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Examining Teacher Experiences:  
A Qualitative Study on Inclusion in the Elementary Classroom

by

Jennifer L. Sinclair

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Educational Administration

Under the Supervision of Dr. C. Elliott Ostler

Omaha, Nebraska

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## **Abstract**

### EXAMINING TEACHER EXPERIENCES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON INCLUSION IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

Jennifer L. Sinclair, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 2017

Advisor: Dr. C. Elliott Ostler

This qualitative study utilized a semi-structured interview approach to better understand the experiences of general education teachers ( $n = 8$ ) with the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. By gaining information about the experiences that general education teachers have with supports and services for, as well as communication about, inclusion, the study results provide additional information about experiences in order to inform the supports teachers receive to better educate students with and without disabilities. Each semi-structured interview was transcribed and coded for themes. Seven key themes emerged from findings: Acceptance, Time in General Education Classroom, Supports and Strategies, Special Education Teacher Role, Collaboration and Communication, Dangerous, Destructive, Disruptive Behaviors, and Other Barriers.

Literature names the frequent barrier to inclusion being negative attitudes of general education teachers, special education teachers, and parents; that was not the case in the findings of this research, which found the large barrier described by all participants to be experiences with dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior. Along with the large barrier described as a result of student behavior, teachers detailed experiences with a lack of human supports because of student behavioral support needs. Research findings

include that despite teachers having supports and services in place for the education and inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom, such things didn't appear to be enough to combat the significant barrier that arose from dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior. Behavior affected the presence, participation, and achievement of special education students. Additionally, participants detailed the rippling effects that dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior had on inclusion, as well as the learning of other students in the classroom and often across the school. Of importance is for leaders and districts to be cognizant and focused on providing supports to school staff when programming and providing supports for students with significant behavioral needs. Adequate staffing is a must. Candid, supportive Individualized Education Program (IEP) conversations around least restrictive environment are critical.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

The Federal Government mandates students be placed in the least restrictive environment possible with the preferred placement being in the general education classroom, yet the concept of inclusion differs in how it is defined through policy and action in schools and districts across the United States. Teachers are the key to more inclusive education (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). It is what teachers think, believe, and do at the classroom level that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that students with and without disabilities experience (Hargreaves, 1994). Furthermore, increasing the inclusiveness of the school and classroom involves active attempts to develop a culture where educators not only accept student differences and diversity, but they celebrate such differences (Ainscow, 2007). Moreover, inclusion involves actively combating exclusion, and in the context of educating students with disabilities, inclusion is a never-ending process; it requires ongoing vigilance (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). Ultimately, inclusive education holds with it the belief that all children can learn, all children have the right to be educated with peers in age-appropriate heterogeneous classrooms within neighborhood schools, and that it is the responsibility of the school community to meet the diverse educational needs of all its students (Thousand & Villa, 1992). Law mandates inclusive education, yet it varies widely in practice (Kilanowski-Press, Foote, & Rinaldo, 2010).

The United States educational system has many mandates by the Federal Government, especially when it comes to educating students with disabilities. Federal law mandates that students with disabilities receive learning experiences in the general education classroom and in the least restrictive environment as possible (Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act, 2004), and students with disabilities are mandated to take grade-level assessments, which test the same rigorous standards that peers without disabilities must master (Act, E. S. S., 2015). There are the challenges of increasingly more rigorous content standards, increased high-stakes testing requirements, and the requirement of providing high-quality educational experiences for all learners. Of greatest concern in today's educational landscape is the large number of students with disabilities and specialized learning needs. Former United States Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, stated during his keynote address at the IDEA Leadership Conference on July 29, 2013, "President Obama and I are committed to doing everything in our power to ensure the American promise of equal educational opportunity is a reality for children with disabilities. All means all. When I talk about students, I mean all students, regardless of race, disability, and demographics."

Of great importance is that students with disabilities receive more exposure to grade level content and learning opportunities when present with age-appropriate peers in the general education classroom (Soukup, Wehmeyer, Bashinski, & Bovaird, 2007; Wehmeyer, Lattin, Lapp-Rincker, & Agran, 2003). Sadly, placing students with disabilities in a general education classroom doesn't mean they become part of the classroom; exclusionary practices still exist alongside inclusive efforts (Singal, 2008). Students with disabilities must be members of an inclusive classroom and not just to socialize with peers; they must learn meaningful skills in the general education setting (Snell, 2009). Furthermore, school-specialized supports must be provided to students with disabilities within the general education setting, for this will enable all students to belong to a same-age peer group (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). Importantly, educators

must provide close, systematic monitoring of student progress, and when students fail to respond adequately from the instruction in the inclusive setting; specialized interventions are necessary (Fuchs, et al., 2015).

Educators have the challenge of meeting the needs of all learners in the general education classroom, and important to note is that students with disabilities within the general education setting are more likely to progress in general curriculum than similar students in segregated settings; the students are more academically engaged in the general education setting (Soukup, Wehmeyer, Bashinski, & Bovaird, 2007). Furthermore, students must benefit from access, as it has been found that students may have access, but they aren't being provided with accommodations and curriculum modifications to allow them to benefit from the access they are receiving (Wehmeyer, 2006). Ultimately, students with disabilities must be held to the same high academic standards as students without disabilities, and they are not to be singled out for special instruction or stigmatized by having to leave the class to get special help in a special room (Zigmond, Kloo, & Volonino, 2009).

Educators have the challenge of meeting the individualized needs of all the learners they have in their classrooms. Federal law mandates students with disabilities to be placed in the least restrictive environment, and there is evidence to support the benefits of including and providing access for students with disabilities. Yet, districts and schools vary greatly in the inclusion models that they implement making it difficult to identify best practices (Kilanowski-Press, et al., 2010). Of great concern is that inclusion is not a uniformly defined construct (Dymond, 2001). Importantly, inclusion is a whole school reform not just a student placement issue (Fisher, Roach, & Frey, 2002).



Furthermore, inclusion is not a placement but rather a method of delivering services (Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, & Kline, 2009), and ultimately, inclusive education includes the critical components of student progress and achievement for all students (Wehmeyer, 2006).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to better understand teachers' experiences with supports and services for special education students to enable the students to be educated in the regular classroom to the maximum extent appropriate as determined by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. While federal regulations and school district/building communications and policies work to direct what inclusion looks like in classrooms, teachers are the key to more inclusive education and have the greatest impact on access and student learning. Data and themes collected from this research are intended to fill a deficiency in current literature by capturing teachers' real life experiences as opposed to assumptions about what is and perceptions about what might be happening in classrooms. Furthermore, this study sought to better understand how teacher experiences with building and district communications impact teacher experiences and general education access by special education students.

### **Research Question**

This qualitative study gained an understanding of general education teachers' experiences with the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. The researcher examined themes that emerged from research to address the following research questions:

1. What are the teacher experiences of supports and services provided within the general education classroom?
2. What do teachers report as their role in providing, advocating for and seeking out supports and services for special education students to gain access to learning in the general education classroom?
3. What are teacher experiences of school district and building communications about the inclusion of special education students?

### **Definition of Terms**

*Attitudes:* Teacher attitudes about inclusion are influenced by experience and knowledge of disabilities, and teacher attitudes are important to the success of inclusion (Burke & Sutherland, 2004).

*Barrier:* The most frequent barrier mentioned has been negative attitudes of general education teachers, special education teachers, and parents (Downing, Eichinger, & Williams, 1997). A majority of teachers have been found to not believe that access to the general education curriculum is appropriate for students with severe disabilities, and a majority of teachers have stated that students with severe disabilities should not be held accountable to the same performance standards as typical peers (Agran, Alper, & Wehmeyer, 2002); “Regrettably, these teachers continue to believe that students need to ‘earn’ their way into general education” (p. 132; Agran, et al., 2002).

*Experience:* “The process of doing and seeing things and of having things happen to you” (Dictionary, M. W., 2016).

*Individualized Education Program (IEP):* The purpose of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) is to ensure adequate service provided by the school for the student with a

disability. The IEP includes individualized program planning and accountabilities. Parents and teachers work together to discuss common concerns and develop the IEP. The IEP includes a plan to monitor individual student's progress on specific goals as written on the IEP (Goodman & Bond, 1993).

*Inclusion:* Inclusive education holds with it the belief that all children can learn, all children have the right to be educated with peers in age-appropriate heterogeneous classrooms within neighborhood schools, and that it is the responsibility of the school community to meet the diverse educational needs of all its students (Thousand & Villa, 1992).

*Special education:* Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability and includes classroom instruction, instruction in physical education, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions (IDEA, 2004).

*Student with a disability:* A student with a disability includes the following verified disabilities: mental retardation, hearing impairment (including deafness), speech or language impairment, visual impairment (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, or a specific learning disability. A student with a disability is an individual who needs special education and related services because of the verified disability. A child aged 3 through 9 may be termed as a student with a disability, if they have been determined to be experiencing developmental delays (IDEA, 2004).

*Supports:* School-specialized supports must be provided to students with disabilities within the general education setting, for this will enable all students to belong to a same-

age peer group (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). IDEA (2004) includes that educating children with disabilities can be made more effective by providing appropriate special education as well as related services, aids, and supports in the regular classroom whenever it is appropriate to do so.

Supports include, but are not limited to: Proactive social supports and use of interventions (Cook & Semmel, 1999); Placement and quality instruction, inclusion structure, cooperative learning, strategy instruction, differentiated instruction, self-determination, explicit instruction, curriculum-based assessment, generalizations, collaboration, proactive behavior management and peer support and friendships are effective practices for inclusive classrooms (King-Sears, 1997); Choosing and planning what to teach, promoting inclusive values, collaboration between general and special educators, supporting students with challenging behaviors, collaboration between educators and related service providers (i.e. audiology, counseling services, medical services, nursing services, nutrition services, occupational therapy, mobility services, physical therapy, psychological services, interpretation services, social workers, speech-language pathologists, transportation and assistive technology), scheduling, coordinating, and delivering inclusive services within the school, instructional strategies, family involvement, and assessing and reporting student progress on an ongoing basis (Jackson, Ryndak, & Billingsley, 2000).

Additionally, supports include, but are not limited to: Having a common mission (e.g. shared values and beliefs, clear goals and a strong instructional leader), climate conducive to learning (e.g. celebrate diversity) and an emphasis on learning (Rouse & Florian, 1996); A school focus on parent and community involvement, positive student

behavior, recognition and incentives, an inviting physical environment, intentionally welcoming and a shared responsibility to create the learning climate environment (Rouse & Florian, 1996); A positive tone about inclusion set by the building administrator (Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes, 1995); Collaboratively planning individual student outcomes using general education curriculum, integrating therapies into the general education classroom, and having a shared plan time (Jackson, et al., 2000); Leadership, teacher commitment, staff development, planning time and classroom support (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004); Positive teacher attitudes and knowledge about inclusion (Burke & Sutherland, 2004; de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011).

### **Conceptual Framework**

This dissertation is based on a three-part conceptual framework that includes the importance of teachers to provide access to special education students, United States federal law, and research findings about access to general education curriculum. It is necessary to have alignment between the actions a teacher takes in the classroom, what federal special education law mandates, and what is communicated and supported by the district and school. The actions of the general education teacher are critical to the success of access and learning for all students.

1. Teachers are the key to more inclusive education (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). It is what teachers think, believe, and do at the classroom level that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that students with and without disabilities experience (Hargreaves, 1994).
2. Federal Law: Federal regulations state that all special education students are to be placed in the least restrictive environment possible, and the preferred placement being in the general education classroom and having exposure to and adequate progress with the

general education curriculum. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act 1975 was passed to ensure that children with disabilities were given the opportunity to receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. In 1990, 1997, and 2004, reauthorizations of this Act took place, and the law has come to be known as Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA mandates that individuals with disabilities must be provided a public education, and they also should have the right to learn in the least restrictive environment. This means that students with disabilities, both in public and in private schools are, to the maximum extent possible, to be educated in classrooms alongside students without disabilities (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 1975, 1990, 1997, 2004, 2009). Federal law does not explicitly use the term “inclusion” anywhere in regulations, yet it is implied through wording and least restrictive environment.

3. Access to General Education Curriculum: The context in which students are educated is predictive of relative access to the general education content standards. Students receiving instruction in general education contexts are significantly more likely to be working on activities linked to general education content standards than students receiving instruction in self-contained contexts. Being in the general education environment allows students with disabilities to gain access to the general education curriculum to a level that is not existent in a self-contained or resource room (Soukup, et al., 2007; Wehmeyer, et al., 2003). Students with disabilities within the general education setting are more likely to progress in general curriculum than similar student in segregated settings and are more academically engaged (Soukup, et al., 2007).

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited to the experiences the research participants chose to share with the researcher, and participant responses were based on their own unique experiences and personal bias. The number of research participants who responded to the recruiting email and consented to participate limited the number of participants. Therefore, a limited collection of information was gathered but still remains within a number of participants for a purposeful sample size in qualitative research. The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview format. The format of the interview may have resulted in missed information in the interviews, as the researcher made decisions to ask additional questions to follow-up or clarify participants' answers. At the time of the research, the researcher served as a Teacher Leader, known as an Assistant Principal, at one of the elementary schools within the district the research was collected.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

This study is delimited to teachers who are full-time educators in grades kindergarten through sixth grade within an elementary school setting. The teachers included in the research were employed at the same school district in Omaha, Nebraska, for the 2016-2017 school year. Additionally, the study was delimited to full-time teachers who had at least one special education student on their roster at the time of the research. A final delimitation of the study relates to the sample, which was obtained through the random sampling method. The researcher compiled a list of elementary school teachers' names from the school district's public website. Every 6<sup>th</sup> teacher's name was necessary for the appropriate sample size of  $n = 24$ , and the researcher delimited the study further by sorting the sample by grade level. A minimum of one person per grade level was selected to be an initial candidate to form the initial group of 12 possible research

participants. A second round of emails was sent out to try to fulfill the remaining participant sampling needs, and during the final round of recruiting emails, the researcher did not delimit by grade level. All of the remaining possible participants were emailed.

### **Significance of the Study**

The intent of this study is to contribute to the overall knowledge base about teacher experiences with supports and services, as well as building and district communication, for the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. Specifically, this study focuses on the actual experiences had by general education teachers as their experiences relate to the supports and services for, as well as communication about, inclusion. Teachers are the key to more inclusive education (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). The Federal Government mandates students are placed in the least restrictive environment possible with the preferred placement being in the general education classroom (IDEA, 2009). Additionally, being in the general education classroom allows special education students to gain access to the general education curriculum to a level that is non-existent in a self-contained or resource room (Soukup, et al., 2007; Wehmeyer, et al., 2003). Of importance to note, students with disabilities are mandated to take grade-level assessments, which test the same rigorous standards that peers without disabilities must master (Act, E. S. S., 2015).

Through the analysis of the collected data, which shed light on the actual experiences with inclusion that general education teachers have, members of the educational community and the general public may have a continuation point of conversation about inclusion and inclusive education. Through examination of the data collected, members of the educational community and the general public may have a



continuation point for candid conversations about the supports and services for, as well as building and district communications about, the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. By attempting to better understand the actual experiences that general education teachers have with supports and services for, as well as communication about, inclusion, the study results may influence conversations and further research about the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. Ultimately, it is the goal of this research to understand how teachers experience inclusive education efforts with the intent of gaining knowledge that can be leveraged to appropriately support teachers. In providing teachers with additional and appropriate support, teachers are able to better educate all learners, those with and without disabilities.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided an introduction to the dissertation as a whole. Additionally, this chapter clarified the purpose of the study, stated the research questions, included definitions of terms, presented a conceptual framework, stated limitations of the research, and explained delimitations of the research. Finally, this chapter included a statement about the significance of this study. Chapter two reviews literature about inclusion and inclusive education. The review specifically focuses on the evolution of federal regulations around the inclusion of special education students, academic and social benefits for both special education students and general education students, and supports and services named as necessary for inclusive education. Chapter three defines the method used for this qualitative research, describes participant information, details the development of the instrumentation utilized for the research, and describes the instrument

used to collect data. Finally, the chapter details the data collection methods and analysis. Chapter four discusses the findings for this qualitative study. Chapter five provides conclusions and discussions about the implications of the study's findings. Finally, recommendations are made for directions of future research.

## CHAPTER II

### Literature Review

#### **Federal Law**

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 states that Congress found that the special educational needs of more than eight million students with disabilities in the United States were not being fully met. Congress includes in the Act that more than half of the handicapped children were named as to not receive appropriate educational services, which would enable them to have full equality of opportunity. One million students with disabilities were stated in the Act to be excluded entirely from public education and were not be educated with their peers. Congress goes on to state in the Act that state and local educational agencies have a responsibility to provide education for all students with disabilities, and the purpose of the Act was to assure that all children with disabilities have access to a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services to meet individualized needs.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 mandated full educational opportunity for all students with disabilities; a free appropriate public education must be made available for all children with disabilities. The Act states that each state must establish procedures to assure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children without disabilities. It states that special classes, separate schooling, and other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in the regular classroom with the use of aids and services to support cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

IDEA (1990), formally the Education of the Handicapped Act, includes a Part B that provides federal funds to assist states and school districts in making free appropriate public education available to students with specified disabilities. Students with specified physical, mental, emotional, or sensory impairments that need special education and related services are eligible for the services under Part B of IDEA. IDEA requires schools to place students in the least restrictive environment (LRE). LRE means that, to the maximum extent appropriate, schools must educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate supports along with nondisabled peers in the school they would attend if they were not disabled. This is required unless the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) requires another setting for learning. IDEA does not require that every student with a disability be placed in the regular classroom regardless of individual needs and abilities. The range of placement options available to school districts reflects recognition by IDEA that the regular classroom placement may not be appropriate for every student with disabilities. Each student's placement must be determined at least annually and based on the student's IEP (IDEA 1990).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001 was the Reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. In this legislative action the federal government further pushed toward full-inclusion of students with disabilities, as well as assessing and reporting of achievement scores of all students, including students with disabilities. To these expectations, the federal government tied significant sanctions and funding (NCLB, 2001). With the passage of NCLB, students with disabilities, and the teachers who teach them, would be held responsible and accountable for the same academic content and level of performance as students without disabilities. States were

required to establish more challenging performance standards to which all learners, including students with disabilities, would be held. Schools were to be held accountable for all students' achievement in reading, math, and science. States were, however, permitted to develop and use alternate achievement standards for reporting adequate yearly progress (AYP) for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Up to 1% of the general population was allowed to be a part of alternate achievement standards. States were expected to align the alternate achievement standards with the state's academic content standards and continue to promote access to the general education curriculum. The state alternate achievement standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities were to reflect the highest achievement standards possible; no longer were states allowed to create alternate assessments based on functional skills alone (NCLB, 2001).

IDEA was reauthorized and modified in 2004, and it states within that the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was successful in ensuring children with disabilities have access to a free appropriate public education thus improving education results for students with disabilities. IDEA goes on to state, however, that the implementation of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was impeded by low expectations as well as impeded by an "insufficient focus" on utilizing proven methods of teaching and learning for students with disabilities. Educating children with disabilities is made more effective by having high expectations for them. It is made more effective by ensuring that children with disabilities have access to general education curriculum in the regular classroom to the greatest extent possible (IDEA, 2004). The Act includes that educating children with disabilities can be made more effective by

providing appropriate special education as well as related services, aids, and supports in the regular classroom whenever it is appropriate to do so. Professional development to develop skills and knowledge is necessary to ensure high quality personnel work with children with disabilities (IDEA, 2004).

IDEA (2004) stipulated the need for maintaining a level of qualifications to ensure that personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, which would include having the knowledge and skills to provide adequate services to students with disabilities. The law states that paraprofessionals must be appropriately trained and supervised to assist in the provision of special education, and the time that paraprofessionals spend alone with students in the classroom cannot count towards consult teacher time as required by the student's IEP. IDEA (2004) delineates a difference in the level of service that a paraprofessional is able to provide compared to a certified teacher. The reauthorization and modification of this Act aligned it with the No Child Left Behind Act. IDEA required school districts to use the Response to Intervention (RTI) approach as a means for the early identification of students at risk for specific learning disabilities through the use of screening, monitoring, and providing increasing degrees of intervention using research-based instruction (2004).

The Every Student Succeeds Act (Act, E. S. S., 2015) replaced no Child Left Behind in 2015. ESSA (2015) allows for more state control in judging school quality, and it calls for each state to adopt challenging academic content standards and aligned academic achievement standards. ESSA (2015) allows for states to adopt alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The alternate academic achievement standards must be aligned with the

challenging state academic content standards, promote access to the general education curriculum, and must be the highest possible standards achievable by students who are considered to have the most significant cognitive disabilities. The alternate academic achievements standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities must be designated in each student's individualized education program (IEP) as the academic achievement standards that will be used for the student. ESSA also asserts that the alternate academic achievement standards must be aligned to ensure that a student who meets the alternate academic achievement standards would be on track to pursue postsecondary education or employment. Participation of all students must be ensured when taking state accountability tests to measure student academic achievement, and it's required for appropriate accommodations to be given for students with disabilities to measure academic achievement (ESSA, 2015).

States are allowed, as stated by ESSA (2015), to provide for alternate assessments aligned with the challenging state academic standards and alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The state must ensure that for each subject of the test (i.e. math, reading, science) the total number of students assessed in the subject using the alternate assessments does not exceed 1% of the total number of all students in the state who are assessed. ESSA requires comprehensive literacy instruction, which the act defines as age-appropriate, explicit instruction. The act also calls for teachers to use universal design for learning and high-quality instruction dependent upon teachers' collaboration in planning, instruction, and assessing children's progress. The act mandates the need for continuous

professional learning for teachers to provide all students with well-rounded education with age-appropriate peers (Act, E. S. S., 2015).

### **Student Performance**

Full-inclusion and co-teaching between the general and special education teacher is the preferred service delivery model for students with disabilities, and the preferred content is standards-based instruction in grade-appropriate general education curriculum (Zigmond, Kloo, & Volonino, 2009). The impact of inclusion programs on academic performance and social development of students with disabilities has been mixed (Salend & Duhaney, 1999). Meaningful access and achieving adequate student outcomes may involve a combination of grade-level curriculum and an instructional focus on foundational skills from another grade level (Fuchs et al., 2015). There are few opportunities in curriculum to have a “fresh start” when earlier skills are not prerequisite for learning the next instructional target; foundational skill deficits must be recognized and addressed in order for students to make progress toward rigorous content in their grade level (Fuchs et al., 2015).

Logan & Keefe (1997) completed an observational study comparing instructional context, teacher behavior, and engaged behavior for fifteen students with severe disabilities in self-contained classrooms. Findings included that students in general education classrooms received a greater proportion of their instruction through academic rather than functional activities (5% v. 22%,  $p=.005$ ). Students received more one-to-one instruction and teacher attention than did students in self-contained classrooms, yet very few other differences were found. Math (10% v. 2%,  $p=.005$ ) and other academics (9% v. 0%,  $p=.005$ ) occurred more frequently in the general education classroom compared to



the self-contained classroom. The researchers found that the focus on the student with disabilities was higher in general education classrooms (38% v. 29%), and the focus on others was lower (16% v. 30%).

Haynes & Jenkins (1986) examined reading instruction in special education resource rooms, and they found that students received twice as much reading instruction in the regular classroom as in the resource room. Moving students out of the general education room required students transitioning to another space, getting started, and then going back to the class, which caused the students to lose continuity in instruction and continuity in classroom membership (Haynes & Jenkins, 1986). When comparing children with mental retardation in general education and special education classrooms, Freeman & Alkin (2000) reported findings about academic and social attainments of special education students in different educational settings. The researchers found in a review of thirty-six studies that integrated students performed better than their comparable segregated students on measures of academic achievement and social competence (Freeman & Alkin, 2000).

The effects of an inclusive school program on students with mild and severe learning disabilities have been examined in research (Waldron & McLeskey, 1998). Findings of this study indicated that the students with disabilities who were educated in the fully inclusive setting showed significantly greater gains in reading compared to the students with disabilities who spent time in a non-inclusive setting. There were no significant differences in math performances found between the two groups. Further, the findings showed that a significantly higher number of students with disabilities who were in the inclusive classroom progressed in reading at a rate that

paralleled peers without disabilities when their progress was compared to the students with disabilities who were pulled out of the inclusive setting for reading instruction (Waldron & McLeskey, 1998).

Reading and math performance levels of students without disabilities who were educated in the inclusive setting have been found to be significantly better than that of the students without disabilities who were educated in the non-inclusive setting without students with disabilities (Saint-Laurent, Dionne et al., 1998). The reading progress and achievement of students with disabilities placed in a full-inclusion setting for reading instruction paralleled the gains of students without disabilities but were considered “low-reading” (Shinn, Powell-Smith, Good, & Baker, 1997). Students with disabilities have been found to make some academic and affective gains at a pace comparable to that of students who did not have a disability when placed in an inclusion setting (Banerji & Dailey, 1995). Students receiving instruction in general education contexts have been found to be significantly more likely to be working on activities linked to general education content standards than students receiving instruction in self-contained contexts (Wehmeyer, et al., 2003).

### **Social Benefits**

Students educated in inclusive classrooms have been found to have constructed a sense of themselves that was significantly different and more positive compared to students who were in either a segregated setting or a traditional, non-inclusive classroom (Fitch, 2003). Hope, confidence, and belonging were found to never really emerge among the segregated students, and the researchers stated that the longer these students were segregated, the more an identity of being an outsider took hold. Fitch (2003) clearly

supported inclusive schooling practices from the research completed and states in the literature:

This study demonstrated that the marginalization and subordination associated with disability are not inevitable: Transformations in discourse and material structures make a positive and powerful difference in the way special education students construct identity and make sense of their experience. (p. 249-250)

The inclusive setting has several social benefits for the students with disabilities (Salend & Duhaney, 1999). Students with disabilities profit from interactions with their peers without disabilities (Zigmond, 2003). When examining the effects of placing students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom on the social functioning, Vaughn, Elbaum, & Schumm (1996) found that the students with learning disabilities developed a greater number of reciprocal friendships compared to the students who were considered low achieving and average/high-achieving. Students with disabilities who receive instruction in an inclusive setting have been found to benefit in regards to social skills and social status from interactions with their peers without disabilities (Kemp & Carter, 2002). Reciprocal, positive relationships have been found between students with and without disabilities in the inclusive classroom setting (Hall, 1994). Students with disabilities in an inclusive setting have been found to receive more social support from the other students in the inclusive setting when compared to the students with disabilities who were educated in the non-inclusive setting (Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995).

Students with specific learning disabilities served within the inclusive classroom have been found to not feel or behave differently from other students served within the same context, and the students with disabilities have been found to be indistinguishable

from students without disabilities (Banerji & Dailey, 1995). Statistically significant gains on developmental measures and higher social competence scores were made by a group of students in an inclusive setting when compared to a group of students who received services in the self-contained setting, and social competence gains have been shown to be a function of inclusion (Fisher & Meyer, 2002).

### **Students Without Disabilities**

Salend & Duhaney (1999) concluded that the placement of students with disabilities in inclusive settings doesn't appear to interfere with the academic performance of students. Findings of a review of literature suggest that there are no adverse effects on students without disabilities when students with special needs are included in the mainstream school. Findings include that 81% of the outcomes report positive or neutral effects on academic achievement for students without disabilities who are in an inclusive classroom (Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kaplan, 2007). Placement of students with severe disabilities in inclusive classrooms has been shown to have no significant effect on the amount of allocated or engaged instructional time the teacher spent with students without disabilities (Hollowood, Salisbury, Rainforth, & Palombaro, 1995).

In examining the impact inclusion has on the ability of students without disabilities to be educated in an inclusive classroom, studies have found that there is no significant academic difference between the students without disabilities within an inclusive setting and students without disabilities within a non-inclusive setting (Gruner Gandhi, 2007; McDonnell, et al., 2003; Sharpe, York, & Knight, 1994). In fact, students without disabilities educated in inclusive settings have been found to make significantly greater academic progress in math and reading (Cole, Waldron, & Majd, 2004). Students

without disabilities in inclusive classrooms have been found to make significantly greater progress in reading and math than did their peers in non-inclusive classrooms (Cole, et al., 2004).

### **Beyond Placement**

Inclusive education must seek to resist the many ways students experience marginalization and exclusion in schools (e.g. poverty, second language is English, race, ethnicity, and disability) (Broderick, Mehta-Parekh, & Reid, 2005). Inclusion is not a placement but rather a method of delivering services (Vakil, et al., 2009). The discussion of “where” learning will occur is replaced by focusing on “what” the learning will include, and the focus goes beyond the idea of access and moves to progress (Wehmeyer, 2006). Students with disabilities are held to the same high academic standards, and they are not being singled out for special instruction or stigmatized by having to leave the class to get special help in a special room (Zigmond, et al., 2009). Students must benefit from access, as it has been found that students may have access, but they aren’t being provided with accommodations and curriculum modifications to allow them to benefit from the access they are receiving (Wehmeyer, 2006). Fuchs et al. (2015) caution against assumptions that adequate student learning is happening in response to inclusive reforms; they state that progress must be systematically monitored and specialized interventions put in place. “Only evidence of adequate student outcomes demonstrates that access to the curriculum has been accomplished (Fuchs, et al., p. 154).”

Schools and districts are encouraged to move toward viewing grade-level curriculum as the curriculum source for all students, and that districts should mandate that other instructional outcomes not be included as IEP goals (Jackson, 2014). A

beneficial shift can be made to ask “How can we better teach and test general education curriculum knowledge?” in order to replace the outdated practice of asking, “How do we make determination whether grade-level general education curriculum is appropriate or not?” (Jackson, 2014).

### **Inclusive Practices**

Districts and schools vary greatly in the inclusion models that they implement, which makes it difficult to identify best practices (Kilanowski-Press, et al., 2010). Inclusion is not a uniformly defined construct (Dymond, 2001), but there are agreed upon components that research has identified as necessary. Hunt & Goetz (1997) completed a review of nineteen research investigations, published since 1992, of inclusive education programs, practices and outcomes for students with severe disabilities. Six broad themes emerged, although the sample sizes were small across the studies they examined: 1) Parental involvement is an essential component of effective inclusive schooling. Active involvement of committed parents emerged repeatedly; 2) Students with severe disabilities can achieve positive academic and learning outcomes in inclusive settings; 3) Students with severe disabilities realize acceptance, interactions, and friendships in inclusive settings. Parents report acceptance and belonging as a major positive inclusion outcome; 4) Students without disabilities experience positive outcomes when students with severe disabilities are with their classmates; 5) Collaborative efforts among school personnel are essential to achieving successful inclusive schools; 6) Curricular adaptations are a vital component in effective inclusion efforts (Hunt & Goetz, 1997).

Of importance to inclusion are: placement and quality instruction, inclusion structure, cooperative learning, strategy instruction, differential instruction, self-

determination, explicit instruction, curriculum-based assessment, generalizations, collaboration, proactive behavior management, and peer support and friendships are effective practices for inclusive classrooms, which are necessary for the inclusion of students with disabilities (King-Sears, 1997). Other useful practices for inclusion are: choosing and planning what to teach, promoting inclusive values, collaboration between general and special educators, supporting students with challenging behaviors, collaboration between educators and related service providers, scheduling, coordinating, and delivering inclusive services within the school, instructional strategies, family involvement, and assessing and reporting student progress on an ongoing basis (Jackson, et al., 2000).

Three broad categories that need to be in place in an inclusive setting are a common mission (e.g. shared values and beliefs, clear goals, and a strong instructional leader), climate conducive to learning (e.g. celebrate diversity), and an emphasis on learning (Rouse & Florian, 1996). The learning climate in an inclusive school must focus on parent and community involvement, positive student behavior, student recognition and incentives, an inviting physical environment, an intentionally welcoming attitude, and a shared responsibility to create a climate of learning (Rouse & Florian, 1996).

Building administrators must set a positive tone about inclusion (Janney, et al., 1995). Implementation of many useful inclusive practices is necessary; useful services include: collaboratively planning individual student outcomes using general education curriculum, integrating therapies into the general education classroom, and having a shared plan time (Jackson, et al., 2000). Leadership, teacher commitment, staff

development, planning time, and classroom support all are key factors that will contribute to change to be more inclusive (Burstein, et al., 2004).

**Teacher perception.** Teachers are the key to implementing inclusive education, and positive attitudes are considerably important to implementing inclusive education (de Boer, et al., 2011). Teacher attitudes about inclusion are influenced by experience and knowledge of disabilities, and teacher attitudes are important to the success of inclusion (Burke & Sutherland, 2004). A majority of teachers have been found to hold neutral and negative attitudes towards inclusion of students with disabilities; teachers have been found to rate themselves as unknowledgeable about teaching students with disabilities (de Boer, et al., 2011).

Principals and educators have been found to view several barriers, benefits, supports needed, and teaching strategies in similar ways regardless of their role or level of implementation of inclusive education, and the most frequent barrier found to be mentioned was negative attitudes of general education teachers, special education teachers, and parents (Downing, et al., 1997). A majority of teachers have been found to not believe that access to the general curriculum is appropriate for students with severe disabilities, and the majority of teachers stated that students with severe disabilities should not be held accountable to the same performance standards as typical peers (Agran, et al., 2002); “Regrettably, these teachers continue to believe that students need to ‘earn’ their way into general education” (p. 132; Agran, et al., 2002).

Forlin, Douglas, & Hattie (1996) identified an area of major concern in regards to inclusive education: newly appointed teachers rapidly become less accepting of including students with a disability in regular classrooms, and the researchers state:



A person's beliefs of acceptance of the policy of inclusion are likely to affect their commitment to implementing it. The low levels of acceptance, which were given by these educators, do not argue well for a strong commitment to inclusion. In particular, regular class educators will find they are required increasingly to cater for a wider range of students within their classes. Such negativity towards the policy of inclusion requires urgent address if a move towards greater inclusion is to proceed effectively. (p. 128)

Teachers were found to not share a “total inclusion” approach and held differing attitudes about school placements, which were based largely on the nature of the students’ disabilities. Teachers’ attitudes were strongly influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition presented to them (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Barriers that can limit presence, participation and achievement of students with disabilities have been found to include a lack of resources and expertise, inappropriate curricula and teaching methods, and educator attitudes (Ainscow & Miles, 2008).

