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Inclusion Model Impact on Students with Disabilities in Academic Settings

Michael Anthony Adams
Bethel University

Inclusion Model Impact on Students with Disabilities in Academic Settings

by
Michael Anthony Adams

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Approved by:

Advisor: Dr. Mike Lindstrom

Reader: Dr. Barry Sullivan

Reader: Dr. Melanie Keillor

Abstract

This study explored how the special education inclusion model impacted students with disabilities in several South Georgia counties. The researcher determined there were differences in perceptions and actual progression based on the findings from educators' survey responses and standardized test results concerning the impact of the inclusion model on special education students in general education classrooms. This difference in perception versus reality emerged as a theme and may be attributed to educator's negative experiences. Specific interest was given to students with disabilities in the categories of specific learning disability (SLD), emotional behavioral disability (EBD), mild intellectual disability (MI), and other health impairment (OHI) disability that received special education services in general education classrooms. The increase of academic success among students with disabilities on standardized tests over the last five years in some high schools caused this researcher to question why general education teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals were not aware that the inclusive classroom model was responsible for positive changes. Surprisingly, the researcher discovered the dissonance that about half of the educators that would rather return to a segregated resource classroom model instead of an inclusion model for students with disabilities. Educators reported many challenges that led to the likelihood of failure of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Initial evidence of these challenges included declining completion of classwork and homework assignments by students with disabilities. The researcher found these challenges to be present in classroom settings as evidenced by the educators' response to survey questions relating to lack of completion of daily classwork and homework assignments.

Acknowledgements

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During this educational journey, I have lost more than just time consumed by reading and writing. I have lost both of my older sisters, Edna Jean Hurey (d. 2009) and Vivian Ann Pied (d. 2010). There have been emotional highs and lows, but instead of feeling discouraged or being distracted, a decision was made to dedicate this dissertation journey and completion in their memory. I would like to thank my wife, Carol Adams, and sons, Malik Adams and Tarik Adams, for their support, prayers, and patience. Last but not least, praise and thanks are due to My Creator who watched over all my efforts toward completing the extensive research, reading, and writing tasks necessary to conclude the goal of earning an educational doctorate from this esteemed university.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Public education is thought of as a birthright by many American citizens. Other's believe there is no federal constitutional right guaranteeing free education or mandating that states provide public education. Some people use the Tenth Amendment to suggest public education is the responsibility of state governments under the basis of state rights. The federal constitution gives states the right to govern as they choose. State policy makers developed state constitutions to dictate how a state operates its education program and other state-related issues.

However, the federal government highly influences each state's decisions on handling education through educational funding. The federal government encourages state and local action through statutes and regulations. These statutes and regulations influence implementation practices through interpretations of laws and rules. There are also court rulings at federal and state levels which impact educational policy. The federal government controls the educational process by financially penalizing states not complying by reducing or eliminating their educational funding. According to Maciag (2019), Georgia received 9.1% from federal sources, 45.2% from state sources, and 45.7% from local sources. Georgia spends $10,205 per pupil of an allocated $11,758 per pupil in all public elementary-secondary schools

According to Gargiulo and Kilgo (2011), "It was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that special education began to appear in the public schools. The first public school class was organized in Boston in 1869 to serve children who were deaf" (p. 19). The government intervened in the early to mid-1800s to bring attention to educational discrepancies of all children regardless of mental or physical disabilities and because there were not public schools for children with disabilities. Before government intervention, parents were responsible for the education of their children with disabilities.

Some parents utilized private educational institutions servicing children with disabilities or parents placed their physically or mentally disabled children in government institutions. Torreno (2007) echoed on the past by reporting that "in the tradition of segregating students during the middle to late 19th century, special schools for those with disabilities continued to be created in the early 1900s" (p. 1). Presently, students with disabilities walk the hallways of public schools with students not limited in learning the curriculum. Local school boards, as well as state and federal government officials, directly and indirectly influenced the academic structures of learning environments and educational settings through various laws over the last several decades. This movement led to rigorous curriculum and instruction development affecting many peoples' lives.

General education and special education teachers serve a crucial role in developing instructions and implementing curriculum to best meet the needs of all students. General education and special education teachers must positively impact the integrated educational process by addressing the best methods and practices required to effectively teach students with diverse learning needs alongside general education students. Federal education laws structured around funding led to ever-evolving state mandates for curriculum requirements and standard state testing to measure progression. The public educational realm can be tense, stressful, and frustrating as special needs students are mainstreamed in the same learning environment as general education students. Hines (2018) conclusively reported a wide range of interpretations of the definition for inclusion by individual districts that struggle with placing special education students in general education classrooms settings. Georgia's inclusion requirements mandated all district's policies and procedures are followed to ensure students with disabilities be educated with children who are not disabled if education can be achieved satisfactorily with the use of

supplementary aides and services (Georgia Department of Education, 2010). This allowed districts' administration to use partial and full inclusion as needed based on students with disabilities' Individual Education Plan (IEP). This study provided statistical evidence in addition to giving general education teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals the opportunity to voice their opinions and perceptions about their experiences with inclusion in Georgia. It also gave general education teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals the opportunity to share the experiences of their students in this era of focusing on ensuring that all students have access to the same learning materials and learning environments which provide students the opportune learning experience.

