ***Effective leaders***: A. Are approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community. B. Create and sustain positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community for the benefit of students. C. Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments. D. Maintain a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs, develop productive relationships, and engage its resources for the school. E. Create means for the school community to partner with families to support student learning in and out of school. F. Understand, value, and employ the community's cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school improvement. G. Develop and provide the school as a resource for families and the community. H. Advocate for the school and district, and for the importance of education and student

	needs and priorities to families and the community. I. Advocate publicly for the needs and priorities of students, families, and the community. J. Build and sustain productive partnerships with public and private sectors to promote school improvement and student learning.
Standard 6: Technology Plans, implements, and evaluates the effective integration of current technologies and electronic tools in teaching, management, research, and communication. *Key Indicators:* 1. Ability to implement a plan for the use of technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enrich curriculum, instruction, and assessment. 2. Ability to develop a plan for technology integration for the school community. 3. Knowledge to discover practical approaches for developing and implementing successful technology planning. 4. Ability to model the use of technology for personal and professional productivity. 5. Ability to develop an effective teacher professional development plan to increase technology usage to support curriculum-based integration practices. 6. Ability to promote the effective integration of technology throughout the teaching and learning environment. 7. Knowledge to increase access to educational technologies for the school. 8. Ability to provide support for teachers to increase the use of technology already in the school/classrooms. 9. Ability to use technology to support the analysis and use of student assessment data.	
Standard 7: Management of the Learning Organization Manages the organization, facilities, and financial resources; implements operational plans; and promotes collaboration to create a	**Standard 9: Operations and Management** Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being. *Effective leaders*:

safe and effective learning environment. ***Key Indicators:*** 1. Knowledge to develop and administer policies that provide a safe school environment. 2. Ability to apply operational plans and processes to accomplish strategic goals. 3. Ability to attend to student learning goals in the daily operation of the school. 4. Knowledge to identify and analyze the major sources of fiscal and nonfiscal resources for the school including business and community resources. 5. Knowledge to build and ability to support a culture of learning at the school. 6. Knowledge to manage financial and material assets and capital goods and services in order to allocate resources according to school priorities. 7. Knowledge to use an efficient budget planning process that involves staff and community. 8. Ability to identify and organize resources to achieve curricular and instructional goals. 9. Ability to develop techniques and organizational skills necessary to lead/manage a complex and diverse organization. 10. Ability to plan and schedule one's own and others' work so that resources are used appropriately in meeting priorities and goals. 11. Ability to use goals to manage activities. 12. Knowledge to create and ability to empower a school leadership team that shares responsibility for the management of the learning organization.	A. Institute, manage, and monitor operations and administrative systems that promote the mission and vision of the school. B. Strategically manage staff resources, assigning and scheduling teachers and staff to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address each student's learning needs. C. Seek, acquire, and manage fiscal, physical, and other resources to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student learning community; professional capacity and community; and family and community engagement. D. Are responsible, ethical, and accountable stewards of the school's monetary and nonmonetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting and accounting practices. E. Protect teachers' and other staff members' work and learning from disruption. F. Employ technology to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management. G. Develop and maintain data and communication systems to deliver actionable information for classroom and school improvement. H. Know, comply with, and help the school community understand local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations so as to promote student success. I. Develop and manage relationships with feeder and connecting schools for enrollment management and curricular and instructional articulation. J. Develop and manage productive relationships with the central office and school board. K. Develop and administer systems for fair and equitable management of conflict among students, faculty and staff, leaders, families, and community.

Standard 8: Ethics	**Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms**
	L. Manage governance processes and internal and external politics toward achieving the school's mission and vision.
Demonstrates honesty, integrity, and fairness to guide school policies and practices consistent with current legal and ethical standards for professional educators.	Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
Key Indicators:	*Effective leaders*:
1. Knowledge and ability to adhere to a professional code of ethics and values.	A. Act ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision-making, stewardship of the school's resources, and all aspects of school leadership.
2. Knowledge and ability to make decisions based on the legal, moral, and ethical implications of policy options and political strategies.	B. Act according to and promote the professional norms of integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement.
3. Knowledge and ability to develop well-reasoned educational beliefs based upon an understanding of teaching and learning.	C. Place children at the center of education and accept responsibility for each student's academic success and well-being.
4. Knowledge to understand ethical and legal concerns educators face when using technology throughout the teaching and learning environment.	D. Safeguard and promote the values of democracy, individual freedom and responsibility, equity, social justice, community, and diversity.
5. Knowledge and ability to develop a personal code of ethics embracing diversity, integrity, and the dignity of all people.	E. Lead with interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all students' and staff members' backgrounds and cultures.
6. Knowledge and ability to act in accordance with federal and state constitutional provisions, statutory standards, and regulatory applications.	F. Provide moral direction for the school and promote ethical and professional behavior among faculty and staff
7. Ability to make decisions within an ethical context.	

Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Continuous School Improvement. A shared vision is crucial in education for numerous reasons, especially for continuous school improvement and academic success for all students (Cobb, 2015; McLeskey et al., 2014; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; The Wallace Foundation, 2013; Billingsley, 2012; Price, 2012; Waldron, McLesky & Redd, 2011; Burstein et al., 2004). A common vision held by administrators, teachers and other stakeholders creates a sense of commitment to providing an education for all students. The

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inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms cannot be simply thrown at teachers if administration expects the faculty to be dedicated to educating students with disabilities. Literature as antique as the Old Testament recognized the importance of a vision, "where there is no vision, the people will perish" (Proverbs 29:18 King James Version). Without a shared vision, change and improvement will be difficult to navigate. A leader must be able to collaborate with all stakeholders to promote continuous and sustainable improvement. Informed stakeholders can then engage productively with the administrator in the improvement process.

As instructional leaders, administrators must understand and facilitate the use of effective research-based practices to assist with establishing a vision and continuous school improvement by identifying goals, assessing organizational effectiveness, and promoting organizational learning (The Wallace Foundation, 2013; Price, 2012; Bateman, D. & Bateman, C. F., 2001, Turnbull & Cilley, 1999; Sage & Burrello, 1994). Education demands accountability of efforts made and measurements of learning gains and deficiencies. Effective educational leaders use data systematically to guide them in decision making, setting and prioritizing goals, and monitoring progress. Data helps the administrator to identify their students and assists with defining a plan for intervention and follow-up with analysis of the intervention efforts. The administrator is not alone in this and should be knowledgeable in selecting team members who are skillful in data analysis. According to Goldring and Berends, (2009) the team should focus on the four key objectives for data analysis:

- To work toward continuous improvement.

- To meet accountability requirements

- To focus efforts and monitor progress.

- To develop a sense of community through organizational learning (pp. 6-7).

Administrators and teachers are not strangers to using these targets, many have used the same steps within their own schools and classrooms to evaluate progress. Special education instructors use these steps as integral parts of the IEP process for their students. However, the major difference is the measurement is no longer contained within the general and special education classroom. With increased legislation and regulations, schools are being held to a nationwide standard.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. A school administrator often wears many hats and frequently more than one hat at a time. Those hats include a business manager, disciplinarian, curriculum facilitator and instructional leader. It is a fine balancing act that the administrator must juggle throughout the day. The past two of decades we have seen a greater shift towards the instructional role of the administrator due to the increased importance placed on academic standards and the need for schools to be accountable for all students. The reauthorization of IDEA in 1997 and the implementation of NCLB in 2001 has forced administrators to go beyond simple managerial duties. Not only are they required to establish budgets and manage faculty and staff, but they must also consider how each penny is spent and how instruction is being delivered in accordance with research and nationwide standards.

One role of an instructional leader is to maximize student learning through improved instruction by promoting instruction that is authentic, relevant and anchored in the students' experiences, futures, and best understanding of child development and effective pedagogy (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Studies on effective inclusive schools have revealed that an important characteristic contributing to successful inclusion is their dedication to ensuring high expectations for all students, including those with disabilities (Waldron et al., 2011; Irvine, Lupart, Loreman, & McGhie-Richmond, 2010; Farrell, Dyson, Polat, Hutcheson, &

Gallannaugh, 2007; Dyson, Farrell, Polat, Hutcheson, & Gallannaugh, 2004). To maximize student learning, educating the teacher may also be necessary. It is unrealistic and unfair to expect general education teachers to efficiently and innovatively educate students with disabilities within the general education classroom without first receiving appropriate training. Instructional leaders empower their teachers by providing high quality professional development resulting in raising expectations for all children (Deshler & Cornett, 2012; Smith & Leonard, 2005). Studies conducted at high performing inclusive schools by Dyson et al. (2004) and McLesky, Waldron and Redd (2014), found that administrators who had provided the necessary resources and improved teacher practice resulted in high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities.

　　　　Professional Capacity and Professional Community for Teachers and Staff. In the Professional Standards for Educational Learners standards six and seven, the requirements discuss the need for leaders to enhance the instructional capacity and promote professionally-normed communities which apply to general education, special education and special education within the general education classroom. Barriers exist that restrain teachers from being successful in the inclusion process. Administrators can eliminate those barriers by providing additional time, training and personnel to prepare to accommodate inclusion students with all types and levels of disabilities. Leaders can also use funding to provide more resources and reduce class sizes to enhance and ease the transition to an inclusive classroom. Administrators should also seek the input of everyone involved in the inclusion of students with disabilities. To cultivate leadership in others, administrators can promote collaboration that will allow those on the front lines and those who provide support to have an equal voice in initiatives (Cobb, 2015; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; McLeskey et al., 2014; The Wallace Foundation, 2013;

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Brownell, Billingsley, McLeskey & Sindelar, 2012; Price, 2012; Causton-Theoharis, Theoharis, Bull, Cosier, & Dempf-Aldrich, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Janney & Snell, 2005; Burstein et al., 2004; Hunt, Soto, Maier, & Doering, 2003; Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Malgeri, 1996b). Katz and Snyder (2013) found that teachers believed their confidence was increased when they were allowed to collaborate on inclusive practices. Educational leaders can utilize collaboration as an effective tool to provide a "nonhierarchical relationship in which all team members are seen as equal contributors, each adding his or her own expertise or experience to the problem-solving process" (Stainback, W. & Stainback, S., 1990, p. 96).

Community of Care for Students, Equity and Cultural Responsiveness. Educational leaders are responsible for building a community that cares for students and a climate of equality (Furman, 2012; Irvine, 2010). The community should be responsive to cultural needs and the equality of all students, which is fundamental for students' success and the achievement of inclusion goals. All students benefit from education that values and practices the recognition and support of diversity. To assist with building an inclusive culture, administrators should establish a philosophy that supports appropriate inclusionary practice and creates a climate hospitable to education (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Administrators should assume the role of supporting a culturally responsive environment by establishing practice, procedure and routines that promote educational opportunities that embrace inclusive education.

Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community. The beliefs and perceptions of the school administrator significantly influence the school environment. (Cooner et al., 2005). However, those beliefs should not stay confined within the school walls but should permeate into the greater community. The administrator needs to engage the school and community in analyzing and using data to explain strengths, weakness, threats, and opportunities for school

improvement (Goldring & Berends, 2009). Allowing for input from various sources allows for those sources to invest in their future by investing in students.