Existing values, beliefs and attitudes need to be challenged to ensure all students can have full participation in the curriculum and culture in the general education setting; knowledge and skills are critical to strengthening inclusive teaching practices (Singal, 2008). Florian & Black-Hawkin (2011) state:

It is how teachers address the issue of inclusion in their daily practice (reflected in knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs) about learners and learning, as well as the things that they do and the responses that they make when the students they teach encounter barriers to learning – that determines their inclusive pedagogical approach. (p. 826)

General education teachers have given specific reasons as to why they maintained a lack of responsibility for the students in their classrooms with severe disabilities: a belief that the general educator was “not in charge of” the child’s curriculum and that attention devoted to the students with severe disabilities would “disrupt” the quality of instruction provided to the rest of the class (Cameron, 2014). Teachers have been shown to strongly believe that students with disabilities require more attention than students without disabilities (Cameron, 2014). Teachers’ beliefs are critical to the progress of inclusive education; it is their positive beliefs about students with disabilities and positive beliefs about their roles in and responsibilities in meeting the needs of all students that are necessary for progress (Carrington, 1999). Cameron (2014) states, “If students with severe disabilities are to receive a high-quality education in inclusive settings, it is apparent that general educators must also view themselves as responsible for the learning of these children” (p. 271).

**Collaboration.** Teachers who collaborate with a team enjoy and benefit from collegial exchanges of strategies and develop better understandings of student needs (Banerji & Dailey, 1995). Professional development must focus on team building skills to help build collaborative partnerships, which help strengthen team teaching (Rouse & Florian, 1996). Collaboration between the general education teacher and special education teacher is necessary for optimum service delivery and the creation of meaningful learning experiences (Vakil, et al., 2009; Wolfe & Hall, 2003). Collaboration and co-teaching has evolved as a strategy for ensuring that students with special education needs have access to the same curriculum while still receiving the specialized instruction they are entitled to (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger,

2010).

Co-teaching is beneficial in that having two teachers in the classroom increases opportunities for individualized and small group instruction, which can equate to more time for students and increased opportunities for response and engagement (Saloviita & Takala, 2010). Teachers have identified the need for sufficient planning time, compatibility of co-teachers, training, and appropriate student skill level in order for co-teaching to be successful (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). Having high learning expectations for all learners is important; lower expectations for included students may have detrimental effects on student performances (Rubie-Davies, Hattie, & Hamilton, 2006).

**Instructional best practices.** Some suggest that the biggest challenge for educational systems in today's world is responding to learner diversity (Ainscow, 2007). Snell (2009) states, "Simply being in general education classrooms is not enough; students with severe disabilities also must learn needed academic and social skills while they are there" (p. 230). In their research focused on the effects of instructional variables on the engagement of students with disabilities in the general education classroom, Logan, Bakeman, and Keefe (1997) found student engagement levels to be highest for peer as an instructor (60%) during small group, followed by general education teacher (47%) then paraprofessional (35%), and finally special education teacher (28%). Additionally, Logan, et al. (1997) state that teachers need to decrease the time spent in whole class instruction and increase a balance with more one-to-one, small group and independent instruction. Teachers must also look for ways to increase engagement and opportunities to respond during whole group instruction (Logan, et al., 1997).

Educational professionals must vary their approaches, roles, and grouping arrangements (i.e. 1-on-1, small group and whole group) in order to accommodate the full range of students' needs (Cameron, 2014). Differentiation is a necessary component of any effective classroom (Tomlinson, 1999). Positive effect sizes have been found for the use of systematic, direct instruction, which is particularly effective when it is coupled with explicit strategy instruction with students who have disabilities (Zigmond, et al., 2009). Zigmond, et al. (2009) state, "Despite this evidence, effective direct instruction occurs infrequently in whole-group instruction – the most common grouping strategy used in general education settings" (p. 195).

Knight (1999) states that teachers need to be flexible in inclusive classrooms; they must adjust to meet the diversity of students' needs through teaching, resources, and other adaptations that are necessary. Teachers can make efficient use of all resources, which includes utilizing other students as peer tutors (Rouse & Florian, 1996). Teachers must frequently monitor student learning (Rouse & Florian, 1996). Small differentiations in assignments must be made available to groups of students with disabilities, which will keep everyone working on the same page and responsible for learning the same material (Zigmond, et al., 2009).

Soodak (2003) asserts that teachers must work to address challenging behaviors in a positive, proactive, and educative manner. The notion of community is a necessary component of inclusive classrooms, and it's necessary to represent all students as valued members of the community (Naraian, 2011). Teachers must have proactive social supports in place and must utilize interventions to help support students with disabilities (Cook & Semmel, 1999). Students must be able to engage in shared learning activities to

know how to relate and interact with each other; teachers must facilitate positive relationship among students (Janney & Snell, 2006).

**Ongoing professional development.** Coombs-Richardson & Mead (2001) state: Students with disabilities educated in separate classes are not prepared to participate in future employment. Inclusion of students with disabilities is no longer an option, but teachers must be trained to meet this challenge. Quality teacher training should provide the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students to become productive citizens. (p. 384)

Most in- and pre-service teachers' self-confidence and knowledge levels about special education have been found to be low (Gokdere, 2012). Kosko and Wilkins (2009) report that any amount of professional development that a teacher has in a three-year period has been found to significantly predict the teachers' perceived ability to adapt instruction, and at least eight hours of professional development in a three-year time frame has been found to be related to an increase in teachers' perceived ability to adapt instruction more than twice the effect of less than eight hours of professional development. Professional development has been found to be a better predictor for increasing teachers' perceived abilities to adapt instruction than was teacher experience with teaching students with disabilities (Kosko & Wilkins, 2009).

Rouse & Florian (1996) state that professional development about inclusive education is necessary and must be ongoing; the focus of professional development can include: responding to disabilities and diversity (both learning about specific needs and learning instructional techniques like peer tutoring), and fostering and strengthening

awareness and acceptance amongst the students (including preparing students for when and how to assist peers who have disabilities). Teachers have been found to have higher amounts of disapproval behaviors and less approval behaviors when working with students with disabilities (Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013).

**Paraprofessional support.** Teachers have reservations about including students with severe disabilities, and they see the use of paraprofessionals as essential for inclusion (Downing, et al., 1997; Idol, 2006). Giangreco & Broer (2005) conclude that many students with disabilities are getting a substantial amount of instruction from paraprofessionals and ask the question if students are getting enough competent instruction. Concerns about whether students with disabilities are receiving adequate instruction and equitable support from general and special education teachers are not without merit (Giangreco & Broer, 2005). The high degree of attention that paraprofessionals provide to students with severe disabilities can lead to a shift in responsibility away from the general educator and separation from peers (Marks, Schrader, & Levine, 1999).

## **Chapter III**

### **Method**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to better understand the experiences teachers have in the general education classroom with supports and services for, as well as building and district communications about, the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. Federal regulations, as well as building and district communications and policies, work to direct what inclusion looks like in the classroom; however, teachers are the key to more inclusive education and have the greatest impact on student learning. This study sought to understand the experiences general education teachers have, as well as to better understand how general education teachers report their role in providing access to general education classroom and content. Furthermore, this study sought to better understand teacher experiences with district and building communications about inclusion.

The qualitative research method was selected in order to avoid restricting the views of participants (Creswell, 2012), and by utilizing semi-structured interviews in this phenomenological research, the researcher sought to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences teachers have in the classroom. Finally, the data collected was utilized to examine themes that emerged from research to address the following research questions:

1. What are the teacher experiences of supports and services provided within the general education classroom?

2. What do teachers report as their role in providing, advocating for, and seeking out supports and services for special education students to gain access to learning in the general education classroom?
3. What are teacher experiences of school district and building communications about the inclusion of special education students?

### **Selection of Participants**

The target population of this research was general education teachers who work in the elementary school setting. The general education teachers who were interviewed for this study work with students with and without disabilities, and they are responsible for working with students with diverse skills and learning needs. The teachers who participated in this study teach first through sixth grade. The sample included both male and female teachers with various years of teaching experience. The target population of this study included teachers from elementary schools within a single school district, Westside Community Schools, which includes ten elementary schools. The district's website, accessed at <http://westside66.org/about-us/inside-westside/>, provides information about the district. The website reads:

Westside Community Schools is a district of “firsts” and has a reputation for sparking innovative ideas. It is the home to Nebraska’s first special education program and was the first to receive national recognition for its full-inclusion approach for students with special needs.

Westside Community Schools had a total student enrollment of K-12 students of 6,016 in the 2015-2016 school year. According to Westside’s 2015-2016 Demographic and Statistical Profile (Bone & Thompson, 2015), the district’s enrollment includes



16.32% (982) special education students, which also includes pre-kindergarten and non-public resident students receiving special education services. The district also reports 31.27% of district students (1,881) were eligible for free/reduced meals in 2015-2016. Of the total student population of Westside Community Schools, 74.10% identify themselves as White and 25.90% identify themselves as non-White and/or multiracial. The district attracts families who reside in other districts to participate in what is currently the State of Nebraska Option Enrollment Program. These students are not true neighborhood residents, but rather receive the option to attend Westside schools, if space allows and if they are selected from the lottery system. The Westside Community Schools student population is comprised of 2,044 open/option enrollment students or 33.98% of the total student population.

#### K-6 Students Eligible for Special Education Services

Building	Count	% of Building(s)	Total Student Count
Hillside	70	17.16%	408
Loveland	40	13.42%	298
Oakdale	29	9.12%	318
Paddock Road	36	12.72%	283
Prairie Lane	43	14.93%	288
Rockbrook	52	17.87%	291
Sunset Hills	12	7.69%	156
Swanson	36	11.92%	302
Westbrook	73	16.26%	449
Westgate	36	12.54%	287
Subtotal K-6	427	13.86%	3,080

Bone, A., & Thompson, M. (2015, November 15). *Selected Demographic and Statistical Data 2015-2016* [PDF]. Omaha: Westside Community Schools.

The district employs a full-time behavioral specialist to support teams and individuals across the district. Each elementary school employs at least one special education teacher, has access to a school psychologist at least once a week and a

guidance counselor at least one day a week. The ten elementary schools share amongst them a hearing-impaired specialist, two occupational therapists, and a physical therapist. The district employs a Director of Special Education, as well as two inclusion specialists who are all housed at the district's central office and provide supports and services to the ten elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

The ten elementary schools also share amongst them a school psychologist who focuses exclusively on the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), the framework with which the district makes decisions to support students' academic achievement in reading and math. The 2016-2017 school year is the initial year of district-wide implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) during which teams at all ten elementary sites received professional development and support from the Nebraska Department of Education to aid in the implementation of necessary processes and practices. PBIS focuses on supporting students' behavioral needs at the building and classroom level.

Westside Community Schools communicates its goals to the public and employees on the district website (<http://westside66.org/about-us/strategic-plan>) through its WCS Strategic Plan 2016-2017 (Appendix A) with the key focus of ensuring maximum student engagement and achievement. The strategic plan includes three core strategies: 1) Providing quality instruction by integrating literacy skills, creative and critical thinking, and authentic problem solving; 2) Supporting personalized learning with opportunities for students and staff to discover strengths through choice while fostering community and global partnerships; 3) Enhancing all educational experiences by integrating new and existing technologies in a meaningful way. The district also

communicates a focus on having a strong teaching and learning foundation, which includes the following key pieces: guaranteed and viable curriculum, best-practice instruction, balanced, authentic literacy framework, high-functioning Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and ongoing, intentional professional development.

Westside Community Schools has a Special Education Steering Committee, which is comprised of a variety of district positions including special education teachers, school psychologists, service providers, district administrators, and building administrators. The committee works together to continue to strengthen the programming and practices across the district with providing services, inclusion, and writing quality IEPs. The Steering Committee has focused on three district-targeted improvement plan goals, and one of the goals focused on inclusive practices. The goal focused on improving inclusion performance on the Nebraska Department of Education report from a score of 65.7% to 75% of students spending more than 80% of their day in a general education setting.

The sample for this research was obtained through the random sampling method. A random sample ( $N = 8$ ) was selected to represent a sample of general education teachers in the elementary setting. A sample size of twelve teachers was decided upon for the research in order to be able to give necessary time to each one-on-one interview. It was the intention of the smaller sample size to understand each participant's experiences more deeply than would be possible with a larger sample size. The researcher obtained a master teacher list of all kindergarten through sixth grade teachers from the Westside Community Schools public website ( $n = 149$ ), which lists teacher names by school, the grade they teach, and each teacher's email. The researcher

organized the list in alphabetical order, and then the researcher divided the target sample size of twenty by the total number of full-time general education teachers. Every sixth teacher name was highlighted to create a sample pool of twenty-four names. The twenty-four names were sorted by grade level, and a minimum of one person per grade level was selected to be a candidate to form the initial group of twelve possible research participants. The researcher emailed the twelve possible research participants via their public, district email to determine if they had at least one special education student on their class rosters and if they'd be willing to participate in the research. A second round of emails went out to the research participants who did not respond to the initial email request. The second set of twelve general education teachers were emailed to obtain consent from the remaining teachers to obtain consent from eight participants.

Participants were eight full-time general education teachers from Westside Community Schools in Omaha, Nebraska. Included in the sample were a first grade teacher ( $n = 1$ ), second grade teacher ( $n = 1$ ), third grade teachers ( $n = 2$ ), fourth grade teachers ( $n = 2$ ), and sixth grade teachers ( $n = 2$ ). The subjects had an average of 12.6 years of experience teaching. Of the eight participants, there were varying numbers of special education students on class rosters: one student with an IEP ( $n = 1$ ), two students with IEPs ( $n = 1$ ), three students with IEPs ( $n = 3$ ), five students with IEPs ( $n = 2$ ), and six students with IEPs ( $n = 1$ ). A total number of students in the classrooms ranged from sixteen to twenty-five students. The years of teaching experience ranged from as little as three years to as much as thirty years of experience. Seven of the eight participants had both a Bachelors and a Masters degree in Elementary Education. Two of the eight had additional hours beyond a Masters degree. One participant had a special education

endorsement, and another participant had an ELL endorsement with her Masters degree. None of the participants had any other degree, endorsement, or certification related to special education. Three of the eight participants stated that they have not taken any special education coursework during college.

### **Instrumentation**

The researcher determined that a qualitative research method was necessary to collect information about the teacher's experiences. Creswell (2012) states that qualitative research is best for addressing a research problem in which the variables are unknown and there's a need to explore (p. 16). The phenomenological research design used for this research allowed for inquiry about what the phenomena looked like from the perspective of the participants and researcher (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008), which specifically for this research study was focused on the experiences of general education teachers with the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting.

The researcher determined that semi-structured interviews would be conducted using an interview guide. Fylan (2005) describes semi-structured interviews as conversations in which the researcher has a set of questions to ask the participant but the conversation is free to vary (p. 66); the semi-structured interview format enables the researcher to gather more information than would be provided by a structured interview (Fylan, 2005). The semi-structured approach to the interviews allowed for reasonably standard data collection across the eight participants, and it also enabled the researcher sufficient flexibility to clarify, probe, and ask participants to elaborate, as needed. The process of developing the semi-structured interview guide went through different stages, as the researcher determined and fine-tuned an instrument that would enable the

researcher to best capture teacher experiences.

The questions that were asked to each teacher were developed through a process that began with the creation of a survey instrument for quantitative research (see Appendices H, I, J, and K for additional information), continued with the creation of the Inclusion Implementation Model (Appendices B and C), then progressed with a focus group of school district administrators to gather information about the approach and wording of interview questions, continued with identifying three key areas of experiences and the specific wording for questions, and concluded with alignment of research questions and literature. The Teacher Experiences of Inclusion Interview Guide (Appendix E) was the final product of the instrumentation process, which was utilized to collect data during the semi-structured interviews.

***Inclusion Implementation Model.*** The researcher's thinking continually went back to the three key components to the implementation of inclusion of students with disabilities: that which the federal special education law mandates, the communication and supports from districts and schools, and the experiences that teachers have at the classroom level. All three levels, as determined through extensive review of literature, are necessary for inclusion to happen. For example, if the communication and supports provided by the school district or school building are aligned with teacher practices and actions that would provide for great alignment in the system; however, consider if the communication and supports as well as practices and actions are not aligned with what the federal law mandates. An additional example to consider is if an individual teacher reports experiences of her practices and actions that align with federal special education law mandates; however, the teacher's experiences within her school district and school

building do not align with her actions and federal mandates. It is when all three components align that success is achieved. The researcher utilized this thinking to develop a three-part model, Inclusion Implementation Model, A (Appendix B) and Inclusion Implementation Model, B (Appendix C), to illustrate how the necessary components interact.

Through extensive reading of literature about special education and inclusion, as well as the aforementioned development of the quantitative survey, seven key federal law mandates surfaced for the researcher: 1. Students with disabilities are included in the general education classroom; 2. The preferred setting for students with disabilities is the general education classroom; 3. Students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment; 4. To the maximum extent possible, students with disabilities are educated alongside students without disabilities; 5. Supports and services are provided to students with disabilities to allow students with disabilities to participate and make progress in the general education curriculum; 6. High expectations are set and maintained for the learning of students with disabilities; 7. Highly trained professionals educate students with disabilities. In a second version of the Inclusion Implementation Model, B (Appendix C), the researcher included more specific examples of how each of the three components (federal law, district/school and teacher experience) is interconnected.

Seven key federal law mandates are included on the Inclusion Implementation Model, A, which served as the foundation for developing the key topics to present to a focus group of district administration. The intention of the focus group was to inform the angles and wording of each of the nine topics and themes that were presented. The focus group presented perspectives and ideas, and the information led to the wording of the

questions to be asked to each general education during individual the semi-structured interviews.

***Focus group.*** The researcher convened a focus group of district administrators to inform the topics and wording of questions on the semi-structured interview guide. A focus group is utilized to obtain views from specific people (Creswell, 2005). A variety of administrative positions, experiences, and expertise were represented in the focus group: former Special Education Director/current Director of the district's educational service unit; Coordinator of Career Education; Director of Elementary Education; two Coordinators of Special Education; Director of Secondary Education; Coordinator of Elementary Special Projects and School Improvement; Coordinator of Early Childhood. The participants in the focus group were employed at a different school district than the research participants. All of the administrators were employed with the largest school district in the state of Nebraska, Omaha Public Schools, at the time of the focus group.

In arranging the focus group, the researcher initially contacted the Director of Elementary Education and asked for her assistance in convening professionals for the focus group. The Director of Elementary Education emailed professionals she worked with at the district's central office and assembled the group for a one-hour focus group with the researcher. The purpose of the research study was shared with the group, and they were notified that the group's conversation was being recorded to allow the researcher to capture all of the thinking for later review. After a brief introduction and setting of the purpose of the focus group, the researcher posted nine slides with topics and asked, "How would you ask a question to find out about \_\_\_\_\_?" Slide topics were determined from what had emerged from extensive reading of literature on special



education and inclusion. The topics that the professionals responded to included:

- Difference between Specific Learning Disability versus Emotional Disturbance versus Intellectual Disability
- Collaborative teaching/co-teaching
- Appropriate staffing/appropriate support
- Leadership support
- Barriers
- Challenges/appropriate supports
- Resources/tools needed
- Students with disabilities participating in the general education curriculum
- Students with disabilities making progress in the general education curriculum

In addition to each of the topic slides, the researcher concluded the focus group time by asking, “As an administrator who supports teachers, what else would you like to know?” The researcher listened closely and recorded notes as each slide was shown. The content of the group’s discussion was also recorded using a QuickTime audio recording. Focus group members took turns sharing various types of questions to examine and gain more information about each of the slide’s topics. Detailed in Appendix D are the slide topics along with the main points and possible wording shared by the focus group.

The focus group spent the greatest amount of time presenting different angles and wording of questions that focused on two themes: 1) Barriers and challenges that teachers may encounter; 2) Supports teachers think they need to be successful. The group’s time spent on these two topics directed the researcher’s focus on like lines of questioning with

teachers. It was from the time with the focus group that the researcher continued to shape an understanding about the kinds of questions to ask teachers and how to word questions, but more importantly, three main questioning themes emerged for the researcher. In reflecting back on previous reading completed for the literature review, a focus emerged to further examine teacher experiences with barriers and challenges as well as supports received. The researcher utilized the information obtained from the focus group, along with continued focus back to the literature, and thinking about the research questions to shape the interview guide.

***Interview guide.*** The Teacher Experiences of Inclusion Interview Guide (Appendix E) questions were developed as a result of the researcher's process that included the creation of a survey instrument for quantitative research which aligned with the research completed for the literature review, continued with the creation of the Inclusion Implementation Model, A (Appendix B) and Inclusion Implementation Model, B (Appendix C), and then proceeded with utilizing information gained from the focus group of school district administrators. Additionally, the researcher continued to review the themes and information found in the literature about inclusion and inclusive practices. In reviewing the operational definition of *supports*, and the importance of supports to the success of inclusion as described in literature, the researcher determined a focus on supports in the interview questions. The lack of supports would be considered a barrier or challenge for teachers and the inclusion of students with disabilities. The questions were written to elicit accounts of personal experiences by teachers and provide an opportunity for them to reflect on their experiences with the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

The Teacher Experiences of Inclusion Interview Guide includes a section for demographic information, and it includes three key sections of questions: Classroom Experiences, Building and Collaboration experiences, and Family Communication Experiences. At the end of the guide are two open-ended concluding questions. The demographic information on the guide includes: teacher number, current grade level, current number of students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), total number of students on the class roster, working at a Title I or non-Title I school, college degree and special education coursework/degree, and years as a teacher.

Appendix F includes three tables detailing each of the three sections in the Interview Guide: Classroom Experiences, Building and Collaboration Experiences, and Family Communication Experiences. Included in each table are three sections of information: Semi-Structured Interview Question/Prompt, Possible Participant Response Themes, and Connection to Established Research. The Semi-Structured Interview Question/Prompt column lists the exact questions that will be asked to the research participants. Under each question/prompt, in the first column, is an italicized prompt or prompts, to be utilized in the event that the researcher needs to follow-up on the participant's answer. Follow-up prompts will be asked, if the research needs additional information or clarification to understand each participant's experiences. The second section in each table includes examples of possible participant response themes. The researcher includes examples of both positive (research-supported) and negative (not supported by research) experience statements that the research participants may share. The third and final column in the tables includes theme statements about inclusive education supported by established research literature. These statements come from the

quantitative survey instrument, which was developed during the first phase of the researcher's instrumentation development. Literature citations that support each theme statement can be found in parenthesis immediately following each statement.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Twelve names were selected from the random sample group ( $n = 149$ ). The first step was to send a recruiting email form of consent (Appendix G) to all twelve teachers that they had been selected through the random sampling method. A second set of emails was sent to the second group of twelve teachers for a total of twenty-four teachers emailed to be possible research participants. Eight teachers agreed to participate and scheduled a time to meet for the interview. A mutually agreeable time was established, and the researcher met with each teacher at a quiet setting at a location off-site from any district building for the interview. The eight participants took part in the completion of the semi-structured interview questions on the Teacher Experiences of Inclusion Interview Guide (Appendix E). The random sample list was destroyed upon the completion of the eight interviews. Signed, informed consent was obtained through the participants' response to the initial email. All participants were guaranteed anonymity and assured that responses would be kept confidential.

After explaining the purpose of the research and the process for the interview, the researcher began the interview by collecting the demographic information on the Interview Guide. In lieu of the participants' names, the researcher noted a participant number. During the interview, the researcher went down the list of pre-determined questions on the Teacher Experiences of Inclusion Interview Guide to ask each teacher. The researcher recorded answers through note taking on the interview form and audio

recording for post-interview follow-up and data analysis. As additional details, elaboration and/or clarification was needed, the researcher utilized pre-established prompts to obtain further information. The interview came to an end when the researcher had gone through all questions and no longer needed clarification from the participant.

At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher assured the participant of the confidentiality of the responses given and described the next step of the process, which included providing each research participant with a typed summary of the main ideas and experiences shared during the interview for a final review. Immediately following the interview, the researcher reviewed the notes from the interview and added additional points that the participant made, as needed. The researcher transcribed the audio recordings for an exact log of each interview utilizing transcription software named Transcribe, which was accessed at <https://transcribe.wreally.com/>. The researcher followed up with an email to each research participant and attached the summary document from the interview. The research participants were encouraged to review the document and to add, delete, and/or clarify any pieces of the interview, if they believed anything was lacking, was unclear, and/or was not an accurate reflection of their experiences. All research participants replied to the email that the summary accurately captured their thinking and experiences.

The researcher, having personally transcribed each of the eight interviews, spent a great deal of time listening to each comment line by line multiple times. The process of completing the transcription allowed for the content of both questions and teacher responses to be thoughtfully consumed and understood. The researcher also constructed a summary of each of the interviews, which created an opportunity for summary and

synthesis of responses to share with each participant. It was in the summaries that the content was presented succinctly to ensure big ideas and experiences were captured accurately. Each of the interview transcripts was uploaded to MAXQDA a software program was utilized to code each interview by themes and to examine each participant's responses for own personal themes. The researcher read through and coded the summary documents looking for main themes. Through the coding process, specific concepts from literature kept coming up repeatedly throughout the interviews. The concepts included: barriers the teacher experienced, time students spent in the classroom and outside of the classroom, collaboration and communication that the general education teacher engaged in with others, the special education teacher's role, supports and strategies used, acceptance of inclusion by the teacher, acceptance of inclusion by the school as a whole, and principal behaviors that supported teachers. The researcher noticed one persistent type of experience that was shared by each of the participants, and often in multiple ways throughout a single interview, was aggressive and disruptive student behaviors. While the student behaviors that the teachers described are a barrier, the researcher decided to focus on the student behaviors as a separate theme. Teachers shared comments about acceptance of students, and many of these comments were linked to the accounts of experiences with student behaviors. These two ideas are linked together in the behaviors theme.

For the purpose of efficiency in coding the data, the researcher adjusted theme wording to include the following: Acceptance of Inclusion, with a subcategory of Leadership Support and Teachers Wants and Beliefs; Supports and Strategies, with a subcategory of Collaboration and Communication; Special Education Teacher Role;

Time in Classroom; Barriers, with a subcategory of Behaviors. It was determined by the researcher to keep the Supports and Strategies code broad due to the variety of types of supports that participants named, which aligned with the number of inclusive practice supports named in literature. Collaboration and Communication was coded separately due to the sheer number of times participants named working with and talking with others; it stood out from all the other strategies named.

### **Summary**

This study utilized a qualitative research approach. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data on teachers' experiences. The sample for this research was obtained through the random sampling method. The researcher created a list of possible research participants from the school district's public website, and a recruiting email was sent to research participant candidates. Those who responded and consented were interviewed for the research ( $n = 8$ ). The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for analysis. The themes that resulted from the analysis of data obtained from the semi-structured interviews are presented in Chapter four. Chapter four presents an introduction of the data, details demographic information of the research participants, and presents each theme with research findings from each research participant.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

#### **Introduction**

This study intended to understand the experiences general education teachers have with special education students in the general education classroom. The purpose of this study was achieved by interviewing eight general education teachers utilizing a semi-structured interview format and the Teacher Experiences of Inclusion Interview Guide (Appendix E). The research participants met with the researcher at a location off-site from any district building. The researcher asked questions from the Interview Guide, as well as any added questions for further information and clarification of responses. Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher typed summaries of the interviews, transcribed each recording, and coded each interview to determine themes. The researcher emailed a typed summary of the interview to each research participant. The researcher determined that the interview summary would provide a more supportive summary of the big ideas shared by the participants as opposed to providing the participant with the entire transcribed interview, which can be overwhelming in length as well as with all the additional words and utterances. Research participants read through the contents of their responses and emailed a confirmation to the researcher that the essences of their experiences were accurately captured. This chapter presents demographic information of the research participants, as well as attitudes and beliefs about inclusion shared by the participants. Additionally, this chapter presents the qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interviews by describing the seven key themes that emerged.



## **Demographics of Research Participants**

The target population of this research was general education teachers who work in the elementary school setting educating students in grades kindergarten through sixth. The general education teachers who were interviewed for this study work with students with and without disabilities, and they are responsible for working with students with various learning needs. The teachers ( $n = 8$ ) who participated in this study teach first through sixth grade. The sample included both male and female teachers with various years of teaching experience. The target population of this study included teachers from elementary schools within a single school district, Westside Community Schools. The district's website, accessed at <http://westside66.org/about-us/inside-westside/>, states this about the district being a full-inclusion district:

Westside Community Schools is a district of “firsts” and has a reputation for sparking innovative ideas. It is the home to Nebraska’s first special education program and was the first to receive national recognition for its full-inclusion approach for students with special needs.

The following table details demographic information about each of the eight research participants.

Table 1

*Research Participant Demographic Information*

Teacher #	Years Teaching	Current Grade Level	Current Number of Students with an IEP	Total Number of Students on Class Roster	Title or Non-Title School	College Degree BS – Bachelor of Science, Elementary Education  MS – Masters of Science, Elementary Education	Special Education Course-work
1	23 years	6 <sup>th</sup>	5	25	Non-Title	BS, MS <i>Additional Hours in Elementary Education and Technology</i>	None
2	5 years	4 <sup>th</sup>	6	22	Title	BS	None
3	5 years	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3	17	Title	BS, MS	Basic Undergrad
4	3 years	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3	16	Title	BS <i>Special Education Endorsement</i>	Endorsement in Special Education
5	30 years	6 <sup>th</sup>	3	21	Title	BS, MS	Basic Undergrad
6	12 years	1 <sup>st</sup>	1	18	Non-Title	BS, MS	None
7	7 years	3 <sup>rd</sup>	2	21	Non-Title	BS, MS <i>ELL Endorsement</i>	Basic Undergrad
8	16 years	4 <sup>th</sup>	5	19	Title	BS, MS <i>Plus Additional 30 Graduate Hours</i>	Basic Undergrad

### Statements About Attitudes and Beliefs

The following are direct quotes from each of the participant's interviews. Participants made comments about their attitudes towards inclusion and special education students, as well as comments about their beliefs at various times throughout the entire length of the interview. The following quotes were found sprinkled through participant responses to the different questions.

#### *Participant 1.*

- *In response to a special education student who wasn't safe in the general education classroom:* "And it was fine because we would welcome him in, you know, and we would...that was fine there was never an argument. I wanted him in there. The kids wanted him in there, but he just couldn't handle it."
- "Our district in general inclusion really want the kids included, and I think that's great."
- "I believe [my role as a general education teacher] is to make [special education students] feel as part of the classroom. I want them to learn, but I also want them to be part of the community. So I do adapt. I do make changes. I do do things like that, but I don't try to single them out as they're different from anybody else."
- "Sometimes it's just them being in the classroom is enough. I guess it depends on the level."
- "I really work to kind of make it so the students who aren't in the classroom as much are in the classroom...that they don't feel like they're different. Learning disability students, man I want them to be successful. I just want them to feel

good about stuff and not hate math or hate reading...I want them to feel good about it.”

*Participant 2.*

- “I always try to meet their individual need. I mean it’s really based on them and what is it they need. So that can be for academic. It can be social emotional. Just altogether I try to give them what is it that will make them successful.”
- “I always do as much as I can, and I will generally just get them what they need...like I’ll make sure I’ll ask the resource teacher to provide.”
- “...The whole idea is being in the room as much as possible, which I 100% support. I think that’s important to be in the room.”

*Participant 3.*

- “I don’t like my kids being pulled out ever, because I don’t think that, I mean, when they have to be, they have to be. But I like them in my classroom, because I think that it’s good for them. If they are able to be in the classroom, I think they should be.”
- “Plus I have control issues with students. I really like to know what’s going on.”
- “I think our school is, I would say more so open to inclusion even though the, I mean, [the teachers] really shouldn’t have a choice I don’t think.”
- “I just didn’t want them out of my room as much as they couldn’t...I want them in there as much as they could be.”
- “I just think it’s important that they’re in the classroom. Not only for that academic, so that they hear the same language that I’m saying.”

*Participant 4.*

- “That’s why my student that I thought that is modified for everything doesn’t need to be sitting in fifteen minute whole group lesson when she could be practicing a number sense game to identify numbers.”
- “I do a lot of things to help meet their needs, but I know that I can always do more.”
- “I absolutely love working with [special education students]. It’s not like I’m against having special ed, especially having my background, I think. I do a lot of things to help meet their needs, but I know that I can always do more.”

*Participant 5.*

- “If they’re in my classroom, I feel that that’s something that I need to be aware of, as well, what are their goals.”
- *In response to a student who has left the classroom because of behavior and returns when he/she is calm:* “And you accept that apology and welcome them back into your classroom, and you hope that you can continue from that point.”

*Participant 6.*

- “Last year I had two students that were nowhere near grade level, and they were mostly in there for that social piece. You know so then, it was getting the kids to the other kids to greet them, treat them like a first grader, be involved and social with them, and then it’s the teaching part. I would teach something, but they were not at...”
- “[The district] practices inclusion but then there’s that feeling of so are we putting one kid’s above the other kids’ learning, because I have to be an advocate for all of them. Not just the one. So I think that it’s just challenging making sure that

I'm being supportive and doing what's right for him but also making sure that my other kids can continue to learn and grow and have the attention they need from me."

- "It's always interesting to me when I hear some of the educational assistants will say oh well you don't have to do that, and I'll say well yeah that's my student. Like yeah I do have to do that, you know. And it's always interesting I'm like somebody doesn't do that for that student. So it's always interesting to me like what they see."
- "I really enjoy working with the [special education] department and the students."
- "One thing that worries me sometimes is our reasoning behind inclusion. Sometimes it seems that we include students just to say we practice inclusion without thinking is that really the best for them. Is that really the best for the other students in the classroom."

*Participant 7.*

- *In response to a special education student who was violent:* "It just really tugged at my heart, because he could when he chose to be a really amazing sweet kid, but then he would just with a light switch..."
- "It's hard to as a classroom teacher to manage the juggling of meeting kids' needs that need you, understanding these kids to give them what they need but then also okay yeah I gotta teach these eighteen others the indicators that I'm required to teach and that balancing act."
- "Our goal I feel is always include the children as much as possible as long as they are creating a safe learning environment. And if a kid ever has to be taken out of

the classroom...the ultimate goal that they get placed back in the classroom as soon as possible when it, you know, fits their behavioral needs.”

- “I always felt that the ultimate goal was having kids always in the classroom.”
- “I do the general [content and curriculum], but I do the general for all.”
- “Because I’m a firm believer, too, that if it’s gonna help a special education student, I betcha it’s gonna help everybody.”
- “I get frustrated with myself, because I really want to support all the kids the best I can. And I can become an annoying frustrating person to work with when I feel my kids’ needs aren’t being met, because I do fight for what they need. That’s my job. And I want them so badly to always be successful.”

*Participant 8.*

- “I love the thought of inclusion, but when there’s kids with modified [curriculum], it does add a level of difficulty.”
- *On meeting the needs of a difficult child:* “We were trying for this child, but I just don’t feel what we have at our school is what will help that child, and that’s hard and that to me that’s the most difficult thing to deal with.”
- “I predominately work on work with [the special education students]. [The special education teacher] does like the extra stuff like gathering items, because special education has resources that I don’t have.”
- *In regards to the time by special education students spent outside of the general education classroom:* “I feel like the reason that they’re pulling them is because of our discussion that I’ve had with my [special education] teacher. That one of our kids that’s on the modified program is very sensitive to the rest of the

classroom seeing what he's working on compared to the rest [of] his classmates. So he feels very self conscious that he is so below behind the rest of his peers.”