More studies are required on how educational systems throughout the United States are handling special needs students in their districts, classrooms, and institutions of learning. Although this study was not the first of its kind to look at special education, it is necessary to continually monitor student progression in special education. An objective of this study was to research special education in a few South Georgia counties to understand how students with disabilities are served based on their success in academic settings. The focus of this study was limited to 13 South Georgia educational systems. Therefore, there are viewpoints presented in this study that may not reflect the majority's perception of general education teachers who teach inclusion classes.

It is recommended that all readers analytically evaluate the findings and compare them with other research in this area. This study was intended to focus on collecting and identifying results from learning experiences for students with disabilities. It may seem a simple observation, yet for intrinsic values, especially for those who may be close to the special education realm, this study answers questions of equality and individualized curriculum and

instruction. It is important further research studies the inclusion model of special education. Zinskie and Rea (2016) suggested positive conclusions from multiple studies "are needed to make a definitive statement about effectiveness" (p. 3).

Statement of the Problem

Students with learning disabilities can be positively or negatively impacted through the introduction of grade level curriculum when included in the general education environment. Hines (2018) contended that special education students are merely placed in classrooms with general education students to be served separately on a different curriculum and with little interaction with peers. Some people believe special education students included in general classrooms do not absorb the instruction as well as general education students. Karen Agne, as cited in Noll, 2005, contended that "…the inclusion of emotionally disturbed and intellectually unfit students in regular classes robs other students of needed attention, robs [general education] teachers of their sanity, and does not serve the special needs students effectively" (p. 249). Therefore, these students struggle and eventually fail to reach standardized goals on assessments. Hines (2018) reported a high percentage of school districts are implementing inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms with at least an 80% participation rate on a daily basis and at least an 90% participation rate of all students with disabilities being served in a typical public school's classrooms.

Students with disabilities encompass a broad spectrum of children who have challenges in various learning areas; therefore, their learning styles differ from those of general education students. Under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), state education departments have more flexibility with the usage of accommodations, modifications and manipulative resources to create and provide systems designed to support learning for special education students in general

education settings by "establishing context-specific academic standards, identifying accountability indicators, designing annual state assessments, and planning intervention for students and schools at risk of low academic performance" (Zinskie & Rea, 2016, p. 1). State legislatures have adopted federal guidelines providing instructive outlines regarding the inclusion of special needs students in least restrictive environments with their general educated peers. To compensate for learning challenges, ESSA broadened the definition of success beyond only student performance on standard assessments (Zinskie & Rea, 2016). These students are expected to achieve the same level of success on standardized assessments as their general education peers. Students with disabilities, by definition, have difficulty comprehending educational lessons like their general education peers. General education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators are frustrated with poor results from these students in the areas of completing class and homework assignments, low scores on mandated state tests and failing classes.

This study examined whether there has been a successful impact resulting from the placement of students with disabilities in the inclusion learning model within some counties in South Georgia. Some state and local school systems' records were reviewed during this study. The Georgia school systems' personnel participating in this study are from the local area school systems. General education teachers, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals were asked to take part in a survey designed to gain their perception on various special education issues: classwork and homework completion, the perceived strengths and challenges of the inclusion model, special education students' pass rate in inclusion model classes, and the application of special education students' accommodations and modifications. A separate analysis was completed on state end of course test results for inclusion students. The

state end of course test score (20%) and the student's classroom grade (80%) are combined to determine whether the student passed the course.

The results from this study may be informative to those who administer, teach, aid, or are rearing children with mental or physical challenges that interfere with their ability to learn in public education settings. Administrators, general education teachers, and special education teachers can gain insight into the progression of their efforts to educate all students. Gargiulo and Kilgo's (2011) study found the following:

> This model, known as inclusive [inclusion] education, is now widely accepted as an effective way to meet the educational needs of young children with special needs. Children with special needs are now common in child care centers, preschools, Head Start programs, and public schools, learning alongside their typically developing peers [general education students]. (p. 248)

The state of Georgia initially started mandating a form of special education inclusion model around 1990-1991 as well as all states as they implemented a provision in the IDEA Act of 1990 that stated students with disabilities must have access to the general education curriculum in the general education classroom to the maximum extent possible (U.S. Code Chapter 33, n.d.). The most current standardized test results from students with disabilities categorized as SLD, EBD, OHI, and MI are explored to check progress and level of achievement. It is not known whether there is a difference in students with disabilities' state test scores. Positive study results indicated that students with disabilities are achieving standardized goals and succeeding in the general education setting. On the other hand, negative study results indicated that students with disabilities are not achieving standardized goals and succeeding in the general education setting.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the negative or positive impact of the inclusion model for instruction to children with disabilities within 12 southern counties in the state of Georgia. From a statistical point of reference, the researcher explored differences in students with disabilities' assessment scores in the main academic subjects. This in-depth study looked at how rural, secondary students progressed in the general education inclusion model environment and how their general education teachers and special education teachers perceive their inclusion in the general education environment.

The purpose of using surveys in addition to collection and compilation of past assessment scores was to triangulate the data from different sources. To clarify association of the categories, the study utilized elements of several disabilities to create analytical data reviews of assessment scores. Assessment scores must remain anonymous. Therefore, the identities of students, special education teachers, special education paraprofessional, and general education teachers were kept confidential. Variables such as academic or performance grades and disabilities were stressful collection items for some counties to reveal due to the beforementioned confidentiality concerns of the anonymity of students' identity. However, making the most of these variables was important when compiling the final assembly of the overall results.