Evidence indicates that engaging parents is important when developing an effect inclusive environment (Ryndak, Reardon, Benner, & Ward, 2007; Summers et al., 2005; Mayorwetz & Weinstein, 1999). Parents play a huge role in the community and school when advocating for their children, especially those with special needs. Research has provided some support associated with the involvement of parents in activities, such as leadership roles to support schools, and reveals that this support may actually improve student achievement (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Waters et al., 2003) . According to the law, parents are entitled to be fully involved in planning the education of their child with a disability during the IEP process. Parents usually have in-depth knowledge of their child's personality, strengths, and needs and can make substantial contributions to the inclusion effort even though that knowledge is not required by law. Robinson et al. (2009) conducted a review of parent engagement in schools and found a moderate effect for parental involvement on their children's learning. Downing and Peckham-Hardin (2007) found that parents of students with moderate to severe disabilities reported their children were "happier, more independent, and more motivated to go to school and participate in class when included in general education classes" (p. 21). Informed parents recognize the benefits of inclusion and willingly want to share the dreams they have for their children with professional educators on the planning team (Downing & Peckham-Hardin, 2007).

Technology. Even though the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders do not have a separate standard for technology, Alabama established a technology standard using

functions from Professional Standards for Educational Leaders that incorporate technology. Technology is present in almost every aspect of our lives. It affects how we shop, manage financial accounts, socialize, play, and most significantly, how we learn. Some school systems are reluctant to allow students to use their mobile devices in the classrooms. However, technology in the classroom appears inevitable and will have to be embraced by educational leaders. Technology, if used correctly, will allow classrooms to become more accessible to diverse learning styles. Children will be allowed to interact with each other promoting collaboration and an enthusiastic attitude about learning from and with each other with a tool they already enjoy. Technology maintains a heavy presence in the world outside the education arena. To prepare students for their future careers students must be tech-savvy long before graduating.

Educational leaders play an essential role in establishing an educational climate (Urton et al., 2014; Cherkowski, 2012; WHO, 2012; Hunter, 2006; Idol, 2006; Salisbury, 2006; Gredler, 2005; Jaegar & Bowman, 2005; Osgood, 2005; Hall et al., 2003; Praisner, 2003; Daane et al., 2000; Thousand & Villa, 2000; Rude & Anderson, 1992; Stainback, W. & Stainback, S., 1990) and have continually explored how to best serve students with disabilities (Samson, 2011). The best way an administrator can promote a technological climate is to be knowledgeable and an effective user. They need to be aware of how to use software, communicate with email and social media, and the status of technology on their campus. District leaders need to offer opportunities for staff development, funding and resources for support and maintenance. Administrators and teachers who are equipped with knowledge, supplies and support can better assist general and special education students with becoming college and career ready.

Operations and Management. Legislation is in place that requires school systems to

maintain a level of safety for all students within their schools. Administrators use their

managerial skills to make sure that the building meets code requirements and that safety

procedures are in place, while also fulfilling the role of an instructional leader who builds a safe,

orderly and productive learning environment (Billingsley, McLeskey, & Crockett, 2014;

Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Villa & Thousand, 2005) above and beyond facilities and

procedures. Recent studies imply that working conditions are predictive of students' achievement

progression as well as educator satisfaction and retention (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012).

Working conditions contribute greatly to the effectiveness of educators, their opportunities to

teach, and their retention (Brownell et al., 2012; Billingsley, 2011; Hirsch, Emerick, Church, &

Fuller, 2007) and can be conceptualized as attributes that make "effective teaching possible"

(Johnson et al., 2012 , p. 29).

The configuration of the learning environment can hinder or accentuate the inclusion of

students with special needs in general education classrooms. Vigilant preparation and attention to

detail must occur for the transition to inclusion to be smooth and successful. The traditional

arrangement of the learning environment restricts the abilities of the administrators and teachers

to be innovative (Klinger, Arguelles, Hughes, & Vaughn, 2001; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000;

Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Bullough, 1995). Modernizing a traditional school structure can be

difficult, but with district- and school-level support which includes positive perceptions,

accommodations, and adaptations, the transition from exclusion to inclusion of students with

specials needs can be accomplished (Kavale & Forness, 2000).

Ethics and Professional Norms. An administrator's role extends beyond managerial and

instructional guidance to include ethical principles and professional norms. The administrator's

perceptions of other humans, and the ethics and values they have, greatly influence the manner in

which an individual exhibits leadership. Leaders will use their personal beliefs and values to make educational decisions (Gous et al., 2014; Keyes, Hanley-Maxwell & Capper, 1998; Sage & Burrello, 1994; Burrello, Schrup, & Barnett, 1992). Basically, how administrators feels about a topic or situation is how they are going to treat that topic or situation.

Ethical leadership is greatly influenced by the administrator's personal experiences, life's struggles and successes, and the value of the learner. The educational administrator will need to foster a disposition of sensitivity and understanding to facilitate equity towards lifelong learning for everyone. The administrator will also want to develop collaborative work cultures to help staff deal with innovations (Cobb, 2015; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; McLeskey et al., 2014; The Wallace Foundation, 2013; Brownell et al., 2012; Causton-Theoharis et al., 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Janney & Snell, 2005; Burstein et al., 2004; Hunt et al., 2003; Fullan, 1996; Servatius et al., 1992). The collaborative work culture should be extended further to form an inclusive community that cultivates trust among its members facilitated by ethical leaders who consider and respect all stakeholders. The trust among stakeholders will motivate and encouraged them, in turn leading to positive school performance for all students.

Summary

The leadership and support of administrators has been documented as vital for successful school change (Cobb, 2015; McLeskey et al., 2014; Urton et al., 2014; Billingsley, 2012; Cherkowski, 2012; WHO, 2012; Hunter, 2006; Idol, 2006; Salisbury, 2006; Brantlinger, 2005; Fontenot. 2005; Gredler, 2005; Jaegar & Bowman, 2005; Osgood, 2005; Daane et al., Bierne-Smith, & Latham, 2000; Thousand & Villa, 2000; Villa et al., 1996a; Ayers & Meyers, 1992; Rude & Anderson, 1992; Fullan, 1991; Stainback, W. & Stainback, S., 1990;), effective schools, and in developing a vision for successful implementation of inclusion (Mason, Wallace, &

Bartholomay, 2000; Sage, 1996). School administrators are a critical resource for teachers and key to creating change in schools (Cherkowski, 2012; DiPaola et al., 2004; Littrell, Billingsley, & Cross, 1994). Administrators are second only to teachers in impacting student achievement (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010); as the instructional leaders of their schools, administrators are not only key participants in the restructuring of regular education programs, but also in leading special education initiatives for inclusion (Cherkowski, 2012; DiPaola et al., 2004; Livingston et al., 2001). Despite this responsibility, administrators are unfortunately divided over willingness to accept the new shift to inclusion. Their success with inclusion will depend greatly whether they view it as a desirable or undesirable objective.

Addressing the needs of students with disabilities is especially difficult for administrators, who determine how or even whether change occurs, in leading school reform initiatives aimed at homogenizing education. The secondary classroom is structured around subject content rather than focused on individual students (Cole & McLesky, 1997; Tralli, Colombo, Deshler, & Schumaker, 1996; Vaughn & Schumm, 1995) while most IEPs, the trademark of special education (Lasky & Karge, 2006), require complicating instructional demands. The responsibility of presenting subject content with great depth, and in a timely manner, rarely allows time for individualization for secondary students with disabilities, resulting in a heterogeneous education rather than the inclusion-prescribed homogenous education. The skill level of students with disabilities and the demands of the classroom often leave a large gap between the two (Cole & McLesky, 1997).

The method of providing instruction in contained classrooms was and is successful; however, critics of contained classrooms feel that disabled students are not receiving an "appropriate public education" (Moore, 2005; IDEA, 2004). They also argue that contained

classrooms are in violation of the "Mainstreaming Provision of IDEA: A child with disabilities should be educated with children who are not handicapped *to the maximum extent appropriate*" (IDEA, 2004; emphasis in original). Contained classroom opponents believe disabled students are missing out on the necessary social development general education classrooms can offer. Thus, educators and scholars are motivated to research and develop a new ideology that will "shift" disabled students out of their contained environments and in to one of normalcy and stimulation. According to Ware (2005), "Schools were never really meant for everyone, the more they have been called upon to include the masses, the more they have developed the technologies of exclusion and containment" (pp. 47-48) which seems to be the exact opposite of what inclusion wants to accomplish.

As for the general education population, there is a push for more well-rounded students, which inclusion should help create. Schools will be expected to provide opportunities to develop a well-rounded student, just as Alabama schools did in 1975 when character education was mandated. Years ago, students received character education in the home, whereas now Alabama law provides for and requires at least 10 minutes of each day to be dedicated to character education. Schools are once again experiencing a shift as they are becoming more than an institution of academic learning; rather, they are transforming into an institution that prepares individuals for life. Significant work has already been done to assist administrators and teachers in inclusive environments to plan and implement a standards-based curriculum for inclusive secondary classrooms (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Lenz & Deshler, 2004). As a result the students as well as the administrators and teachers of the twenty-first century are going to have much higher demands. Administrators and teachers will be required to be culturally responsive to the increasingly diverse, bilingual, disability sensitive, etc. school environment (Cherkowski,

2012; Dantley & Tillman, 2010). Administrators will be responsible for instituting a framework

to establish an environment that celebrates individual and collective accomplishments, provides

academic and personal mentoring in survival skills and self-advocacy, promotes critical thinking,

and uses cooperative learning groups or peer tutoring situations (Gay, 2000). Multiple

opportunities to reduce prejudice between administrators, teachers and especially students will

need to be provided to develop positive attitudes about human diversity (Polite & Saengar,

2003). Administrators will need to facilitate teachers' capacity to recognize and celebrate unique

individual characteristics and group affiliations, while also stressing the many characteristics all

students have in common. Human identity development is closely tied to a healthy understating

of human difference. Administrators will be tasked with closely examining school policies to

ensure that they promote educational equity for all students. School staff will work together to

develop school environments and classroom communities in which differences can be discussed

openly and sensitively and teach conflict resolution skills that provide students with strategies for

coping with prejudice (Salend, 2011; Schniedewind & Davidson, 2006)   Students will need

experiences that will empower them through experiencing educational equity and choice in all

aspects of schooling by the promotion of shared decision making principles and democratic

citizenship.

The "puzzle" of whether to include or contain students with special needs is a challenging

one to solve and should be handled with great care. In the fourth chapter of *The Structure of

Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn (1996) refers to normal sciences as puzzle solving. When someone

thinks of puzzles, the idea of games may come to mind. When solving the puzzle of whether or

not to include or contain students with special needs, it is important to remember not to treat the

futures of children as a game. Even though some games require methodical calculation and

strategy, at the end of that game there is a winner and a loser. The children do not need to be the losers. Too often in education, educators are too quick to try the newest education fad. Unfortunately, the newest education fad is not always the best thing for the children. While educators are experimenting with a new strategy or method, the children are going through the motions of obtaining an education. There is always room for growth and change, but not at the price of the children's futures.