- “So I think they are considerate of that and they're, you know, noticing what he wants and what he needs. And not trying to be...exclusive or pulling him out and not being inclusive.”
- *In referring to a student's behavior impeding learning his own learning and the learning of other students:* “I'm here to teach them. I'm here to help them, and sometimes when I don't see it being done, I just don't understand.”

### **Themes**

Seven key themes emerged from the interviews: Acceptance, Time in General Education Classroom, Supports and Strategies, Special Education Teacher Role, Collaboration and Communication, Other Barriers, and Dangerous, Destructive, Disruptive Behaviors. The researcher presents each theme below. Each research participant discussed an element of each theme at least once throughout his/her interview. Themes emerged not necessarily from responses to specific questions but as a result of the experiences shared throughout each of the questions asked by the researcher throughout the interview.

#### **Acceptance**

Acceptance of inclusion was brought up as it pertains to the district, the school personnel, school administration, and the teacher. All research candidates expressed messages and individual attitudes of acceptance of special education students in the general education classroom. The majority shared clear messages of acceptance of inclusion by others at the school. A few shared experiences with non-acceptance by



other school employees both teachers and support staff. Overall, there was a general acceptance of the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting.

*Participant 1.* This participant has been a general education teacher in different elementary schools across the district. In describing what inclusion entails at the different school worked at, the participant stated, “It is different everywhere.” Some experiences have been “wonderful” as it relates to inclusion while other experiences have been “not wonderful.” In speaking about the positive experiences the teacher has had, the teacher stated, “I’ve been in buildings where it has been wonderful. And we do inclusion. It’s not even inclusion. It’s just, hey, he’s part of the classroom.” In these experiences where inclusion was accepted, the teacher described having special education students in the classroom as much as possible with teachers working together. “Everybody is willing to try, and everybody is willing to make accommodations, make changes in the classroom, make changes in the schedule.” The teacher detailed experiences of teachers making only positive comments about inclusion and the supports needed. The teacher reported, “There’s nobody that says, ‘Oh, I’m doing this much more’ or ‘I’m not doing it. That’s your job.’” Comments heard throughout the building, from this teacher’s experiences included, “Everybody just says, ‘Sure, I’ll do it.’ Or ‘Hey, I’ve come up with this. What do you think?’” The teacher stressed how impressive it is to have everybody stepping up to support students and inclusive efforts.

In regards to experiences that have not been so supportive of inclusion, the teacher stated, “I’ve been to schools where the teachers are so, ‘I don’t want [special education students] in my class. They’re taking away from my teaching. They’re taking away from the rest of the kids.’” This sentiment has been shocking for the teacher; the

teacher stated that the school community doesn't "allow" for inclusion in the sense the practice of accepting inclusion isn't school wide. This teacher reported an experience with a single general education teacher and a few general education teachers setting the tone about inclusion for the building. The teacher described negativity from some general education teachers who seem frustrated and burnt out. These individuals, the teacher stated, had been very vocal about the fact that certain students should not be in the general education classroom. The teacher described experiences with special education teachers' reactions to the general education teachers' negatively by stating that special education teachers, "Feel like they need to pull back, and they need to take them out of the room more often." The special education teachers, at times, were made to feel that it was solely their job to make the accommodations and work with the special education students, the teacher reports.

*Participant 2.* The experiences with inclusion have been very positive for this participant who reports the school being "very inclusive." This classroom teacher stated, "The goal [of the school] is to pull [kids out of the general education classroom] less. We, you know, the whole idea is being in the [general education] room as much as possible." Additionally, this participant reported staff being flexible to inclusive efforts and special education students.

*Participant 3.* This participant shared examples of both positive and negative experiences with inclusion at school and reported about "half and half" supported inclusion. There are certain teachers the teacher reported that were more open to inclusion than others in the building. "I think it just depends on the teacher, but I think our school is, I would say more so open to inclusion even though, I mean, they really

shouldn't have a choice." The teacher reported experiences with other teachers, "I feel like there are teachers who just can't or don't want to deal with the behaviors or the students, and they just kind of send them off [to the special education room]." It seemed to the teacher to be a question of if teachers are able and willing to deal with the student and students' needs. Depending on the ability level of the student, the extra help needed or behaviors, and the teacher's ability, at times, altered a teacher's willingness to "deal" the participant shared.

Ultimately, the teacher reported that overall the school was definitely inclusive and including of special education students. The teacher reported that not everybody in the school is positive stating, "So, that's another thing. Not everybody in the school cares about inclusion, I guess. Not necessarily teachers but other staff working with the students." Additionally, the teacher talked about having different experiences with different medical nurse/educational assists a special education student. The teacher shared about experiences with the nurses who supported a special education student, "[The student] was going everywhere. He was doing everything the kids were doing. She'd take him out of his chair and put him on the floor with us when we had our class meetings." When this nurse stopped coming, and a different nurse assumed the position, that stopped. The teacher shared a time when a nurse told the teacher that she would not be taking the student to specials; instead, he would go with her to the teacher workroom, as she "needed to make copies."

*Participant 4.* "I would say we are very inclusive. We really try and see what works best, how we can use our supports, how we can change things to make it fit," reports Participant 4. An example was given of teachers working together to meet the

needs of all students. The participant described how flex grouping of students had been utilized to meet students' needs. Additionally, the participant described students waving and being kind to an older student at the school who was non-verbal. The teacher described the students at the school being accepting of the student who was non-verbal, as well as of a special education student who cried a lot in their classroom, "It's not something that my kids laugh about." The teacher described student differences as a normal part of the school experience for the other students, "It's never a big production or a teasing matter. It's just it is what it is. Each student has their own needs to help them be successful, and I think that's the overall concept at our school."

*Participant 5.* This participant reported that everyone at the school had been accepting of the fact that there will be special education students in everyone's classroom. Inclusion is "accepted" and "understood," the teacher described. The teacher continued, "We understand it's just part of our day. It's part of the way we operate. It's not something that just this teacher has or just that teacher has. It's something that we all are that we're all doing." This teacher reports that the school has a large number of special education students, and because all of the teachers work with special education students, there had been a strong sense throughout the building that everyone was including and being inclusive, "I think that helps because, again, it builds that culture and that understanding. We're all doing it." The teacher reported that while staff may be cognizant and recognize the time and efforts involved in being inclusive, it hasn't made people against the idea of having special education students in their classrooms; inclusion just makes it more work, the teacher explained.

*Participant 6.* The teacher reported that the school had been “in a little bit of a funk” in the area of inclusion and continued by adding, “All of us agree inclusion is a great thing.” The teacher reported that inadequate staffing has had an impact on inclusion in the school.

*Participant 7.* “Our goal, I feel, is always include the [special education] children as much as possible as long as they are creating a safe learning environment. If a kid ever has to be taken out of the classroom, it’s the ultimate goal that they get placed back in the general education classroom as soon as possible...” The teacher reported that students with academic needs have always been in the classroom as much as possible. The students who may or may not spend time out of the general education classroom, the teacher reported, are students who have behavioral needs.

*Participant 8.* “I know that every classroom is experiencing inclusion.” The teacher described the differing experiences with inclusion around the building, because classrooms have had differing degrees of student needs, which have ranged from modified curriculum to a learning disability to hearing impairment. “I know that every teacher out there in our school is using an IEP...to assist their kids.” The participant described the school staff as accepting of inclusion and that inclusion is “just part of what we do at our school.”

### **Time in general education classroom**

Experiences with the time special education students spend in the general education classroom were detailed in each of the interviews. The teachers discussed instruction and interventions for special education students. Some teachers shared experiences with some interventions and instruction time taking place outside the

classroom (i.e. in the hallway, special education classroom, other room). Some participants described students receiving the intervention inside the classroom.

A prevalent theme within all interviews included special education students with behavioral needs being pulled from the general education classroom and going to an alternate setting. Some participants described large amounts of time spent outside of the general education setting by the special education student in order to receive behavioral support. In general, participants described experiences of special education students who received special education supports solely because of an academic or learning need having spent greater amounts of time in the general education classroom compared to special education students who had behavioral support needs who spent less time in the general education setting.

*Participant 1.* This participant described experiences with special education students are in the classroom “full-time” unless they are pulled for an academic or speech intervention. This participant identified experiences a special education student receiving pre-teaching outside of the general education classroom, and then the student would return to the general education setting with peers to receive core instruction. This participant named incidences when a student’s behavior had prohibited the student from experiencing things with the rest of the students. An example given was when a student was walking in and out of the classroom and was upset. The class had to leave the classroom, because the individual student would not leave the classroom. This participant described an experience with a student whose behavior was “off and on.” The student “couldn’t handle it” in the general education classroom, and the student wasn’t in the classroom as much at the beginning of the year. After behavior impacted this

student's participation in the general education setting, the teacher stated that the student had always been welcomed back in when the student was behaviorally ready to return. This student had a contingency plan for when he could and could not be in the general education classroom; his behavior dictated when he could return and when he must remain outside of the general education setting. The teacher stated that this student also had a support person with him at all times whether it is a paraprofessional or the special education teacher.

The participant described experiences of having the special education students in the classroom as much as possible. A student in class may be "worked up" and need a movement break; the student would leave the room for this type of break. This participant described students taking breaks within the general education setting, as well. The speech teacher came into this classroom to work with a group at the back table. When talking about the special education students in this classroom that are not considered "one on one" students, the participant stated, "I work with them just as much as the [special education teacher] or anyone else does."

*Participant 2.* Students are in the classroom, and this participant stated, "The goal is to pull less...the whole idea is being in the room as much as possible." Educational assistants and special education teachers will "come and support." Paraprofessionals had come into this classroom and pulled special education students for breaks, which this teacher stated had taken around 10 minutes where the student(s) had been out of the general education setting. Behavior impacted student placement, as well, this participant described. The special education teacher had removed a special education student from the classroom. The teacher described, "So they're removing. I mean this is usually when

a child's out of control, can no longer be in the room." When a student's behavior reached a level that the special education teacher became involved and removed the child from the general education setting, the removal had taken anywhere from five minutes to as long as the rest of the day. Additionally, this teacher described an experience with a student who was not at all in the general education classroom; the student had not attended the general education classroom for at least a month. The teacher reported the student, because of behavior, had not been in the general education setting but rather in the special education room. In general, the teacher reported, "...The only time that, like, when I'm no longer supporting and guiding is if I have to because of behavioral issues, send them out of the room, and then from that point on, it becomes the resource teacher. And that's outside of the classroom."

The special education students who received academic interventions received the intervention outside of the general education classroom. "Academically, [paraprofessionals] and special education will come and support. If they do get pulled, that's usually within the hallway nearby, so they're not going too far away for too long either," the participant stated when talking about math and reading interventions being provided to special education students. In addition to educational assistants and special education staff having pulled students out for interventions, the reading teachers also pulled some special education students outside of the general education setting and provided interventions outside the classroom.

*Participant 3.* This participant described the special education students being pulled from the general education setting to have their IEP time met. Paraprofessionals came to get the students for about ten minutes a day to work on math outside of the



general education setting. In speaking about one special education student in particular, the participant stated, “It was just easier for them to pull him out to work with him one-on-one.” The teacher stated, “I think it was requested by Mom that he get pulled out and work on skills that he’s missing.” In the general education setting, the teacher described providing re-teaching to special education students. This participant shared an example of a time when students were being pulled out of the general education setting to receive writing services in the special education room. In speaking about students who had academic needs and were receiving academic supports, the classroom teacher stated that the students came back into the general education setting with little work completed. The teacher detailed, “When they stayed with me, they got a whole lot more done. So I just stopped sending them. While that was not on their IEP, I felt that it was more beneficial for them, because they were actually getting things done. And sometimes being pulled out causes more distraction than just staying in the classroom.” The speech teacher came into this classroom and provided services to the student who required them.

The teacher spoke about students who had severe behaviors and explained that many times the severe behaviors happened outside of the general education setting. An example was given of a student who would run away from the general education teacher on multiple occasions. The teacher talked about the student needing to take a break, if behaviors were severe. Additional examples were given of various special education students were in different classrooms and were sent to the special education room. The participant stated, “I feel like there are teachers who just can’t or don’t want to deal with the behaviors or the students, and they just kind of send them off.” If a student refused to work in the general education classroom, the participant described times when other

general education teachers would send students to the special education room. This participant shared an experience with a student who needed to take a break for behavior support reasons, and he began taking his breaks in the general education setting rather than leaving and going to the special education room. This student also had been pulled for a reading intervention, and he went to the special education room for the intervention. The teacher described the student losing recesses for various reasons and then having to complete the intervention. Because of those combined occurrences, the student “just loses it. He can’t come back from it.”

In addition to academic needs and behavioral needs, the teacher described an experience with a student who was confined to a wheelchair and had a nurse with him at all times. The student was present in the general education setting, and the teacher explained, “A lot of times he will just sit and watch.” The teacher shared that the student was present in the classroom. There were times when one of the nurses took the student out of his wheelchair, and he sat with his peers and was present with the group during class meetings. Depending on the nurse with the student for the day, the student would be included to a greater or lesser extent in the general education setting. The teacher shared, “Sometimes he doesn’t go to specials because the nurse doesn’t want to take him.”

*Participant 4.* The level of participation in the general education setting has been dependent on behavior, reported this participant. This teacher described situations of a student who cried and refused to work in the classroom. The behavior prohibited the student’s participation in the general education setting, because while the special education student was physically present in the classroom, the teacher reported that the

student would not participate. The teacher said, “Well, I mean if they’re crying for 20 minutes, and you’re trying all your strategies of a timer, and then they have to miss some of the instruction away from their peers. It’s they missed that lesson for that day. And sometimes they’ll want to work later that day. Other times it will be a continued crying or refusal just sitting there non-responsive.” The special education student had to leave the general education setting in order to have the student’s behavioral needs supported. The participant described the need for special education students to take breaks from the general education setting and go to the special education room.

Academically, special education students received supports in the general education classroom. The teacher reported that students had been placed in like-need groupings across the different same-age general education classrooms, and the special education students received their reading intervention in the back of the general education classroom. The teacher affirmed that the special education teacher provided academic supports and services in math, reading and writing to the special education students in the back of the general education classroom. Additionally, there had been times that the speech teacher provided speech services in the general education classroom, and other times, she pulled the students out of the room and provided services in the hallway or in her room. The participant described an experience with a student that received “modified for everything,” and the participant detailed concerns about having this special education participant in core math instruction, “I have one student who is modified everything, so it didn’t make sense for her to be sitting in my math class that’s talking about addition with regrouping when she can’t identify numbers. She was wasting fifteen minutes of possible learning by sitting in there.” The teacher stated, “My student that I thought that is

modified for everything doesn't need to be sitting in fifteen minute whole group lesson when she could be practicing a number sense game to identify numbers." The teacher described this student having spent a great deal of time receiving direct instruction, "She just, she never has any independent time during the week. She's always with a teacher." Even though this student has received so much support and time, the teacher expressed concerns with the lack of growth and progress.

*Participant 5.* This participant detailed how the behavior of a special education student impacted participation in the general education classroom. The class had to evacuate the room, at times, because of the escalated nature of the student's behavior. Other times when the student was able to leave the general education classroom with the support of the special education teacher, he wouldn't be allowed back in until his behavioral needs were under control. The teacher described that the student had come back into the general education classroom when his behavior was no longer getting in the way of his learning or the learning of the other students. The teacher stated, "When he was taken out of the room at certain times we'd have to lock the door, so he would try to get back in. And he would beat on the door to try to get back in." Due to the nature of this student's physical aggression, he had to leave the general education setting; however, when the student was behaviorally ready, he went back in the general education classroom. The participant stated, "Once that situation, they were out of the situation and they could have that time to come back, then they would be able to come back into the classroom...we would try to, you know, go on from that point and try to just-." The student had always been welcomed back, "You accept the apology and welcome them back into your classroom, and you hope that you can continue from that point." The

teacher was thinking about two different students when sharing these examples of escalated behavior that resulted in the student being removed from the general education setting. One student ended up being placed in a different setting other than at the particular school. The other student continued the escalated behavioral occurrences throughout the rest of the school year and spent time in and out of the general education classroom, depending on his behavior day to day.

The participant described experiences with the special education teacher being in the general education classroom to provide supports and services in math and writing to the special education students. Special education students had been flex-grouped into the classroom where the special education teacher happened to be providing services. The speech teacher provided services to special education students outside of the general education classroom, and paraprofessionals pulled special education students into the hallway to provide reading and math interventions. Additionally, the teacher described experiences with special education students who received supports and services outside the general education classroom from the occupational therapist, the physical therapist, the school psychologist, and the school counselor.

*Participant 6.* This participant described an experience of having special education students mostly in the general education classroom, adding, “They are like any other student except for they have that extra support in there.” The participant described an experience with a special education student who had been disruptive to other children and had to be removed from the general education classroom. At the beginning of the year, the student had been in the general education classroom, but as the year progressed, the student was in the setting less. The teacher talked about the student’s time in the

general education classroom, “It just seemed like that right away being with kind of the chaos of the morning threw him off right away. So it kind of started us at a bad thing. But we tried really hard and usually it was-he had to be removed from the classroom because at that point he was escalated and did not want to comply at all or to de-escalate. So he was typically in the classroom for five to ten minutes in the morning.”

The teacher gave a detailed explanation of the time this student spent with peers and away from peers. The special education student went to recess twice a day with the general education students, and he also went to specials with the class. The student did not eat lunch with his peers. He did have a social time one time a week for about twenty-five minutes with the guidance counselor, two other adults, and two same-age peers from his classroom. Additionally, the student met one-on-one with his classroom teacher for a one-on-one guided reading group in the general education setting. At the end of the day, the student returned to the general education setting. For the remainder of the school day, the special education student remained in the special education room and received services from the special education teacher, speech teacher, or paraprofessional.

*Participant 7.* “Our goal is always include the children as much as possible as long as they are creating a safe learning environment. If a kid ever has to be taken out of the classroom...the ultimate goal is that they get placed back in the classroom as soon as possible when it fits their behavioral needs if it’s behavior, but as far as academics those kids are like always, always in the classroom as much as possible,” described this participant. The experiences this teacher shared included special education students being pulled for academic interventions outside of the classroom. Two of the special education students had been pulled from the general education setting at least three times

a day for about twenty to thirty minutes at a time. Additionally, one of the special education students met with the ELL teacher. The special education students who received speech services had been pulled outside of the general education classroom and serviced in the speech teacher's office. The participant commented, "I do find it a little more interesting because in the past a lot of my kiddos academically would get more support inside the classroom, and I do find it interesting this year that there's a lot more pulling outside the classroom." The teacher shared an experience with the support provided to a special education student who was reading below grade level but participated in a guided reading group with her general education peers in the classroom.

This participant has experienced behavior that impacted the time in the general education classroom. The teacher recently experienced a special education student who had to often be removed from the general education classroom by the principal because of behavior. There had been times when the student refused to leave the general education setting, and the classroom teacher had to evacuate the remaining students to another location. Additionally, the teacher shared experiences with students right outside the classroom door who were in a different grade level. One of the students hadn't ever spent time in his general education classroom because of his behavior. The teacher shared, "He has unpredictable and could potentially have violent behaviors...he gets services in a private little room right outside my door. That little guy is actually required to have two staff members with him." The teacher shared that the other student spent time "running around the building" and not being in his general education classroom.

*Participant 8.* The participant shared an experience of having two students in the classroom that received modified curriculum, "If they're in my classroom, I have to

modify everything I do so that way they can participate.” Additionally, the students had tubs of modified work in the general education classroom to work on independently.

While both students began the year spending more time in the general education classroom, one had been taken out of the general education setting more. The teacher described, “He was being really defiant, so then we pulled out and it was working well. And then we decided let’s give it a shot again. Let’s be back in the room, and I know [the special education teacher’s] been back in the room lately doing activities. But again he is starting to you know not...[He was] refusing to work again.” The teacher shared experiences of paraprofessionals pulling these two students to work in a nearby intervention room and also in the special education room. The teacher stated that it seemed like the paraprofessionals had pulled the special education students out of the classroom more, and the previous year the special education students had received interventions more often in the general education setting.

The participant shared experiences with behavior by students that had resulted in the students leaving the general education setting. The teacher described an experience with a student who took breaks in the special education classroom to “chill out” and then returned to the general education classroom. Another experience included a student who had been in the general education setting but refused to work. This student also wandered the hallways. The teacher described times when a classroom evacuation was necessary, and all the students were removed except for the special education student who needs behavioral supports.

### **Supports and strategies**



All research participants shared many different supports and strategies. General supports included: differentiation, assessing learning, adjusting and adapting instruction and materials, caring for students, working hard, spending time, building relationships, communicating with parents, utilizing support staff, participating in professional development, and determining students' individual needs. Below are Supports and Strategies charts for each participant. The left column of each chart lists the types of supports and strategies named in literature as inclusive practices and instructional best practices. The right column of each chart lists words and phrases that each individual participant named in experiences throughout the interview. The researcher assigned the words or phrases to the best-fit category or categories. If a research participant didn't mention a type of support or strategy or if an example wasn't given that would fit, the box remains empty. An empty box simply denotes that the participant did not mention the support or strategy within the time of the interview, which is not to say that the participant does not implement or utilize the support or strategy.

Table 2

*Participant 1 Supports and Strategies Chart*

Type of Support/Strategy	Example Given in Interview
Assessment – <i>checking for learning</i>	Student portfolios
Cooperative Learning – <i>students working together with other children</i>	
Curriculum Adaptations – <i>modify or adapt the prescribed grade level learning</i>	Adapt assignment; adapt curriculum
Differentiation – <i>different students; different avenues to learn</i>	Individualized goals; goal-setting; personalized learning/enrichment; use IEP; provide accommodations; use of tools (e.g. calculators, iPad, typed notes); individualizing; auditory presentation; visual presentation; tactile presentation; sensory needs; re-teaching; guided reading groups; guided math groups; passion projects
Emphasis on Learning	Set a lot of goals in the classroom; students go back and reflect using portfolios; students write their reflections; student led conferences
Friendships/Peers	Part of the community; friendship circles; guidance lessons: community, unity, reaching out to others
Proactive Behavior Supports	Positives; fun; build relationships; support risk-taking; take an interest in students' lives; recognize positives; build trust back up; take time to work with students; fun; jokes; lots of different voices; lots of different music
Professional Development	MANDT training; different in-services through the district and outside the district
Quality Instruction ( <i>e.g. explicit instruction, active engagement, opportunities to respond, etc.</i> )	Pre-teaching; identify and focus on critical content; reflection
Reporting Ongoing Progress	Daily, week, monthly verbally to parents; daily behavior log; little notes in the assignment notebook; behavior report journals
Small Groups, 1:1 Instruction	One-on-one instruction; guided reading;

	guided math; interventions
Support Student with Challenging Behavior	Behavior logs; rewards; positive reinforcement; behavior report journals

Table 3

*Participant 2 Supports and Strategies Chart*

Type of Support/Strategy	Examples Given in Interview
Assessment – <i>checking for learning</i>	Observations; anecdotal notes; summative assessments; formative assessments; conversation
Cooperative Learning – <i>students working together with other children</i>	
Curriculum Adaptations – <i>modify or adapt the prescribed grade level learning</i>	
Differentiation – <i>different students; different avenues to learn</i>	Specific needs; meet their pace; meet individual needs; IEP as a guide and reference; academic needs; social emotional needs; differentiate; math interventions; reading interventions
Emphasis on Learning	
Friendships/Peers	Circle of Friends; build peer group
Proactive Behavior Supports	Social-emotional support; conversations with students; positive; classroom is everyone’s space; students bring photos to the classroom; student ownership; listen and communicate with students; Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS); Zones of Regulation; praise
Professional Development	Behavior; chronic stress in students; Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS); Zones of Regulation; meeting individual needs; special education top of being aware of the words used, inclusion and “our students”; setting up supports for students; Eric Jensen presented
Quality Instruction ( <i>e.g. explicit instruction, active engagement, opportunities to respond, etc.</i> )	
Reporting Ongoing Progress	
Small Groups, 1:1 Instruction	Small groups; one-on-one

Support Student with Challenging Behavior	Emotional-social support; praise; breaks out of the classroom; model positive self-talk; ignore student's negative self-talk
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Table 4

*Participant 3 Supports and Strategies Chart*

Type of Support/Strategy	Examples Given in Interview
Assessment – <i>checking for learning</i>	Formative assessment to check; summative assessment; notes; check-in with each kid; student attitude – see level of frustration; verbal assessment
Cooperative Learning – <i>students working together with other children</i>	Partner groups; partner work; partners quiz each other
Curriculum Adaptations – <i>modify or adapt the prescribed grade level learning</i>	
Differentiation – <i>different students; different avenues to learn</i>	Visuals; manipulatives; time to process; scribe as an accommodation; give choices; IEP – goals and accommodations; re-teaching; differentiation; know the individual; extra support in classroom; review activity; get to know kids as individuals; read questions for kids who need it; offer choices; interventions; take a step back and go over it again
Emphasis on Learning	Goal-setting; balance intervention and enrichment opportunities for students who receive interventions; set challenges for a student; phrase it as “look at what you get to do” rather than “you have to do this”; “If you get this down, we can learn more”
Friendships/Peers	Circle of Friends; teaching pro-social behaviors; teach kids to ask another to play and include him; “This person asked me first. I’ll be with you next time”; encourage students to say “yes” when someone asks them to be partners or to play
Proactive Behavior Supports	Relationships; give choices; offer break; greet; “I wish my teacher knew” activity; redirection; empathy; teaching pro-social behaviors; color chart behavior communication home daily; positive calls home; offer choices; build a strong relationship; Boys Town social skills; class meetings; laugh a lot; talk

	about their lives; take person lunch to eat and talk with kids
Professional Development	Behavior for Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)
Quality Instruction ( <i>e.g. explicit instruction, active engagement, opportunities to respond, etc.</i> )	Intervention with reading teacher; target a specific goal
Reporting Ongoing Progress	Tests and work goes home; behavior color every night in student planner; if not making progress, email or call home; call home to report a big jump in reading level
Small Groups, 1:1 Instruction	
Support Student with Challenging Behavior	Break in classroom; student “owes recess and does a walk and think”

Table 5

*Participant 4 Supports and Strategies Chart*

Type of Support/Strategy	Examples Given in Interview
Assessment – <i>checking for learning</i>	Check-in; check for understanding; formative check; checking-in; assessments; tests
Cooperative Learning – <i>students working together with other children</i>	Partners; partner sharing
Curriculum Adaptations – <i>modify or adapt the prescribed grade level learning</i>	
Differentiation – <i>different students; different avenues to learn</i>	Visuals; auditory; break down directions; pace; prompts; model thinking; accommodations; tools (i.e. dictionary, word charts, number charts); repeat directions/steps; hands-on; reminders; IEP goals; motivation strategies; connection to interests; accommodations; scribe; reading through directions; intervention; providing a quiet environment to work; re-teaching; working with specific students 1:1; break down steps; provide a checklist for the student; directions and materials presented on the screen; flex-group students; different modes of learning: visual, kinesthetic, written, auditory
Emphasis on Learning	Engaged with teaching; care about material
Friendships/Peers	Pro-social behavior instruction (i.e. giving apologies); model social skills; teach kids to give praise
Proactive Behavior Supports	Check for behaviors; encouragement; motivation strategies; connection to interests; know the individual; greeting; pro-social behavior instruction (i.e. giving apologies); building relationships; celebrations; fun; model social skills; know about personal lives; show that you care about the students no matter what; class meeting; teach kids to give praise; play with them at recess; do something fun; talk to children



	individually; take an interest; kids eat lunch with teacher in the classroom; good relationship with students; talk about being save, respectful and responsible
Professional Development	
Quality Instruction ( <i>e.g. explicit instruction, active engagement, opportunities to respond, etc.</i> )	Model thinking; focus on engagement; movements with actions; teacher model; strategy instruction; student engagement; written, action, verbal responses; check for understanding; be reflective and think about each lesson
Reporting Ongoing Progress	Parent-teacher conferences; show work to demonstrate ongoing progress and areas of improvement; notes in student notebook
Small Groups, 1:1 Instruction	One-on-one work; individualized instruction; small group
Support Student with Challenging Behavior	Behavior chart; If/Then chart; rewards; behavior plan; mentor; take breaks; set a timer; one-on-one attention; teacher checks behavior chart with individual students, gives feedback and rewards

Table 6

*Participant 5 Supports and Strategies Chart*

Type of Support/Strategy	Examples Given in Interview
Assessment – <i>checking for learning</i>	Check-in; assess different ways: talk, write or demonstrate; self-assessment; benchmarks for learning progression and students check-in and reflect
Cooperative Learning – <i>students working together with other children</i>	Partners
Curriculum Adaptations – <i>modify or adapt the prescribed grade level learning</i>	Break assignment down; alternate assignment; notes copied
Differentiation – <i>different students; different avenues to learn</i>	Accommodations; directions; opportunities; extra time; pre-teaching; lots of opportunities to demonstrate and time to learn; interventions; flex-grouping; IEP goals and student identification; extra time to work; make sure students have opportunities; more checking in to make sure students understand directions; break assignments down; provide alternate assignments; give different directions; sticking with a student when he/she doesn't understand something; prepared notes; look at how information is being delivered; identify what needs are and what accommodations will work best for a student
Emphasis on Learning	Goals; samples; self-assessment; high expectations; take students from where they are, teach them to the best of ability and help them meet goals
Friendships/Peers	
Proactive Behavior Supports	Conversation with students; learn and know student interests; positives; teacher takes an interest; listen to students when they want to share; students knowing the teacher wants them to do well; focus students on being responsible, respectful students; students knowing it's important to the teacher how students present themselves and act around others
Professional Development	Learning styles, teaching styles, best

	practice in reading, best practice in writing, best practice in math; thinking strategies; making teaching more engaging; active involvement; differentiation; cooperative learning
Quality Instruction ( <i>e.g. explicit instruction, active engagement, opportunities to respond, etc.</i> )	Interactive teaching; team-teaching with special education teacher; clarify the learning objective; provide lots of opportunities for students to show progress on class learning goals; provide examples for clear expectations
Reporting Ongoing Progress	Report cards; emails and calls with concerns and celebrations; IEP/MDT meetings; conferences
Small Groups, 1:1 Instruction	Small groups; interventions
Support Student with Challenging Behavior	

Table 7

*Participant 6 Supports and Strategies Chart*

Type of Support/Strategy	Examples Given in Interview
Assessment – <i>checking for learning</i>	Formative assessments; summative assessments
Cooperative Learning – <i>students working together with other children</i>	
Curriculum Adaptations – <i>modify or adapt the prescribed grade level learning</i>	
Differentiation – <i>different students; different avenues to learn</i>	IEP; pre-teaching; Braille; identify areas of needed progress, student's current level, and determine next step; IEP goals; break down learning goals with targets to meet across the year
Emphasis on Learning	Advocate for all students; make sure kids can continue to learn and grow and have the attention they need; teaching students that everyone makes mistakes
Friendships/Peers	
Proactive Behavior Supports	Motivation; greeting; positive; asking personal questions; smile at students; being support of students
Professional Development	
Quality Instruction ( <i>e.g. explicit instruction, active engagement, opportunities to respond, etc.</i> )	Active participation; engagement; motivate students to learn; guided reading; team teach with special education teacher
Reporting Ongoing Progress	Face-to-face; parent-teacher conferences
Small Groups, 1:1 Instruction	Small group; one-on-one
Support Student with Challenging Behavior	Self-calming strategies; rewards

Table 8

*Participant 7 Supports and Strategies Chart*

Type of Support/Strategy	Examples Given in Interview
Assessment – <i>checking for learning</i>	Review work; check-in with students
Cooperative Learning – <i>students working together with other children</i>	Partners
Curriculum Adaptations – <i>modify or adapt the prescribed grade level learning</i>	
Differentiation – <i>different students; different avenues to learn</i>	Break everything down; visual; extra support; re-teaching; interventions; practice; IEP to understand needs; interventions; try best to differentiate and adapt to needs when teaching standards and indicators; pull students to meet with teacher as much as possible to understand needs; break down vocabulary; more strategies and skills; gain extra information to break down the information even more; materials to reinforce classroom learning; re-teaching; pre-test for intervention placement
Emphasis on Learning	Teacher responsible that students are learning to a proficient level; when students needs aren't being met, teacher fights for what they need
Friendships/Peers	
Proactive Behavior Supports	Fun; relationships; help students feel valued, respected and cared for; jokes; try hard to build relationships
Professional Development	Meeting student needs and working with special education students
Quality Instruction ( <i>e.g. explicit instruction, active engagement, opportunities to respond, etc.</i> )	Vocabulary; practice; active participation; body movements/signals for response; teach to proficiency level; using a curriculum map; guided reading; teacher setting personal and professional goals for own personal growth
Reporting Ongoing Progress	Conferences; calls; face-to-face to share both positives and what to work on; IEP meeting

Small Groups, 1:1 Instruction	Boys Town Social Skills
Support Student with Challenging Behavior	

Table 9

*Participant 8 Supports and Strategies Chart*

Type of Support/Strategy	Examples Given in Interview
Assessment – <i>checking for learning</i>	Anecdotal notes; observations; formative assessment; summative assessment
Cooperative Learning – <i>students working together with other children</i>	
Curriculum Adaptations – <i>modify or adapt the prescribed grade level learning</i>	Modify activity; support whole group; accommodate work amount; accommodate work format; modified material
Differentiation – <i>different students; different avenues to learn</i>	Single-step directions; checklist for multi-step directions; tools (i.e. FM system; iPad for sound); IEP goals; extra practice; interventions; exploring alternate ways to present content; breaking down; color coding; redirection; sensitive to student needs; small directions; drawers/tubs with differentiated independent work for a student; extra practice; different strategies
Emphasis on Learning	Goal-setting; students keep individual data books to show growth; growth mindset vs. fixed mindset; embrace mistakes; value learning; building independence
Friendships/Peers	
Planning	
Proactive Behavior Supports	Preventatives; close proximity; breaks; greet; private behavior conversations; high expectations; have fun; silly; take an interest in personal; building independence; sensitive to student needs; relationship; explain to students that the teacher cares; smile; hugs and high-fives; go see the students at their extra-curricular activities outside of school

Professional Development	Trauma; active participation; strategies to include all students; Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
Quality Instruction ( <i>e.g. explicit instruction, active engagement, opportunities to respond, etc.</i> )	Guided reading
Reporting Ongoing Progress	Phone calls about behavior; good and bad news via email; good news face-to-face
Small Groups, 1:1 Instruction	Small groups; interventions
Support Student with Challenging Behavior	Preventatives; behavior plans; behavior books; breaks; token system; students look at behavior books and see progress; constant parent contact; encouragement and positives; being sensitive to changes in behavior because of changes in student's home life



### **Special education teacher role**

All research participants described how the special education teacher with which the student is assigned to the caseload served the student and supported the classroom teacher in variety of ways. Participants described different supports and services provided by the special education teachers with who they worked. Some special education teachers came into the general education setting to provide interventions and/or support, a few co-taught with the general education teacher, some pulled outside of the general education classroom for pre-teaching and interventions, and some supporting in other ways. Each participant described differing profiles of the role of the specific special education teacher who were caseload managers for special education students.