There are various categories of special education classification for children with disabilities. The range of disabilities include but was not limited to emotional behavior disorders (EBD), specific learning disorders (SLD), autism (ASD), mild intellectual disability (MI), moderate intellectual disability (MO), and other health impairment (OHI). Some of these disabilities are easier to find test results data on than others. Some disabilities have more data

available than others. Therefore, it was less complicated to construct this study around the aspects of research for those disabilities were easier to find and collect data on.

This study considered disabilities and focused on grouping achievement based on a few disabilities serviced in general education classrooms. Students with disabilities serviced in other school settings are important however, this study was limited to special education students served by special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers. These identified students participated in state assessments due to several critical disability differences in qualification categories of state and federal requirements for assessments.

Nature of the Study

To provide some historical background of Georgia's inclusion policy, one needs to understand what organization was at the forefront of the inclusion policy and its development. Around the year 1991, Gwinnett County Public Schools put an inclusion model in place to support students with disabilities. Currently, it is a requirement school districts have implemented an inclusion approach and adhere to state and federal policies (U.S. Code Chapter 33, n.d.). As with any other state, Georgia special education training requirements must be met prior to the state education board awarding a teacher certification. Professional development and ongoing training are also required by the state of Georgia on managing an inclusion approach and the remedial training process. Results from Georgia standardized state assessments are available from former and current inclusion special education students' scores. All standardized inclusion assessments are closely tied to Georgia and federal education policies as it relates to funding based on compliance (U.S. Code Chapter 33, n.d.). As a foundation of Georgia school systems' decision to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom, results

were sought for student with disabilities to have a positive learning environment. Logan, Diaz, Piperno, Rankin, MacFarland, and Bargamian (1994) explained the early educational challenge as follows:

> The Gwinnett County Public Schools, Georgia's second largest district, is now involved in its third year of inclusion. In our classrooms, the presence of students with severe disabilities has not only sparked understanding and acceptance of differences, but has also motivated our students to engage in worthwhile and high-level intellectual activity. Teachers [general and special education teachers] today more fully recognize the value of inclusion because they see its power as an effective instructional practice. (p. 44)

This study attempted to answer the questions of whether there was a difference in students with disabilities assessment scores. Fatta, Garcia, and Gorman (2009) suggested a trend existed of low scores on teacher-made chapter tests and non-completion of daily mathematics class homework. Fatta, Garcia, and Gorman (2009) calculated average homework scores within all mathematics classes in the first semester averaged an 87.55% homework completion rate. Furthermore, standardized test results show most students with disabilities score below average on most portions, and many students with disabilities repeat general education courses (Fatta, Garcia, & Gorman, 2009). High school students' overall grade averages have dropped, along with their attitudes towards learning (Fatta, Garcia, & Gorman, 2009). "When asked why their peers might do poorly in math and science, 79% of White, 62% of African-American and 65% of Hispanic students said it was because they feel the subjects are irrelevant to their [general education students and students with disabilities] lives" (Friedman & Kadlec, 2007, p. 13). These findings were retrieved from a telephone survey of 1,293 middle and high school students in Kansas and Missouri (Friedman & Kadlec, 2007).

A policy change occurred with the issuance of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004 that moved the once separated and self-contained special education students with disabilities into the mainstream general education population, therefore creating the inclusive education environment that is currently in public schools across the country (Torreno, 2007). Prior to these policy changes, several laws were passed to support students with disabilities in public institutions and schools. One of the first and most impactful laws passed in 1975 by Congress called the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142), which required states to provide equal access for children with disabilities to public funded educational institutes and schools. Alexander and Alexander (2009) provided a summary of the original special education law, P.L. 94-142 which states its focus was free appropriate public education, individualized educational programs, special education services, related services, due process and least-restrictive environment. Siegel's (1998) study found the following:

> The IDEA [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act which is the modern name of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act] was enacted in 1975 and reauthorized and revamped in 2004. The purpose of the law is to ensure that children with disabilities receive an appropriate education. (p. 14)

Therefore, states started aligning their general education programs to be more inclusive for students with disabilities based on the rules of the IDEA that stated special education services would be in the least restrictive environment (LRE) when possible. "To sum up, the LRE rules demonstrate: a strong preference for mainstreaming [inclusion], including the requirement to provide aides and services before a child can be removed from a regular class…" (Siegel, 2017, p. 25). This policy change has been in place for the last 47 years yet has been expanded to be

more inclusive in the last 18 years. Torreno (2007) explained these changes as follow:

> Beginning with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its amendments of 1986 and 1992, employment and educational rights of people with disabilities were guaranteed from institutions receiving federal funding. Then, with the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), all school districts were required to develop and provide a free, appropriate public education for all children. (p. 2)

The level of agreement with the policy change to inclusive education for all students were measured by special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers' surveys designed to gauge special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers' perceptions. The researcher gathered data by obtaining and analyzing assessment scores and conducting special and general education teachers' surveys to understand how the inclusion teaching setting impacted students with disabilities' learning.

High school special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers were the sample population. The researcher must consider whether general education teachers and special education teachers' responses are similar or different due to variables. These variables were not considered: gender, age, and ethnicity. However, variables such as grade level taught, disabilities taught, years teaching students with disabilities, years teaching inclusion courses, assessment scores, district approach to inclusion, teacher training (professional development), demographics, and school history was considered.

To collect empirical data, score analysis and surveys were collected from high school special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers. This was a backward study where the end of the research was processed into the actual research

while gathering pertinent information. Research information was gathered and other pertinent materials relating to their search. The timeline for collecting relevant data were from 2012 to 2020.