Once the new paradigm of inclusion has been implemented, whether accepted or forced, the impact on educators will be dramatic. It is almost as if someone has allowed their optical prescription to become outdated, and, after updating their prescription, put on new glasses to view the same world but with a slightly different perspective. The unique aspect of a new paradigm shift is the ability for participants to view the paradigm from their perspective. Their experiences and what they viewed before, will impact what they will see with the new paradigm.

As educational researchers attempt to fit the meaning of equity and inclusion "into conceptual boxes" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 5), participants in their policy suggestions, namely teachers and administrators, are reminded they "may have to relinquish the notion, explicit or implicit, that changes of paradigm carry scientists and those who learn from them closer and closer to the truth" (Kuhn, 1996, p. 171). While it may be difficult to buy into new educational ideologies like inclusion, doing so is important for the children and their futures. As schools are increasingly including students with special needs, the administrator's perceptions of inclusion, belief in the inclusive philosophy, and knowledge of special education are factors that should be examined to a much greater extent in order for the inclusion paradigm shift to occur and be successful.

CHAPTER III: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter provides a description of the methodology that was used to gather data from a population of 9th through 12th secondary administrators in the state of Alabama. The research perspective, setting and sample, the instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis of the study are detailed throughout the chapter. The chapter concludes with a summary of the overall methodology of the study.

Research Perspective

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of 9th through 12th grade administrators toward inclusion of students with disabilities in Alabama public schools. This quantitative study compared the current perceptions of public school administrators on two dichotomous scales (i.e. hostility/receptivity and anxiety/calmness) relative to serving students with disabilities in grades 9 through 12 in the state of Alabama in general education settings. The study also attempted to determine the correlation between principals' personal demographics, work experience and training, school demographics, and principals' perceptions of serving students with various types of disabilities within the general education setting. The study was a non-experimental, descriptive research design. The purpose is further delineated by the following research questions.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for this study.

    1. What are Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education public school

administrators' perceptions of inclusion?

2. To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and personal demographics: (a) age and (b) gender?

3. To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and personal experience: (a) years of experience in a general education classroom, (b) years of experience in a special education classroom, and (c) years of\ experience as an administrator?

4. To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and special education training: (a) amount of formal special education training and (b) amount of special education inservice hours?

5. To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and school demographics: (a) campus size, (b) average class size, and (c) number of students with IEPs (not including gifted)?

Setting and Sample

The researcher obtained permission to conduct a quantitative study through the Auburn University Human Subjects Research protocol process. This study complied with the institutional policy and regulatory requirements of the Auburn University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research and the Human Research Protection Program. All participants received an email invitation to participate in the study, and given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Implied consent from the participants was received upon the completion of the survey. The emailed invitation assured the participants anonymity,

therefore, the participants' email, nor was the identity of the participants revealed or associated with any part of the study.

The potential participants represented public schools that enrolled 9th through 12th grade students only. The size of the schools ranged from less than 250 to over 1,000 students and the average class size ranged from more than 10 and less than 40 students. The list of potential participating administrators was developed from an email list obtained from the Alabama State Department of Education website. As a result, the intended sample of the study was 464 public school 9th through 12th grade principals. The actual sample size of respondents who completed the survey was 228, 49 percent of the sample. The 228 responses maintained a confidence level of 95 percent and confidence interval of +/-5.

Instrumentation

The Perceptions of Inclusion Survey (POIS; translated and modified for this study by the author from Thomas et al., 2010; Shippen et al., 2005; Soodak et al., 1998) originally titled Response to Inclusion Survey (RIS), was completed anonymously by each participant. The POIS was broken down into three sections: Section I – Inclusion Scenario, Section II –Experience and Training, and Section III – Demographic Information.

Section I consisted of a modified one-paragraph hypothetical scenario regarding providing services for students with disabilities. Survey participants read a hypothetical scenario in which their superintendent informs them that their school would be including students with disabilities ranging from physical to mental impairments. The students with disabilities in the hypothetical scenario were identified as having hearing impairment, learning disabilities, intellectual impairments, behavioral disorders, autism, and physical impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair. The hypothetical scenario was followed by a list of 17 adjectives that were

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rated on a 5-point Likert scale defined as positive, somewhat positive, neutral, negative and somewhat negative feelings towards the scenario. The items were counterbalanced with positive and negative variations.

Section II addressed the Experience and Training of the administrator. The Experience and Training section of the POIS was designed with seven questions to gather data on variables that could potentially influence an administrator's perception of inclusion. The first two questions collected basic information about the administrator's age and gender. Questions three through seven collected data on the administrator's formal training and personal experiences: years of full-time regular education teaching experience, years of full-time special education teaching experience, years as a secondary (9th through 12th) school principal, approximate number of special education credits in your formal training, and approximate number of in-service trainings hours in inclusive practices.

Section III used three questions to collect the demographic information of the administrator's school. The first two questions gathered information on the number of students enrolled and the average class size. The last question addressed the approximate percentage of students with IEPs (excluding gifted) in the building.

Data Collection

The POIS was sent in April 2016, by e-mail to 9th through 12th grade administrators from the state of Alabama. Qualtrics, a web-based survey/assessment tool, was used to administer the survey. The email included an information letter with instructions and procedures for responding. The letter stated the purpose of the study, assured the participants anonymity, and provided the Qualtrics link for the survey along with a note of thanks for their anticipated willingness to participate. The survey website link was not connected with the administrator's

email, nor was the identity of the administrator revealed or associated with any part of the study.

The POIS was emailed to a total of 464 secondary principals in the state of Alabama using the Qualtrics email services, with 441 reaching their destination. The initial survey participation request elicited seven responses causing concern that the receiving email systems may or may not have blocked the survey email. As a result, during May of 2016, 248 of the 464 administrators were contacted using the emailing system provided by their school websites. Only 248 of the 464 provided this method of contact, therefore they were the only individuals contacted using this method. This request for participation resulted in 60 responses. Further attempts were made to contact participants through the Qualtrics email services in June 2016 with 29 responses and July 2016 with 39 responses. An additional attempt to recruit participants was made at the MEGA Conference in Mobile, AL in mid July 2016. MEGA conference is a five day conference where numerous administrators and teachers gather for professional development. Secondary administrators were asked in person to participate in the study. They were given a letter stating the purpose of the study, request for anonymous participation, and provided a hard copy of the survey to be completed and returned immediately. The paper survey process resulted in 93 responses. The combined efforts of the Qualtrics email services, contacts through school websites and paper surveys distributed during MEGA conference resulted in 228 responses. The 228 responses, which were 49 percent of the sample, maintaining a confidence level of 95 percent and confidence interval of +/-5.

Data Analysis

Upon receiving the survey responses, the questionnaires were examined and checked for completeness. Eight surveys were removed from the original 228 responses due to missing data. Two of the 17 adjectives were also removed due to lack of response of those two adjectives. The

remaining 220 responses were analyzed using SPSS Version 23.

The validity of the POIS was determined by the original authors of the RIS. According to Shippen et al. (2005) and Soodak et al. (1998), a confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that the 17 items presented in the RIS held their factor structure even after manipulation of the scenario. Additionally, these authors reported a reliability coefficient for the overall instrument of $r = .96$, indicating extremely strong test-retest consistency. Therefore, the utility of the instrument made it possible to adapt the scenarios without disturbing the psychometric properties.

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on the POIS, a modified version of the RIS (Soodak et al, 1998) to determine if the POIS maintained the original two-factor structure in its modified form. The Chi Square for the overall model was 188.106 ($df = 81$). The CFA confirmed there was convergent validity for the factor of hostility/receptivity as evidence of an average variance extracted at .67. The CFA confirmed there was convergent validity for the factor of anxiety/calmness as evidence of an average variance extracted at .85. The Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.92 determined the instrument was reliable. The CFA also determined a composite reliability of $r = .95$ for hostility/receptivity and $r = .97$ for anxiety/calmness. The normed fit index (NFI) was .902 and the comparative fit index (CFI) was .941. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was recorded as .078 and the goodness of fit index (GFI) was acceptable at .9.
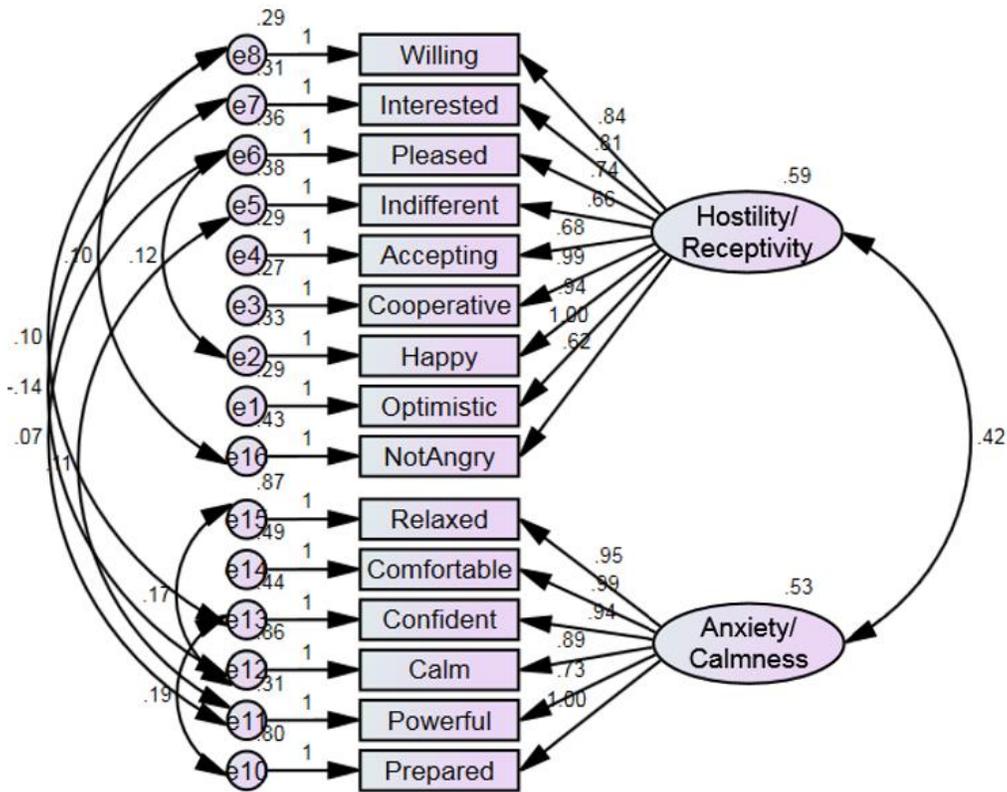
Figure 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model. This figure confirms the measurement theory.

    The study was a non-experimental, descriptive research design and used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data collected. The statistical analysis of the data included a repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with follow-up pairwise comparisons. The MANOVA was used to examine data between and within the groups of variables. Descriptive data included frequency distributions, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations. The dependent measures yielded from the survey were (1) mean score on the hostility/receptivity scale and (2) mean score on the anxiety/calmness scale in relation to (a) age, (b) gender, (c) years of experience in a general education classroom, (d) years of experience in a special education classroom, (e) years of experience as an administrator, (f) amount of formal special education training, (g) amount of special education inservice hours, (h) campus size, (i) average class size, and (j) number of students with IEPs (not including gifted).