*Participant 1.* The special education teacher helped the students in a different way than the general education teacher. The services provided by the special education teacher were described as dependent on each individual student's needs (e.g. re-teaching, pre-teaching). The participant reported that the general education teacher's role was to make the special education students feel part of the classroom, "I want them to learn, but I also want them to be part of the community. So, I do adapt. I do make changes. I do things like that, but I don't try to single them out as different from anybody else." The special education teacher provided accommodations for the student. The teacher described the special education teacher's role as different dependent upon the level of support the students needed. In regards to the level and kind of support provided by the special education teacher, the participant said, "It depends on the student. It depends on their learning disability or their disability in general."

The teacher described a student who was a “one-on-one student with special education,” and the special education teacher was more involved with the student. The teacher explained that the more severe a disability was, the more involved the special education teacher was and the less involved the general education teacher was with the student, “I like to know what’s going on, but like I said, some of it, sometimes you can’t because you’re not with them.” Additionally, the teacher stated, the special education teacher was more involved with communication with parents, as the special education sometimes had a relationship with them from a previous school year. In further discussing the role of the general education teacher, the teacher commented, “But I try, because they’re, they’re just fun kids. They’re kids.”

*Participant 2.* This general education teacher reported that the special education teacher had not been in the general education classroom at all during the school year. The teacher had paraprofessionals in the classroom to support with the six students with IEPs. While the special education teacher had not been present in the general education classroom, the teacher reported, “I think my relationship with my case manager this year is very positive.” The teacher and the special education teacher worked together to communicate with the parents of the special education students, “We split up the caseload, so I make contact with about half. She makes contact with the other half, and [we report] positive and negative things [to the parents].”

*Participant 3.* This participant reported that the special education teacher had focused on the IEP goals with the special education students more so than the general education teacher had. The special education teacher targeted the specific goals, and the special education teacher provided behavioral support, as well. The special education

teacher in the special education room provided a reading intervention to the special education student.

*Participant 4.* The teacher reported that the special education teacher checked in with the special education students before lunch; she gave the students feedback on their behavior by checking their behavior chart. The special education teacher supported the special education students beyond behavior by being in the general education classroom. “She and I do not really interact in the classroom. So unfortunately, this is way different than I’ve ever had any sort of special ed teacher be. We don’t get to parallel teach or co-teach.” The special education teacher provided interventions, “She does an intervention with two students, and then she leaves. And in the afternoon, she comes in and she does an intervention with those same two students for math.” Beyond providing feedback for behavior, an intervention for reading, and an intervention for math, the special education teacher went back into the general education classroom after the whole group writing lesson to support a small group of three or four students. The special education teacher had a focus on the student’s IEP goals. In regards to parent communication, the general education teacher reported having completed more of the communication to the special education parents. The special education teacher “sends a lot of paperwork home” and attended a few of the conferences.

*Participant 5.* The classroom teacher reported spending time planning with the special education teacher once or twice weekly, and the special education teacher was included in meetings and was present as much as possible. The special education teacher spent time in the general education classroom. The teacher explained, “She comes in and, you know, has and uses our lesson plans. This year the special education teacher is

in my classroom for writing every day. We have groups, so there's other students who have writing goals on their IEPs that come into my classroom." The special education teacher remained in the general education classroom during the entire writing period to support students, and the special education teacher supported all students. The teacher stated, "She's not limited to [special education students]. But it's just another opportunity to have another teacher in there to help all of my students." In addition to "team-teaching" with the general education teacher, the special education teacher provided at least one intervention for the special education students. The special education teacher provided support to the general education for both academic concerns and if there were "social issues." Together, the two teachers collaborated on the report cards of the special education students.

*Participant 6.* The general education teacher described experiences of spending a great deal of time with the special education teacher, as they collaborated at least once weekly. The teacher sent lesson plans to the special education teacher, as well. The special education teacher is the primary teacher for the special education student, as he does not spend time in the general education classroom other than his one-on-one guided reading group with the general education teacher. The general education and special education teachers collaborate to ensure that the content of the instruction in the special education room was consistent with the content of the instruction in the general education room. The teacher had experienced the special education teacher being the primary contact for the mother of the special education student.

*Participant 7.* The special education teacher was the key person for obtaining materials for a student's math intervention; a paraprofessional delivered the intervention.

The general education teacher reported that paraprofessionals had delivered all services to the students; the special education teacher hadn't provided any of the services or interventions, "She has a couple kids on her caseload that take a lot of her time. So, with [my students] not being as high as a behavioral need, and since they're in these more direct programs, they're just kind of given to assistants to follow the program to the best of their ability." Additionally, the general education teacher reported, "I really don't see the caseload manager until I go in and actually talk to her. And we'll discuss some things, but I just don't feel [the special education teacher] truly knows [my special education students]."

While the special education teacher might have known about the programs that the special education students were in, the general education teacher stressed that the special education teacher didn't actually know about the individual students. The teacher explained conferences as having been awkward because the special education doesn't "really know them." The general education teacher reported attempts to connect with and talk to the special education teacher about every two weeks. The teacher stated, "I talk to her when I need to." Most of the general education teacher's conversations were with the paraprofessionals, "We can figure out what the kid needs and move on from there." While the special education teacher had been invited to weekly meetings with the general education teacher, the reading teacher, and the ELL teacher, the special education teacher had attended two meetings since the beginning of the year.

*Participant 8.* The role of the special education teacher was similar to the role of the general education teacher. The teacher stated, "I honestly find them very similar." The special education teacher provided a direct program for the special education

students, which was something that the general education teacher hadn't been given access to. Additionally, the special education teacher gathered and created materials for two of the special education students to use in the general education setting (i.e. tubs with independent work and a token system). The special education teacher provided academic services and instruction in both the general education setting and the special education room. Additionally, the special education teacher provided supports for behavior. The teacher explained, "What I do and what she does is very similar. It's just that sometimes I have a whole audience of kids when I'm coming up and talking to a kid. Whereas sometimes the resource teachers can pull them away and talk to them more privately without the rest of the class. Or I can take away my kids while she can calm a kid down." For one of the special education students, the special education teacher had been the key point of contact for the mother. The teacher explained, "My resource teacher has been doing a lot with the one parent."

### **Collaboration and communication**

The research participants shared a variety of ways in which they collaborate with special education teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, and other professionals within the school. In addition to collaborating with various people, each participant gave examples of what types of things they collaborate on and communicate about. Each participant's Collaboration Diagram shows specifics below.

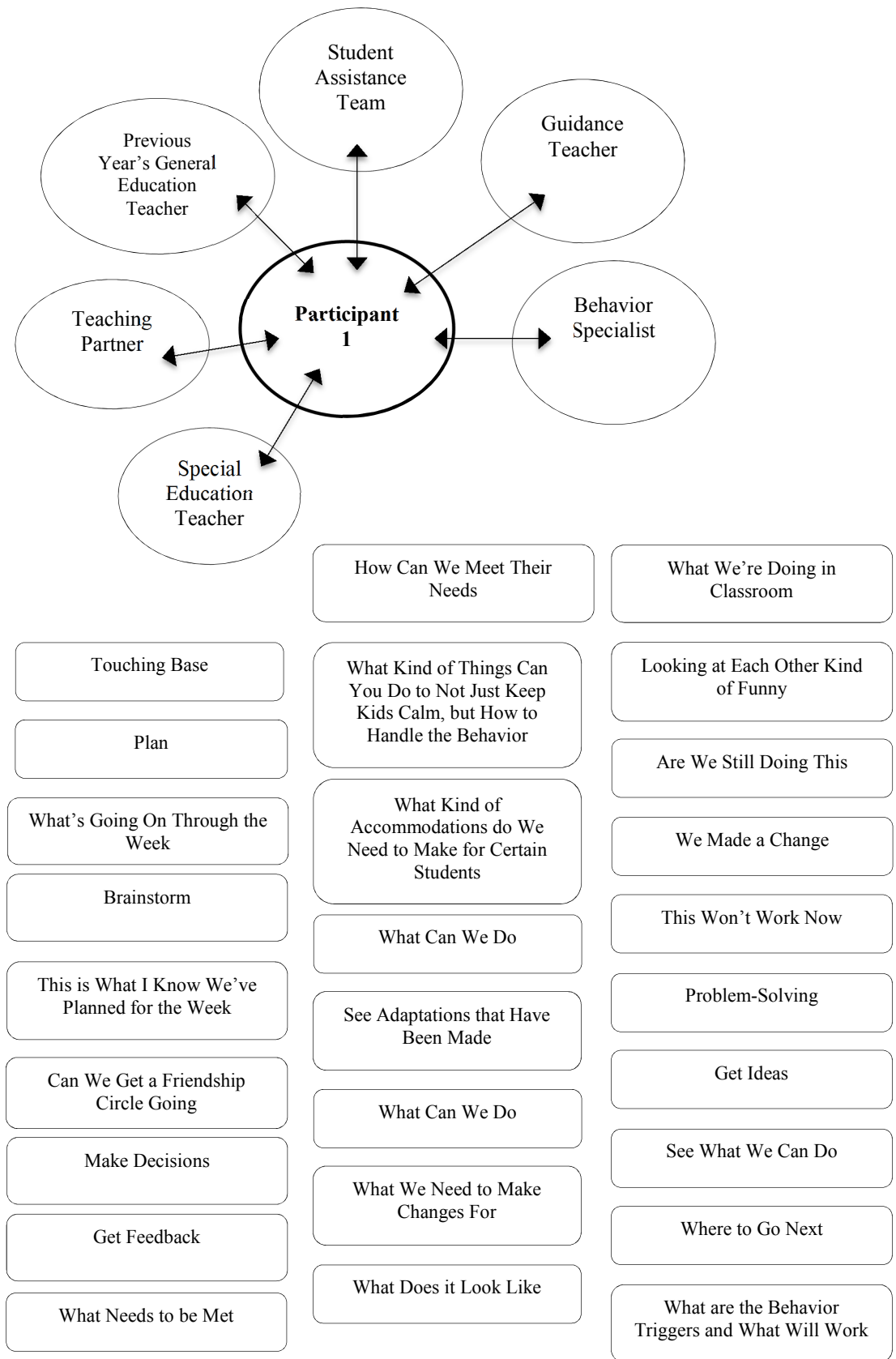
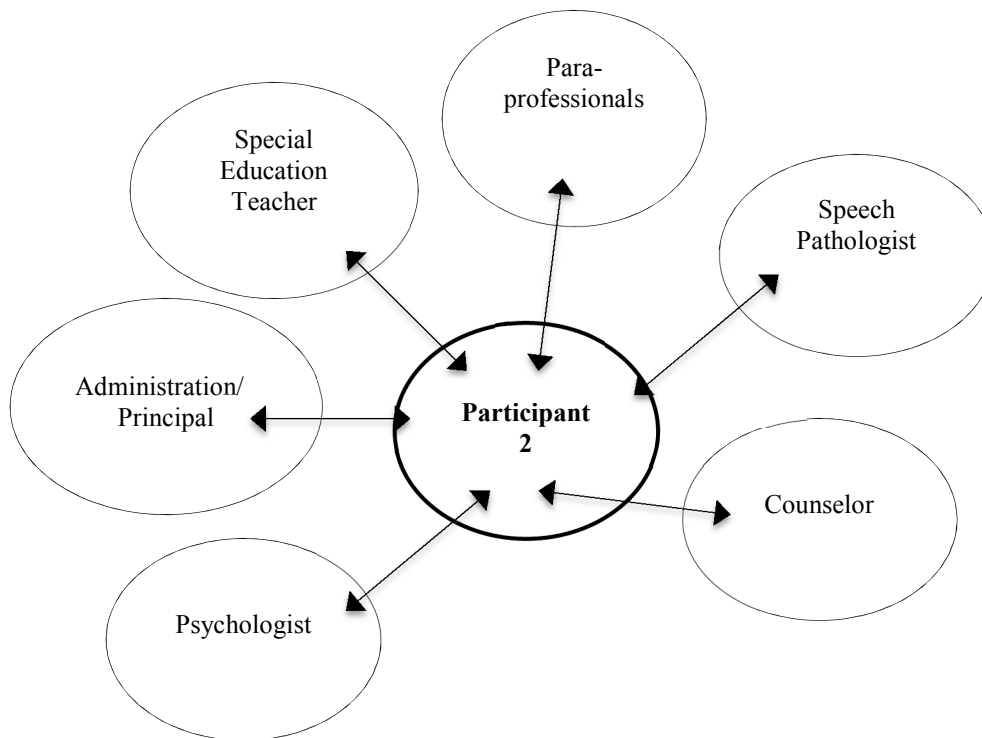


Figure 1. Participant 1 Collaboration Diagram.



What's Working	What's Not Working
Communicate	Suggestions
Problem-Solve	Outside Counselor's Suggestions
Bring in as Many Suggestions As Possible	Guiding in What Needs to be Done
Discussion	Ask Questions and Inquire
What's Coming Up	Bring Up Issues
What Needs Do We Need to Provide	

Figure 2. Participant 2 Collaboration Diagram.



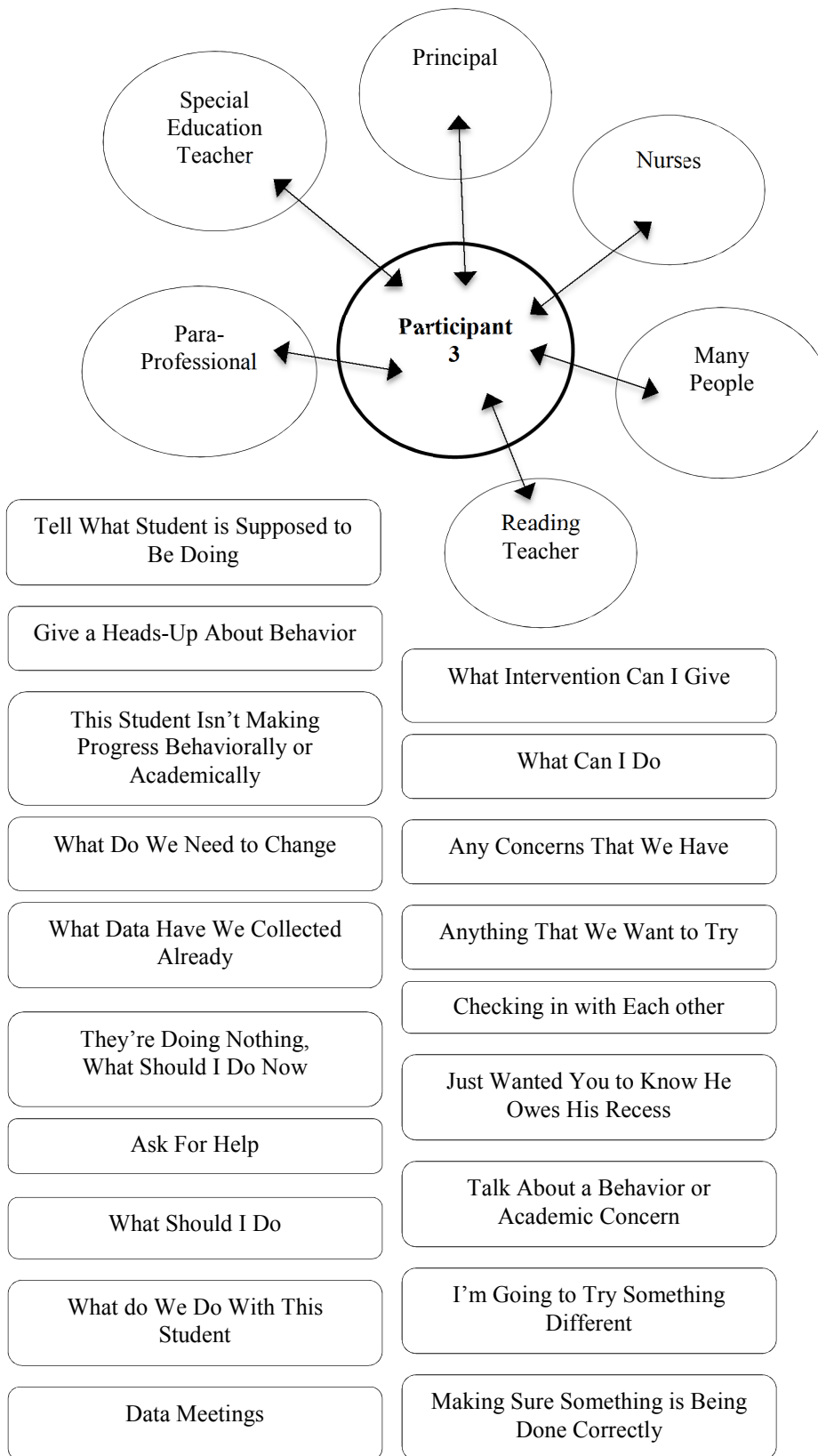


Figure 3. Participant 3 Collaboration Diagram.

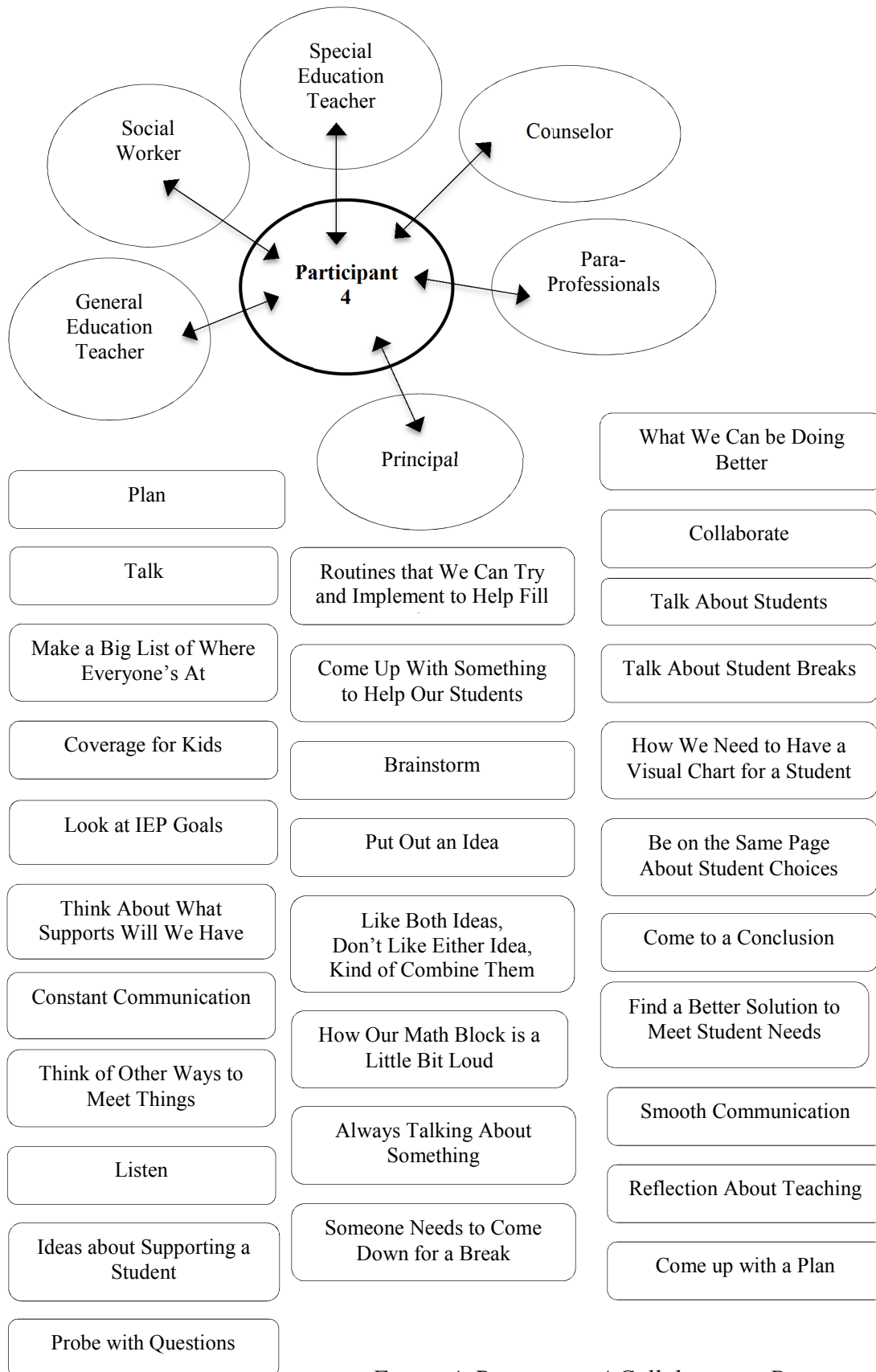
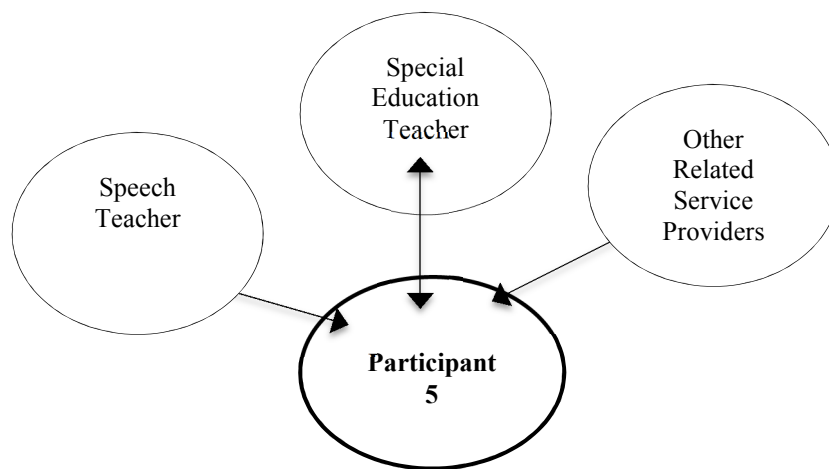
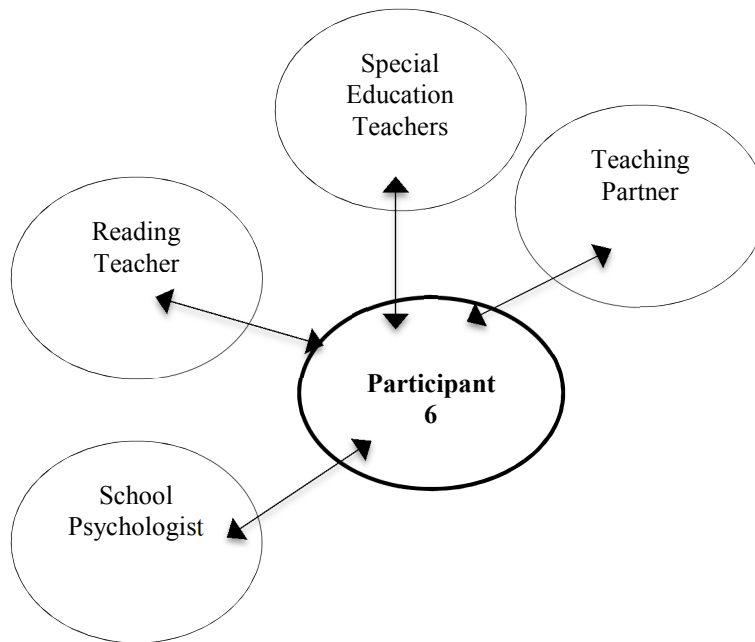


Figure 4. Participant 4 Collaboration Diagram.



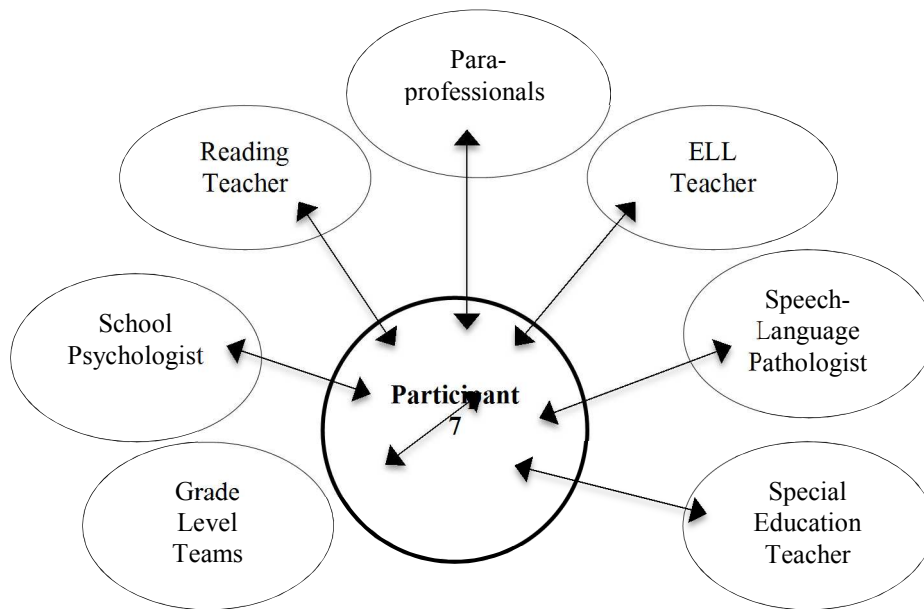
Identify Student Needs	Meeting
Share Upcoming Unit	Who Might This Student Benefit from Working With or Not Working With
Plan	Shares IEP Goals
Share All Our Content	Creating Report Cards
What Has Been Done in the Past with a Student	Talk About the Students
Grouping Kinds of Concerns	Kind of Collaborate on What Grade on the Report Card
Let Others Know of Any Changes in the Classroom	Is This Something That's Typical and Has it Happened in the Past or Is it Something New
Check Back and Let Teacher Know How Things are Going	Share With Teacher about Any Interventions and About How Students Are Working in the Intervention
Talk	
What Kind of Accommodations are Going to Work Best for a Student	Talking Over What Teacher Sees the as the Needs of the Student

Figure 5. Participant 5 Collaboration Diagram.



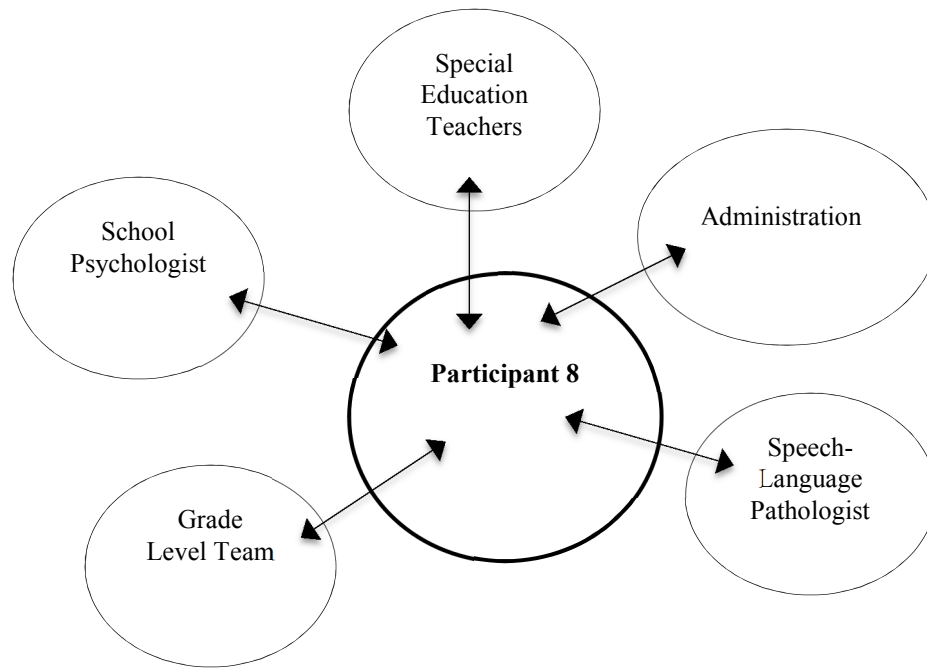
What Are We Saying to Mom	A Few Exchanges About Things
Identify the Areas Where Progress is Needed	What's the Next Step
Where Students are Currently At	Lesson Plans
Brainstorm	Problem Solve
Ideas	Products/Examples
Collaborate	Really Short Collaboration Moments
Information from IEP	Keeping Teacher in the Loop with Information from Parent

Figure 6. Participant 6 Collaboration Diagram.



Need Support	Check-In About What's Being Worked On	How Can We Get Needs Met
We're On This Unit	Ask About the Student	How's It Going
Share Concerns	What the Student Needs Are	Figure Out What the Kid Needs and Move on From
Struggling Students	This is What We're Doing in Class	Discuss Building Climate Issues
Talk	Discussion	Talk When We Need to
Sit and Brainstorm	We're Working on This	Make Sure Kids Have the Foundation that They Really Need to be Successful in the High Grades
Quick Conversation	Quick Check-In	
Student is Doing Great with This	Brainstorming Certain Things We Can Try	
Student is Struggling with This		

Figure 7. Participant 7 Collaboration Diagram.



Constantly in Communication	Compare Data
Talk about Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports	Look at What the Issue is and Discuss
Time Student Spends in the Classroom	Talk About Plans
	Give Feedback about What is Working and What is Not

Figure 8. Participant 8 Collaboration Diagram.

## **Barriers**

Research participants named barriers to the inclusion. Barriers included a variety of things: lack of consistency, negative attitudes, students not making growth, feelings that the teacher can and should be doing more, an understanding that one person cannot do it all, not having enough time, student mental health issues, lack of training in dealing with behaviors, feelings of frustration, a sense of overload, students feeling scared, teachers feeling scared, staffing issues, and students refusing to work. Additionally, experiences with dangerous, destructive, and disruptive behaviors were persistent across research participants and throughout interviews. The descriptions of these experiences included incidences that were so disruptive to the general education environment and education of students that a different theme, Dangerous, Destructive, Disruptive Behaviors, was created separately from the Other Barriers theme to emphasize the content shared.

***Dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors.*** Research participants shared experiences they've had with students who presented challenges in the general education classroom and challenges for staffing supports in an elementary school building. Participants shared stories of anger, aggression, disruption, and destruction of the learning environment. They shared personal feelings of fear and frustration.

*Participant 1.* "Last year I was very concerned, because I had a couple individuals that were very physical. And I have no problem with having them in the classroom. They were great kids, but they would hit a level." The teacher stated that students would grab and throw things, and their behavior was impulsive. One student threw desks and chairs, and he would rip things off the walls. "That is my only concern is the safety of

the other kids. Then it becomes a different kind of problem, and then it becomes different types of goals. I love having every kid in the classroom. And we don't treat them differently in the classroom. We really try to. Everybody is part of the community and what we're doing in there. But when it gets to the point that other students are [impacted]." The teacher described experiences when the other students' health, wellbeing, and safety was being threatened, and stated, "Then I have a problem with it, which is sad. It's just sad, because then those kids aren't experiencing all the great things in the classroom with the rest of them."

The participant talked about the other students and how supportive, kind, and understanding they are of others. "It's the safety that scares the crud out of me." This participant detailed other experiences with physically aggressive students. The teacher described the most challenging experience had, "I think the most challenging is when they're physically [aggressive]. They get bigger than I do, too." The teacher discussed participating in de-escalation training by saying, "I've been through MANDT training, but to, you know, that's scary to restrain a child. That's hard. I think that's the hardest part is to restrain a child who is just trying and is so frustrated that they're just trying to lash out and show their frustration, but I think that's my biggest, biggest thing is having to restrain a child so they're not hurting themselves or somebody else."

The participant detailed an experience when a student was getting very upset, and he walked in and out of the classroom. The teacher detailed, "We got the kids out right away, and he did not follow, and so he was swinging at teachers, kicking." The student then began to bang his head against the wall, and the teacher explained, "So we did have to restrain him, and he calmed down right as soon as we got him kind of, you know,



restrained.” The student quickly calmed, but the experience provoked questions within the teacher about if she was doing the restraint right and if the restraint had been required. “I think that’s the hardest part is the safety part, because some of the students depending on where they are mentally,” the teacher explained. The teacher hadn’t had prior experiences with such a level of aggression from a student, nor had the teacher experienced such a personal level of worry before. The teacher explained, “Last year I was shocked...I didn’t know the history, and that was a big shock with the safety of not only the student but the other kids.”

After physically aggressive experiences like those detailed above, the classroom teacher maintained acceptance of having the student in the general education classroom. The teacher explained, “It was fine because we would welcome him in. I wanted him in there, but he just couldn’t handle it. So, he wasn’t in as much as the beginning of the year, but he still was in the classroom.” The student was in and out of the general education classroom and it changed day to day, depending on the student’s behavior. The teacher explained, “So it depended on his behavior, so we never knew. You know, so it was off and on.” The general education teacher stated that support had been received from the student’s special education teacher who “had had him years before and knew the triggers and what would work.” The student also had an educational assistant with him at all times.

*Participant 2.* “The behavior part of it is really hard. I think it pulls away a lot from academics. Usually meeting the needs for them academically, I can do. But when the behavior problems come in, and when you have more than one behavior, it adds up very quickly.” The teacher discussed how the behavior has taken away from the teaching

and learning of other general and special education students. Responding to a behavior has impacted the services provided by the special education teacher, and the teacher explained, “The resource teacher could be pulled from group or from individual students. Whether it’s in my classroom or other classrooms that that teacher supports, as well. So not only does it affect my room but then it affects others as well. That’s the impact.”

The special education teacher had been called to the classroom to remove the misbehaving student. The teacher described, “I mean this is usually when a child’s out of control, can no longer be in the room. Usually that’s when I like to, like I will do everything I can, as long as they’re in control and being safe.” The teacher talked about safety being a concern and said, “But once safety starts to become an issue, that’s when I bring in the resource teacher immediately, and so they need to be removed.”