Some covariates that may affect results include the implementation of the IDEA and NCLB Act and the roll-out of the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) to replace Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) in the state of Georgia. These mandates set quotas and guidelines that initiated the development of comprehensive strategies to include all students in the mainstream education process. School systems adopted curriculum and instruction designed not to separate students based on abilities. It was necessary for schools to engage in systems of accommodation and modification for students with disabilities in order to improve their chances of succeeding in classrooms and on state assessments. These interventions were necessary steps so schools could pass annual progression evaluations. Previous intervention efforts effectiveness was reviewed during an analysis of special education students' standardized classroom assessment results. Zinskie and Rea (2016) found the following:

> In December 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was passed to replace the NCLB Act. ESSA gives school districts—in partnership with school staff and parents—the opportunity to replace the one-size-fits-all remedies of NCLB with locally selected and designed evidence-based interventions that are creatively adapted to the particular needs of their struggling students and schools. (p. 1)

Research Questions

A Likert scale survey was used to gather answers to research questions.

RQ1: What are the differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' state test scores in an inclusion model in recent years?

RQ2: What are the differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' classwork and homework completion in an inclusion model in recent years?

RQ3: What are the differences or similarities in the way special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers view the special education students' pass rate on standardized assessments and overall course pass rate in an inclusion model?

RQ4: Do special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers prefer the inclusion model or special education classroom model as the best way to serve high school students with disabilities?

Definition of Terms

The Understanding Special Education homepage provides an assortment of information on definitions and terms associated with special education (Understanding Special Education, n.d.).

- Accommodations: Changes that allow a person with a disability to participate fully in an activity. Examples include extended time, different test format, and alterations to a classroom.
- Disability: Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): Special education and related services are provided at public expense, without charge to the parents.
- Inclusion: Services that place students with disabilities in general education classrooms with appropriate support services. Students may receive instruction from both a general education teacher and a special education teacher.

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004): The original legislation was written in 1975 guaranteeing students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education and the right to be educated with their non-disabled peers. Congress has reauthorized this federal law. The most recent revision occurred in 2004.
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP): The written document that states the disabled child's goals, objectives, and services for students receiving special education.
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): The placement of a special needs student in a manner promoting the maximum possible interaction with the general school population. Placement options are offered on a continuum including general education classroom with no support services, general education classroom with support services, designated instruction services, special day classes, and private special education programs.
- Mainstreaming: The integration of children with special needs into general education classrooms for part of the school day. The remainder of the day is in a special education classroom.
- Multiple Disabilities: A combination of disabilities that causes severe educational needs that require multiple special education programs such as cognitive delay with blindness.
- Other Health Impaired (OHI): Limited strength, vitality, and alertness that result in limited ability in the educational environment. Impairment could be a result of chronic health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder, epilepsy, heart condition, hemophilia, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia.
- Parent Consent: Special education term used by IDEA that states one have been fully informed in their native language or other mode of communication of all the information

about the action for which one are giving consent and that one understands and agree in writing to that action.

- Specific Learning Disability (SLD): A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language spoken or written that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical equations.

Limitations

This study was limited by the number of special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers that participated in this study's surveys. For various reasons, educators chose not to participate in this study. With the number of special education personnel shrinking due to numerous circumstances whether voluntary or involuntary, finding participants to volunteer was a difficult task yet accomplishable. Also, getting systems to allow their personnel to utilize school systems' time and resources to participate, was an obstacle.

The number of general education teachers and special education teachers that could relate to the period prior to inclusion implementation influenced the validity of the hypothesis. With the ever-changing of personnel in the special education field, it was relatively hard to find personnel that have tenure in special education positions that provided the historical background information needed to connect past and present elements of special education doctrine. Current trends lend to short term careers in special education or the use of the special education position as a stepping stone to another education position. Nationally, the overall general education teachers' turnover rate is 16% annually (8% leave the teaching profession and 8% shift schools), however, special education teachers leave their positions at U.S. public schools at a turnover rate

of 14.2% annually (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). In Georgia, 44% of educators [general education teachers] leave within the first five years in their teaching position (Owens, 2015). Therefore, this study was limited to a small spectrum of special education educators that taught in the special education field in the period prior to inclusion implementation.

The honesty of those providing information to this study via surveys was crucial to the relationship of actual experience to the results from raw quantitative data retrieved through research. Some human factors possibly interfered with the validity of survey results. Most people want to say the right thing and portray that they think and do the right things, so answers swayed toward positivity. To reduce the impact of limitations on honest responses, the identity of educators participating in this research was not be revealed. Therefore, meticulous analysis of the data retrieved depicted the accuracy of the sample populations' input.

A limitation of this study was the selection of only special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers. These participants taught and assisted students with disabilities in learning academics in general education classes and special education classes. Selecting those who make decisions about setting up and administering special education programs for educational districts would have broaden the research population. However, time consumption was a major factor in limiting personnel used as sources when collecting and compiling results.

There was a limitation in the small sample size because this study was concentrated in the southern area of the state of Georgia. This area entailed 13 school districts that were used in the survey. It was not known how many educators would participate from the possible participants in those districts. Another support for the belief that the sample and population sizes for this research would be small, was the use of secondary (high school) special education personnel and

general education personnel entirely. Of the potential educators that could have possibly participated in this research, the population size was 436. This research sought a sample size of 305 educators.