Summary

This quantitative study examined 9th through 12th grade administrators perceptions towards inclusion in Alabama public schools. The data were collected using Qualtrics, a web-based survey/assessment tool. The collected data allowed for an examination of the correlation between specific variables and principals' perceptions of inclusion. The data analysis also provided insight into the variables that positively correlated with the principals' perceptions. The study provided information that could be utilized by local and state policy makers, educational leaders and others involved with implementing inclusion programs in 9th through 12th grade public education environments.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analyses used to address the research questions posed in this study. The demographic characteristics of the sample are outlined. The results of the statistical analysis are discussed in relation to the research questions and hypothesis formulated for the study. Sections addressed within this chapter are purpose of the study, research questions, method, and analysis of principal demographics, experience and training, school demographics, perceptions of inclusion scores, MANOVA results and pairwise comparisons.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of 9th through 12th grade administrators toward inclusion of students with disabilities in Alabama public schools. The study also attempted to determine the correlation between principals' personal characteristics, school demographics, work experience, training, education and principals' perceptions of inclusion. The purpose is further delineated by the following research questions.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for this study.

1. What are Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education public school administrators' perceptions of inclusion?

2. To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and personal demographics: (a) age

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and (b) gender?

3. To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and personal experience: (a) years of experience in a general education classroom, (b) years of experience in a special education classroom, and (c) years of\ experience as an administrator?

4. To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and special education training: (a) amount of formal special education training and (b) amount of special education inservice hours?

5. To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and school demographics: (a) campus size, (b) average class size, and (c) number of students with IEPs (not including gifted)?

Method

The Perceptions of Inclusion Survey (POIS), a modified version of the Response to Inclusion Survey (RIS) developed by Soodak et al. (1998), was sent by e-mail to 9th through 12th grade administrators from the state of Alabama. The list of paticipants was developed from an email list obtained from the Alabama State Department of Education website. The survey was sent to 464 public school 9th through 12th grade principals with a response rate of 49 percent (n=228). The 228 responses maintained a confidence level of 95 percent and confidence interval of +/-5.

Data Analysis

Principal Demographics. In Section II of the survey, principals answered seven questions pertaining to their personal characteristics, training and experience. The principals

provided their age, gender, years of full-time general education teaching experience, years of full-time special education teaching experience, years as a secondary school principal, approximate number of special education credits in formal education, and approximate number of in-service training hours in inclusive practices. The ages of the principals are summarized in Table 1 and the gender composition is distinguished in Table 2.

Table 1

Age of Principal Sample

Age	n	Percent
20-30 years	3	1.36%
31-40 years	32	14.55%
41-50 years	110	50.00%
51-60 years	64	29.09%
61 or more	11	5.00%
Total	220	100.00%

Table 2

Gender Composition of Principal Sample

Principal gender	n	Percent
Male	151	68.64%
Female	69	31.36%
Total	220	100.00%

Principal Experience. Questions three, four and five of Section II asked principals to indicate the number of years of full time teaching in general education, the number of years teaching full-time in special education, and the number of years as a secondary (9th through 12th) school principal. The results of a somewhat different representation of full-time teaching

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experience in general education are presented in Table 3. The number of years of experience

teaching full-time in special education is summarized in Table 4 and a summary of years of as a

secondary (9th through 12th) principal is presented in the Table 5.

Table 3

Years of Full-Time General Education Teaching Experience:

Years	n	Percentage
0	2	0.91%
1-6	11	5.00%
7-12	49	22.27%
13-18	65	29.55%
19 or more	93	42.27%
Total	220	100.00%

Table 4

Years of Full-Time Special Education Teaching Experience

Years	n	Percentage
0	185	84.09%
1-6	11	5.00%
7-12	8	3.64%
13-18	12	5.45%
19 or more	4	1.82%
Total	220	100.00%

Table 5

Years as a 9th through 12th *Secondary Principal*

Years	n	Percentage
0-5	110	50.00%
6-10	62	28.18%
11-15	31	14.09%
16-20	12	5.45%
21 or more	5	2.27%
Total	220	100.00%

Principal Training. The last two questions of Section II inquired about the approximate number of formal special education course work credits and the number of inservice training hours in inclusive practices. Table 6 summarizes the approximate number of special education credits in formal training. The approximate number of inservice training hours in inclusive practices is summarized in Table 7.

Table 6

Approximate Number of Special Education Credits in Formal Training

Special Education Credits	n	Percentage
0	9	4.09%
1-6	124	56.36%
7-12	64	29.09%
13-18	5	2.27%
19 or more	18	8.18%
Total	220	100.00%

Table 7

Approximate Number of Inservice Training Hours in Inclusive Practices

Inservice Training Hours	n	Percentage
0	4	1.82%
1-8	62	28.18%
9-16	84	38.18%
17-24	27	12.27%
25 or more	43	19.55%
Total	220	100.00%

The results from Section II, Principal Demographic Information, Experience and Training, indicate that two-thirds of the principals who participated in the study were male (n=151). Half (n=112) of the principals were between the ages of 41 and 50 years of age. The participants have a wide range of years of teaching experience in general education ranging from no experience up to more than 19 years. Almost 84 percent (n=185) of the principals have no experience teaching in special education, however, over half of the principals have 1 to 6 hours of special education formal course work and an assortment of hours of training in inclusive practices. The majority of the principals have between 0 and 10 years of experience serving as a secondary school principal.

School Demographics. In Section III of the survey, principals were asked to consider three questions that dealt specifically with their school: the approximate number of all students attending their school, the average class size for all students, and the approximate percentage of students with IEPs not including the students identified as gifted. The approximate number of all students in the principals' school buildings is summarized in Table 8. The results in Table 9 summarized the average class size for all students at the principals' individual schools. Table 10 summarized the results for the approximate percentage of students with IEPs, not including those

students identified as gifted, who are in the principals' respective schools.

Table 8

Approximate Number of All Students on Campus

Number of Students	n	Percentage
0-250	14	6.36%
251-500	48	21.82%
501-750	29	13.18%
751-1000	67	30.45%
1001 or more	62	28.18%
Total	220	100.00%

Table 9

Average Class Size for All Students

Average Class Size	n	Percentage
0-8	0	0.00%
9-16	6	2.73%
17-24	71	32.27%
25-32	140	63.64%
33 or more	3	1.36%
Total	220	100.00%

Table 10

Approximate Percentage of Students with IEPs in the Building (Gifted Not Included)

Students with IEPs (Gifted Not Included)	n	Percentage
0-5%	26	11.82%
6-10%	93	42.27%
11-15%	67	30.45%
16-20%	28	12.73%
21% or more	6	2.73%
Total	220	100.00%

The outcome of the School Demographic Information in Section III of the POIS provides insight into the structure of the principals' respective schools environment. Most schools have at least 751 students and possibly more than 1000 students. The average class size ranges from 25 to 32 students. The majority of schools serve students with disabilities that make up between six and 10 percent of the school population.

Perceptions of 9th through 12th secondary administrators toward inclusion students with disabilities in Alabama public schools. To examine the perceptions of 9th through 12th grade public school administrators' perceptions of inclusion, principals were asked to read a one-paragraph hypothetical scenario regarding providing services for students with disabilities. In the scenario, their superintendent informs them that their school would be including students with hearing impairment, learning disabilities, intellectual impairments, behavioral disorders, autism, and physical impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair. The hypothetical scenario was followed by a list of 17 adjectives that were rated on a 5-point Likert scale defined as positive, somewhat positive, neutral, negative and somewhat negative feelings towards the scenario. The items were counterbalanced with positive and negative variations. Two of the 17 adjectives were removed due to lack of response to those two adjectives. The principals' perceptions were

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calculated using the responses to the 15 descriptive adjectives in Section I of the POIS. A total

perception of inclusion score was determined for each of the 220 respondents in Section I. Based

on the total score obtained from Section I, ranging from 15 to 75, lower scores are an indication

of somewhat negative perceptions and higher scores are an indication of more positive

perceptions of inclusion. The actual scores from principals ranges from the lowest score of 26 to

the highest score of 75. The mean score is 56.8, the median is 58, the mode is 60, and the

standard deviation is 9.53. The distribution of scores is shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Principals' Perceptions of Inclusion Scores

Scores	Frequency	Percent
26	2	0.9
33	2	0.9
34	2	0.9
37	2	0.9
38	1	0.5
41	4	1.8
42	1	0.5
43	1	0.5
44	5	2.3
45	9	4.1
46	4	1.8
47	4	1.8
48	2	0.9
49	12	5.5
50	5	2.3
51	2	0.9
52	7	3.2

(table continues)

Table 11 (*continued*)

Scores	Frequency	Percent
53	4	1.8
54	13	5.9
55	9	4.1
56	7	3.2
57	7	3.2
58	13	5.9
59	7	3.2
60	23	10.5
61	8	3.6
62	8	3.6
63	4	1.8
64	7	3.2
65	10	4.5
66	5	2.3
67	2	0.9
68	2	0.9
69	7	3.2
70	2	0.9
71	5	2.3
73	3	1.4
74	2	0.9
75	7	3.2

The 15 adjectives in Section I were separated into two dichotomous scales, hostility/receptivity and anxiety/calmness. The hostility/receptivity factor heavily loaded on adjective pairs such as angry/not angry, interested/disinterested, and pessimistic/optimistic. The anxiety/calmness factor heavily loaded on adjective pairs such as anxious/relaxed,