The general education teacher described experiences with the special education teacher de-escalating a student. The teacher detailed a process that had ranged from as little as five minutes to as long as the whole school day. The special education teacher “might disappear because they’re working with that student.” This general education teacher described having had one student who had not come into the general education classroom at all throughout the day, because of his behavior. The student had been out of the general education classroom for over a month and a half. When asked about the most challenging experience, the teacher stated, “I think behavioral in the sense of like destructive, unsafe would be like the most challenging, and my most frustrating is when the other students become frustrated and fearful and worried.” The teacher experienced a student who was very angry. When the student escalated, he destroyed the classroom, attacked other students by throwing things, and yelled at other students. The student also

pushed other students and would “just scare them.” The students would be scared, and the behavior negatively impacted the sense of security in the room.

“Everyone was just worried. That’s not okay. It’s frustrating for me, because my whole goal as a teacher is to make an environment that’s safe and secure.” The teacher explained a strong desire to create a safe place for the students. The teacher explained having a classroom where “they don’t have to worry about something so negative and so violent to occur.” The teacher maintained acceptance for the inclusion of special education students and said, “So students are in the classroom. The goal is to pull less...the whole idea is being in the room as much as possible, which I 100% support. I think that’s important to be in the room.” This teacher has experienced the behavior piece impacting the other students’ learning and explained, “The academics gets put to the side. And that can be by me, that can be by the educational assistants, and that can be by the special ed teacher.” The teacher expressed that it wasn’t a matter of the educational assistants and teacher being “neglectful or just choosing not to,” but rather because the student would be pulled because behavior created a barrier.

*Participant 3.* “I’ve not had lots of severe, severe behaviors. I have had them, but they haven’t happened in my classroom.” The teacher detailed an experience with a student who repeatedly ran away from the teacher. The teacher explained, “He would run away from me or wander...that was frustrating for sure.” The student’s behavior wasn’t as severe as other behaviors that the teacher had experienced from other students. The teacher stated, “I mean I haven’t had any like large outbursts like chairs throwing like that kind of stuff.” The behavior the teacher had encountered includes a student who got mad because he wanted to leave the room, and the student would rip up his papers when

he was mad. There was a student would “just lose it” behaviorally and had to leave the classroom to take a break in the special education room. After the student left the general education classroom, the teacher described times when the student couldn’t come back to the room, because he remained escalated. The teacher maintained acceptance of the student and stated, “I don’t like my kids being pulled out ever, because I don’t think that, I mean, when they have to be, they have to be. But I like them in my classroom, because I think it’s good for them. If they are able to be in the classroom, I think they should be.” The teacher stated an example of a student being physically aggressive to the point that the teacher explained that a situation in need of outside support. The teacher detailed, “Now, I had a student kick a window and break it. That’s a whole separate story, you know.”

*Participant 4.* “One student will cry and refuse to work.” When asked to describe the situation further, the teacher stated, “Well, I mean if [she’s] crying for twenty minutes, and you’re trying all your strategies of a timer, and then [she] has to miss some of the instruction away from [her] peers. It’s...they missed the lesson for that day. And sometimes [she’ll] want to work later that day. Other times it will be a continued crying or refusal just sitting there non-responsive.” Crying isn’t the only behavior this teacher has experienced. The teacher also described experiences with a “hyper” student who constantly moved out of his seat. In regards to all behavior, though, the teacher stated, “It just it really affects I think everything when their behavior is off.” In describing her most challenging experience, the teacher described a student who was physically aggressive towards herself. The teacher described, “It was very random and very scary as a new teacher. Biting her lip to bleed. Pushing her chair over. Um, just being very negative

and harmful. So that was, I think, my scariest.” The teacher described an experience of giving the student a direction, having the child push her chair back from her desk, and then the child just sat in her chair sobbing. The teacher went on to explain about the student’s behavior, “[She was] kind of getting very yelling and was biting her lip. And blood was running down her face. She wasn’t able to calm down with my help. The kids were scared, I think, and I think I was scared, too.”

The student’s behavior happened randomly, described the teacher. The student would be having a great day, and then suddenly this type of outburst would occur. The special education teacher came into the general education classroom to assist in de-escalating the student. Beyond the student’s self-harming, bleeding, and sobbing, the teacher described, “Sometimes she would yell at other kids if they would look at her when she was that way.” The special education teacher supported the student and helped her out of the room into the special education room to de-escalate. The classroom teacher stressed the level of support she received from the special education teacher, especially when it came to supporting behavior. In talking about the special education teacher, the participant stated, “And it’s kind of hard, because she has a lot of kids on her caseload, and there’s a lot of kids with behaviors.” While the special education teacher had been so supportive to this classroom teacher, she also supported other teachers and students throughout the school. The teacher explained, “But I think the hard part is when she’s missing because an aid is gone or because she has a behavior in another classroom.”

The teacher described an experience during math instruction when the special education teacher was pulled away to support a student, who was also on her caseload, in a fifth grade classroom; the special education teacher was unable to return to the

classroom to complete the math intervention with the students. The educational assistant did the intervention with the students instead, and then the classroom teacher had to work with the educational assistant's group. That left two students to work on their own, they who typically spend that time in small group with the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher stated that this occurred about once every two weeks, and it happened usually because an educational assistant was gone. The teacher said, "Fortunately, [the special education teacher] has not had a lot of behaviors. Her caseload is more academic, but I know that's not the case for our other sped teachers. Um, they've been missing out on a lot of instruction in first grade because of some behavior. So I'm blessed, I guess, that she doesn't have a ton of behaviors, but she does have some very intense academic needs, um, that kind of pull her elsewhere."

*Participant 5.* The participant talked about the behavior side of supports being the most challenging part and stated, "I personally feel like I guess I have more help. I have more resources academically, and not that there's a lot of resources and things that do help with behavior, but I think that behavior is a hard issue sometimes, because it has...there's so many factors that go into it." The teacher went on to detail, "I've had students who were just so up and down behaviorally that it's so hard to then even try to do something as far as the goals and academic wise because the behaviors in the way of being able to be successful with that." In sharing a specific experience with a student, the teacher explained, "Well, I had a student that was obviously there was mental, medical issues that went to it...he would come in and he would curl up underneath the desk...he would pretend that he was a super hero and want to fly around the room. And you know, you're trying to kinda manage that along with obviously your other students that are in

the class at the same time.” The teacher shared, “It was you may start off great and then all of a sudden there may be some kind of trigger or something that would set it off. And then trying to determine what those triggers were to avoid them, but it was constantly changing. It was constantly different.”

The teacher shared an experience with a different student who was more physically aggressive. The student would get frustrated in class, and if he thought someone was not being fair or was doing something wrong, the student would react. The teacher explained, “He would, you know, throw things, throw chairs, knock over desks. Um, we’ve had, you know, to evacuate the room. He was taken out of the room at certain times we’d have to lock the door, so he...because he would try to get back in, and he would beat on the door to try to get back in.” The teacher’s classroom was near the special education room, which allowed support to come quickly, the teacher stated. “There was always somebody there that would come in to help either help evacuate my class or help try to bring that student down to the point where they could leave.” The teacher also shared, “I’ve never had a student actually hit me. I’ve had students kick at me, but never actually hit me.”

In discussing how long students may be out of the general education classroom when they are being aggressive, the teacher explained, “Sometimes they would come back before the end of the day. We would try to, you know, go on from that point and try to just-” The teacher explained that someone else would process the situation with the student while the general education teacher remained with the rest of the students. The aggressive student would return to class after the situation had been dealt with, and the student would apologize for what had happened. The teacher shared, “They would come

back in, and, you know, often times they would give the apology. And you accept that apology and welcome them back into your classroom, and you hope that you can continue from that point.”

*Participant 6.* The teacher shared an experience that happened in the general education classroom. The student was described as “much more aggressive than students I’ve had in the past.” The student was also very disruptive to the other children, and the student had to be removed from the classroom. The teacher explained, “At the beginning of the year he was in there more. We found that it kind of escalates his behavior the more he’s in there, because he’s so distracted by the other kids. His mom actually prefers him not to be in the classroom.” The teacher went on to detail the student’s behavior, “His behavior would escalate and you know he would go from doing his work to all of a sudden angry, kicking, screaming, running around the room.” This student destroyed things in the classroom and had incidences of hitting and kicking adults. The teacher described calling the special education teacher for support. The student was typically in the classroom for about five to ten minutes each morning before a transition would take place. The teacher stated that the student, at times, would appear to be fine with the initial task demand in the classroom, but as soon as a transition to another task would take place, then the student’s behavior “would escalate into something.”

The teacher stated that the student would go over to other students and try to take their things. When he was reminded that it wasn’t his property, he would escalate. The teacher continued, “But we tried really hard and usually it was, you know, he had to be removed from the classroom because at that point he was escalated and did not want to comply at all.” The special education teacher would work to have the student de-escalate



outside of the general education classroom, but the teacher reported, “So he was typically in the classroom for five to ten minutes in the morning, and then he would go have a break, come back, and that cycle would continue kind of throughout the morning. In the afternoons, he wasn’t there a lot, because he couldn’t. He wasn’t getting calm enough to even come in the classroom after like lunch.” The teacher shared experiencing concerns with such aggressive behavior in the classroom and stated, “I have to be an advocate for all of them. Not just the one...there would be times that he was hitting, kicking adults, and I didn’t think it was appropriate for my other students to be witnessing that.” The teacher described the challenge of being supportive and doing what’s right for the one child and also making sure the other kids were allowed to continue to learn and grow. Finally, about this specific student, the teacher explained, “I’ve seen research about the benefits and stuff, but then I can also see the fear in my students’ faces when you know this child’s screaming or kicking or hitting an adult.”

This teacher shared additional experiences with behavioral support needed throughout the school building. The special education teacher had often been pulled from working with individual students and small groups to support other behavioral needs. The teacher detailed, “Like lots of times the [special education] teacher will be called away, so that just makes it really hard for us to meet his goals.” The teacher stated, “It seems like we have a lot of...a handful of students that are pretty aggressive to the point that at times they need to be restrained.” The difficult nature of the students’ needs required that the special education teachers who knew them best had been required to provide behavioral support. The teacher described, “So in the middle of [instruction] like after five minutes, she was pulled out by the other [special education] teacher.”

Ultimately with the issue of having special education teachers pulled away to support significant behaviors in the school, the teacher described, “The kids that I feel that it’s just really challenging for is your kids that are like your LD kids. That just need that resource extra support, but they function fine in their classroom. They’re not a one-on-one kid. They don’t need an educational assistant with them, but those kids are sometimes skipped.” The teacher explained that the behavioral needs impacted the services received by special education students who had academic support needs without behavioral support needs.

*Participant 7.* The teacher shared experiences with the special education teacher and stated, “[The special education teacher] has a couple kids on her caseload that take a lot of her time, so with these kids not being as high as a behavioral need, and since they’re in these more direct programs, they’re just kinda given to assistants to follow the program to the best of their ability.” In speaking about the school as a whole, the teacher stated, “We have a handful of kiddos that have a variety of different needs, but because they are either runners, potential physical threats, or just loud, they can cause a whole class disruption. It’s like they put [these students] at a priority than the kiddoes that need services and are not as...that are just quiet and just need that extra support.” The teacher explained experiences that often happened outside the door to the general education classroom. In addition to the special education teachers, the building principal was often involved in supporting two second grade students right outside the classroom door. The teacher stated, “One is very non-verbal...he doesn’t even go in the classroom” because of potentially violent behaviors. The experiences with this student were described, “When he does act up, he pounds the door, and it causes pretty good interruption. I just train my

kids to kind of like...sometimes people have bad days, so we're just gonna kind of keep doing what we do and just ignore that pound." The student received services right outside this teacher's classroom, and he had to have two staff members with him at all times. The teacher shared experiences with another student who had been known to "kind of be a runner" just "running around the building."

Additionally, the teacher described an experience within the teacher's own classroom with two special education students who were often very disrespectful, would blow up, and were violent. The class had to be evacuated a few times because of behaviors by one of the students. The teacher described the experience, "Depending on mood, I called them the blizzards, but he would start ripping up paper and throwing it everywhere. The kids got really good at ignoring some of these behaviors [of] crawling around in between desks, crawling under kids' feet, under chairs, throwing pencils, erasers, little things, but throwing them, ripping every like books and journals things like that. He had oral fixation, too. A lot of things went into his mouth. He was eating pencils like not just chewing on them but eating pencils. Always covered in scabs, because he would just pick at his skin."

The teacher explained an experience with a student, "It's just the trickiest thing we can't figure out triggers or anything. It's just like light switch. I'm going to do this and he would...it was a daily occurrence. It was super tricky and frustrating to be honest. That every day I was calling for extra support, because I can't have this one student stop me from teaching twenty other kids." The principal would often come to the classroom to support. Many times, the principal would support the student in leaving the classroom. The teacher detailed an experience when the principal tried to deal with the behavior

within the classroom in front of the teacher and the other students. The teacher described the experience as “not a happy experience” with the occurrence being unpleasant and scary for the teacher and students.

*Participant 8.* The teacher detailed an experience with a difficult student, “My little friend that was in my classroom, and he did nothing all year long. He would walk around constantly. He would climb the walls. He would bang on things. He would call people names. He would just do anything to avoid the task. He would just leave the room. Wander the school. That was the hardest, because I felt like I failed. Even though I know that what he has mentally going on is not something that I can fix in a way. I felt like it was out of my control, but I wanted to try to be, you know, the best teacher that I could, but yet I felt like that was the most challenging because I felt no progress at all with that child. And I felt even for the resource teachers I feel like they feel defeated and feel like they’re not helping.” The teacher described school personnel collaborating with the parents to best support the child. The teacher described, “We were trying for this child, but I just don’t feel what we have at our school is what will help that child and that’s hard and that to me that’s the most difficult thing to deal with.”

The teacher went on to describe other experiences in the general education classroom, “Last year more often than this year that I’ve had to remove my kids. It’s evacuation of the room, so that way when a kid is kicking things and being dangerous to another, you know, the environment, so we don’t want any kids to be hurt or be in their path or be an audience.” The special education teacher and the building administration supported the student during times of escalated behavior. The teacher explained about the special education teacher, “The resource teachers can pull them away and talk to them

more privately without the rest of the class, or I can take away my kids while she can calm a kid down.”

***Other barriers.***

*Participant 1.* This participant explained experiences with the special education teacher who worked to support the special education students in the general education classroom. The teacher explained, “I just have the [special education] teacher. Once in awhile an assistant, but usually it’s just the [special education] teacher coming and going.” The teacher went on to state, “I haven’t had a lot of people in the classroom lately just because we don’t have as many assistants...don’t have as many [special education] teachers.” The participant expressed a feeling that connections were not being made between the teacher and all students. The participant stated, “I feel like there’s so much going on that I can’t just chill and talk to them. And I just feel like, man, I’m not making those connections like I usually do.”

*Participant 2.* This participant experienced difficulty knowing what things were the responsibilities of the general education teacher and what things the special education was responsible for. “It can be frustrating sometimes, because I think it comes down to like who’s responsible for that.” The general education teacher discussed an experience with a special education student who hadn’t been in the classroom for over a month and added, “That [special education] teacher now is more preoccupied, because of like that one student, so then my other students I’m having to - I feel like I have to support more.” The participant added that the educational assistants who provided support in the classroom were at times distracted because of student behavior. The general education teacher experienced times of distraction because of behavior and said, “So sometimes I

can't always guarantee that during independent time that [the students] are being productive and successful and are doing it correctly." The participant shared experiences of having felt overloaded and said, "I think my biggest concern is the overload. Like if I have so many in the special, you know, with the resource, and if many of those have behavior it's really hard to manage that caseload. And then when I have students in the general ed who have behavioral issues, too. That's like the biggest concern where I feel like I get stretched too thin. That balance. Becoming unbalanced."

*Participant 3.* "Not enough time. There's not enough time to slow down for [special education students], because they need extra practice. There's not enough, in my opinion, qualified people working with them. The aids are great, but they don't have that background to work with them." In speaking about a specific special education student who had been pulled out of the general education classroom and who worked with an educational assistant, the teacher stated, "So [the educational assistant would] come get my student for ten minutes every day to work on math, but unfortunately, the aid that had been working with him was teaching him incorrectly." The participant shared additional experiences with special education students being pulled from the general education setting. "Students getting pulled out of my room when I feel like they would benefit more in the classroom, because of them being with someone who's not necessarily doing what they should be doing. So last year, I had kids being pulled. So they were supposed to be pulled for writing, and I sent them down [to the special education room] once. And they were there for half an hour, and they got two sentences written. When they stayed with me, they got a whole lot more done. So I just stopped sending them."

The teacher had experiences with a special education student who was confined to a wheelchair and lived at an extended care facility. The student had a nurse with him at all times at school. The teacher described, “They have no nurses, so they send either an agency nurse that has no idea what’s going on, or they don’t send him at all, because there’s no nurse.” The participant reported not having participated in professional development that focused on working with special education students. The participant also stated that there had been some training on the Multi-Tier System of Supports and behaviors. In regards to supports in the general education classroom, the teacher reported, “We have a lot of paras that call in sick, and so, coverage is not always happening.”

Additionally, the teacher stated, “I think the lack of consistency makes me nervous. Especially for those kids...consistency from year to year or consistency from day to day. Special education teachers are pulled out for meetings all the time.” The teacher also shared about experiences with special education students who received interventions during a designated “intervention/enrichment” time. Students had been unable to participate in the enrichment piece, because their time was always filled with the scheduled interventions. The teacher explained, “Third through sixth [grade] has an enrichment time where it’s actually enrichment or intervention time. And I have a problem with this, because those students that need the intervention are almost the students who most likely need the enrichment time also.” The teacher continued the explanation, “And I think that it’s important that, yes, that they get that extra intervention, but also that they get to do other things that make them feel successful. And I think there’s a hard balance there, because I’m not sure everyone sees that.”

*Participant 4.* “It’s very frustrating, because I have students that are supposed to meet grade level indicators, and they cannot. Even with all the supports in place or the time in place.” All of the different students’ needs can be a lot for one classroom, and the teacher explained, “It adds a lot to the classroom, and I like to do different modes of learning. And it just makes me think that when I’m doing just one of those, I’m not meeting [all student needs].” The teacher shared about an experience with a special education student who received lots of supports by stating, “I’d also say my concern is sometimes it just feels like we’re devoting a lot of energy, and there’s no growth.” Additionally, the teacher stated that it had been difficult for the teacher to obtain evidence that the special education student understood the learning objectives and teaching. The teacher stated, “So it’s really hard to know if she gets anything. And she can’t write it. Even her drawings don’t always depict, so that’s very frustrating, I would say.”

The teacher stated that while the special education teacher provided support for special education students in the general education classroom, absences had impacted the support. The teacher explained, “But I think the hard part is when [the special education teacher] is missing because an aid is gone or because she has a behavior in another classroom.” In regards to parent-teacher communication, the teacher talked about an experience with the parents of a special education student. The parents spoke negatively about the student’s abilities. The teacher said, “They don’t think the student can grow or isn’t able to learn.” At parent-teacher conferences, the teacher showed the student’s work to the parents to illustrate growth. The teacher experienced a language barrier with a different special education student’s parents, which had resulted in no communication between the school and the parents. The teacher detailed feelings of struggle to meet all



the academic levels that are in the general education classroom. “I would say that I don’t think there’s anything that can really prepare you for all of this unless you encounter the situation, and each child is 100% different. I would just say nothing prepares you, and sometimes you feel really crappy when you aren’t meeting their needs. And that’s pretty hard. Where’s the time and where’s the energy. And are you meeting the other students’ needs.”

*Participant 5.* The participant explained, “Sometimes the biggest thing is that there’s such a variety, and it’s sometimes hard to feel that you’re meeting all their needs along with the other students in your classroom who obviously have their own particular needs whether they’re identified or not...it’s just that that wide range of needs, of accommodations, of differentiation of all of that. And it’s just sometimes you just feel like you do a lot, but you can’t do it all.” In regards to special education students participating in grade level curriculum, the teacher shared thinking, “Where’s the line between keeping it consistent with what other kids [are doing] and then being able to report accurately as to where [they are and] what level they’re working at so the parents understand that. So those teachers further down the road can understand where they’re coming from and what they’ve been doing.”

The teacher discussed supporting the various needs of all students, “I think that, you know, certainly [special education students] provide a lot of challenges. And sometimes, you know, working with other teachers to deal with a student can be difficult just for time and meeting and talking and preparing and planning and all that can be taxing particularly if you have, obviously, multiple different students with multiple different needs.” Additionally, the teacher talked about experiencing worries related to

students finding value in their learning and overcoming negative outside influences on the student. The teacher also stated that time is also an issue and said, “It worries me sometimes that we have so much to teach. That sometimes we don’t have the time to really get in depth and really help them to really get good at something before we have to move onto something else.”

*Participant 6.* The teacher stated, “I think my greatest concern is the amount of training people have. Whether it’s myself or the educational assistants that spend a lot of time with these students. I don’t feel like anyone’s fully trained. There’s not time in a day for that.” In regards the staff working with special education students, the teacher explained, “All of us agree inclusion is a great thing, but we are not staffed to do it appropriately in our opinions. We in our special ed room. We are short, so we’re short-staffed in that sense.” The teacher had experienced an issue with inconsistencies for students that the issues with staffing had caused. The teacher said, “I just wish the staffing was different and the resources.”

*Participant 7.* The participant shared an experience with a student intervention. The student has passed a certain level within the intervention provided by the paraprofessional. The paraprofessional was unable to move on to the next level with the student, because the special education teacher hadn’t prepared the materials. The teacher explained, “The assistant comes in ready to pull her, but he always has to come to me now and say, ‘Uh, so what do you want me to do with her.’” The teacher described inconsistencies with paraprofessional supports and explained, “Right now we’re having a lot of subs for assistants. And I feel sometimes these [interventions] are not being done to the authenticity that they need to be done to.” The teacher detailed experiences with

inconsistent supports and said, “Oh that’s almost weekly when we get emails that state due to the lack of support staff, we will not be pulling your kids today.”

In addition to the lack of paraprofessional support, the teacher detailed a lack of special education teacher support and stated that the special education teacher did not appear to know about the individual special education students. The teacher described working with the special education teacher, “She’s not super easy to deal with.” The difficult experience had working with the special education teacher included minimal communication between the two teachers. The set interventions that the special education students received were not necessarily connected to the general education content. The teacher stated, “I’ve mentioned, hey we’re here doing this this and this. There just hasn’t been a conversation how to integrate outside and inside of the classroom, because it’s like nope, they’re in this program doing this page, doing this activity.”

The teacher described an issue with time, “I never have enough time with them either to feel that they’re really grasping what I need them to grasp, because there’s always like we need to move on. We need to move on with you know time sequencing and the curriculum maps and things like that.” The teacher described experiences of not knowing about the programs and skills that the special education students were working on during the interventions provided by paraprofessionals. Additionally, the teacher detailed an experience with the building principal providing inconsistent behavioral support to a special education student within the classroom, which was troublesome for the teacher and other students. The teacher said in response to an unhelpful experience

with administrative support, “Yes, I asked for support but the support I got wasn’t helpful. It was kind of scary for the other kids.”

*Participant 8.* This teacher detailed the supports needed for special education students who received modified curriculum. The teacher experienced challenges when support staff was absent. The teacher stated, “When there’s kids with modified [curriculum] it does add a level of difficulty, especially when we have a lot of absentees of the resource teachers or the [paraprofessionals]. Because there are times when nobody shows up, and then all of a sudden I have them the entire time. And they are not independent on skills that they can do very well in the classroom. It becomes almost a behavior problem, which just takes my attention off of, you know, instruction. And I’m having to do Plan B.” The staffing shortage the teacher had experienced had improved as the year had progressed. The teacher explained, “It’s gotten a little bit better, because we’ve hired a couple extra [paraprofessionals].” Additionally, the teacher stated, “The lack of support. Just the absentee - that has been really hard, because I have to just - I have to be prepared all the time instead of just during the time I’m supposed to be covering them. I have to be prepared all the time in case somebody doesn’t show up.”

The teacher described experiences with student teachers and described the need for teacher preparation programs to have additional preparation. The teacher stated, “So I feel that when we’re coming into a classroom, especially being a new teacher and even an experienced teacher. It is a different type of teaching, and you have to be prepared for all the way from a hearing-impaired kid to a modified curriculum. I mean, I just feel like there needs to be a lot of training, so that way teachers are successful or maybe just having access to resources.”

**Summary**

In this chapter, an introduction was given regarding the analysis and process taken of identifying themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews of eight general education teachers. Research participant experiences and stories helped give life to inclusion in the general education classroom. This chapter presented the experiences, and the findings were organized by theme. The next chapter will present a summary of the study, discussion of findings as they relate to the research questions and the three-part conceptual framework. Additionally, the next chapter discusses implications of findings, presents considerations for the Inclusion Implementation Model, details suggestions for further research, and provides concluding thoughts.

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusions and Discussions**

#### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the presentation and analysis of qualitative data has been detailed. Findings can be found in the previous chapter and are organized seven key themes emerged from the interviews: Acceptance, Time in General Education Classroom, Supports and Strategies, Special Education Teacher Role, Collaboration and Communication, Dangerous, Destructive, Disruptive Behaviors, and Other Barriers. This chapter includes a summary of the study, discussion of the findings as related to research questions and the conceptual framework, and implications for practice. The chapter concludes with considerations for the Inclusion Implementation Model, gives recommendations for further research, and provides conclusions.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to better understand teachers' experiences with the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. While federal regulations as well as building and district communications and policies work to direct what inclusion looks like in classrooms, teachers are the key to more inclusive education and have the greatest impact on access and student learning. Findings and themes collected from this research are intended to fill a deficiency in current literature by capturing teachers' real life experiences as opposed to assumptions about what is and perceptions about what might be happening in classrooms.

#### **Summary of the Research**

This study sought to understand the experiences general education teachers have with special education students in the general education classroom. Each research participant was employed as a full-time general education teacher in an elementary school during the 2016-2017 school year. At the time of the interviews, participants had at least one special education student on his/her class roster. Participants had various years of experience and all but one had obtained a Masters level college degree. The researcher used a semi-structured interview format and utilized the Teacher Experiences of Inclusion Interview Guide (Appendix E) to obtain information focused on three key areas of experiences: Classroom Experiences, Building and Collaboration Experiences, and Family and Communication Experiences. The researcher asked the questions from the Interview Guide with added questions and prompts for further information and clarification of responses. Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher typed up summaries of the interview and emailed them to each research participant. Research participants read through the contents of their responses and emailed a confirmation to the researcher that the essence of their experiences was accurately captured. Each interview was fully transcribed and coded to determine themes. Seven key themes emerged and were evident throughout the interviews.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The following themes were present in the research findings: Acceptance, Time in General Education Classroom, Supports and Strategies, Special Education Teacher Role, Collaboration and Communication, Dangerous, Destructive, Disruptive Behaviors, and Other Barriers. Literature emphasizes the importance of positive attitudes by teachers about inclusion (Burke & Sutherland, 2004; de Boer, et al., 2011). All research

participants shared positive, accepting comments about the inclusion of special education students in their general education classrooms. While literature names the frequent barrier to inclusion being the negative attitudes of general education teachers, special education teachers, and parents (Downing, et al., 1997), that was not the case in the findings of this research. Each research participant named individual experiences with differing barriers. All participants shared experiences that detailed the large barrier they have had with dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior. Correlated with the barrier that behavior creates were teacher experiences with a lack of human supports.

Teachers reported experiences with not sufficient staffing, both special education teachers and paraprofessionals, which occurred when adults were called to respond to and support significant student behaviors. Teachers shared experiences with the high level of behavior support needs of some special education students, which lead to consistent lack of human supports necessary to meet the academic needs of special education students. The experiences general education teachers shared in this research about dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors in the general education classroom resulted in the strongest theme that surfaced from the semi-structured interviews. Themes are detailed in Chapter four where participant responses are organized by theme. Information from themes and findings are interwoven in response to the research questions and the three-part conceptual framework of this study.

**Response to research questions.** The researcher shaped three research questions and the subsequent interview guide questions around literature-named supports and services necessary for the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. The researcher set out to examine the experiences of general education



teachers with supports and services as well as messages about inclusion communicated from the building and district level. The research questions attempted to gain a better understanding of general education teacher experiences with the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. The research uncovered an inconsistency between the themes found in the literature review and themes that persisted in the findings of the qualitative research.

Ainscow & Miles (2008) did not conclude behavior as a barrier that can limit presence, participation, and achievement of students with disabilities, but rather, the literature named a lack of resources and expertise, inappropriate curricula and teaching methods, and educator attitudes as barriers. A few participants shared experiences with negative attitudes about inclusion from other school employees. A review of the literature didn't find a persistent theme of dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors limiting presence, participation, and achievement of students with disabilities; however, the findings of this qualitative research study did show dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior as a barrier that did indeed limit presence, participation, and achievement. Dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior was a persistent and strong barrier to inclusion throughout the interviews.

Sadly, even with other supports and services in place to support inclusion, it appeared to not be enough to combat the significant barrier that arose from dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior. Lack of resources, named in literature as a barrier, aligns with the findings of this study. Seven of the eight participants described the barrier that the lack of human support created. While the remaining participant did not specifically name lack of staff or human support, the participant did describe a barrier of

the one teacher having so many different needs within the classroom. Additionally, experiences were shared in this research of special education teachers being pulled away from the supports and services they were providing for special education students when they were needed to support the behavior of a single special education student. The only other mentions of behavior support needs and addressing behavior as a barrier were found in the following pieces of literature and included in the literature review: proactive behavior management as a support (King-Sears, 1997); a focus on positive student behavior, recognition and incentives as a support (Rouse & Florian, 1996); and supporting students with challenging behaviors (Jackson, et al., 2000). Importantly, behavior as a barrier to the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting was not a theme or significant thread throughout the literature examined for the literature review on supporting inclusion and inclusive education; behavior as a barrier was a theme and significant thread in the findings of this research.

Experiences shared during the semi-structured interviews included dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior by a special education student; behavior which limited presence, participation, and achievement of students with disabilities. Participants detailed rippling effects that special education students' dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior had on the inclusion process. The strength of this theme, as well as the significant nature of this barrier, was an unexpected oversight on the part of the researcher. The significant barrier created by special education students' behavior was not accounted for when the researcher developed the research questions.

Findings of this research support the strong barrier to inclusion created by dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior. Research participants' answers, while

meaningful in the themes that came out of the interviews, were not supportive in clearly answering the three research questions; this was an oversight of the researcher. While a review of literature and information gleaned from the focus group provided strong support for the research questions and the questions on the interview guide, the actual experiences shared by the research participants didn't provide appropriate information to sufficiently answer the questions the researcher set out to answer. Interestingly enough, such an outcome adds significance to the themes that emerged from the data collected. A strong theme emerged of the ripple impact that dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior has on the inclusive efforts of a classroom and school, as well as the academic learning of other students in the classrooms and often across the school.

Each research question is addressed below. The researcher provides a best-fit response to the three research questions of this research study. While the responses do not fully address and answer the research questions, it is important to note that the findings from this qualitative research study, as well as the themes that emerged, do provide additional information related to each of the research questions.

***Research question 1.*** What are the teacher experiences of supports and services provided within the general education classroom? A multitude of supports and services (i.e. social supports, interventions, placement, quality instruction, differentiated instruction, explicit instruction, parent communication, collaboration, co-teaching, professional development, curriculum-based assessments, etc.) are named in literature as necessary to the success of the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting. The research participants gave examples, experiences, and named supports and services (i.e. social supports, interventions, placement, quality instruction,

differentiated instruction, explicit instruction, parent communication, collaboration, co-teaching, professional development, curriculum-based assessments, etc.) that are in place both in the classroom and at the school level to support the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. The research participants shared positive attitudes about the inclusion of special education students, and they all are teachers within a school district that has received national recognition for being a full-inclusion school district. Ultimately, all research participants described a level of negative impact and barrier to the learning process that is caused by an individual student's dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior.

The persistent message throughout the research findings was that despite the supports and services in place, the behavior of even one student caused a ripple effect to said supports and services. The stories shared about the negative impact of behavior were persistent across each research participant. Each participant detailed experiences of teaching and learning being impacted. The behavior of one special education student prevented the learning of the group as well as services and supports for the other students. Behavior was found to limit presence, participation, and achievement of special education students.

Significantly, the research participants shared experiences of special education teachers who were to provide supports and services within the general education classroom, which is a literature-supported inclusive practice: collaboration and co-teaching, only to have the special education teacher pulled away from the other students and the general education teacher in order to provide support for the behavioral needs of a single special education student. Collaboration and co-teaching are strategies for ensuring that

students with special education needs have access to the same curriculum while still receiving the specialized instruction they are entitled to (Friend, et al., 2010).

Furthermore, co-teaching is said to be beneficial because having two teachers in the classroom increases opportunities for individualized and small group instruction, which can equate to more time for students and increased opportunities for response and engagement (Saloviita & Takala, 2010). Sadly, research participants shared experiences of a special education student's behavior being so dangerous, destructive, and disruptive that it required the special education teacher to support the individual's behavior in the classroom, on the playground or somewhere else in the school building. The behavior support provided by the special education teacher impeded them from collaborating and co-teaching.

The research participants detailed experiences of special education teachers being pulled from providing supports and services in the general education setting in order to support a special education student's behavior in a different grade level. There were experiences shared of special education students who were on the special education teacher's caseload but in another grade needing behavioral support, and there were experiences shared of students on another special education teacher's caseload needing behavioral support. Participants described experiences of special education teachers being pulled from supports and services for half days and whole days thus removing all possibility for collaboration and co-teaching.

**Research question 2.** What do teachers report as their role in providing, advocating for and seeking out supports and services for special education students to gain access to learning in the general education classroom? Research participants shared

positive attitudes about the inclusion of special education students, and they took ownership over teaching and educational opportunities for all students, both special education and general education. While the research participants described positive attitudes towards inclusion, the fact remained that they were responsible for the learning, progress, and achievement of the other students in their classroom. Experiences shared included times when the special education students had behavior that was so dangerous, destructive, and disruptive that the teacher was unable to keep teaching and the students were unable to continue learning. Unfortunately, teachers described situations when they had to focus instead on protecting themselves and other students from physical harm. There were some experiences that included the teacher, rather than teaching and the students learning, having to guide the class out of the learning environment when one special education student's behavior was so dangerous, destructive, and disruptive.

The experiences described by all of the research participants included moments when the individual student's behavior grossly impeded the learning of the others. Sadly still, the participants didn't report that the behavior and impeded learning impact was an isolated, one time event, but rather described the behavior as ongoing across the days, weeks, and months of school. Only one of the eight research participants, a sixth grade teacher, stated that the student who had dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior was placed in a more restrictive setting outside the school. The participant detailed that the student eventually had a placement change after multiple occurrences of dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior over a period of months. It was clear from the participants' interview responses, that they wanted all students to learn and be a part of the general education setting. They all viewed it as their job to ensure high levels of

learning for all students; however, when a student exhibits dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior, the student's presence, participation, and achievement is impacted.