The construction of the questions may have possibly been a stumbling block if the respondents did not fully comprehend the questions. The assumptions were because these were educators; they would understand the language of the text and respond appropriately. This was noticed in the short time required to credulously complete surveys. Hopefully, respondents had familiar experiences with the inclusion model. Due to the lack of previous instruments used in similar research work, it was deemed necessary for the researcher to create survey questions. A Likert scale survey was used to gather answers to research questions. To screen the survey and questions for validity and reliability, a pre-survey was used then a resubmission of a final survey to better gauge consistency in responses to survey questions.

Ethical Considerations

The subjectivity of this study shows some degree of partiality since some data collected came from schools with small populations and co-workers with long and close relationships. Human factors contributed to unreliable responses from some co-workers at these schools. However, these participants were a small percentage of the sample population. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research and writing. Most data were retrieved from county and state resources. The confidential data were retrieved from school sources normally only granted limited access. Impartiality was also maintained through the research and writing of the text to ensure the integrity and development of an ethical product. It was accomplished by confidential communication with peers, school administration, and school board staff members.

Three basic principles, among those generally accepted in America's cultural tradition,

were particularly relevant to the ethics of research involving human subjects: the principles of respect of persons, beneficence, and justice. These principles were adhered to in this research. There were no students used in this research directly, which voids the need for parental consent.

Assumptions

There are limitations that could have affected this study which were out of the researchers' control. Limitations in controlling the sample population gender affected the outcome. A significant concern was the fact that the female gender dominates response to surveys. Due to the nature of the personnel make-up of most school districts, it was not shocking to find most special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers are females. "About 77% of teachers [general and special education teachers] are women—up slightly from 76% in 2012. In primary schools, nearly 9 in 10 teachers [general and special education teachers] are women. In high schools, less than two-thirds are" (Loewus, 2017, p. 11). However, as assumed this fact did not impact utilizing statistical data retrieved from personal responses.

The scope of qualifying personal responses were the qualifications of their responses. Ensuring an error free data analysis was quite difficult yet partially achievable with variance analysis through ANOVA. The participants with at least 10 years of special education teaching was most favorable for this research. Their knowledge of historical events relating to this research was invaluable. All data gathered and received was treated objectively.

Organization of the Study

Bethel University requires that dissertations be organized in the following manner:

Chapter 1 has presented the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose and nature of the study, definition of terms, limitations, ethical considerations, assumptions, and organization

of the study. It has opened the focus of this study starting with the necessity for this research effort. This was all-encompassing in the background data given relating to the problem with the intention of maintaining a progressive and thorough research. Chapter 2 includes the review of literature, history of the subject, continual debate on inclusion in the education community, development of special education trends, inclusion models in special education, co-teaching, and summary. The methodology, an overview, data gathering procedures sample and setting, instrumentation and measures, data collection, analysis of data, research questions, hypotheses statements, and chapter summary is presented in Chapter 3. Contained in Chapter 4 are the results and findings related to inquiry questions. This study concludes with discussions, implementations, and recommendations, final analysis, implications for educational practice, and implications for further research nestled in Chapter 5.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

The traditional approach to education is intrinsically centered around academics. Students' intellectual growth is determined and evaluated by their verbal and mathematical proficiency (Mohamed, 2018, p. 3). Most teaching practices required students to complete a task, repeat the task, then take tests at a regular interval to check the students' recall of the information or practice they learned. This is what a typical class's instruction was like prior to inclusion of special education students in general education classes. The method of teaching special education students was altered when the NCLB Act was created. In moving to improve education for all students, President Bush signed the NCLB Act into federal law on January 8, 2002. This Act revised the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Robelen, 2005). Gregory (2018) informed readers that "inclusive education is defined as educators and schools ensuring that children can access the curriculum by not only being physically included into the educational setting, but also, ensuring the curricular materials are appropriately modified and used by educators to allow all children to access them (p. 128). According to Mohamed (2018), the needs of a special education program can only be met through the implementation of a progressive approach to education in American institutions (p. 13).

According to the NCLB Act, all states must demonstrate improvement in student test scores in reading, English language arts (ELA), and mathematics each year (Jehlen & Winans, 2005; Paige, 2002). The basic purpose and provisions of NCLB were to ensure that each child in the United States meets the learning standards established by his or her state. Various researchers on inclusion, such as Hines (2018), believe there are clear benefits for students with disabilities as well as students without disabilities and for the whole society. The NCLB Act was passed to raise achievement levels for all students, provide new accountability measures linked

to state standards, and better prepare teachers [general and special education teachers] for today's learners (Riley, 2002; Robelen, 2005). General and special education teachers are demanded to teach rigorous subjects to students with learning disabilities which called for general and special education teachers to teach differently. Burt, Graves, and LeDoux (2012) revealed that general education teachers desired to be involved in "grading, developing goals and objectives on the Individualized Education Program (IEP), and helping to create Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) and make Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) decisions (p. 29)" for students with disabilities in their inclusion classrooms. In other words, general education teachers were eager to meet the NCLB Act's call for general education teachers to practice differential instruction and equity. According to researchers, these inclusion teachers also had a big concern with building positive relationships with student with disabilities because prior to the NCLB Act positive relationships were missing (Burt, Graves, & LeDoux, 2012).