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comfortable/uncomfortable, and nervous/calm. The means and standard deviations for the dependent measures are presented in Figures 2 and 3. The Hostility/Receptivity factor mean is 3.94 with a standard deviation of 0.66 and the Anxiety/Calmness factor mean score is 3.55 and a standard deviation of 0.77. Both mean scores and standard deviations indicate that 9th through 12th grade secondary school principals' attitudes in Alabama in general are favorable toward inclusion.
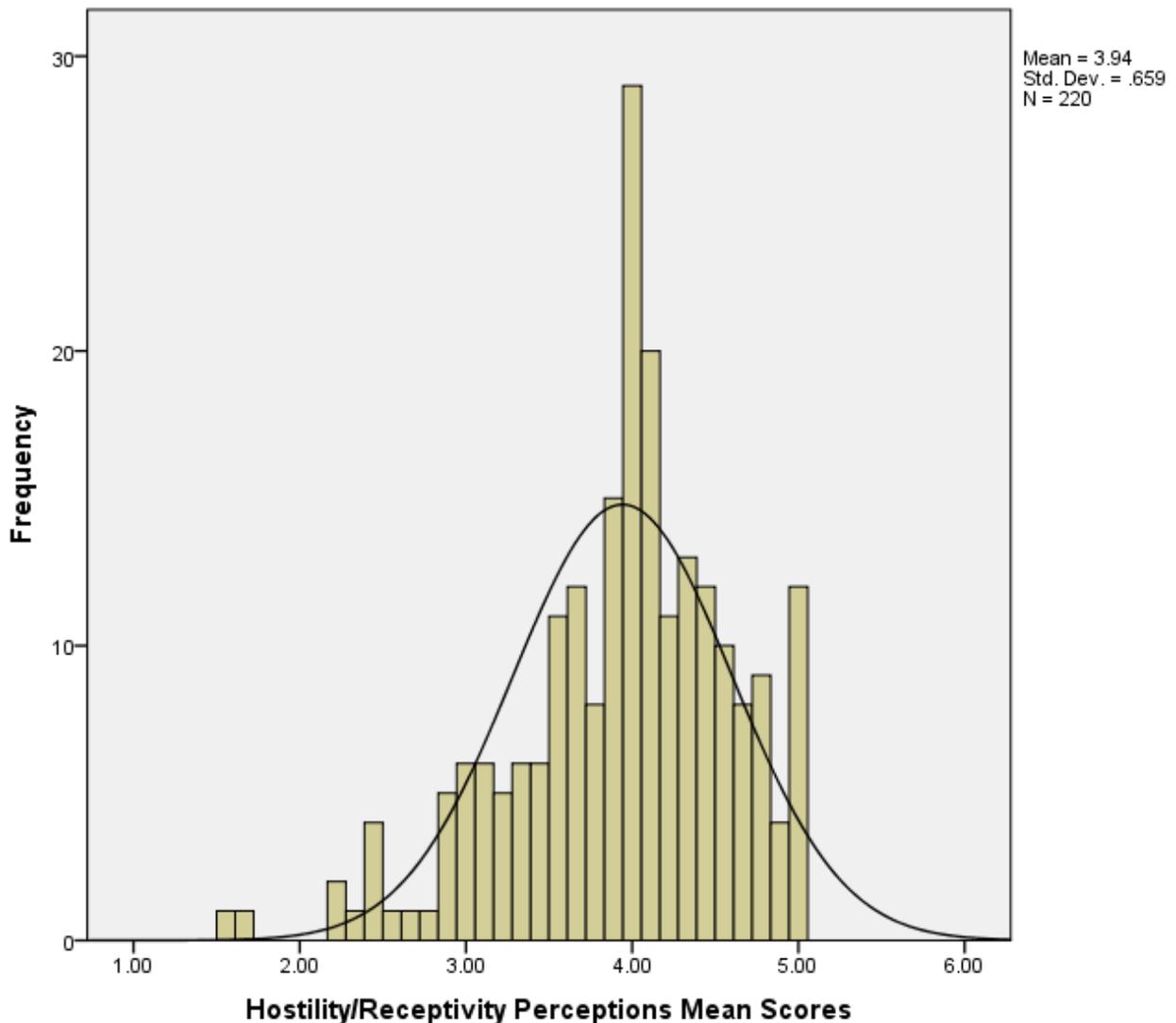
Figure 2. Hostility/Receptivity Factor Mean Distribution.
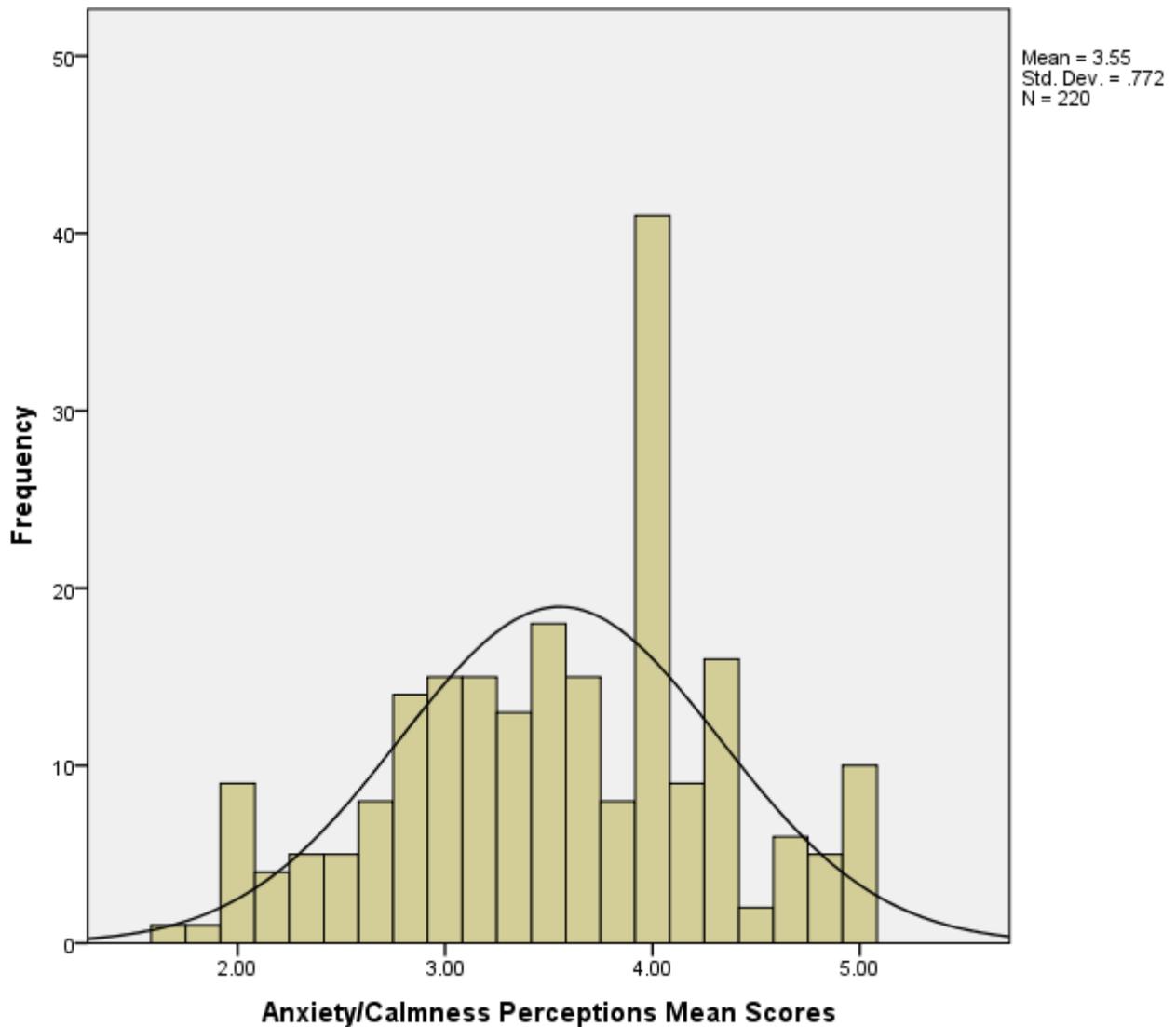
Figure 3. Anxiety/Calmness Factor Mean Distribution.

MANOVA Results. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to test for statistical significance between the means of two dependent variable and 10 independent variables. The dependent variables were two dichotomous scales generated from the 15 adjectives in Section I of the POIS. The first scale, hostility/receptivity, consisted of nine descriptive adjectives and anxiety/calmness was constructed with six. The independent variables, taken from Section II and Section III of the POIS, include: (a) age, (b) gender, (c) years of experience in a general education classroom, (d) years of experience in a special education

classroom, (e) years of experience as an administrator, (f) amount of formal special education training, (g) amount of special education inservice hours, (h) campus size, (i) average class size, and (j) number of students with IEPs (not including gifted). The total number of responses for this MANOVA was 220.

Wilks' Lambda was used in the MANOVAs to determine if differences exist between the means of identified groups of independent variables on a combination of dependent variables (Everitt & Dunn, 1991). The MANOVA, through Wilks' Lambda, reveals a statistically significant multivariate main effect for seven of the 10 independent variables: age, Wilks' $\lambda =$ .811, F (8, 428) = 5.91, p < .001, η^2 = .099, general education teaching experience, Wilks' $\lambda =$ .912, F (8, 428) = 2.53, p < .05, η^2 = .045, special education teaching experience, Wilks' $\lambda =$ .898, F (8, 428) = 2.96, p < .05, η^2 = .052, 9th through 12th secondary administrative experience, Wilks' λ = .893, F (8, 428) = 3.12, p < .05, η^2 = .055, number of inservice hours in the area of special education, Wilks' λ = .921, F (8, 428) = 2.26, p < .05, η^2 = .041, the average size of campus, Wilks' λ = .898, F (8, 428) = 2.95, p < .05, η^2 = .052, and average class size, Wilks' $\lambda =$ .935, F (6, 430) = 2.44, p < .05, η^2 = .033. The MANOVA does not reveal a statistically significant effect for three of the 10 independent variables: gender, Wilks' λ = .983, F (2, 217) = 1.87, p > .05, η^2 = .017, formal credits earned in the area of special education, Wilks' λ = .946, F (8, 428) = 1.50, p > .05, η^2 = .027, and number of IEPs (not including gifted), Wilks' λ = .943, F (8, 428) = 1.58, p > .05, η^2 = .029. The results of the MANOVA are reported in Table 12.

Table 12

MANOVA Results

Effect	Value	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared[1] (η^2)
Age	.811	5.91	.001*	.099
Gender	.983	1.87	.156	.017
General Education Teaching Experience	.912	2.53	.011*	.045
Special Education Teaching Experience	.898	2.96	.003*	.052
9th through 12th Secondary Principal Experience	.893	3.12	.002*	.055
Special Education Formal Credits	.946	1.5	.154	.027
Special Education Inservice Hours	.921	2.26	.022*	.041
Average Size of Campus	.898	2.95	.003*	.052
Average Class Size	.935	2.44	.025*	.033
Number of IEPs (not including gifted)	.943	1.58	.128	.029

Note: *Significant finding ($p<.05$); [1]Partial Eta Squared (η^2) is the effect size of the study

Pairwise Comparisons. Pairwise comparisons were conducted for each statistically significant combination of dependent variables. This method allows a concentration on the comparison of only two criteria at a time. Once significance has been determined, further detail about each relationship within those relationships will be discussed. The following statistically significant effects will be discussed: age, general education teaching experience, special education teaching experience, 9th through 12th secondary principal experience, special education inservice hours, average size of campus, and average class size.

Pairwise Comparison 1: Age. The interactions between age and the dependent variables, hostility/receptivity and anxiety/calmness, are shown in Table 13 and explained in detail below.

Table 13

Between Subjects Test for Age and the Mean Score on Hostility/Receptivity and Anxiety/Calmness Scales

Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared[1] (η^2)
Hostility/Receptivity	3.9	.004*	.068
Anxiety/Calmness	5.28	.001*	.089

Note: *Significant finding ($p<.05$); [1]Partial Eta Squared is the effect size of the study

Age, independent variable and hostility/receptivity, dependent variable. Principals who state their age is 61 or more years of age indicate they are less receptive towards the inclusion of students with disabilities compared to ranges of age 31 to 40 (mean difference -.67), 41 to 50 (mean difference -.78) and 51-60 (mean difference -.62).

Age, independent variable and anxiety/calmness, dependent variable. Principals who specified their age as 31 to 40 are more anxious than individuals 41 to 50 (mean difference -.47 and 51to 60 (mean difference -.37). Principals who indicated their age was in the 20 to 30 range are more anxious than all of the ages: 31 to 40 (mean difference -.99), 41 to 50 (mean difference -.47), 51 to 60 (mean difference -1.37) and 61 or more years (mean difference -1.10) of age.

Pairwise Comparison 2: General Education Teaching Experience. The interactions between general education teaching experience and the dependent variables, hostility/receptivity and anxiety/calmness, are shown in Table 14 and explained in detail below.