Snell (2009) states, "Simply being in general education classrooms is not enough; students with severe disabilities also must learn needed academic and social skills while they are there" (p. 230). Research participants shared experiences when participation in instruction and learning tasks was not possible due to the immediate and dangerous, destructive, and disruptive nature of a special education student's behavior. Not only is the one student unavailable for learning in these instances, but also the student's behavior impedes the focus on learning of all others in the classroom. The research participants expressed concerns about the learning of the other students. They talked about how the behavior of a special education student impacted the ability of the other students to focus on learning, to do learning tasks, and at times to feel safe in the learning environment. The participants detailed times when the class was removed from the learning environment. The experiences shared took the teacher's attention away from teaching and learning. Interestingly enough, the research participants did not once share an experience, story or comment about what they did about advocating for a more restrictive environment for the student.

The Federal Government has made it clear in regulations that the general education setting is the preferred placement for students with disabilities, and federal regulations mandate placement of students with disabilities in the student's least restrictive environment. It is also required that the student's IEP team come together to determine the best placement for the student. There was not one single mention in any of the eight interviews about requesting an IEP team meeting to discuss the student's

placement. There wasn't a mention about going to the building principal, the special education teacher, or some other professional to discuss if the placement was appropriate for the special education student; despite the fact that the teachers shared experiences happening on a regular basis with students' dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior that severely impacted the learning environment for the other students as well as the presence, participation, and achievement of the special education student.

*Research question 3.* What are teacher experiences of school district and building communications about the inclusion of special education students? Importantly, as the research participants described their experiences, they spoke from a classroom level. While there were comments and experiences with support from building principals for individual student's behavior, there was not a mention of the communication received from a district level. Of note is the fact that four of the eight research participants gave an example or shared an experience when collaboration occurred with the building principal. Additionally, there was not enough information obtained through the semi-structured interviews to create a theme or gain a better understanding about building and district communication about the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting. While there was a section in the interview guide, Building and Collaboration Experiences, written in an attempt to gain findings to answer this question, it was not in fact realized.

The lack of findings to answer this research question has led the researcher to conclude two things without information to know which of the two, if either, may be accurate. Perhaps the interview guide questions were ill prepared to gather the necessary information to support a finding to answer this research question, which would be a



significant oversight on the part of the researcher. Perhaps the research participants simply did not have much to share due to the limited nature of the communications about the inclusion from the building or district level.

**Connection to conceptual framework.** This dissertation is based on a three-part conceptual framework that includes the importance of teachers providing access to special education students, United States federal law, and providing access to general education curriculum. It is necessary to have alignment between the actions a teacher takes in the classroom, what federal special education law mandates, and what the building and district communicates and supports. The actions of the general education teacher are critical to the success of access and learning for all students; however, teachers may be doing all that is necessary to be inclusive and provide access, and yet their efforts may be derailed by the often unpredictable and concerning behavior of a special education student.

*Conceptual Framework, part 1.* Teachers are the key to more inclusive education (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). It is what teachers think, believe and do at the classroom level that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that students with and without disabilities experience (Hargreaves, 1994). The theme found through the semi-structured interviews was that teachers are supportive of inclusion of special education students. In general, the research participants described supportive schools and building leaders who believe in including all students in the general education classroom. The research participants shared experiences of collaborating with others within the building, as well as parents, to devise and adjust supports and services for students as well as to problem solve issues. Participants described teaching practices they utilize to meet the needs of

all learners, and they described avenues they take when a student is not learning or is not progressing.

Research participants discussed various effective teaching strategies and methods for differentiating for the needs of all students. Teachers can think that inclusion is great, worthwhile, and necessary; however, when a student's behavior impedes and distracts away from the learning process, the teacher's attitude towards inclusion is no longer a moot point. Teachers can be supportive of inclusion, yet if the barrier presented by dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior is so great to the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom, then a teacher's feelings and attitude about inclusion simply ceases to be of consideration.

*Conceptual Framework, part 2.* Federal law: Federal regulations state that all special education students are to be placed in the least restrictive environment possible, and the preferred placement is in the general education classroom. Placement in the general education classroom provides the students with exposure to and adequate progress with the general education curriculum. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act 1975 was passed to ensure that children with disabilities were given the opportunity to receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. In 1990, 1997, and 2004, reauthorizations of this Act took place, and the law has come to be known Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA mandates that individuals with disabilities must be provided a public education, and they also should have the right to learn in the least restrictive environment. This means that students with disabilities, both in public and in private schools, are, to the maximum extent possible, to be educated in classrooms alongside students without disabilities

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 1975, 1990, 1997, 2004, 2009). Federal law does not explicitly use the term “inclusion” anywhere in regulations, yet it is implied through wording and least restrictive environment.

The theme of dangerous, destructive, and disruptive behaviors was evident throughout the teachers’ interviews. It is clear that teachers work to include special education students with significant behavioral support needs in the general education setting as much as they can. There were examples given of special education students with extreme behavioral support needs and highly disruptive behaviors, and yet the participants shared experiences of working to include the student in the general education setting. There were a few examples of students whose behaviors were so dangerous and disruptive to the learning of themselves and others that they spent little or no time in the general education classroom. Even when such examples were given, often the teacher included examples throughout the school day that the special education student spent time with general education students (i.e. lunch, specials, and recess). There was one example given of student’s behaviors being so significant that he was out of the classroom and with two adults at all times. Only one teacher, a sixth-grade teacher, talked about a student leaving the school for a more restrictive setting because of the magnitude of the behaviors. In determining the least restrictive environment for special education students, the theme in this research included experiences of practices that err on the side of being in the general education classroom at the expense of the learning of all individuals involved. In these experiences, not only is learning not happening, but exposure to the general education content was halted.

*Conceptual framework, part 3. Access to General Education Curriculum:* The context in which students are educated is predictive of relative access to the general education content standards. Students receiving instruction in general education contexts are significantly more likely to be working on activities linked to general education content standards than students receiving instruction in self-contained contexts. Being in the general education environment allows students with disabilities to gain access to the general education curriculum to a level that is not existent in a self-contained or resource room (Soukup, et al., 2007; Wehmeyer, et al., 2003). Students with disabilities within the general education setting are more likely to progress in general curriculum than similar students in segregated settings and are more academically engaged (Soukup, et al., 2007).

The research participants gave examples and made statements about including all special education students, both with academic and behavioral needs, in the general education setting. There were comments made by the different research participants about special education students with academic needs being included in the general education setting. There were examples of students leaving the general education setting to receive interventions one-on-one, with a small group of other special education students, and in a small group with special education and general education students. There were a few examples of special education students who participated in modified curriculum due to the significance of their learning disability, and a few research participants made comments about the grade level content not being “appropriate” for a few students with significant learning disabilities. Some general education teachers shared experiences of students not participating in grade level content because of the significant difference in their academic needs.

In general, all of the participants described different strategies they used to differentiate content for special education students to allow the students to gain access to the content, learn, and progress. The participants detailed many different practices they utilize in the classroom when students, both special education and general education, aren't making progress. All students, general education and special education, were described as having access to interventions and small group instruction. A few teachers made comments about the negative impact of having a special education student receiving instruction and supports *outside* of the classroom, because then the general education teacher wasn't aware of the content, the language may be different, and the content may not be delivered to the level of expertise that the teacher would like. The findings include behavior being a barrier to the inclusion of special education students who display dangerous, destructive, and disruptive behavior to the point that not only is learning not happening, but even exposing the special education student with the behaviors to the general education content ceased to be a possibility.

### **Implications for Practice**

Teachers and schools have many different supports and services in place to address the multitude of needs of both special education and general education students. Inclusion involves including special education students in the general education setting as much as possible to allow access to the general education content and to learn alongside same-age, non-disabled peers. Research-supported practices may be in place, such as: positive teacher and leadership attitudes towards the inclusion of special education students, time spent in the general education setting, collaboration and communication amongst school professionals and families, supports and strategies such as differentiation and effective

teaching practices being utilized, and professional development consistently given to support. Yet, despite all the previously named literature-supported practices in place, there still exists a barrier that educators experience when it comes to teaching a special education student with dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors. Behavior affects the presence, participation, and achievement of special education students, and it can impede the learning of others.

It is necessary to be cognizant and focused on providing supports to teachers and staff when programming and providing supports for a student with significant behavioral needs. Adequate staffing in buildings is a must. Candid, supportive IEP conversation around least restrictive environment is critical. A single special education student in a school building with dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors can cause a very impactful ripple throughout the school building that impedes supports and services for all students. Time and attention is needed to provide adequate supports and services to a student with significant behavioral support needs. Such a process of ensuring the least restrictive setting is being utilized and necessary supports are being provided can be time-consuming and require significant attention. The attention to supporting the behavior, which is a necessary first step in education, impacts the academic learning the student is not participating in.

Bearing in mind time considerations and constraints, as well as the level of collaboration and time required, is of great importance when working to provide behavioral support needs for a special education student who exhibits dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors. It is necessary to be aware of and remember that teachers, both general education and special education, are working with many different

learners. All students need time focused on them, as an individual, in order for the teacher to develop a relationship with the student, as well as for the teacher to understand and support academic, behavioral and socio-emotional needs. Additionally, when a student is displaying dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors, the process of participating in academics has ceased. Of importance to consider, is the amount of irrevocable learning time missed by a special education student who displays dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors in school.

The findings from this study have a direct impact on having a clearer understanding of what general education teachers actually experience in the general education setting with special education students. The themes that emerged from this research indicate that the experiences teachers have with students with significant behaviors are not in the minority. Each research participant detailed experiences with students who had significantly dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors. Such extreme behaviors greatly impact the learning process in the classroom as the general education teacher's attention and supports are diverted, the special education teacher's attention and supports are diverted, and the remaining students' attention and learning is diverted. Significant behaviors exhibited by special education students can and do cause a diversion to the educational process in the general education classroom in the elementary school.

### **Considerations for Inclusion Implementation Model**

The Inclusion Implementation Model, A and B, Post Findings (Appendix L and M) includes three key components for the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. The three key components include: that which the federal

special education law mandates, the communication and supports from districts and schools, and the experiences that teachers have at the classroom level. Literature supports that all three must be in place for special education students to be included in the general education setting. Including special education students in the general education setting goes beyond just placement and includes high levels of learning and progress in grade level content. It is when all three components of the model align that successful inclusion is achieved. The researcher inadvertently left out a necessary component of the Inclusion Implementation Model, and it must be considered in order to have successful inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. Careful, timely, and candid conversations must be had by IEP teams, and encouraged and supported by buildings and districts, to address the barrier that dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors cause for the special education student, the other students, and the supports and services the school is attempting to provide to all learners.

In order for inclusion to be successful, districts, buildings, teams, and teachers must confront the uncomfortable reality that there are special education students, albeit few, who may require a more restrictive setting within the school or outside of the school because of dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors. When behaviors detract so greatly away from the learning process of the special education student and the other students, it is necessary for teams to meet without delay and have candid, supportive conversations about the reality of the situation. It is necessary for the school to move beyond feeling as though they must simply manage a student's dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors when said behaviors impede student presence, participation, and achievement. Conversations must be had and decisions must be made when the student



ceases to participate in academic learning and impedes the academic learning of the others. Realistic action is necessary and must be taken without a long, drawn out process.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The goal of this study was to better understand the experiences that general education teachers have with the inclusion of special education students. The findings, although significant, have some limitations. One limitation is that the research did not examine the actual time lost on instruction. Further, the research was unable to delineate the specific number of times students had to evacuate the general education setting or were disrupted from learning because of a dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior. The research instead collected narratives of experiences to better understand what the experiences looked like. Future research into the subject of inclusion of special education students with behavioral support needs may examine the number of times a special education teacher is pulled from providing necessary IEP hours and services to provide behavioral support.

Another avenue of research could be examining the amount of time special education students with specific behavioral verifications and needs are engaged in non-academic tasks due to behavioral support needs during their time at school. An additional limitation of this study was this research included research participants from the same school district. Future studies would be well served to examine general education teachers' experiences across school districts. Furthermore, it would be of interest to examine the processes and procedures that other school buildings and school districts go through to provide adequate behavioral supports and services to special education students with significant dangerous, destructive, and disruptive behavior.

Future studies may benefit from research into the process of determining and providing an appropriate least restrictive environment in school for students with dangerous, destructive, and disruptive behaviors.

### **Conclusions**

Teachers can, and must, make great efforts and utilize supports and strategies to provide inclusive education and be inclusive of all learners. Teachers can, and must, believe in inclusion, and they can, and must, support and advocate for inclusion. The idea and act of including special education students in the least restrictive environment, which is emphasized by federal regulations as being in the general education classroom alongside same-age peers with high levels of learning and progress in the grade level content, was consistently expressed by the research participants. Teachers can, and must, share a positive attitude about including special education students in the general education classroom, which aligns with federal regulations. The teachers talked about the importance of student learning, and being in the general education setting increases learning of general education content. Teachers can, and must, engage many different supports and services to support the successful inclusion of special education students in the general education setting, and they can be successful.

Inclusion can be successful, except when there is a barrier to efforts, supports and services. Inclusion can be successful, except when it isn't. Except when a single student's dangerous, destructive, and disruptive behavior impedes the learning of all. Except when a student has an outburst, which takes away learning from everyone. Except when a student tears around the classroom ripping books and journals, which takes away learning from everyone. Except when the student keeps leaving the

classroom and wandering around the school. Except when the student is hitting and kicking adults. Except when the student is throwing materials, throwing chairs, and knocking down desks. Except when the student is biting her lip so hard it is bleeding, is refusing to stop because she's so upset, and then has blood running down her face. Except when the student is crying and refusing to work. Except when a student kicks a window and it breaks. Except when the student is beating on the classroom door. Except when the student is crawling around the floor under kids' feet, under chairs, and between desks. Except when the student is ripping things off the walls. Except when the student is banging his head against the wall. Except when the student is pushing and yelling at other students. Except when the student runs away from school. Inclusion can be successful except when such a large barrier happens; otherwise, teachers can focus on teaching. Without the barrier of such extreme behaviors, teachers can work to put supports and services in place to enable the presence, participation, and achievement of special education students. Without the barrier of behavior, the other students can focus, learn, collaborate, innovate, set and achieve goals, write, compute, read, participate, and explore. Except when a dangerous, destructive, disruptive behavior occurs, teachers and students are able to feel safe and supported.

The findings of this study expanded the work of previous researchers in the area of the inclusion of special education students in the general education setting. This qualitative investigation revealed that general education teachers are greatly impacted the dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors of a small number of special education students. While teachers and schools work collaboratively and have many supports in place, there is a significant ripple of impact across a school's supports and services

caused by the behavioral support needs of even just one special education student who displays dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors. Just one student with significant behavioral support needs impacts the general education teacher's ability to teach, the special education teacher's ability to provide supports and services, and the time engaged in learning that the remaining students experience.

The literature suggests that teachers are the key to more inclusive education, because it is what teachers think, believe, and do that impacts student learning and inclusion. The research findings of this study indicate that teachers support inclusion through their attitudes and practices. The teachers, however, experience significant negative barriers to teaching and learning when there is a student with significantly dangerous, destructive, and disruptive behaviors who is in their classroom or even in the school.

Federal rules and regulations mandate students be educated in the least restrictive environment alongside peers to the maximum extent possible. What this means, remains unclear to many. Teachers and building teams do not have a clear-cut understanding of how to determine the least restrictive environment. Students with significant behavioral support needs are being placed in general education classrooms and being pulled out off and on over the course of school days and across weeks. Literature suggests that being in the general education classroom provides the greatest amount of access to the general education curriculum and content. Students who have significant behavioral support needs who display dangerous, destructive, disruptive behaviors are not accessing the general education curriculum. The disruptive behaviors described in the research findings detail experiences when other students in the classroom were unable to hear or

focus on the instruction. Teachers are being pulled away from teaching to attend to behavior. Adequate staffing is a must to support the needs of all students. Candid, realistic conversations about least restrictive environment are critical. Teachers need greater support and guidance about what least restrictive environment means. They need greater support and guidance to allow for students to be outside the general education setting when behavior is dangerous, destructive, and disruptive. There needs to be policies and procedures in place, as well as supportive communication, that allows and empowers teachers to teach and advocates for and protects the collective student population to their right to an education.

Teachers have an important job to do. Teachers are in the classroom for the collective learning of all students. General education and special education teachers need to be better supported and guided when an individual student is greatly impacting the learning, and at times the safety, of the group. One student can significantly impact the teaching and learning in a school; all students have the right to learn and to learn at a high level. All must be supported and guided in asking about the point that the needs of the group override the needs of the individual, and what must be done to ensure that happens.

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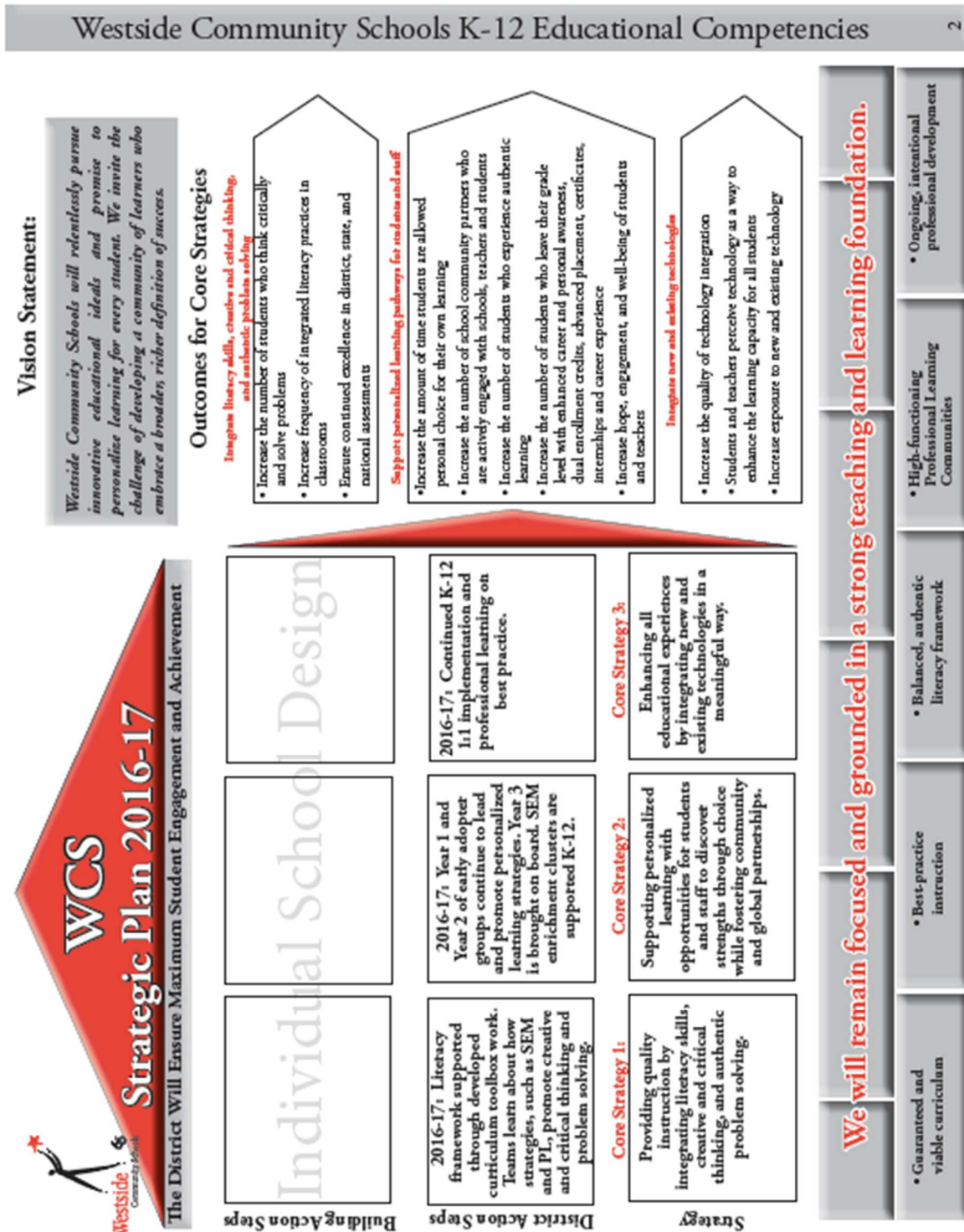
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## Appendix

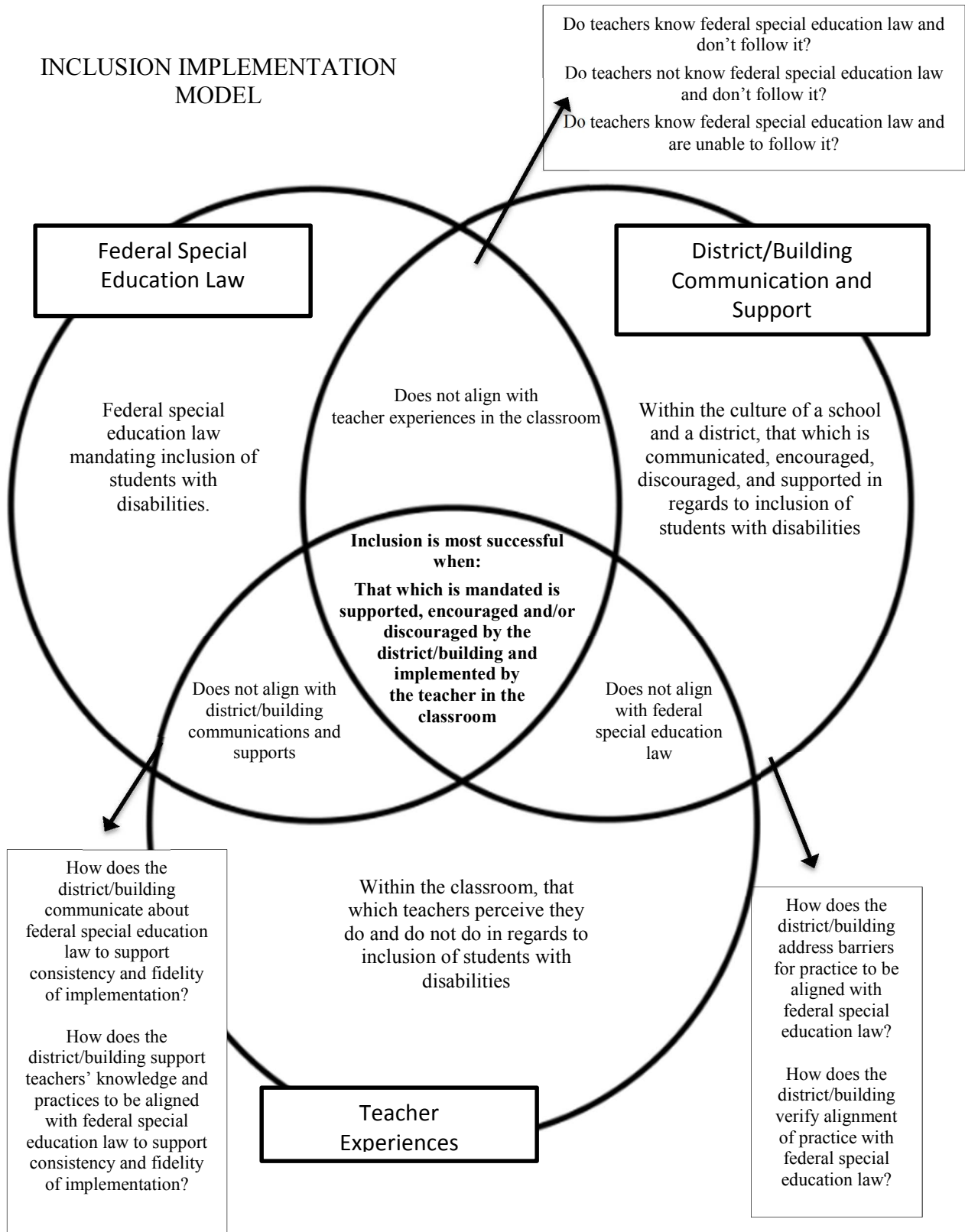


Appendix A: Westside Community Schools Strategic Plan 2016-2017

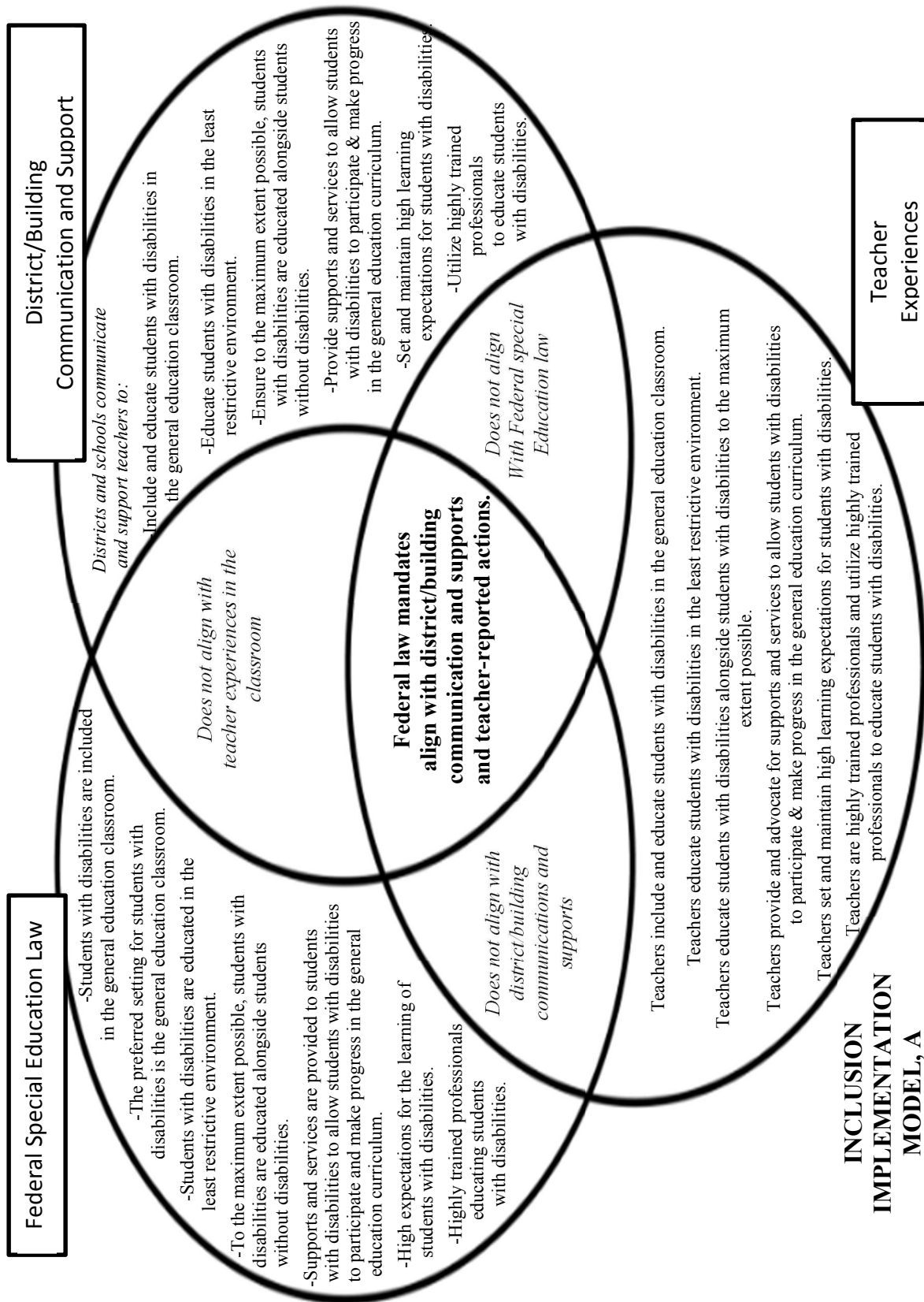
Accessed at: <http://westside66.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Strategic-Plan-house-FINAL-2016.pdf>



Appendix B: Inclusion Implementation Model, A



Appendix C: Inclusion Implementation Model, B



**INCLUSION IMPLEMENTATION MODEL, A**

Jennifer L. Sinclair, 2016

## Appendix D: Focus Group Questions

<b>Difference between specific learning disability versus emotional disturbance versus intellectual disability</b>
What types of needs are students displaying?
What are the educational needs, sensory needs and needed behavioral supports?
How much support is needed of special education staff in providing interventions to the students?
What is the teacher comfort level?
In regards to general education teachers, do the teachers know about the differing disabilities of the students they serve?

<b>Collaborative teaching/co-teaching</b>
Have teachers had the opportunity to co-assess?
Have they had the opportunity to co-plan?
Describe what it looks like to work with the general education (or special education) teacher.
Describe what it looks like when the special education teacher comes into the classroom or when <i>you</i> (special education teacher) walk into the classroom.
Have you ever been exposed to the five co-teaching models?
Have you had training about the five co-teaching models?
Do students see the general education teacher and special education teacher as equals?
What kinds of things have the general education teacher and special education teacher done together?

<b>Appropriate staffing/appropriate support</b>
In regards to the parents' role, if the student is not in special education what are parents' comfort levels?
Describe the support received from the school administrator to co-teach.
Describe the general culture of your school around the inclusion of students with disabilities.
In regards to the special education teacher's experience, describe a struggle experienced in order to provide IEP services.
What is the ratio of general education students to special education students in your classroom?
Do you feel that support staff (i.e. paraprofessionals) is properly trained?
Describe an experience with a paraprofessional in which their level of training, or lack thereof, was evident.
Do you feel like you have enough support?

<b>Leadership support</b>
Is your leader visible in your school?
What type of support does your leader provide you?
Describe a time you felt supported by your building principal to meet the needs of special education students assigned to you.
Are all families welcomed equally in your school?
Is the leader's philosophy clear?
Explain your building principal's philosophy about teaching students with disabilities.
Describe how your building principal models his/her philosophy about working with and teaching students with disabilities.
Are other families supported to welcome all students?

<b>Barriers</b>
What are your barriers?
How are your barriers addressed?
Do you have an understanding of various [special education] verifications?
Do you have an understanding of various characteristics [of disabilities]?
Do you know whom to contact for support?
Who do you contact for support?
Tell me about a time when you sought out support.
What about higher levels of needs [presented by a student]?
What barriers are there to you receiving the supports you need?
What barriers are there to you understanding what you need?
What barriers are there to knowing who to call for support?
What barriers are there in regards to the physical space you use with students?
Do you have access to IEPs? Do you understand IEPs?
Talk about how you use a student's IEP.
Does the special education teacher have access to the lesson plan and time to develop adjustments?
Describe your experience with the general education teacher's lesson plans.
What prior experiences, classes and coursework have you had?
Describe your general experience working with special education students.
Describe classes or coursework you have participated in in regards to special education and working with students with disabilities.
Describe your personal experience with a family member with a disability.
What personal experience have you had with a family member having a disability?

<b>Challenges/appropriate supports</b>
What's your greatest fear in working with students with disabilities?
What are you well prepared for?
What are you not prepared for?

How do you handle unexpected challenges?
Do you have support with the function of the behavior – with physical aggression/reaction?
What do you do when a student does _____ (physical aggression)?
What do you do when a student is physically aggressive in class?
What do you do when a student is below grade level in math or reading?
How have you reacted differently?
How do you go about individualizing for students – behavior plans?
Describe your experience with utilizing behavior plans.
In regards to the Office of Civil Rights, what accommodations are in place?
Are doors and necessary supports available for the school to be handicapped accessible?
How do you communicate with parents?
Have you had any conversations with parents that have influenced your beliefs?
Have you had to support students with a restroom schedule?
Would you help a student who has a restroom schedule?
How would you feel about helping a student who has a restroom schedule?
How do you communicate?
How do you ensure that you support all students in your classroom?
What makes you feel prepared to receive a student with an IEP?
This year, did you feel prepared to receive the students in your classroom (or on your caseload)?
If you felt prepared, what made you feel prepared? If not, what could have happened to help you feel more prepared?
Do you know that a student with a disability (or students with disabilities) might have a placement in your classroom?
Was there a transition plan for the placement?
Was there an actual visitation rather than just paperwork?
What training, equipment and personnel help to support you?
Do you feel you receive appropriate support? If yes, what supports do you receive? If no, what supports do you think you need?
What kind of support do you receive from parents?
Do you feel supported by the parents of students with disabilities?
Describe a positive experience you've had with a parent of a special education student.
Describe a negative experience you've had with a parent of a special education student.
How do you develop community in class with families and students?
Is there a difference between the supports the district provides versus what parents ask for?
What stressor do you feel?
Are supports provided on a regular and consistent basis?

<b>Resources/tools needed</b>
Who do you call?
What do you need?
Do you get the necessary tools in a timely manner?
What is the process for getting what you need?
In talking with parents, is there a difference between what the student-needs versus what the parent-wants?
Have you been trained and are you aware of accommodations you can provide based on the IEP?

<b>Students with disabilities participating in the general education curriculum</b>
Should students with disabilities be included – why/why not?
Are you aware of interventions that address social and academic needs?
Is everybody getting the same thing fair?
What are the goals specific to students' needs – what's the point?
Describe how your current student with a disability fits into your class group.
Describe his/her actions in your classroom.
What has been your experience with special education students having equal access to the general education curriculum?
Do you have high expectations?
What do you do when a student isn't making progress?
What do you do when the student is not performing to the level as his/her peers?
How do you grade a special education student?
How do you communicate with parents of a special education student?
How do you communicate progress to a parent of a student with a disability?
How do you ensure a student with a disability has equal access to general education content?
What does equal access to general education instruction mean to you?
What's your school's philosophy?
Is your school's philosophy consistent across grade levels?
In regards to professional development, are there monthly topics about students with disabilities participating in the general education curriculum?
Should inclusion look the same at every grade level – why/why not?
What are the priorities of services?
Do you share your philosophy with grade level partners?
Are all children assigned to a general education teacher?
Describe your most positive experience with inclusion.

<b>Students with disabilities making progress in the general education curriculum</b>
What do you do with data to change your instruction?
How often do you use data?

How often and what do you do with data?
Do you notice the district employing adults with disabilities?
How do your students know you care?
How do your students' families know you care?
What makes you get out of bed in the morning?