Students with disabilities' dropout rates are a concern for all people involved in their education and life skills development. Dropout rates for students with disabilities and students without disabilities are a significant problem nationally since inclusion was mandated (Johnson & Thurlow, 2011). The 2015-2016 U.S. Department of Education government report is the most recent report covering students with disabilities between 14 and 21 years old. It reported the breakdown of percentage rates of students with disabilities exiting IDEA, Part B as follows: 44.8% graduated with general high school diploma, 26.5% moved and were known to be continuing their education plan, 11.2% dropped out, 9.3% transferred to general education, 7.1% received a certificate, and 1.0% exited for other exiting reasons (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). As in the general population, these statistics vary by race and ethnicity. Visual impairment students had the lowest dropout rates from 2006-07 through 2015-16 within the

population of students with disabilities (6.3%), whereas the corresponding dropout rates for Emotional Disturbance, Other Health Impairment, and Specific Learning Disability respectively had the highest dropout rates at 34.8%, 17.3%, and 17.2% respectively (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Impartiality and equity are intended to involve all students: minority and students with disabilities. Johnson and Thurlow (2011) emphasized that special education's focus on dropouts had been addressed primarily through the transition requirements of the IDEA. Basically, laws are purposely passed to support educational impartiality and the success of students with disabilities beyond academic programs into being productive and gainfully employed citizens.

The core of educational equity and impartiality is to ensure that every student has access to challenging curriculum that supports his or her personal, academic, and professional goals. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics [NCTM] (2000) study found the following:

> Regardless of their differences of race, ethnic group, gender, socioeconomic status, geographic location, age, language, disability, or prior academic achievement, all students deserve equitable access to challenging and meaningful academic learning and achievement. Equally important factors are high expectations and strong support. (p. 12)

General education teachers' perceptions and acceptance of inclusion classroom models are equally important to collect to assist with setting and achieving their personal goals, and their students', administrators', and legal goals. So, a question is how do the general education teachers feel? Stidham-Smith's (2013) research results discovered that veteran general education teachers indicated in a survey that most of them had a positive attitude towards inclusion versus lower rating from general education teachers with less experience. General education teachers are on the frontline of implementing mandates, therefore, they have valuable insight into the

inclusion process. Evidence of the strength of the inclusive position was seen in the steady increase in placement rates of students with disabilities in general education classrooms (McLeskey, Henry, & Axelrod, 1999). Inclusion of students with disabilities laws were created "to benefit special children through improvements in their learning outcomes, including their social skills" (Wang, 2009, p. 155). Inclusion classroom settings allow team building and cooperation of students with disabilities with their general education peers while learning. Wang's (2009) research on inclusion considers this same idea as he discovered that learning and psychological conditioning occurs in other settings, besides just the academic setting, as students with disabilities interact in culture and other activities with general education students.

However, does placing students with disabilities in general education classrooms motivate the students with disabilities? Blackorby, Wagner, Cameto, Davies, Levine, and Newman (2005) reported that students with disabilities (special education needs) who spend more time in general education classrooms have higher scores on achievement tests, are absent less, and perform closer to grade level than their peers who are withdrawn for instruction. At the secondary level, Blackorby et al. (2005) corroborated the findings of Wagner, Newman, Cameto, and Levine (2003) that students with disabilities in inclusive settings perform closer to grade level on standards-based achievement tests than their more segregated peers. Do they have a sense of belonging? Belonging has been described as "students' sense of being "accepted, respected, included, and supported by others" (teachers and peers) in the academic classroom setting and of feeling oneself to be an important part of the life and activity of the class (Goodenow, 1993, p. 80). If emotionally troubled students with disabilities do not have a sense of belonging even if they can succeed in their educational setting, they may not grasp all the good intentions of lawmakers and administrators and fail or dropout all together. Information

retrieved from the 40th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2018 provides statistical data that supports this dropout issue (U.S. Department of Education, 2018):

> In each year from 2006-07 through 2015-16, a larger percentage of the students reported under the category of emotional disturbance exited special education and school by dropping out. In fact, in each year, the dropout percentage was no less than 30%, which was substantially larger than the dropout percentage for any other disability category. (Exhibit 42, p. 73).

Students' classroom engagement, academic effort, and subsequent school success or failure are influenced not only by individual differences in skills, abilities, and predispositions, but also by many situational and contextual factors (Goodenow, p. 80). Administrators must focus on laws and policies inherited with NCLB, IDEA and ESSA Acts while clearly identifying and ensuring special and general education teachers understand their roles with the situational and contextual factors. Goodenow (1993) stated that these contextual factors include the quality of school social relationships as potentially the most important factor. NCLB has now been replaced by ESSA. However, the same SPED requirements under NCLB continues under ESSA. With very few changes from the old NCLB policy, ESSA allows for more state controlled educational programs and more flexibility, especially relating to developing, implementing academic standards, and assessing those standards while being held accountable for results (Zinskie & Rea, 2016, p. 1).

Ideally, the special education teacher has expertise in learning styles, learning strategies, behavior modification, diagnostic or prescriptive teaching, and accommodations, and the general education teacher has expertise in content area, scope and sequence of curriculum, presentation

of curriculum, large group management strategies, and an objective view of academic and social development (Basso & McCoy, 1997). Also, these areas are keys to success in inclusion models: special education and general education teachers' teaching style, students' learning style, classroom differentiation, the IEP teams' creation and implementation of the IEP, student inputs, and collaboration between the special education and general education teachers. Administrators must continually assist special education and general education teachers and students by influencing "a culture of acceptance, love, open-mindedness, and caring between students, staff, parents, and the community" (Murphy, 2018, p. 97).