Table 14

Between Subjects Test for General Education Teaching Experience and the Mean Score on Hostility/Receptivity and Anxiety/Calmness Scales

Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared[1] (η^2)
Hostility/Receptivity	2.56	.038*	.046
Anxiety/Calmness	1.88	.114	.034

Note: *Significant finding (*p*<.05); [1]Partial Eta Squared is the effect size of the study

General education teaching experience, independent variable and hostility/receptivity, dependent variable. Principals with 7 to 12 years of general education teaching experience affirm they are more receptive towards the inclusion of students with disabilities compared to principals with 1 to 6 years of experience (mean difference .56), 13 to 18 years (mean difference .2778) and 19 or more years (mean difference .23) of general education experience.

General education teaching experience, independent variable and anxiety/calmness, dependent variable. The pairwise comparison general education teaching experience and the anxiety/calmness scale does not produce a statistically significant difference.

Pairwise Comparison 3: Special Education Teaching Experience. The interactions between special education teaching experience and the dependent variables, hostility/receptivity and anxiety/calmness, are shown in Table 15 and explained in detail below.

Table 15

Between Subjects Test for Special Education Teaching Experience and the Mean Score on Hostility/Receptivity and Anxiety/Calmness Scales

Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared[1] (η^2)
Hostility/Receptivity	4.57	.001*	.079
Anxiety/Calmness	4.12	.003*	.071

Note: *Significant finding (*p*<.05); [1]Partial Eta Squared is the effect size of the study

Special education teaching experience, independent variable and hostility/receptivity, dependent variable. Principals with 19 or more years of special education teaching experience state they are less receptive towards the inclusion of students with disabilities compared to principals of all the other years of experience ranges including 0 years (mean difference -1.18), 1 to 6 years of experience (mean difference -1.27), 7 to 12 years (mean difference -1.56) and 13 to 18 more years (mean difference -1.43) of special education experience.

Special education teaching experience, independent variable and anxiety/calmness, dependent variable. Principals with 19 or more years of special education teaching experience state they are more anxious about the inclusion of students with disabilities compared to principals of all the other years of experience ranges including 0 years (mean difference -.93), 1 to 6 years of experience (mean difference -1.10), 7 to 12 years (mean difference -1.56) and 13 to 18 more years of special education experience (mean difference -1.40).

***Pairwise Comparison 4: 9th through 12th Secondary Principal* Experience.** The interactions between 9th through 12th secondary principal experience and the dependent variables, hostility/receptivity and anxiety/calmness, are shown in Table 16 and explained in detail below.

Table 16

Between Subjects Test for 9th through 12th Secondary Principal Experience and the Mean Score on Hostility/Receptivity and Anxiety/Calmness Scales

Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared[1] (η^2)
Hostility/Receptivity	2.82	.026*	.050
Anxiety/Calmness	.424	.791	.008

Note: *Significant finding ($p<.05$); [1]Partial Eta Squared is the effect size of the study

9th through 12th secondary principal experience, independent variable and hostility/receptivity, dependent variable. Principals with 0 to 5 years of 9th through 12th secondary principal experience infer they are more receptive of the inclusion of students with disabilities compared to principals with 11 to 15 years of experience (mean difference .34) and 19 or more years (mean difference .70). Principals with 19 or more years of experience are less receptive than 0 to 5 years (mean difference -.70).and 6 to 10 years (mean difference -.62) of 9th through 12th secondary principal experience.

9th through 12th secondary principal experience, independent variable and anxiety/calmness, dependent variable. The pairwise comparison of 9th through 12th secondary principal experience and the anxiety/calmness scale does not produce a statistically significant difference.

Pairwise Comparison 5: Special Education Inservice Hours. The interactions between special education inservice hours and the dependent variables, hostility/receptivity and anxiety/calmness, are shown in Table 17 and explained in detail below.

Table 17

Between Subjects Test for Special Education Inservice Hours and the Mean Score on Hostility/Receptivity and Anxiety/Calmness Scales

Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared[1] (η^2)
Hostility/Receptivity	.96	.429	.018
Anxiety/Calmness	3.34	.011*	.058

Note: *Significant finding ($p<.05$); [1]Partial Eta Squared is the effect size of the study

Special education inservice hours, independent variable and hostility/receptivity, dependent variable. The pairwise comparison special education inservice hours and the hostility/receptivity scale does not produce a statistically significant difference.

Special education inservice hours, independent variable and anxiety/calmness, dependent variable. Principals with 1 to 8 special education inservice hours state they are more anxious about the inclusion of students with disabilities compared to principals with 17 to 24 hours (mean difference -.49) and 25 or more hours (mean difference -.40). Principals with 9 to 16 hours are also more anxious than principals with 17 to 24 hours (mean difference -.41) and 25 or more (mean difference -.33) special education inservice hours.

Pairwise Comparison 6: Average Campus Size. The interactions between average campus size and the dependent variables, hostility/receptivity and anxiety/calmness, are shown in Table 18 and explained in detail below.

Table 18

Between Subjects Test for Average Campus Size and the Mean Score on Hostility/Receptivity and Anxiety/Calmness Scales

Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared[1] (η^2)
Hostility/Receptivity	2.12	.080	.038
Anxiety/Calmness	3.40	.010*	.059

Note: *Significant finding ($p<.05$); [1]Partial Eta Squared is the effect size of the study

Average campus size, independent variable and hostility/receptivity, dependent variable. The pairwise comparison average campus size and the hostility/receptivity scale does not produce a statistically significant difference.

Average campus size, independent variable and anxiety/calmness, dependent variable. Principals with campus sizes of 1001 or more students revealed they are less anxious about the inclusion of students with disabilities compared to principals with 0 to 250 students on campus (mean difference .62), 251 to 500 students (mean difference .40) and campuses with 751 to 1000 students on campus (mean difference .37).

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Pairwise Comparison 7: Average Class Size. The interactions between average class size and the dependent variables, hostility/receptivity and anxiety/calmness, are shown in Table 19 and explained in detail below.

Table 19

Between Subjects Test for Average Class Size and the Mean Score on Hostility/Receptivity and Anxiety/Calmness Scales

Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared[1] (η^2)
Hostility/Receptivity	.96	.414	.013
Anxiety/Calmness	2.20	.089	.030

Note: *Significant finding ($p<.05$); [1]Partial Eta Squared is the effect size of the study

Average class size, independent variable and hostility/receptivity, dependent variable. The pairwise comparison average class size and the hostility/receptivity scale does not produce a statistically significant difference.

Average class size, independent variable and anxiety/calmness, dependent variable. The pairwise comparison average class size and the anxiety/calmness scale does not produce a statistically significant difference.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the perceptions of 9th through 12th grade administrators toward inclusion of students with disabilities in Alabama public schools. Further, the study attempted to determine the effect of personal demographic information, work experience and training of secondary principals as they relate to principals' perceptions of inclusion. The study also examined the effect of the principals' school size, average class size and the number of IEPs (not including gifted).

The results of the study indicate that the principals are relatively homogenous in that the

majority have favorable to very favorable perceptions of including students with disabilities. Only four of the 220 principals have a score which represents negative to very negative perceptions of inclusion. The results of the study indicate that when considering all of the principals' personal demographic information, work experience and training, the best predictors of the principals' perceptions were age, general and special education teaching experience and the number of special education inservice hours. The analysis indicates that principals' who are 61 or more years of age are less receptive, while principals' ages 31 to 40 and 41 to 50 are more anxious but receptive. Principals' who had taught in general education for 7 to 12 years are more receptive while individuals with 1 to 6 years of general education experience are more anxious. Principals' with 19 or more years of special education teaching experience are less receptive and more anxious about the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes. Principals' with 0 to 5 years of experience as a 9th through 12th grade principal are more receptive while the veteran administrators with 19 or more years of experience are more anxious. The number of special education inservice hours of 1 to 8 and 9 to 16 are indicators that principals are more anxious than principals with more inservice hours. When considering the principals' school demographics, the average campus size of 751 to 1000 students indicates they are less receptive to inclusion while campus sizes of 1001 or more students are less anxious.

This chapter addressed the purpose of the study, research questions, method, and statistical analysis of principal demographics, experience and training, school demographics, perceptions of inclusion scores, MANOVA results and pairwise comparisons. Chapter V will present a summary of the study and discuss important conclusions drawn from the results of the study presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V will also discuss implications and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the perceptions of 9th through 12th grade administrators toward inclusion of students with disabilities in Alabama public schools. The study investigated 9th through 12th grade administrators' overall attitude toward inclusion and how principals' demographic information, training, experience and school demographics affected their perceptions. Chapter V presents a summary of the study and important conclusions drawn from the results of the study presented in Chapter IV. The chapter also provides a discussion of the implications and recommendations for further research.

Summary of Study

The study was conducted using a Web-based survey that utilized Qualtrics to collect the data. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, which describe the characteristics of the population being surveyed. The participants were selected from an email list obtained from the Alabama State Department of Education website. The Perceptions of Inclusion Survey (POIS; adapted from Thomas et al., 2010; Shippen et al., 2005; Soodak et al., 1998) was emailed to 464 9th through 12th grade administrators in April 2016. The email included a letter stating the purpose of the study, request for anonymous participation, and a link to the survey in Qualtrics. The survey was available from April 2016 through July 2016. The survey was sent to 464 public school 9th through 12th grade principals with a response rate of 49 percent (n=228). The 228 responses maintained a confidence level of 95 percent and confidence

interval of +/-5. The POIS was broken down into 3 sections: Section I – Inclusion Scenario, Section II –Experience and Training, and Section III – Demographic Information.

The statistical analysis of the data included a repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with follow-up pairwise comparisons. The MANOVA was used to examine data between and within the groups of variables. Descriptive data included frequency distributions, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations. The dependent measures yielded from the survey were (1) mean score on the hostility/receptivity scale and (2) mean score on the anxiety/calmness scale in relation to (a) age, (b) gender, (c) years of experience in a general education classroom, (d) years of experience in a special education classroom, (e) years of experience as an administrator, (f) amount of special education training – formal and professional development.

Conclusions of Research

Research suggests that administrators play an essential role in establishing an educational climate (Cobb, 2015; McLeskey et al., 2014; Urton et al., 2014; Billingsley, 2012; Cherkowski, 2012; WHO, 2012; Hunter, 2006; Idol, 2006; Salisbury, 2006; Brantlinger, 2005; Fontenot. 2005; Gredler, 2005; Jaegar & Bowman, 2005; Osgood, 2005; Daane et al., 2000; Thousand & Villa, 2000; Villa, Thousand et al., 1996; Ayers & Meyers, 1992; Rude & Anderson, 1992; Stainback, W. & Stainback, S., 1990) that provides opportunities for interaction between students without disabilities and students with disabilities. Administrators' attitudes can often determine the degree to which a leader will support academic advancements such as the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms (Praisner, 2000). Even though administrators are often not prepared for special education responsibilities, most are optimistic when shifting to inclusion. As the number of students with disabilities that are

included in the general education classroom increases, so does the need for administrators and teachers who have been trained in the process of inclusion. According to McGhie-Richmond (2011), "Inclusion affects us all. It's not a subject matter or a program or an approach, it's an attitude" (p. 1, emphasis in the original). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of 9th through 12th grade administrators toward inclusion of students with disabilities in Alabama public schools.