<b>As an administrator who supports teachers, what else would you like to know?</b>
In regards to general education teachers, do they know the different verifications on the front end before the kids come?
What do they do to prep?
Prior to the start of the school year, what do teachers do to prepare for the students with disabilities?
Do co-teachers get along?
How can your building principal support you in teaming with the special education teacher (or general education teacher)?
What can your building administrator do to help staff get along and build teams?
What's the best way to deliver professional development?
Are teachers aware of various interventions?
Do teachers know how interventions are different?
Do teachers have primary knowledge – a balance of understanding of child development and literacy development?
Do teachers understand the sequence of skills – how skills progress?
How do teachers match the sequence with high expectations?
In regards to Emotional Disturbance and suspensions, what are appropriate strategies, and are suspensions appropriate?



## Appendix E: Teacher Experiences of Inclusion Interview Guide

### Teacher Experiences of Inclusion Interview Guide

#### Demographic Information

Teacher Number:

Current Grade Level:

Current Number of Students with an IEP:

Total Number of Students on the Class Roster:

Title I or Non-Title I School:

College Degree:

Special Education Coursework/Degree:

#### Classroom Experiences

1. Describe how you work with special education students.

*Describe what you do in your classroom with your special education student.*

2. Describe what you do when a student isn't making progress.

*You mentioned interventions. Please tell me more about your experiences with students receiving interventions.*

*You mentioned someone other than yourself working with the student. Please tell me more about your experiences with the student when the student isn't making progress.*

*You mentioned not having much time to go back over content. Please tell me more about your process of knowing when to move on with the content.*

*Please tell me more about your experience as it relates to other people you may work with when a student isn't making progress.*

3. Describe how you use a student's IEP.

*Please tell me more about your experiences with working on a student's IEP goals.*

*Please tell me more about your experiences with providing accommodations for a special education student.*

4. Describe your greatest concern in working with special education students.

*Tell more about why this is a concern in working with special education students.*

*You mentioned a concern in working with special education students. Please tell me more about the extent of this concern.*

5. How do you ensure that all students learn in your classroom?

*Tell me more about the steps you take to ensure high levels of learning for all students.*

*Tell me more about what you do to ensure all students learn in your classroom.*

*You mentioned the general education students in your classroom. Tell me more about how you work with the special education students to ensure they learn.*

*You told me about what you do to ensure all students learn the academic content in your classroom. Tell me more about social learning. Tell me more about behavioral learning.*

6. Describe your most challenging experience you've had with the inclusion of a special education student.

*Tell more about why this was a challenge in working with special education students.*

*You mentioned a challenge you've experienced in working with a special education student. Please tell me more about this challenging experience.*

*Please tell me more about your experiences related to the challenge you've described.*

7. How do you students know you care?

*Tell me more about what you do to ensure students know you care about them.*

*Tell me more about what you do to ensure students feel connected to you and the classroom.*

*Tell me more about how you start the year with a new group of students.*

*Tell me about an experience with a student who doesn't seem to be happy in the classroom.*

*Tell me about an experience with a student who didn't seem to interact with the*

*other students.*

*Tell me about an experience with a student whose parent reports child disliking school.*

### Building and Collaboration Experiences

8. Describe the general culture of your school around the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom.

*Tell me more about the general practices within the building when it comes to special education students.*

*Tell me more information about some experiences you've had within your school with the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom.*

9. Describe how your building principal models his/her philosophy about working with and teaching special education students.

*Tell about an experience you've had with your principal about working with a special education student (or students).*

*Tell what you perceive your principal's beliefs are about special education students and their learning.*

*Tell about the experiences you've had with your principal to inform your perceptions.*

10. Tell about professional development you've received about working with special education students.

*Tell me more about some information that has been discussed during a staff meeting, PLC or professional development session about special education students.*

*Tell me more about some information that has been discussed during a staff meeting, PLC or professional development session about differentiation and/or teaching practices.*

*Tell me more about some information that has been discussed during a staff meeting, PLC or professional development session about positive behavioral supports for students.*

*Tell me more about some information that has been discussed during a staff meeting, PLC or professional development session about collaboration.*

*Tell me more about some information that has been discussed during a staff meeting, PLC or professional development session about inclusion.*

*Tell me more about some information that has been discussed during a staff meeting, PLC or professional development session about diversity.*

11. Describe how you work with the special education teacher.

*Tell me more about your meetings with a special education teacher.*

*Tell me more about your role versus the special education teacher's role in working with special education students in your classroom.*

12. Tell me about the people who work with your special education student/students.

*Tell me more about the people who come into your classroom to work with special education students.*

*Tell me more about the people who work with special education students outside of your classroom.*

13. Describe how you work with related service providers. Related service providers include audiology, counseling services, medical services, nursing services, nutrition services, occupational therapy, mobility services, physical therapy, psychological services, interpretation services, social workers, speech-language pathologists, transportation and assistive technology.

*Tell me more about the specific types of support the related service providers give you.*

*Tell me more about your experiences with related service providers.*

*Tell me more about how often you meet with different related service providers.*

### Family Communication Experiences

14. Describe how you communicate progress to a parent of a special education student.

*Tell me more about what the communication is like between you and the parent(s) of a special education student.*

*Tell me more about how your communication with the parent(s) of the special*

*education student compared to the communication the special education teacher has.*

Conclusion

15. What do you want me to know about you as a general education teacher who works with special education students that I haven't asked you or given you a chance to talk about?

16. What worries you?

## Appendix F: Interview Guide Research Connection

The *Classroom Experiences* section includes the following:

Semi-Structured Interview Question/Prompt	Possible Participant Response Themes	Connection to Established Research
<p>1. Describe how you work with special education students.</p> <p><i>Describe what you do in your classroom with your special education student.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special education student placement is more than just students being in the room. <i>Special education student just placed in the classroom.</i></li> <li>• Special education student spends large amounts of time/entire day in the classroom. <i>Special education student spends very little time in the general education classroom.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher works with the special education student. <i>Classroom teacher doesn't work with special education student.</i></li> <li>• Paraprofessional supports general education students so the classroom teacher can work with the special education student. Paraprofessional is a support but doesn't interfere. <i>Paraprofessional usually works with the special education student.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher assumes responsibility for the special education student's learning and progress. <i>Classroom teacher not responsible for the special education student learning and progress.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher has</li> </ul>	<p>Inclusion goes beyond just placing students who have disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, 2014; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloof &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals assume a large amount of responsibility for instructing students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Giangreco &amp; Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader &amp; Levine, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008).</p> <p>At my school, students participate in cooperative</p>

	<p>learned about the special education student. <i>Classroom teacher doesn't know about the special education student.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher collaborates to know more about the special education student. Classroom teacher utilizes the student's IEP. <i>Classroom teacher doesn't know how to support the special education student.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher collaborates to support the special education student. Classroom teacher utilizes different strategies to support the special education student. <i>Classroom teacher struggles with special education student.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher seeks out supports and implements different strategies to support the special education student. <i>Classroom teacher is frustrated with the special education student and doesn't know how to help.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher describes high expectations for special education student. <i>Classroom teacher describes decreased expectations for special education student.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates support for special education student being in general education classroom. <i>Classroom teacher indicates that</i></li> </ul>	<p>learning opportunities with each other, and the cooperative learning groups include students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Logan, Bakeman &amp; Keefe, 1997; Rouse &amp; Florian, 1996); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013.</p> <p>I utilize explicit instruction techniques and practices with all students in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Snell, 2009; Zigmund, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I utilize positive behavioral supports with all students in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003).</p> <p>At my school, peers (disabled and non-disabled students) support and help each other, and friendships amongst students (disabled and non-disabled) are encouraged (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; de Boer,</p>
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	<p><i>special education student shouldn't be in the general education classroom.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates support for the diversity that the special education student adds to the classroom. <i>Classroom teacher indicates the special education student somehow impedes/distracts/negatively impacts general education student(s).</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates knowledge about the special education student's needs and IEP. <i>Classroom teacher indicates lack of knowledge about the special education student's current level of learning.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher describes collaborating and adjusting practices to meet the needs of all students. <i>Classroom teacher indicates that the special education student is unable to be in the general education classroom.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates a responsibility for educating all students. <i>Classroom teacher indicates needing the special education teacher to provide the instruction for the special education student.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher describes utilizing supports and services within the classroom for</li> </ul>	<p>Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; Logan, Bakeman &amp; Keefe, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Rouse &amp; Florian, 1996; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as students without disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, students have IEP goals that are directly linked to grade-level standards and curriculum (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996;</p>
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	<p>the special education student. <i>Classroom teacher talks about being alone and not receiving supports and services for the student.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates an ability to meet the needs (academically, behaviorally and/or socially) of the special education student. <i>Classroom teacher indicates uncertainty, frustration and/or anger for lack of support or ability to meet the academic, behavioral and/or social needs of a special education student.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates having experience working with different special education students. <i>Classroom teacher indicates having no experience working with special education students.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, there is an emphasis on high levels of learning for all students (disabled and non-disabled) at my school (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>My school holds a core belief that all students (both disable and non-disabled) can learn grade-level content (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz,</p>
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		<p>2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I differentiate my instruction. I can give multiple examples of why and how I differentiate for the various needs of students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals are responsible for meeting the majority of the academic needs of students with disabilities in my school (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Idol, 2006; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>Collaboration is necessary for inclusion to happen (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Cameron, 2014; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkin, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton,</p>
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		<p>O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>I feel confident in making curricular and instructional modifications and accommodations (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>General education teachers are responsible for the majority of the teaching and learning of all students including special education students (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Knight, 1999; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>All students, including students</p>
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		<p>with mild, moderate and severe disabilities, should spend the majority of their school day with same-grade peers in the general education setting (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; ESSA, 2015; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; IDEA, 2004; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013).</p> <p>Inclusion is not a placement but rather a method of delivering services (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Carrington, 1999; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, 2014; King-Sears, 1997; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the behavioral needs of</p>
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		<p>students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the social needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999).</p> <p>I am experienced when it comes to working with students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland,</p>
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		<p>2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Soodak, 2003).</p> <p>I feel confident in implementing positive behavioral supports to address challenging behaviors (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Beaman &amp; Wheldall, 2000; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003).</p> <p>I celebrate diversity with my students (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008;</p>
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<p>2. Describe what you do when a student isn't making progress.</p> <p><i>You mentioned interventions. Please tell me more about your experiences with students receiving interventions.</i></p> <p><i>You mentioned someone other than yourself working with the student. Please tell me more about your experiences with the student when the student isn't making progress.</i></p> <p><i>You mentioned not having much time to go back over content. Please tell me more about your process of knowing when to move on with the content.</i></p> <p><i>Please tell me more about your experience as it relates to other people you may work with when a student isn't making progress.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates adjusting instruction. <i>Classroom teacher indicates a lack of understanding about what to do.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates providing support or utilizing support staff to provide high-quality interventions. <i>Classroom teacher indicates paraprofessional involvement and doesn't indicate teacher involvement.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher is clear about adjusting practices. <i>Classroom teacher does not indicate a change within the general education setting.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher explains supports put in place. <i>Classroom teacher explains student spending increased time outside of the general education classroom.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher describes different strategies used. <i>Classroom teacher does not describe any different strategies used.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher describes continued work until the student is proficient. <i>Classroom teacher indicates that some content may remain not learned by a student.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher describes a process of working with other</li> </ul>	<p>Snell, 2009).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals (also known as educational assistants) support inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Giangreco &amp; Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader &amp; Levine, 1999).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals assume a large amount of responsibility for instructing students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Giangreco &amp; Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader &amp; Levine, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008).</p> <p>I utilize explicit instruction techniques and practices with all students in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Snell, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino,</p>
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	<p>professionals to determine next steps in instruction.  <i>Classroom teacher indicates working alone or in isolation.</i></p>	<p>2009).</p> <p>I utilize positive behavioral supports with all students in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003).</p> <p>At my school, peers (disabled and non-disabled students) support and help each other, and friendships amongst students (disabled and non-disabled) are encouraged (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; Logan, Bakeman &amp; Keefe, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Rouse &amp; Florian, 1996; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as students without disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996;</p>
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		<p>King-Sears, 1997; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, there is an emphasis on high levels of learning for all students (disabled and non-disabled) at my school (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>My school holds a core belief that all students (both disabled and non-disabled) can learn grade-level content (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996;</p>
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		<p>Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I differentiate my instruction. I can give multiple examples of why and how I differentiate for the various needs of students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals are responsible for meeting the majority of the academic needs of students with disabilities in my school (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Idol, 2006; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>Collaboration is necessary for inclusion to happen (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Cameron, 2014; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; King-</p>
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		<p>Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>I feel confident in making curricular and instructional modifications and accommodations (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland,</p>
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		<p>2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the social needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999).</p> <p>I feel confident in implementing positive behavioral supports to address challenging behaviors (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Beaman &amp; Wheldall, 2000; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington,</p>
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		1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Janney & Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003).
<p>3. Describe how you use a student's IEP.</p> <p><i>Please tell me more about your experiences with working on a student's IEP goals.</i></p> <p><i>Please tell me more about your experiences with providing accommodations for a special education student.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher describes utilizing the special education student's IEP. <i>Classroom teacher describes not knowing about the IEP.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher describes working on IEP goals. <i>Classroom teacher describes not working on IEP goals.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates collaborating with the special education teacher. <i>Classroom teacher indicates the responsibility belongs to the special education teacher.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates special education student learning in the general education classroom. <i>Classroom teacher indicates special education student spending significant time outside of the general education classroom.</i></li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates an understanding of meeting the diverse academic, social and/or behavioral needs of learners. <i>Classroom teacher indicates inability or lack of knowledge in</i></li> </ul>	<p>My school has supports in place to enable inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Idol, 2006; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007).</p> <p>At my school, students have IEP goals that are directly linked to grade-level standards and curriculum (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p>

	<p><i>meeting the diverse academic, social and/or behavioral needs of learners.</i></p>	<p>I feel confident in making curricular and instructional modifications and accommodations (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>General education teachers are responsible for the majority of the teaching and learning of all students including special education students (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Knight, 1999; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>Inclusion is not a placement but rather a method of delivering services (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland,</p>
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		<p>2004; Carrington, 1999; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, 2014; King-Sears, 1997; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999).</p>
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		<p>I am confident in my ability to meet the social needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999).</p>
<p>4. Describe your greatest concern in working with special education students.</p> <p><i>Tell more about why this is a concern in working with special education students.</i></p> <p><i>You mentioned a concern in working with special education students. Please tell me more about the extent of this concern.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Principal doesn't support teacher.</i></li> <li>• <i>Principal doesn't seem to believe that special education students should be in the general education classroom.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher doesn't feel supported.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher needs additional resources.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher perceives paraprofessionals are untrained, ill equipped, uninvolved and/or too involved.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher states that special education students are not in the general education classroom.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher states that special education students are in the general education classroom too</i></li> </ul>	<p>My building principal supports inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney, Snell, Beers &amp; Raynes, 1995; Singal, 2008).</p> <p>My school has supports in place to enable inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Idol, 2006; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp;</p>



	<p><i>much.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes a lack of time for teams to meet and collaborate.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes special education student being isolated from peers and/or not included.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes being unable to handle behavioral, social and/or academic issues in the classroom.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes special education student interrupting the learning of general education students.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes an inability or lack of knowledge in teaching a special education student.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes difficulty in educating students who have different levels of understanding.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes a lack of parent support and/or involvement.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes a lack of knowledge about a special education student and/or lack of knowledge and/or access to the student's IEP.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes a lack of training and/or professional development</i></li> </ul>	<p>Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals (also known as educational assistants) support inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Giangreco &amp; Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader &amp; Levine, 1999).</p> <p>Inclusion goes beyond just placing students who have disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, 2014; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, teams collaborate regularly to talk about how to better teach and test general education standards for all students, including students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon,</p>
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	<p><i>around differentiating instruction and/or working with special education students.</i></p>	<p>Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkin, 2011; Jackson, Singal, 2008; King-Sears, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals assume a large amount of responsibility for instructing students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Giangreco &amp; Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader &amp; Levine, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008).</p> <p>At my school, students participate in cooperative learning opportunities with each other, and the cooperative learning groups include students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Logan, Bakeman &amp; Keefe, 1997; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Rouse &amp; Florian, 1996).</p>
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		<p>I utilize explicit instruction techniques and practices with all students in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Snell, 2009; Zigmund, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I utilize positive behavioral supports with all students in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003).</p> <p>At my school, peers (disabled and non-disabled students) support and help each other, and friendships amongst students (disabled and non-disabled) are encouraged (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; Logan, Bakeman &amp; Keefe, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Rouse &amp; Florian, 1996; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, there is a shared, common plan time in each grade level where the special</p>
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		<p>education and general education teachers plan together (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>My school is inclusive of students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as students without disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Rubie-</p>
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		<p>Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, students have IEP goals that are directly linked to grade-level standards and curriculum (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, there is an emphasis on high levels of learning for all students (disabled and non-disabled) at my school (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp;</p>
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		<p>Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>My school holds a core belief that all students (both disabled and non-disabled) can learn grade-level content (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I differentiate my instruction. I can give multiple examples of why and how I differentiate for the various needs of students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals are responsible for meeting the majority of the academic needs of students with disabilities in</p>
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		<p>my school (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Idol, 2006; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>Collaboration is necessary for inclusion to happen (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Cameron, 2014; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>This school year, I have received professional development in one or more of the following areas: collaboration, differentiation, positive behavioral support, inclusion and/or diversity (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Kosko &amp; Wilkins, 2009; Rouse &amp; Florian, 1996; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Tomlinson, 1999; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wolfe &amp; Hall,</p>
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		<p>2003; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I feel confident in making curricular and instructional modifications and accommodations (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>General education teachers are responsible for the majority of the teaching and learning of all students including special education students (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Knight, 1999; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the academic needs of</p>
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		<p>students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the social needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-</p>
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		<p>Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999).</p> <p>I am experienced when it comes to working with students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Soodak, 2003).</p> <p>Students with disabilities benefit socially from being included in the general education classroom (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).</p>
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		<p>Students with disabilities benefit academically from being included in the general education classroom (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>Students without disabilities benefit socially from learning in an inclusive classroom with students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008).</p> <p>Students without disabilities benefit academically from learning in an inclusive classroom with students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp;</p>
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		<p>Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Wehmeyer, 2006).</p> <p>I feel confident in implementing positive behavioral supports to address challenging behaviors (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Beaman &amp; Wheldall, 2000; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003).</p> <p>I believe parents play an important role in making decisions and remaining knowledgeable about their students with disabilities (Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997).</p> <p>I celebrate diversity with my students (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp;</p>
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		Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Jackson, Ryndak & Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).
<p>5. How do you ensure that all students learn in your classroom?</p> <p><i>Tell me more about the steps you take to ensure high levels of learning for all students.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more about what you do to ensure all students learn in your classroom.</i></p> <p><i>You mentioned the general education students in your classroom. Tell me more about how you work with the special education students to ensure they learn.</i></p> <p><i>You told me about what you do to ensure all</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates time spent working with other professionals for ideas, support and professional conversations.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates times when students support each other's learning and/or work together to learn.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates utilizing different teaching techniques and practices to ensure students have a clear understanding of what is being taught.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates utilizing strategies and supports to engage all students in the learning process.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates positive behavior supports used in the classroom.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates having high expectations for all learners.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates having all</li> </ul>	<p>At my school, teams collaborate regularly to talk about how to better teach and test general education standards for all students, including students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Singal, 2008; King-Sears, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>At my school, students participate in cooperative learning opportunities with each other, and the cooperative learning groups include students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Logan, Bakeman &amp; Keefe, 1997; Sazak-Pinar &amp;</p>

<p><i>students learn the academic content in your classroom. Tell me more about social learning. Tell me more about behavioral learning.</i></p>	<p>students participate in whole group instruction where in which grade level content is presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates having all students participate in learning activities where in which grade level content is practiced and learned.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates differentiation practices to meet the differing needs of learners in the classroom.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates use of accommodations and/or modifications to support various behavioral, social and/or academic needs in the classroom in order for all students to access and progress in learning the general education content.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates a responsibility for the learning of all students not just the general education students.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates having the ability and opportunity to work with and teach all students not just the general education students.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates all students, including special education students, participating in the classroom activities.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates involvement of special education students beyond just being in the</li> </ul>	<p>Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Rouse &amp; Florian, 1996).</p> <p>I utilize explicit instruction techniques and practices with all students in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Snell, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I utilize positive behavioral supports with all students in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003).</p> <p>At my school, students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as students without disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton</p>
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	<p>classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates having experience in meeting the various needs students may have.</li> </ul>	<p>(2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, students have IEP goals that are directly linked to grade-level standards and curriculum (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, there is an emphasis on high levels of learning for all students (disabled and non-disabled) at my school (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p>
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		<p>My school holds a core belief that all students (both disable and non-disabled) can learn grade-level content (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I differentiate my instruction. I can give multiple examples of why and how I differentiate for the various needs of students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006).</p> <p>I feel confident in making curricular and instructional modifications and accommodations (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp;</p>
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		<p>Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>General education teachers are responsible for the majority of the teaching and learning of all students including special education students (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Knight, 1999; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>Inclusion is not a placement but rather a method of delivering services (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Carrington, 1999; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, 2014; King-Sears, 1997; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor,</p>
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		<p>Kline, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the social needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich,</p>
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		<p>2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999).</p> <p>I am experienced when it comes to working with students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Soodak, 2003).</p>
<p>6. Describe the most challenging experience you've had with the inclusion of a special education student.</p> <p><i>Tell more about why this was a challenge in working with special education</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Principal didn't support teacher.</i></li> <li>• <i>Principal didn't seem to believe that special education students should be in the general education classroom.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher didn't feel supported.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher needed additional resources.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher perceives</i></li> </ul>	<p>My building principal supports inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney, Snell, Beers &amp; Raynes, 1995; Singal, 2008).</p> <p>My school has supports in place to enable inclusion of students</p>

<p><i>students.</i></p> <p><i>You mentioned a challenge you've experienced in working with a special education student. Please tell me more about this challenging experience. Please tell me more about your experiences related to the challenge you've described.</i></p>	<p><i>paraprofessionals were untrained, ill equipped, uninvolved and/or too involved.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher states that special education students were not in the general education classroom.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher states that special education students were in the general education classroom too much.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes a lack of time for teams to meet and collaborate.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes special education student being isolated from peers and/or not included.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes being unable to handle behavioral, social and/or academic issues in the classroom.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes special education student interrupting the learning of general education students.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes an inability or lack of knowledge in teaching a special education student.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes difficulty in educating students who have different levels of understanding.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes a lack of parent</i></li> </ul>	<p>with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Idol, 2006; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals (also known as educational assistants) support inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Giangreco &amp; Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader &amp; Levine, 1999).</p> <p>At my school, teams collaborate regularly to talk about how to better teach and test general education standards for all students, including students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Singal, 2008; King-</p>
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	<p><i>support and/or involvement.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes a lack of knowledge about a special education student and/or lack of knowledge and/or access to the student's IEP.</i></li> <li>• <i>Classroom teacher describes a lack of training and/or professional development around differentiating instruction and/or working with special education students.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Sears, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals assume a large amount of responsibility for instructing students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Giangreco &amp; Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader &amp; Levine, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008).</p> <p>At my school, there is a shared, common plan time in each grade level where the special education and general education teachers plan together (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>My school is inclusive of students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008;</p>
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		<p>Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I differentiate my instruction. I can give multiple examples of why and how I differentiate for the various needs of students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals are responsible for meeting the majority of the academic needs of students with disabilities in my school (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Idol, 2006; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>Collaboration is necessary for inclusion to happen (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey,</p>
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		<p>1995; Cameron, 2014; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>This school year, I have received professional development in one or more of the following areas: collaboration, differentiation, positive behavioral support, inclusion and/or diversity (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Kosko &amp; Wilkins, 2009; Rouse &amp; Florian, 1996; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Tomlinson, 1999; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003; Zigmond, Kloos &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I feel confident in making curricular and instructional modifications and accommodations (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead,</p>
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		<p>2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>General education teachers are responsible for the majority of the teaching and learning of all students including special education students (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Knight, 1999; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, parents play an active role in making decisions and remaining knowledgeable about their students with disabilities (Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich,</p>
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		<p>2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999).</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to meet the social needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp;</p>
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		<p>Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999).</p> <p>I am experienced when it comes to working with students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Soodak, 2003).</p> <p>Students with disabilities benefit socially from being included in the general education classroom (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).</p> <p>Students with disabilities benefit academically from being</p>
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		<p>included in the general education classroom (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>Students without disabilities benefit socially from learning in an inclusive classroom with students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008).</p> <p>Students without disabilities benefit academically from learning in an inclusive classroom with students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp;</p>
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		<p>Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Wehmeyer, 2006).</p> <p>I feel confident in implementing positive behavioral supports to address challenging behaviors (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Beaman &amp; Wheldall, 2000; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003).</p> <p>I believe parents play an important role in making decisions and remaining knowledgeable about their students with disabilities (Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997).</p>
<p>7. How do you students know you care?</p> <p><i>Tell me more about what you do</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates using positive behavioral supports with all students.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher indicates a need and</li> </ul>	<p>I utilize positive behavioral supports with all students in my classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011;</p>

<p><i>to ensure students know you care about them.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more about what you do to ensure students feel connected to you and the classroom.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more about how you start the year with a new group of students.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me about an experience with a student who doesn't seem to be happy in the classroom.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me about an experience with a student who didn't seem to interact with the other students.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me about an experience with a student whose parent reports child disliking school.</i></p>	<p>willingness to adjust for differing needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher describes adjusting for the various academic, behavioral and social needs of students.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher describes willingness and need to ensure all students feel like they belong to the group.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher describes a focus on caring about the needs of each student.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher describes building and/or maintaining relationships with all students.</li> <li>• Classroom teacher describes repairing relationships with students.</li> </ul>	<p>Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003).</p> <p>At my school, there is an emphasis on high levels of learning for all students (disabled and non-disabled) at my school (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloof &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>I differentiate my instruction. I can give multiple examples of why and how I differentiate for the various needs of students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006).</p>
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		<p>I celebrate diversity with my students (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).</p>
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The *Building and Collaboration Experiences* section includes the following:

<b>Semi-Structured Interview Question/Prompt</b>	<b>Possible Participant Response Themes</b>	<b>Connection to Established Research</b>
<p>8. Describe the general culture of your school around the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom.</p> <p><i>Tell me more about the general practices within the building when it comes to special education students.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more information about some experiences you've had within your school with the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special education students spend the majority or all of their school day in the general education classroom.</li> <li>• General education teachers take the responsibility for the learning of all students.</li> <li>• Special education teachers provide support to general education teachers to ensure high levels of learning in the general education classroom.</li> <li>• The general education and special education teachers work collaboratively.</li> <li>• Teachers problem-solve to best support all students.</li> <li>• Teachers are given time to meet, discuss and develop supports for all learners.</li> <li>• Teachers have knowledge about best practices for learning and implement them in the classroom.</li> <li>• Teachers participate in professional development to strengthen teaching and learning for all students.</li> <li>• Paraprofessionals are a support for teachers and are used effectively.</li> <li>• General education teachers are responsible</li> </ul>	<p>Federal laws mandate our school and our district to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; IDEA, 2004; ESSA, 2015).</p> <p>The general education classroom setting is the preferred setting for the majority, if not all, students with disabilities, as asserted by federal legislation (NCLB, 2001; ESSA, 2015).</p> <p>Students with disabilities are, to the maximum extent possible, to be educated in classrooms alongside students without disabilities (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 1975, 1990, 1997, 2004, 2009).</p> <p>The Every Student Succeeds Act (Act, E. S. S., 2015) of 2015 includes the core ideas of inclusion, accountability, high expectations for learning and having highly qualified professionals educating all students, especially students with disabilities.</p> <p>My building principal supports inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp;</p>

	<p>for the teaching and learning of special education students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General education teachers are knowledgeable about special education students' needs, accommodations, services and supports.</li> <li>• Supports are in place for students to be successful and learn in the general education classroom.</li> <li>• Special education students are included and learn in the general education classroom.</li> <li>• Special education and general education students work collaboratively together to learn.</li> <li>• Special education and general education students interact socially and develop meaningful social relationships with each other.</li> <li>• Special education students are included throughout the various aspects of general education.</li> <li>• There are high expectations for learning for general education and special education students.</li> <li>• Special education students are expected and supported, if necessary, to participate in and learn general education content.</li> <li>• Teachers build</li> </ul>	<p>Spagna, 2004; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney, Snell, Beers &amp; Raynes, 1995; Singal, 2008).</p> <p>My school has supports in place to enable inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Idol, 2006; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals (also known as educational assistants) support inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Giangreco &amp; Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader &amp; Levine, 1999).</p> <p>Inclusion goes beyond just placing students who have disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999;</p>
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	<p>relationships with parents and work collaboratively to meet student needs.</p>	<p>Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, 2014; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, teams collaborate regularly to talk about how to better teach and test general education standards for all students, including students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Singal, 2008; King-Sears, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals assume a large amount of responsibility for instructing students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Giangreco &amp; Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader &amp; Levine, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008).</p>
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		<p>At my school, students participate in cooperative learning opportunities with each other, and the cooperative learning groups include students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Logan, Bakeman &amp; Keefe, 1997; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Rouse &amp; Florian, 1996).</p> <p>At my school, peers (disabled and non-disabled students) support and help each other, and friendships amongst students (disabled and non-disabled) are encouraged (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; Logan, Bakeman &amp; Keefe, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Rouse &amp; Florian, 1996; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, there is a shared, common plan time in each grade level where the special education and general education teachers plan together (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009;</p>
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		<p>Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>My school is inclusive of students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Narayan, 2011; Singal, 2008; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as students without disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, students have IEP goals that are directly linked to grade-level standards and curriculum (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011;</p>
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		<p>Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, there is an emphasis on high levels of learning for all students (disabled and non-disabled) at my school (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>My school holds a core belief that all students (both disable and non-disabled) can learn grade-level content (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-</p>
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		<p>Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals are responsible for meeting the majority of the academic needs of students with disabilities in my school (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Idol, 2006; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>Collaboration is necessary for inclusion to happen (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Cameron, 2014; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>General education teachers are responsible for the majority of the teaching and learning of all students including special education students (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Knight, 1999; Scruggs,</p>
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		<p>Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, parents play an active role in making decisions and remaining knowledgeable about their students with disabilities (Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997).</p> <p>All students, including students with mild, moderate and severe disabilities, should spend the majority of their school day with same-grade peers in the general education setting (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; ESSA, 2015; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; IDEA, 2004; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013).</p> <p>Inclusion is not a placement but rather a method of delivering services (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Carrington, 1999; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, 2014; King-Sears, 1997; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p>
9. Describe how your building principal models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal supports through words and/or actions that special</li> </ul>	Inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom is required at

<p>his/her philosophy about working with and teaching special education students.</p> <p><i>Tell about an experience you've had with your principal about working with a special education student (or students).</i></p> <p><i>Tell what you perceive your principal's beliefs are about special education students and their learning.</i></p> <p><i>Tell about the experiences you've had with your principal to inform your perceptions.</i></p>	<p>education students spend the majority or all of their school day in the general education classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that general education teachers take the responsibility for the learning of all students.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that special education teachers provide support to general education teachers to ensure high levels of learning in the general education classroom.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that the general education and special education teachers work collaboratively.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that teachers problem-solve to best support all students.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that teachers are given time to meet, discuss and develop supports for all learners.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that teachers have knowledge about best practices for learning and implement them in the classroom.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or</li> </ul>	<p>my school (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; IDEA, 2004; ESSA, 2015).</p> <p>My school has supports in place to enable inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Idol, 2006; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007).</p> <p>Inclusion goes beyond just placing students who have disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, 2014; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmund, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, teams collaborate regularly to talk about how to better teach and test general education standards for all</p>
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	<p>actions that teachers participate in professional development to strengthen teaching and learning for all students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that paraprofessionals are a support for teachers and are used effectively.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that general education teachers are responsible for the teaching and learning of special education students.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that general education teachers are knowledgeable about special education students' needs, accommodations, services and supports.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that supports are in place for students to be successful and learn in the general education classroom.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that special education students are included and learn in the general education classroom.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that special education and general</li> </ul>	<p>students, including students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Singal, 2008; King-Sears, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>At my school, there is a shared, common plan time in each grade level where the special education and general education teachers plan together (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Ripley, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>My school is inclusive of students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmund, Kloo</p>
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	<p>education students work collaboratively together to learn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that special education and general education students interact socially and develop meaningful social relationships with each other.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that special education students are included throughout the various aspects of general education.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that there are high expectations for learning for general education and special education students.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that special education students are expected and supported, if necessary, to participate in and learn general education content.</li> <li>• Principal supports through words and/or actions that teachers build relationships with parents and work collaboratively to meet student needs.</li> </ul>	<p>&amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as students without disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, students have IEP goals that are directly linked to grade-level standards and curriculum (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>At my school, there is an emphasis on high levels of learning for all students (disabled and non-disabled) at my school (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008;</p>
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		<p>Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>My school holds a core belief that all students (both disable and non-disabled) can learn grade-level content (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, &amp; Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>This school year, I have received professional development in one or more of the following areas: collaboration, differentiation, positive behavioral support, inclusion and/or diversity (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna,</p>
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		<p>2004; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Kosko &amp; Wilkins, 2009; Rouse &amp; Florian, 1996; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Tomlinson, 1999; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p>
<p>10. Tell about professional development you've received about working with special education students.</p> <p><i>Tell me more about some information that has been discussed during a staff meeting, PLC or professional development session about special education students.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more about some information that has been discussed during a staff meeting, PLC or professional development session about differentiation and/or teaching practices.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General education teacher describes a session or more of professional development that has occurred at a meeting, Professional Learning Community (PLC) time, or professional development session.</li> <li>• General education teacher describes training that presented information about: collaboration, differentiation, positive behavioral support, inclusion and/or diversity.</li> </ul>	<p>This school year, I have received professional development in one or more of the following areas: collaboration, differentiation, positive behavioral support, inclusion and/or diversity (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Cook &amp; Semmel, 1999; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Kosko &amp; Wilkins, 2009; Rouse &amp; Florian, 1996; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Tomlinson, 1999; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p>

<p><i>Tell me more about some information that has been discussed during a staff meeting, PLC or professional development session about positive behavioral supports for students.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more about some information that has been discussed during a staff meeting, PLC or professional development session about collaboration.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more about some information that has been discussed during a staff meeting, PLC or professional development session about inclusion.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more about some information that has been discussed during a staff meeting, PLC or professional development session about diversity.</i></p>		
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<p>11. Describe how you work with the special education teacher.</p> <p><i>Tell me more about your meetings with a special education teacher.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more about your role versus the special education teacher's role in working with special education students in your classroom.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers work collaboratively to talk about how to better teacher and assess students' understanding of general education content.</li> <li>• General education and special education teachers have a shared, common plan time, and they meet during that time.</li> <li>• Instruction is differentiated to support various student needs.</li> <li>• Curriculum and instruction are adjusted, as needed, to support the learning of all students.</li> <li>• Accommodations are known and utilized, as necessary, to support the learning of all students.</li> <li>• General education teacher takes the lead in educating special education students. The special education teacher provides information and supports to the general education teacher.</li> <li>• General education teacher is knowledgeable about special education student's IEP.</li> </ul>	<p>At my school, teams collaborate regularly to talk about how to better teach and test general education standards for all students, including students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Singal, 2008; King-Sears, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>At my school, there is a shared, common plan time in each grade level where the special education and general education teachers plan together (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>I differentiate my instruction. I can give multiple examples of why and how I differentiate for the various needs of students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears,</p>
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		<p>Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006).</p> <p>Collaboration is necessary for inclusion to happen (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Cameron, 2014; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>I feel confident in making curricular and instructional modifications and accommodations (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>General education teachers are responsible for the majority of the teaching and learning of all students including special education students (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp;</p>
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		<p>Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Knight, 1999; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p>
<p>12. Tell me about the people who work with your special education student/students.</p> <p><i>Tell me more about the people who come into your classroom to work with special education students.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more about the people who work with special education students outside of your classroom.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports are present in the general education classroom.</li> <li>• Collaboration amongst adults takes place to best support special education students.</li> <li>• While paraprofessionals may provide a level of support, they do not provide the only teaching and/or support for the special education student.</li> <li>• General education teacher is responsible for the teaching and learning of all students in the general education classroom.</li> </ul>	<p>My school has supports in place to enable inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Idol, 2006; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals (also known as educational assistants) support inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Giangreco &amp; Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader &amp; Levine, 1999).</p>

		<p>Paraprofessionals assume a large amount of responsibility for instructing students with disabilities (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Giangreco &amp; Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader &amp; Levine, 1999; Sazak-Pinar &amp; Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008).</p> <p>Paraprofessionals are responsible for meeting the majority of the academic needs of students with disabilities in my school (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Idol, 2006; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo &amp; Volonino, 2009).</p> <p>General education teachers are responsible for the majority of the teaching and learning of all students including special education students (Agran, Alper &amp; Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burke &amp; Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997; Knight, 1999; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007;</p>
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		Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).
<p>13. Describe how you work with related service providers. Related service providers include audiology, counseling services, medical services, nursing services, nutrition services, occupational therapy, mobility services, physical therapy, psychological services, interpretation services, social workers, speech-language pathologists, transportation and assistive technology.</p> <p><i>Tell me more about the specific types of support the related service providers give you.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more about your experiences with related service providers.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more about how often</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports are present in the general education classroom.</li> <li>• Collaboration amongst adults takes place to best support special education students.</li> <li>• General education teacher is responsible for the teaching and learning of all students in the general education classroom.</li> <li>• General education teacher implements/provides accommodations, supports, and services based on information given from related service providers.</li> <li>• General education teacher meet regularly with related service providers, as necessary for each individual special education student.</li> </ul>	<p>My school has supports in place to enable inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Avramidis &amp; Norwich, 2002; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Coombs-Richardson &amp; Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Forlin, Douglas &amp; Hattie, 1996; Idol, 2006; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Janney &amp; Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007).</p> <p>At my school, teams collaborate regularly to talk about how to better teach and test general education standards for all students, including students with disabilities (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, &amp; Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl &amp; Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Jackson, Singal, 2008; King-Sears, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak &amp; Billingsley, 2000; Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; McDuffie, 2007; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe &amp; Hall, 2003).</p> <p>Collaboration is necessary for inclusion to happen (Ainscow &amp; Miles, 2008; Banerji &amp; Dailey,</p>

<i>you meet with different related service providers.</i>		1995; Cameron, 2014; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak & Billingsley, 2000; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe & Hall, 2003).
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The *Family Communication Experiences* section includes the following:

<b>Semi-Structured Interview Question/Prompt</b>	<b>Possible Participant Response Themes</b>	<b>Connection to Established Research</b>
<p>14. Describe how you communicate progress to a parent of a special education student.</p> <p><i>Tell me more about what the communication is like between you and the parent(s) of a special education student.</i></p> <p><i>Tell me more about how your communication with the parent(s) of the special education student compared to the communication the special education teacher has.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General education teacher provides open and ongoing communication with the parent sharing information about supports, services, academic progress, social information, and behavioral supports and needs.</li> <li>• General education teacher indicates importance of communicating with the parents.</li> <li>• <i>Special education teacher provides all the communication to the parent(s) of the special education student.</i></li> </ul>	<p>At my school, parents play an active role in making decisions and remaining knowledgeable about their students with disabilities (Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997).</p> <p>I believe parents play an important role in making decisions and remaining knowledgeable about their students with disabilities (Downing, Eichinger &amp; Williams, 1997; Florian &amp; Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hunt &amp; Goetz, 1997).</p>

## Appendix G: Recruiting Email Form of Consent

IRB #716-16-EX

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

I am currently a doctoral student at UNO, and I am contacting you about participating in my research. I believe that adding your voice as a research participant will add information to my research. I am seeking K-6<sup>th</sup> grade general education teachers who have at least one special education student on their class roster and are willing to privately share their experiences with the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom.