Choi, McCart, and Sailor (2020) suggested that "a school with a fully integrated educational framework is better positioned to meet the needs of all students, including those who live in poverty, who experience high mobility, who benefit from an accelerated curriculum, or who struggle to learn for other reasons" (p. 8). Administrators' efforts must support the general education teachers and special education teachers in developing the knowledge, skills and dispositions that enhance students with disabilities transition into general education classrooms. Choi, McCart, and Sailor (2020) described administrators' role as part of "a whole interlocking education systems (i.e., state, district, school) to reshape and increase school capacity to implement and sustain an equity-based, inclusive multi-tiered system of support" (p. 8). Murphy (2018) explained that it is beneficial for administrators to attend general and special education teachers' professional learning community meetings to listen, ask questions, and try to learn as much as they can to help with inclusion progress.

Fatta, Garcia, and Gorman (2009) discovered that "literature on helping students retain and develop higher level thinking skills focuses mainly on creating lessons based on different multiple intelligences, incorporating more group work, and the use of positive reinforcements in

the classroom (p. 17). Friedman and Kadlec (2007) discovered that 54% of survey participants (parents) responded that grouping students by ability was a favorable way of improving math and science education. Benefits of ability grouping includes keeping students active on their level, reducing skill level differences, and improving the development of instructions. Friedman and Kadlec (2007) suggested a need for aggressive and creative ways to increase parents', students', special education and general education teachers' engagement. Their engagement is necessary to increase interest and help students pass assessments and courses; particularly in math, science, and technology (Friedman & Kadlec, 2007).

The difficulty of transition from one program or practice to another always invites resistance. According to the NCLB, all states must demonstrate improvement in student test scores in reading, ELA, and mathematics each year (Jehlen & Winans, 2005; Paige, 2002). A successful reform requires creating a supportive climate for implementation (Blair, 2003):

> The supportive climate means changing the way special education and general education teachers are trained to teach mathematics and science; changing their belief systems; ensuring that special education and general education teachers are qualified to teach their subject areas; building strong research and development programs to highlight effective instructional strategies; and changing curricula. (p. 28)

History of Special Education

Historical case studies, mainly from Georgia, were used as resources and references. "Special education in the U.S. began in earnest with passage of the Education of the Handicapped Amendments (EHA) to the Elementary and Secondary Education Statute (ESEA), passed by Congress and signed into law by President Ford in 1975" (Choi, McCart, & Sailor, 2020, p. 9). Essex (2008) suggested "Individuals with disabilities are protected by three

significant federal statutes: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA), Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 (p. 132). Several decades ago, seeing students with disabilities in public schools with general education students were uncommon. Traditional educators' instruction was based on fixed curricular orders that applied a "one standard fits all" model (Mohamed, 2018). Parents and special interest groups had to advocate for students with disabilities to be included in the same buildings as general education students. Mohamed (2018) made the points that traditional approach to education did not deliver instructions based on students with disabilities' needs and abilities because traditional approach did not consider that there were differences in aptitudes. The initial movement to have students with disabilities educated in public school facilities began with concerned and caring parents uniting in groups to bring national attention to the neglect of educating all children. Algozzine et al. (2012) stated that all the following should be involved in the inclusion process: school leaders, parents, community members, and other stakeholders.

Choi, McCart, and Sailor (2020) realized that "traditional schools with separate classrooms and even schools designated to exclusively serve various learner subgroups (e.g., students identified for special education) will require reorganized systems, structures, and resources" (p. 8). Often students with disabilities were excluded from public education because of their disabilities. Some early legal battles resulted in indirect influences in the efforts to include students with disabilities in public education settings. Although the *Plessey v. Ferguson* (1896) court case did not directly deal with separation of students with disabilities, it did place the term from its court decision, "Separate but Equal," in the public thought and conscience. Inclusiveness of all people in public facilities was a theme that the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s endorsed. Therefore, education was not exempt from including all citizens with

the opportunity to a fair and appropriate education. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) although not directly focusing on students with disabilities but education integration in general, would lead to other court cases affecting education for students with disabilities fighting to receive public education with their peers.

The increasing diversity of students who were physically or mentally challenged seeking to attend public schools led educators, administrators, and politicians to find ways to integrate the diverse learning needs of students in educational systems, across the nation to better meet the needs of all people (Choi, McCart, & Sailor, 2020). Torreno (2007) noted that special classes with trained teachers for students with varying disabilities began to develop between 1850 and 1950 as teachers noticed the differences in students. "In 1962, President Kennedy's Panel on Mental Retardation announced their hope to reduce the prevalence of MR [mental retardation] by 50% by the year 2000" (Brosco, Mattingly, & Sanders, 2006, p. 306). The creation of the President's Panel on Mental Retardation during President John F. Kennedy's administration led to allocating funds to help states tackle the issue of educating students with disabilities under the scrutiny of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation. President Kennedy's successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which specifically targeted funds to lower, entry level education throughout the nation to provide equal access to quality education (Paul, 2016).

Several federal laws were created to offset the slow pace that the school systems accepted toward the fair and appropriate integration of students with disabilities in general education settings. "In 1975, Public Law 92-142 mandated the free appropriate public education to students with disabilities. Subsequent legislation (IDEA-1997, IDEA-2004) has specified that students with disabilities are to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE)" (Hines,

2018, p. 65). This basically meant "…school districts must educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports, along with their nondisabled peers in the school they would attend if they were not disabled" (Hines, 2018, p. 65).