The collected data allows for an examination of the correlation between specific variables and principals' perceptions of inclusion. The data analysis also provides insight into the variables that positively correlates with the principals' perceptions. Results of this study contributes to an understanding of administrators' attitudinal responses to inclusion by characterizing the nature of administrators' responses and by identifying factors. The study provides information that could be utilized by local and state policy makers, educational leaders and others involved with implementing inclusion programs in 9th through 12th grade public education.
The study answers the following research questions:

What are Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education public school administrators' perceptions of inclusion? The principals' perceptions were calculated using the responses to the 15 descriptive adjectives in Section I of the POIS. Based on the total score obtained from Section I, ranging from 15 to 75, lower scores are an indication of somewhat negative perceptions and higher scores are an indication of more positive perceptions of inclusion. The actual scores from principals ranges from the lowest score of 26 to the highest score of 75. The mean score is 56.8, the median is 58, the mode is 60, and the standard deviation is 9.53. Only four of the 220 principals have a score which represents negative to very negative perceptions of inclusion while the remaining scores reflects a positive to very positive perception

of inclusion classrooms.

The principals' perceptions were further analyzed using the 15 adjectives in Section I of the POIS that were separated into two dichotomous scales, hostility/receptivity and anxiety/calmness. Both mean scores and standard deviations indicates that the majority of 9th through 12th grade secondary school principals' in Alabama are, in general, receptive to and not anxious about the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes.

A MANOVA provided further analysis of principals' perceptions of inclusion by testing for statistical significance between the means of the two dependent variables and 10 independent variables. The dependent variables were two dichotomous scales generated from the 15 adjectives in Section I of the POIS. The first scale, hostility/receptivity, consisted of nine descriptive adjectives and anxiety/calmness was constructed with six. The independent variables, taken from Section II and Section III of the POIS, include: (a) age, (b) gender, (c) years of experience in a general education classroom, (d) years of experience in a special education classroom, (e) years of experience as an administrator, (f) amount of formal special education training, (g) amount of special education inservice hours, (h) campus size, (i) average class size, and (j) number of students with IEPs (not including gifted). The MANOVA produced a statistically significant multivariate main effect for seven of the 10 independent variables: age ($p < .001$), general education teaching experience ($p < .05$), special education teaching experience ($p < .05$), 9th through 12th secondary administrative experience ($p < .05$), number of inservice hours in the area of special education ($p < .05$), the average size of campus ($p < .05$), and average class size ($p < .05$). The results can be interpreted to mean that principals with these types of personal demographics, experiences, training and school demographics tend to be more positive about the placement of students with disabilities in general education. The MANOVA does not

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reveal a statistically significant effect for three of the 10 independent variables: gender (p > .05), formal credits earned in the area of special education, (p > .05), and number of IEPs (not including gifted) (p > .05).

Building administrators and teachers are responsible for inclusion in schools, it is imperative that their perceptions be recognized by policy (Gous et al., 2014; Bandura, 2012; Ferretti & Eisenman, 2010; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Hill, 2009; Horrocks et al., 2008; Jull & Minnes, 2008; Reynolds, 2008; Valeo, 2008; Idol, 2006). For more than half a decade researchers have reinforced the observation that a principal's perception of students with disabilities and their place in general education is a critical prerequisite for successful inclusion (Gous et al., 2014; Bandura, 2012; Ferretti & Eisenman, 2010; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Hill, 2009; Horrocks et al., 2008; Jull & Minnes, 2008; Reynolds, 2008; Valeo, 2008; Idol, 2006; Villa et al., 1996). Horrocks et al., 2008 study found that an overall positive experience with inclusion resulted when positive attitudes toward inclusion were present prior to implementation. This study reveals that of the 220 successful responses, principals have a more positive perception of including students with disabilities in general education classes. These findings can be useful in the implementation of inclusion programs at the secondary level and also suggest further research in the area of how principals' perceptions affect the implementation of inclusion within the secondary school setting.

To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and personal demographics: (a) age and (b) gender? The principals' age (F (8, 428) = 5.91, p < .001) have a statistically significant effect on the principals' perceptions of inclusion. Age also has a statistically significant effect on the two dichotomous scales, hostility/receptivity and anxiety/calmness. The

study revealed that older principals tend to be less receptive to the inclusion students with disabilities but more calm than their younger contemporaries. The principals' gender (F (2, 217) = 1.87, p > .05) does not have a statistically significant effect on the principals' perceptions of inclusion. Gender does not have a statistically significant effect on neither hostility/receptivity nor anxiety/calmness.

To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and personal experience: (a) years of experience in a general education classroom, (b) years of experience in a special education classroom, and (c) years of experience as an administrator? Administrators have conflicting views when it comes to the implementation of inclusion within their schools. Fontenot's 2005 study revealed that the more general education teaching experience an administrator has, the less receptive they are to inclusion. Similar to Fontenot's 2005 study, this study found that a principal's years of experience as a general education teacher (F (8, 428) = 2.53, p < .05), has a statistically significant effect on the hostility/receptivity scale. There was no statistically significant difference on the anxiety/calmness scale.

Researchers have found that a principal's willingness to support inclusive placements depends on the level of personal and professional interactions the principal has had with students with disabilities (Gous et al., 2014; Graham & Spandagou, 2009; Livingston et al., 2001). Fontenot (2005) discovered a positive correlation between the attitudes of administrators with teaching experience in special education and those administrators' attitudes scores. Ramirez's 2006 study reported that a statistically significant difference was found in administrators' attitudes of implementing inclusion if they had special education experience. This study found that a principal's years of experience as a special education teacher (F (8, 428) = 2.96, p < .05)

has a statistically significant effect on the principal's perceptions of inclusion. In contrast to Gous et al., Graham and Spandagou, Livingston, Fontenot and Ramizer, this study found the more experience the principal has with teaching special education, the less receptive and more anxious they were.

Research has shown the more experience and seniority an administrator has, the less support for inclusion (Avissar, 2007; Barnet & Monda-Amaya, 1998; Villa et al., 1996; Center et al., 1985; Ward et al., 1978). In a 2007 study, Brown reported that school administrators with fewer years of administrative experience tended to agree more with the inclusion of students with disabilities. Avissar (2007) found that the more experience a principal has, whether it was teaching or as an administrator, the less accepting they are towards inclusion. A 2008 study conducted by Horrocks et al. reinforces the theory of administrator experience and perception of inclusion when they reported that the administrators' length of service in their current district negatively correlates with the administrators' positive attitudes toward inclusion. Administrators with less than seven years of experience and those with special education qualifications expressed more positive attitudes toward integration of students with disabilities than administrators with more years of experience and no special education qualifications (Center et al., 1985). In support of the aforementioned studies, this study showed that a principal's years of experience as a 9th through 12th secondary administrator (F (8, 428) = 3.12, p < .05) has a statistically significant effect on the principals' perceptions of inclusion. Principals with 0 to 5 years of administrative experience are more comfortable with the inclusion of students with disabilities.

To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and special education training: (a)

amount of formal special education training and (b) amount of special education inservice hours? Administrators' background experience and knowledge form their ability to design the learning process and establish an inclusive learning environment in their schools (Fullan, 1993, 2006; Foriska, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1995). In order for administrators to be instructional leaders; they must design programs that are all-encompassing for the students served in the school's inclusive environment (Council for Exceptional Children, 1998; Spillane et al., 2001) while at times working in areas with which they may not be familiar or possess an in depth knowledge. Ball and Green (2014) determined a need for pre-service training and professional experience with special education in order to increase the practice and quality of inclusion. This study revealed the amount of formal special education training (F (8, 428) = 1.50, p > .05) a principal has acquired does not have a statistically significant effect on the principals' perceptions of inclusion and does not have a statistically significant effect on either hostility/receptivity or anxiety/calmness scales. The number of special education inservice hours (F (8, 428) = 2.26, p < .05) does have a statistically significant effect on the principals' perceptions of inclusion. The level of anxiety correlates with the number of inservice hours. The fewer the hours the more anxious principals are about inclusion.

To what extent is there a relationship between Alabama 9th through 12th secondary level education administrators' perceptions of inclusion and school demographics: (a) campus size, (b) average class size, and (c) number of students with IEPs (not including gifted)? Leading schools, whether they are small or large, rural or urban, public or private, general education or special education, is a challenging endeavor. A school administrator often wears many hats and often more than one hat at a time. Those duties include a business manager, disciplinarian, curriculum facilitator and instructional leader. It is a fine balancing act that

administrators must juggle throughout the course of their day. The reauthorization of IDEA in

2004 and the implementation of NCLB in 2001 has forced administrators to go beyond simple

managerial duties. Administrators are experiencing a greater shift towards the instructional role

of the administrator due to the increased importance placed on academic standards and the need

for schools to be accountable for all students. Some administrators believe the decision to

include a student with special needs in a general education classroom should typically be made

on the basis of the child's needs, not those of the institution (Idol, 2006; Osgood, 2005; Praisner,

2003); others argued that integration was advisable only if convenient for the school (Idol, 2006;

Ware, 2005; Center et al., 1985). This study analyzed the size of the campus, average class size

and the number of IEPs within the school and discovered the average size of the principals'

campus (F (8, 428) = 2.95, p < .05) and the average class size (F (6, 430) = 2.44, p < .05) has a

statistically significant effect on the principals' perceptions of inclusion. The number of students

with IEPs (not including gifted) (F (8, 428) = 1.58, p > .05) within principals' schools does not

have a statistically significant effect on the principals' perceptions of inclusion.

Implications

For more than two decades, researchers have reinforced the observation that a principal's

perception of students with disabilities and their place in general education is a critical

prerequisite for successful inclusion (Gous et al., 2014; Bandura, 2012; Ferretti & Eisenman,

2010; Hang & Rabren, 2009; Hill, 2009; Horrocks et al., 2008; Jull & Minnes, 2008; Reynolds,

2008; Valeo, 2008; Idol, 2006; Villa et al., 1996). Principals often serve as program facilitators

on their campuses and therefore have the influence of a positive or negative environment that

reflects on success or failure of the programs. Their success with inclusion will depend greatly

on how they perceive it. This study was conducted to determine and better understand 9th

through 12th secondary administrators' perceptions of inclusion in Alabama public schools. The results of the study determined that overall, principals' perceptions of inclusion were positive. However, as the administrators' years of age increases, so does the administrators' reluctance towards implementing inclusion. The younger generation of administrators are more receptive but also they more anxious about inclusion. This knowledge can assist superintendents and special education directors with determining the type of professional development and additional support that faculty and staff needs to address the reluctance and anxiety of including students with disabilities. This information can also assist education leadership programs with identifying areas of need when designing curriculum for future instructional leaders.