Participation in this research includes an interview session about your experiences in the general education classroom with special education students. If you have at least one special education student on your roster, and you're willing to participate, we will meet off-site for about an hour. After our time together, you will be given a typed copy of your responses. An additional 10-15 minutes will be needed for you to review your responses and make adjustments, if necessary.

All of your answers, as well as your identity, will be kept confidential and will not be shared with any employees of Westside Community Schools beyond me. If you have any questions or would like to participate in this research study, please respond to this email or email me on my private email account [jensinclair@live.com](mailto:jensinclair@live.com).

For research problems or questions regarding subjects, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted through the following mailing address: Institutional Review Board University of Nebraska Medical Center, 987830 Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, NE 68198-7830, via phone call at [\(402\) 559-6463](tel:(402)559-6463), or via email at [irbora@unmc.edu](mailto:irbora@unmc.edu).

Thank you so much for your consideration in participating in this research.

Best,

Jen

## Appendix H: Instrumentation Process Phase I – Quantitative Survey

The initial survey instrument, Inclusion Survey: Definition, Federal Law, Policies and Actions (see below) includes items that were intended to examine teacher definitions of inclusion and knowledge of federal special education law, which impacts policies and actions at a school district, elementary building and classroom level. In completing extensive reading for the literature review and creating the survey instrument, key themes emerged around federal regulations and special education practices. The survey that was developed sought to better understand teachers' perceptions about inclusion. The researcher developed a survey with open-ended and close-ended questions. The survey instrument was created and included one version for both special education and general education teachers. The survey includes a section for each respondent group to provide individually relevant demographic information (i.e. general education or special education teacher, years of experience, education, and current grade levels served and working with. The survey questions include four open-ended questions about inclusion and federal special education law. The survey also includes selected-response survey questions including: 12 questions pertaining to federal law, 26 questions about policy and action around inclusion at the district and building level, and 13 questions examining teacher beliefs about inclusion of students with disabilities.

*Open-ended survey questions.* The survey includes four open-ended questions at the start of the survey. Teachers are to be asked to write a definition for inclusion first, and then they are to write what a teacher must know and do for special education students. These two open-ended questions are intended to be scored in tandem. The

information from questions 1 and 2 are to be scored on the “Definition of Inclusion” (see below) scoring rubric. The third open-ended question asks teachers to write what they know about federal special education law. The final open-ended question asks teachers to define least restrictive environment. The information from questions 3 and 4 are intended to be scored on the “Knowledge of Federal Law” (see below) scoring rubric. The four open-ended questions are:

1. Write your definition of inclusion.
2. What must a teacher know and do for special education students?
3. Write what federal special education law mandates for teachers, schools and districts.
4. Describe what least restrictive environment means to you.

*Selected response survey questions.* Following the four open-ended questions, teachers are asked a series of close-ended questions. The survey items are questions about federal and state laws, personal beliefs and policy and action at the building and district level. Response options to survey items include: *strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, don't know.*

*Survey questions related to federal law.* The following questions are intended to measure teachers' understanding of the current federal special education laws that mandate special education services and placement for students with verified disabilities.

1. I have a high level of personal knowledge and understanding about current federal laws as they pertain to special education and inclusion (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; IDEA, 2004; ESSA, 2015).
2. Federal laws mandate our school and our district to include students with disabilities in

the general education classroom (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; IDEA, 2004; ESSA, 2015).

3. The general education classroom setting is the preferred setting for the majority, if not all, students with disabilities, as asserted by federal legislation (NCLB, 2001; ESSA, 2015).

4. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act 1975 was passed to ensure that children with disabilities were given the opportunity to receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

5. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that individuals with disabilities must be provided a public education, and they also should have the right to learn in the least restrictive environment.

6. Students with disabilities are, to the maximum extent possible, to be educated in classrooms alongside students without disabilities (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 1975, 1990, 1997, 2004, 2009).

7. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001, which was the Reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, was legislative action that required full-inclusion of students with disabilities, as well as assessing and reporting of achievement scores of all students, including students with disabilities.

8. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001, mandated that students with disabilities, and the teachers who teach them, would be held responsible and accountable for the same academic content and level of performance as students without disabilities.

9. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 is federal law

that reinforces the expectation that students with disabilities receive learning experiences in the general education classroom and in the least restrictive environment as possible.

10. Currently, federal law states that students with disabilities are to be provided with supports and services that allow them to participate and make progress in the general education curriculum.

11. The Every Student Succeeds Act (Act, E. S. S., 2015) of 2015 includes the core ideas of inclusion, accountability, high expectations for learning and having highly qualified professionals educating all students, especially students with disabilities.

12. Federal law mandates that less than 1% of students are allowed to take alternate assessments. The remaining students must take grade level tests.

*Survey questions related to policy and action.* The following questions examine teacher information and understanding about the policies in place for inclusion of students who receive special education services and supports at the district and building level.

13. My district communicates and reviews federal special education laws with us regularly through one or more of the following ways: professional development, policy notices, emails, etc.

14. My building principal communicates and reviews federal special education laws with the staff through one or more of the following ways: professional development, policy notices, emails, etc.

15. Inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom is required at my school (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; IDEA, 2004; ESSA, 2015).



16. My building principal supports inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak & Billingsley, 2000; Janney, Snell, Beers & Raynes, 1995; Singal, 2008).
17. My school has supports in place to enable inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Banerji & Dailey, 1995; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Idol, 2006; Jackson, Ryndak & Billingsley, 2000; Janney & Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007).
18. Paraprofessionals (also known as educational assistants) support inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Giangreco & Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader & Levine, 1999).
19. Inclusion goes beyond just placing students who have disabilities in the general education classroom (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Jackson, 2014; Janney & Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).
20. At my school, teams collaborate regularly to talk about how to better teach and test general education standards for all students, including students with disabilities (Ainscow

& Miles, 2008; Banerji & Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Jackson, Singal, 2008; King-Sears, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak & Billingsley, 2000; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe & Hall, 2003).

21. Paraprofessionals assume a large amount of responsibility for instructing students with disabilities (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Giangreco & Broer, 2005; Idol, 2006; Marks, Schrader & Levine, 1999; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008).

22. At my school, students participate in cooperative learning opportunities with each other, and the cooperative learning groups include students with disabilities (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak & Billingsley, 2000; Janney & Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Logan, Bakeman & Keefe, 1997; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Rouse & Florian, 1996).

23. I utilize explicit instruction techniques and practices with all students in my classroom (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Cook & Semmel, 1999; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak & Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Snell, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).

24. I utilize positive behavioral supports with all students in my classroom (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkin,

2011; Jackson, Ryndak & Billingsley, 2000; Janney & Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003).

25. At my school, peers (disabled and non-disabled students) support and help each other, and friendships amongst students (disabled and non-disabled) are encouraged (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Janney & Snell, 2006; Logan, Bakeman & Keefe, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Rouse & Florian, 1996; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009).

26. At my school, there is a shared, common plan time in each grade level where the special education and general education teachers plan together (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Banerji & Dailey, 1995; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Jackson, Ryndak & Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe & Hall, 2003).

27. My school is inclusive of students with disabilities (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Jackson, Ryndak & Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).

28. At my school, students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as students without disabilities (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing,

Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, & Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).

29. At my school, students have IEP goals that are directly linked to grade-level standards and curriculum (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).

30. At my school, there is an emphasis on high levels of learning for all students (disabled and non-disabled) at my school (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, & Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).

31. My school holds a core belief that all students (both disable and non-disabled) can learn grade-level content (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie,

1996; Jackson, 2014; Rubie-Davies, Hattie, & Hamilton (2006); Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).

32. I differentiate my instruction. I can give multiple examples of why and how I differentiate for the various needs of students with disabilities (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006).

33. Paraprofessionals are responsible for meeting the majority of the academic needs of students with disabilities in my school (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Idol, 2006; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).

22. Collaboration is necessary for inclusion to happen (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Banerji & Dailey, 1995; Cameron, 2014; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Jackson, Ryndak & Billingsley, 2000; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Wolfe & Hall, 2003).

34. This school year, I have received professional development in one or more of the following areas: collaboration, differentiation, positive behavioral support, inclusion and/or diversity (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Banerji & Dailey, 1995; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; Cook & Semmel, 1999; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; King-Sears, 1997;

Knight, 1999; Kosko & Wilkins, 2009; Rouse & Florian, 1996; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Singal, 2008; Tomlinson, 1999; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Wolfe & Hall, 2003; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).

35. I feel confident in making curricular and instructional modifications and accommodations (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).

36. General education teachers are responsible for the majority of the teaching and learning of all students including special education students (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Banerji & Dailey, 1995; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Knight, 1999; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).

37. At my school, parents play an active role in making decisions and remaining knowledgeable about their students with disabilities (Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Hunt & Goetz, 1997).

*Survey questions related to beliefs.* The following survey questions are focused on collecting information as it relates to teacher beliefs about inclusion.

38. All students, including students with mild, moderate and severe disabilities, should

spend the majority of their school day with same-grade peers in the general education setting (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; ESSA, 2015; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; IDEA, 2004; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013).

39. Inclusion is not a placement but rather a method of delivering services (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Carrington, 1999; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Jackson, 2014; King-Sears, 1997; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, Kline, 2009; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).

40. I am confident in my ability to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).

41. I am confident in my ability to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities in my classroom (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; Cook & Semmel, 1999; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999).

42. I am confident in my ability to meet the social needs of students with disabilities in

my classroom (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Janney & Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Tomlinson, 1999).

43. I am experienced when it comes to working with students with disabilities (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Soodak, 2003).

44. Students with disabilities benefit socially from being included in the general education classroom (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Janney & Snell, 2006; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).

45. Students with disabilities benefit academically from being included in the general education classroom (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing,



Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Wehmeyer, 2006; Zigmond, Kloo & Volonino, 2009).

46. Students without disabilities benefit socially from learning in an inclusive classroom with students with disabilities (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Janney & Snell, 2006; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008).

47. Students without disabilities benefit academically from learning in an inclusive classroom with students with disabilities (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Wehmeyer, 2006).

48. I feel confident in implementing positive behavioral supports to address challenging behaviors (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Beaman & Wheldall, 2000; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Janney & Snell, 2006; King-Sears, 1997; Knight, 1999; Sazak-Pinar & Guner-Yildiz, 2013; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009; Soodak, 2003).

49. I believe parents play an important role in making decisions and remaining

knowledgeable about their students with disabilities (Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Hunt & Goetz, 1997).

50. I celebrate diversity with my students (Agran, Alper & Wehmeyer, 2002; Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cameron, 2014; Carrington, 1999; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Downing, Eichinger & Williams, 1997; Florian & Black-Hawkin, 2011; Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996; Jackson, Ryndak & Billingsley, 2000; King-Sears, 1997; Naraian, 2011; Singal, 2008; Snell, 2009).

*Survey data collection and analysis.* The researcher initially planned for general education and special education teachers to receive an email that contained the survey with both open- and closed-end questions. Teachers were to complete two open-ended questions that focus on their definition of inclusion. They were to complete each question on a separate page of the electronic survey, and participants would not be able to refer back to previous answers. Throughout the survey, when the participant would have advanced to the next question, he/she would have been unable to return to the previous question. This was intentional to ensure that a participant did not change answers to the open-ended questions, as he/she progressed to the federal law, perceptions of actions and policies and beliefs sections, which included specific information about inclusion.

Teachers would likely construct a variety of lengths of responses to open-ended questions 1-4. The content of the answers to questions 1 and 2 is intended to be scored using the “Definition of Inclusion” Rubric (Appendix B). The rubric is designed to include core components of inclusion as stated in federal law, as well as research-based best practice. The researcher intended to utilize the rubric when scoring each individual participant’s responses. The rubric was intended to be marked to reflect the content of the

participant's definition. Depending on the type and amount of information included in the responses to questions 1 and 2, participants' answers were to be considered as one of four levels of understanding: *Lacks an Understanding of Inclusion, Partial Understanding of Inclusion, Solid Understanding of Inclusion or Exceptional Understanding of Inclusion*. *Lack of an Understanding of Inclusion* would be reflected if a participant included one or more negative comments about the impact of inclusive efforts, the need for students to be segregated or separated from age-appropriate, peers without disabilities, and/or that the general education teacher is not responsible for educating special education students. A *Solid Understanding of Inclusion* level of understanding would include key components of understanding about inclusion. The section of the rubric was intended to be utilized to determine whether a participant's response to questions 1 and 2 included enough information to show a *Partial, Solid or Exceptional* understanding of inclusion.

The researcher intended to gather information about each participant's final level of understanding about inclusion. The researcher intended to analyze the percentage of teachers who scored at each of the four levels of understanding: *Lacks and Understanding of Inclusion, Partial Understanding of Inclusion, Solid Understanding of Inclusion or Exceptional Understanding of Inclusion*. The general and special education teachers would have been compared for levels of understanding. The researcher intended to analyze which components from the rubric teachers included in their definition of inclusion. Themes of included components were to be examined.

The content of the answers to questions 3 and 4 were to be scored using the "Knowledge of Federal Law" Scoring Rubric (Appendix C). The rubric was designed to include key information of inclusion as stated in federal law. The researcher intended to

utilize the rubric when scoring each individual participant's responses. The rubric was intended to be marked to reflect the contents of the participant's definition. Depending on the amount of type and amount of information included in the responses to questions 3 and 4, participants' answers were to be considered as one of four levels of understanding: *Lacks an Understanding of Federal Law*, *Partial Understanding of Federal Law*, *Solid Understanding of Federal Law* or *Exceptional Understanding of Federal Law*. *Lack of an Understanding of Federal Law* were to be reflected if a participant was unable to include information about current federal special education legislation or included inaccurate information about current special education laws. A *Solid Understanding of Federal Law* level of understanding would be one that included key components of understanding about federal law. The section of the rubric was intended to determine whether a participant's response to questions 3 and 4 included enough information to show a *Partial*, *Solid* or *Exceptional* understanding of federal law.

The researcher intended to gather information about each participant's final level of knowledge about federal Law. The researcher intended to analyze the percentage of teachers who scored at each of the four levels of understanding: *Lacks and Understanding of Federal Law*, *Partial Understanding of Federal Law*, *Solid Understanding of Federal Law* or *Exceptional Understanding of Federal Law*. The general and special education teachers were to be compared for levels of understanding. The researcher intended to analyze which components from the rubric teachers included in their level of understanding of federal law. Themes of included components were to be examined.

Upon completion of the four open-ended questions, the teachers were to begin the

close-ended section of the survey. The selected-response questions are organized into three categories of questions and include question pertaining to federal special education law, policies and actions at the district and school level and personal beliefs about working with students with and without disabilities. Teachers were to respond to each question by selecting: *strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, don't know*. The researcher intended to analyze teacher responses in the federal law section by looking for the level in which each teacher agreed with the statements. The information in the *Federal Special Education Law* section included accurate statements about current federal mandates, and the researcher intended to be looking for the percentage of participants who agreed and strongly agreed with the statements. Also of interest would have been the number of participants who select disagree, strongly disagree or don't know in response to each of the 12 questions specifically about current federal special education legislation. The researcher intended to analyze participants' responses for themes about knowledge of federal special education law. The level of agreement that each participant were to report would be compared with the score they would have received on the "Knowledge of Special Education Law" Scoring Rubric (Appendix C) previously scored by the researcher utilizing the information obtained from questions 3 and 4 of the survey. The researcher intended to also compare the level of agreement to each question by special education teachers to that of the general education teachers.

The next section of closed-ended questions focused around policy and action at the school and classroom level. Teachers were to be asked to answer each selected response question by stating their level of agreement: *strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, don't know*. These 26 questions were to collect information about teacher

knowledge and understanding of the policies in place for inclusion of students who receive special education services and supports in their building. The researcher intended to analyze participants' responses for themes about policy and action at the school and in the classroom. The researcher intended to compare each participant's level of agreement to each question to the level of understanding each scored on the "Definition of Inclusion" Scoring Rubric (Appendix B) to be previously scored by the researcher utilizing the information obtained from questions 1 and 2 of the survey. The researcher intended to also compare the level of agreement to each question by special education teachers to that of the general education teachers.

The final section of closed-ended questions focused around teacher beliefs. Teachers were to be asked to answer each selected response question by stating their level of agreement: *strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, don't know*. These 13 questions were to be used to collect information about beliefs about special education students and special education services. The researcher intended to analyze participants' responses for themes about teacher beliefs. The researcher intended to compare each participant's level of agreement to each question to the level of understanding each scored on the "Definition of Inclusion" Scoring Rubric (Appendix B) to be previously scored by the researcher utilizing the information obtained from questions 1 and 2 of the survey. The level of agreement that each participant reports to belief statements was to be compared with the score they were to receive on the "Knowledge of Special Education Law" Scoring Rubric (Appendix C) to be previously scored by the researcher utilizing the information obtained from questions 3 and 4 of the survey. The researcher intended to also compare the level of agreement to each question by special education teachers to that

of the general education teachers.

Appendix I: Instrumentation Process, Phase I - Inclusion Survey: Definition, Federal Law, Policies, Actions and Beliefs

Demographic Information

Special Education or General Education Teacher:

Years of Experience as an Educator:

Level of Education:

Current Grade Level(s):

Open-Ended Questions

1. Write your definition of inclusion.
2. What must a teacher know and do for special education students?
3. Write what federal special education law mandates for teachers, schools and districts.
4. Describe what least restrictive environment means to you.

Selected Response Survey Questions

Response options to the following survey items include: *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *agree*, *strongly agree*, or *don't know*.

**Survey questions related to federal law**

1. I have a high level of personal knowledge and understanding about current federal laws as they pertain to special education and inclusion.
2. Federal laws mandate our school and our district to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom.
3. The general education classroom setting is the preferred setting for the majority, if not all, students with disabilities, as asserted by federal legislation.
4. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act 1975 was passed to ensure that children with disabilities were given the opportunity to receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.
5. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that individuals with disabilities must be provided a public education, and they also should have the right to learn in the least restrictive environment.



6. Students with disabilities are, to the maximum extent possible, to be educated in classrooms alongside students without disabilities.
7. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001, which was the Reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, was legislative action that required full-inclusion of students with disabilities, as well as assessing and reporting of achievement scores of all students, including students with disabilities.
8. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001, mandated that students with disabilities, and the teachers who teach them, would be held responsible and accountable for the same academic content and level of performance as students without disabilities.
9. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 is federal law that reinforces the expectation that students with disabilities receive learning experiences in the general education classroom and in the least restrictive environment as possible.
10. Currently, federal law states that students with disabilities are to be provided with supports and services that allow them to participate and make progress in the general education curriculum.
11. The Every Student Succeeds Act (Act, E. S. S., 2015) includes the core ideas of inclusion, accountability, high expectations for learning and having highly qualified professionals educating all students, especially students with disabilities.
12. Federal law mandates that less than 1% of students are allowed to take alternate assessments. The remaining students must take grade level tests.

#### **Survey questions related to Policy and Action**

13. My district communicates and reviews federal special education laws with us regularly through one or more of the following ways: professional development, policy notices, emails, etc.
14. My building principal communicates and reviews federal special education laws with the staff through one or more of the following ways: professional development, policy notices, emails, etc.
15. Inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom is required at my school.
16. My building principal supports inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.
17. My school has supports in place to enable inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

18. Paraprofessionals (also known as educational assistants) support inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.
19. Inclusion goes beyond just placing students who have disabilities in the general education classroom.
20. At my school, teams collaborate regularly to talk about how to better teach and test general education standards for all students, including students with disabilities.
21. Paraprofessionals assume a large amount of responsibility for instructing students with disabilities.
22. At my school, students participate in cooperative learning opportunities with each other, and the cooperative learning groups include students with disabilities.
23. I utilize explicit instruction techniques and practices with all students in my classroom.
24. I utilize positive behavioral supports with all students in my classroom.
25. At my school, peers (disabled and non-disabled students) support and help each other, and friendships amongst students (disabled and non-disabled) are encouraged.
26. At my school, there is a shared, common plan time in each grade level where the special education and general education teachers plan together.
27. My school is inclusive of students with disabilities.
28. At my school, students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as students without disabilities.
29. At my school, students have IEP goals that are directly linked to grade-level standards and curriculum.
30. At my school, there is an emphasis on high levels of learning for all students (disabled and non-disabled) at my school.
31. My school holds a core belief that all students (both disabled and non-disabled) can learn grade-level content.
32. I differentiate my instruction. I can give multiple examples of why and how I differentiate for the various needs of students with disabilities.
33. Paraprofessionals are responsible for meeting the majority of the academic needs of students with disabilities in my school.

34. This school year, I have received professional development in one or more of the following areas: collaboration, differentiation, positive behavioral support, inclusion and/or diversity.

35. I feel confident in making curricular and instructional modifications and accommodations.

36. General education teachers are responsible for the majority of the teaching and learning of all students including special education students.

37. At my school, parents play an active role in making decisions and remaining knowledgeable about their students with disabilities.

### **Survey questions related to Beliefs**

38. All students, including students with mild, moderate and severe disabilities, should spend the majority of their school day with same-grade peers in the general education setting.

39. Inclusion is not a placement but rather a method of delivering services.

40. I am confident in my ability to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities in my classroom.

41. I am confident in my ability to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities in my classroom.

42. I am confident in my ability to meet the social needs of students with disabilities in my classroom.

43. I am experienced when it comes to working with students with disabilities.

44. Students with disabilities benefit socially from being included in the general education classroom.

45. Students with disabilities benefit academically from being included in the general education classroom.

46. Students without disabilities benefit socially from learning in an inclusive classroom with students with disabilities.

47. Students without disabilities benefit academically from learning in an inclusive classroom with students with disabilities.

48. I feel confident in implementing positive behavioral supports to address challenging behaviors.

49. I believe parents play an important role in making decisions and remaining knowledgeable about their students with disabilities.

50. I celebrate diversity with my students.

## Appendix J: Instrumentation Process, Phase I - Definition of Inclusion Scoring Rubric

<b>Lacks an Understanding of Inclusion</b>	<b>Partial Understanding of Inclusion</b>	<b>Solid Understanding of Inclusion</b>	<b>Exceptional Understanding of Inclusion</b>
<i>Teacher includes one or more of the following.</i>	<i>Teacher includes three or less understandings listed under "Solid Understanding of Inclusion."</i>	<i>Teacher includes at least four of the following.</i>	<i>Teacher includes more than nine of the understandings listed under "Solid Understanding of Inclusion."</i>
Indicates a belief that students with disabilities are unable to be in the general education setting or with general education peers		Indicates an understanding that students with disabilities are to be in the general education classroom alongside students without disabilities to the maximum extent possible	
Indicates a belief that students with disabilities are unsuccessful when in the general education setting or with general education peers		Indicates language about Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), and/or Individualized Education Plan (IEP)	
Indicates a belief that students with disabilities interfere with the learning of students without disabilities		Indicates that it is more than placing students with disabilities in a general education classroom	
Indicates students are pulled out of the general education setting for long periods of time during the day		Indicates that it is more than just exposure to grade-level content	

Indicates that a paraprofessional provides majority of instruction		Includes the critical components: student progress and achievement	
Indicates that the special education teacher provides majority of instruction		Indicates that instructional content for students with disabilities is standards-based in grade-appropriate general education curriculum	
Indicates that students with disabilities are isolated/separated in the general education classroom		Indicates that students with and without disabilities benefits	
Indicates that students with disabilities are socially isolated/separated		Indicates the importance of celebrating diversity	
Indicates that a paraprofessional is with the student for the majority of the day		Indicates the importance of collaboration between students and professionals	
Indicates a lack of knowledge about what's on the IEP		Indicates the importance of high quality teaching, high levels of fidelity in instruction and/or skilled differentiation	
Indicates a lack of participation in one or more of the following: IEP meetings, instruction of students with disabilities, and IEP goal writing and monitoring		Indicates the importance of teacher knowledge and providing accommodations and curricular modifications to allow students to benefit from the access they are receiving	

		Indicates the importance of the general education teacher knowing what's listed on the IEP	
		Indicates that time spent in the general education classroom increases access to grade level content and learning	

Appendix K: Instrumentation Process, Phase I - Knowledge of Federal Special Education Law Scoring Rubric

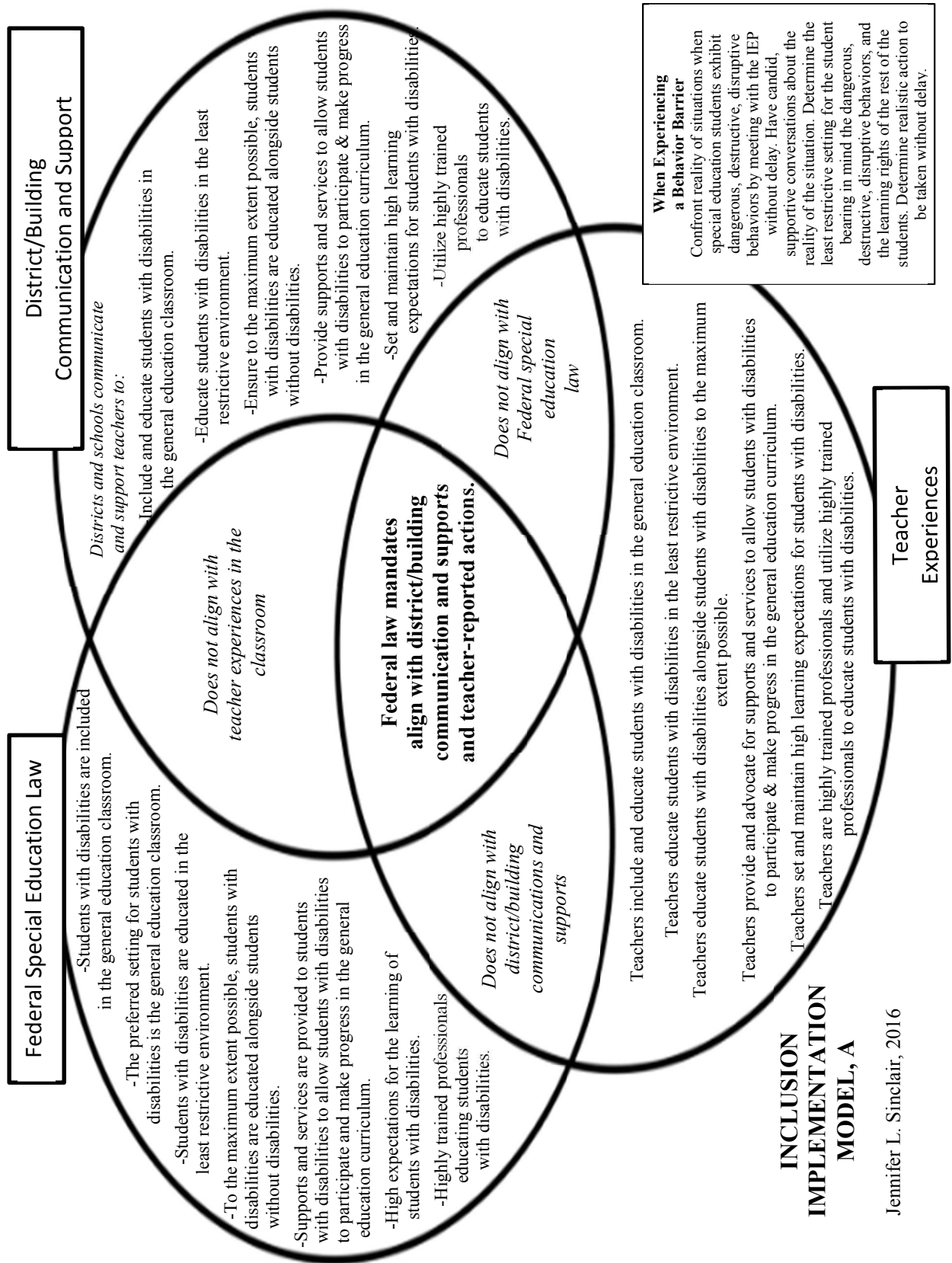
<b>Lacks an Understanding of Federal Legislation</b>	<b>Partial Understanding of Federal Legislation</b>	<b>Solid Understanding of Federal Legislation</b>	<b>Exceptional Understanding of Federal Legislation</b>
<i>Teacher includes no accurate information about current special education laws, or teachers include inaccurate information about current special education laws.</i>	<i>Teacher includes three or less understandings listed under "Solid Understanding of Federal Law."</i>	<i>Teacher includes at least four of the following understandings.</i>	<i>Teacher includes more than nine of the understandings listed under "Solid Understanding of Federal Law."</i>
		Includes information about an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)	
		Includes information about annual review of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) by a team including parents	
		Includes information about reevaluation for special education services every 3 years	
		Includes information about least restrictive environment (LRE)	
		Includes information about Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	
		Includes information about students with disabilities being placed with age-appropriate peers at the school he/she would attend with or without a disability	



		Includes information about access to general education classroom AND general education content	
		Includes information about “appropriate” use of paraprofessionals and not an over-reliance on them providing services	
		Includes information about students with disabilities receiving specialized services and/or interventions	
		Includes information about high expectations of learning for all students with and without disabilities	
		Includes state and federal reporting of student achievement for students with and without disabilities	
		Includes students and teachers held responsible and accountable for same academic content and level of performance as students without disabilities	
		Includes that less than 1% of the district’s student population is allowed to be given alternate assessments and alternate content	
		Includes specific federal laws by name (i.e. Individuals with	

		Disabilities Act (IDEA), Every Student Experiences Success Act (ESSA), No Child Left Behind (NCLB)	
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Appendix L: Inclusion Implementation Model, A (Post-Findings)



Appendix M: Inclusion Implementation Model, B (Post-Findings)