With the latest incarnation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2004 emphasizing the education of an increasing number of secondary students with exceptional needs in inclusive environments and its mandate for including 99 percent of students in state standardized assessments, administrators and both general and special educators are examining the feasibility of and their responsibility for providing individualized instruction in the general education classroom. Prior to NCLB, students with disabilities were not included in statewide or national assessments (MacQuarrie, 2009). These new reforms weigh heavy on administrators and teachers, particularly at the middle- and high- school level due to heavy content demands and the implications of high-stakes testing (Stodden et al., 2003). This presents many policy challenges for schools and their leaders which leave some feeling unsure of how to maintain a balance between achieving satisfactory test scores on standardized, nationally-based assessments and providing equal opportunities to student with disabilities (Nichols et al., 2010; Howe & Welner, 2002; Florian & Rouse, 2001). This study investigated the area of inservice training and found a statistically significant effect on principals' perceptions of inclusion. Particular attention must be

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paid to the area of implementation of inclusion programs and the laws that govern them. Special education law is constantly evolving, therefore administrators must also evolve. With awareness in the areas of implementation of inclusive programs and special education law, principals are more cognizant of the different special education services and the impact that one can have on their campus.

Recommendations

An area considered worthy of further research is Alabama secondary principals' perceptions of inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms and how they relate to similar perceptions of principals in larger regional areas as well as the nation as a whole. Further research should be considered in the area of principals' perceptions of the benefits of students with disabilities participating in general education classrooms and whether the benefit is academic, social or both for the student with special needs and the general education students. An additional factor to be considered is the principal's level of knowledge of legislation and funding governing special education services and the correlation with their perceptions of inclusion. The idea of inclusion at the secondary level is more complicated, warranting future investigations to answer these questions.

Further research in the area of years of administrative experience should be considered as a result of data collected in this study. Principals with zero to five years of experience made up 50 percent (n=110) of the responses. A study needs to be conducted to determine why many of Alabama's, and other states, public high schools are headed by inexperienced leaders. This study's data corresponded with national findings that 50 percent of secondary principals have between zero and five years of secondary administrative experience. Further research should be conducted to evaluate administrators' receptivity to inclusion and the number of years of

administrative experience. Individuals with 0 to 5 years of experience were the most receptive to inclusion, however, as the number of years of experience increased, the receptivity to inclusion decreased. Qualitative data should be collected and evaluated for an explanation in the decline of receptivity.

Principals who stated they worked at campuses with a 1001 or more students revealed they were less anxious about the inclusion of students with disabilities. Data should be collected to determine if administrators with large campuses are more confident in delegating responsibilities, therefore, resulting in lower anxiety because they do not directly facilitate each program at their school. Further research should be conducted to determine whether or not the level of anxiety correlates with the number of resources available at schools with a student population of 1001 or more students. Data should be collected to determine if schools with higher populations have increased access to resources, faculty who specialize in working and developing curriculum for students with disabilities, and more programs available to assist students with disabilities.

An evaluation of graduate education leadership program special education curriculum requirements and the content of the special education curriculum administrators are required to take should be evaluated. This study's results reported that 60% (n=130) have zero to six formal credits in the area of special education. While the number of course credits does not have a statistically significant effect on the principals' perceptions of inclusion, this study did not explore the content of the courses that are required. Researchers will need to evaluate the principals who have completed the respective programs and their perceptions of the courses related to the preparedness to facilitate special education programs. Areas of strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum should be determined along with areas of need to focus on

developing curriculum to prepare instructional leaders for facilitating special education programs.

An additional area of research to be considered would be the number of special education inservice hours, the content and the rigor of special education inservices. This study revealed the number of special education inservice hours (F (8, 428) = 2.26, p < .05) has a statistically significant effect on the principals' perceptions of inclusion. Principals with the least amount of special education inservice hours are more anxious about inclusion. Principals rely heavily on local education agencies (LEA) to provide or facilitate access to special education professional development. LEAs need to recognize the importance of their role in equipping their instructional leaders with the special education information that will result in greater confidence and less anxiety. The LEAs professional development plan should be evaluated and structured to include a special education component. The state department of education should also evaluate the implementation of a certificated program that would require administrators to complete modules that prepare administrators to knowledgably serve as school district representatives on IEP teams.

Conclusion

The results of this study found that 9th through 12th secondary principals' perceptions of inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms were positive. The results can assist educational leadership programs to equip future leaders with the knowledge necessary to facilitate special education programs. School district- and campus-level inservice training programs can also benefit from the knowledge gained by incorporating inservices on special education law, funding and facilitation of special education programs. The results are beneficial in gaining a deeper understanding of how principals' perceptions affect the inclusion of students

with disabilities. Principals play a vital role in establishing a climate of learning for all students. Their roles are changing from the mundane management of facilities, discipline and transportation to also include curriculum, instruction, data assessment, human resource development and the building of a safe, caring culture that welcomes and respects diversity. With positive perceptions of inclusion, principals can coordinate with special and general education teachers to design a learning environment where students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers will achieve.

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Appendix 1

Perceptions of Inclusion Survey

The purpose of this study is to compare the perceptions of ninth through twelfth grade principals, on two dichotomous scales (i.e. enthusiastic/unenthusiastic and accepting/opposing) toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

Inclusion Scenario

Circle the word that best describes your feelings after reading the following scenario.

The superintendent of your school system calls you in for a conference two weeks before school is out for the summer. He/She informs you that beginning next school year our school system will include students with disabilities in general education classes as often as appropriate. The superintendent goes on to say that the students that will be attending your school have identified exceptionalities in the areas of hearing impairment, learning disabilities, intellectual impairments, behavioral disorders, autism, and physical impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair. You walk out of the meeting feeling . . .

1.	Enthusiastic	Somewhat Enthusiastic	Neutral	Somewhat	Unenthusiastic	Unenthusiastic
2.	Scared	Somewhat Scared	Neutral	Somewhat	Fearless	Fearless
3.	Anxious	Somewhat Anxious	Neutral	Somewhat	Relaxed	Relaxed
4.	Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Neutral	Somewhat	Uncomfortable	Uncomfortable
5.	Angry	Somewhat Angry	Neutral	Somewhat	Not Angry	Not Angry
6.	Unwilling	Somewhat Unwilling	Neutral	Somewhat	Willing	Willing
7.	Interested	Somewhat Interested	Neutral	Somewhat	Disinterested	Disinterested
8.	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Neutral	Somewhat	Insecure	Insecure
9.	Nervous	Somewhat Nervous	Neutral	Somewhat	Calm	Calm
10.	Pleased	Somewhat Pleased	Neutral	Somewhat	Displeased	Displeased
11.	Weak	Somewhat Weak	Neutral	Somewhat	Powerful	Powerful
12.	Annoyed	Somewhat Annoyed	Neutral	Somewhat	Indifferent	Indifferent
13.	Accepting	Somewhat Accepting	Neutral	Somewhat	Opposing	Opposing
14.	Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Neutral	Somewhat	Unprepared	Unprepared
15.	Resistant	Somewhat Resistant	Neutral	Somewhat	Cooperative	Cooperative

| 16. | Happy | Somewhat Happy | Neutral | Somewhat Unhappy | Unhappy |
| 17. | Pessimistic | Somewhat Pessimistic | Neutral | Somewhat Optimistic | Optimistic |

The following information in the Experience and Training *and* Demographic Information *sections will only be used to describe the population being studied.*

Experience and Training

1. Your age:

    20-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   61 or more

2. Gender: Male   Female

3. Years of full-time regular education teaching experience:

    0   1-6   7-12   13-18   19 or more

4. Years of full-time special education teaching experience:

    0   1-6   7-12   13-18   19 or more

5. Years as a secondary (9th-12th) school principal:

    0-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   21 or more

6. Approximate number of special education credits formal training:

    0   1-6   7-12   13-18   19 or more

7. Approximate number of inservice training hours in inclusive practices:

    0   1-8   9-16   17-24   25 or more

Demographic Information

1. Approximate number of all students in your building

    0-250   251-500   501-750   751-1000   1001 or more

2. Average class size for all students:

    0-8   9-16   17-24   25-32   33 or more

3. Approximate percentage of students with IEPS in your building. *(Do not include gifted)*

    0-5%   6-10%   11-15%   16-20%   21% or more

Appendix 2

Information Letter

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, LEADERSHIP, AND TECHNOLOGY
4036 Haley Center, Auburn, AL 36849
(334) 844-4460

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH
CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)
INFORMATION LETTER
for a Research Study entitled
**Perceptions of ninth through twelfth grade administrators toward inclusion in Alabama
public schools**

You are invited to participate in a research study to investigate the perceptions of ninth through twelfth
grade administrators toward inclusion in Alabama public schools. Your responses may prove beneficial
in planning, designing, and implementing inclusion programs within their schools and professional
development programs to prepare faculty to work with and serve students with disabilities efficiently
and effectively. The study is being conducted by Sandra Bodiford, a doctoral student in Education
Leadership, under the direction of Dr. Ellen Reames and Dr. Brittany Larkin in the Auburn University
Department of Education Foundations, Leadership and Technology. You are invited to participate
because you are identified as a principal of an Alabama public high school by the Alabama State
Department of Education and are age 19 or older.
If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete and submit an electronic survey. It should only
take about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. All information will be summarized so that no
individual answers will be identified. Also, the responses will be anonymous, and no email address will
be returned to the researcher.
If you choose not to participate, you can do so by closing out the electronic survey and your information
will not be collected. Your participation is completely voluntary. Your decision about whether or not to
participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the
Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology, or your school district.

If you have question about this study, please contact Sandra Bodiford by phone (706)332-1307 or email
bodifse@auburn.edu or Dr. Ellen Reames by phone (334)844-4460 or email reamseh@auburn.edu or Dr.
Brittany Larkin by phone (334)844-4460 or email bml0023@auburn.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University
Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or e-mail at
IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION ABOVE, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE
IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, PLEASE CLICK ON THE LINK
BELOW. YOU MAY PRINT A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO KEEP.

Follow this link to the Survey: Take the Survey

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
https://auburn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_8p5s5DV2Unm4jrL

Your input is greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your cooperation!
Sandra Bodiford

Appendix 3

IRB Approval Letter

Dear Ms. Bodiford,

Your protocol entitled " Perceptions of Ninth Through Twelfth Grade Administrators Toward Inclusion in Alabama Public Schools " has been approved by the IRB as "Exempt" under federal regulation 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

Official notice:
This e-mail serves as official notice that your protocol has been approved. A formal approval letter will not be sent unless you notify us that you need one.   By accepting this approval, you also accept your responsibilities associated with this approval. Details of your responsibilities are attached. Please print and retain.

Electronic Information Letter:
A scan of your approved letter is attached. However you still need *to **add the following IRB approval information to your information letter***: "The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from March 16, 2016 to March 15, 2019. Protocol #16-027 EX 1603 "   (Also attached is a scan of your approved protocol.)

You must use the updated document(s) to consent participants. *Please forward the actual electronic letter(s) with a live link so that we may print a final copy for our files*.

Expiration – Approval for three year period:
Your protocol will expire **on March 15, 2019.**   About three weeks before that time you will need to submit a renewal request.

When you have completed all research activities, have no plans to collect additional data and have destroyed all identifiable information as approved by the IRB, please notify this office via e-mail. A final report is no longer required for Exempt protocols.

If you have any questions, please let us know.
Best wishes for success with your research!
Susan
 Susan Anderson, IRB Administrator
Office of Research Compliance
115 Ramsay Hall (basement)
Auburn University, AL 36849
(334) 844-5966
IRBadmin@auburn.edu *(for general queries)*
IR**Bsubmit**@auburn.edu *(for protocol submissions)*