Continual Debate on Inclusion in the Education Community

In the heat of the political pressure and social upheavals of the early and mid-20th century, it became necessary for politicians to pursue a path that led to laws that demanded better treatment of students with disabilities barred from participating in general education environments by discrimination, segregation, and exclusion. Choi, McCart, and Sailor (2020) proclaimed the transformation from traditional to inclusive educational practices forecasted improved results for students with IEPs. Critics proclaimed including students with disabilities in the same classroom as general education students would lead to failed policies.

Yet, there are some indications revealed from results of state assessments and graduation rates that the concept of special education inclusion is not as promising as it seemed in theory. Although there has been a gradual increase in graduation rates for students with disabilities, it only lingers around 50% (Torreno, 2007). Continual debate on this topic suggest further research was needed.

Special education inclusion was a relatively recent initiative that was less than half a century old. The inclusion models are just faintly passing the era of rejection and moderately moving into the era of reluctant acceptance (Hines, 2018, p. 65). Theoretically, placing students with intellectual challenges in environments with general education students provides a more enriching setting for the students with disabilities. Advocates and early adopters of personalized learning view it as a game changer with the potential to dramatically accelerate learning for students at all levels of performance (Hyslop & Mead, 2015, p. 8). However, some students with

disabilities struggle adjusting to social and learning settings because of the faster teaching pace, exposure to rigorous materials, and personal anxiety experienced when they try to be successful and be socially accepted in general education classroom settings. Many students with disabilities lack the mental capacities to absorb lessons based on several variables and ultimately drop out of school. Johnson and Thurlow (2011) reported that these variables are age, gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity, native language, region, mobility, ability, disability, parental employment, school size and type, and family structure. Students with disabilities show frustrations with these variables which usually lead to behavior issues, therefore creating other issues like failing grades, inability to communicate well with peers, special education and general education teachers, social rejection, and ultimately dropping out of school. Special education students in the eligibility category of emotional behavioral disabilities are the greatest concern for dropping out of school because of the high dropout rate among these students with disabilities (Johnson & Thurlow, 2011).

Theories formulated by those pushing for inclusion with the reason of giving a clear direction for citizens to utilize their rights to free and appropriate education can be traced back to the Supreme Court decision on *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) that stated that school could not separate students because of race (Torreno, 2007). Irrational ideas without practicality forced academically challenged pupils to fit in an education system where all variety of students could fit the same mold and learn. As one study in California suggested, special education students are also likely to have had limited access to the same curriculum as other students, resulting in a vicious circle of low performance and poor grades (Johnson & Thurlow, 2011, p. 43). Henceforth, students with disabilities found it difficult to succeed in general education classroom learning general education standards and curriculum.

Some students with disabilities triumphed and graduated from their particular school yet many that struggled while trying to succeed in inclusion settings eventually gave up. Dropping out for special education students and non-special education students is a significant problem nationally (Johnson & Thurlow, 2011, p. 1). The cause of their failure to succeed in inclusion settings cannot be pinpointed to factors but is caused by a combination of factors connected to the student's social background, educational experiences, and community setting (Johnson & Thurlow, 2011). These factors also cause some general education students to fail in inclusion settings. The field of special education is constructed on the ability of specially trained administrators, educators, and assistive staff personnel to develop the students with disabilities' "learning experience through accommodations, remediation, and alteration of assessment, curriculum, and instructional strategies and practices" (Johnson & Thurlow, 2011, p. 26). However, students with disabilities will not succeed at a level close to the success of the average general education student. Hines (2018) stated that although legislation exists with achievable directives that seem fit for a positive learning experience for all special education students, there are still districts segregating students with disabilities which perpetuates learning issues.

Current theoretical results from critics speak against focusing on educating all students in the same environment and in many cases under the same curriculum standards regardless of their intellectual abilities. Ferguson, Schwartz, and Symonds (2011) reported that they are convinced that "expanding and emphasizing work-linked learning would help us achieve far more promising results, including raising high school and college completion rates" (p. 34). Ferguson, Schwartz, and Symonds (2011) noted that a young person with a one-year certificate from a community college is sometimes better suited to earn more money than a young person in the category of "some college" or a four-year degree. Therefore, options that prepare students for

work after graduation other than just offering only a special education or college preparation diploma in school systems.

Knowing all students are different, options for parents and students should exist beyond the theory that all varieties of students can fit under a couple of educational plans. Cosier, White, and Wang (2018) reported "a substantial body of research suggests a complex, but primarily positive relationship between placement in regular classes and achievement for students with an intellectual disability" (p. 25). This indicates a direct correlation between individually prepared education plans and positive outcomes for student with disabilities in general education classes. Hyslop and Mead (2015) described a new movement toward providing all students with modified individualized education plans that "a small but growing number of schools and districts across the country are experimenting with [called] personalized learning, an innovation that customizes students' experiences to their individual needs and strengths (p. 3). To further explain this movement, Hyslop and Mead (2015) described the process as follows:

> Personalized learning, which involves transforming students' daily experiences so that they are customized to their individual needs and strengths. Through new kinds of learning environments, new technologies, and new ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge, personalized learning aims to meet students where they are and allow them to advance to more challenging material whenever they are ready. (p. 8)

Meanwhile, as with most corporations or large companies in recent years of economic woes, politicians are leading state education systems in models like downsizing and privatization to curb spending, balance budgets, and preserve jobs. Weiner (2012) proposed that the intention of lawmakers who claim to be interested in increasing educational opportunities is to create a

privatized public education system focused on standardized tests from a narrow, vocational curriculum. However, this paradigm shifts away from specialized (individually tailored) education to all-inclusive education has led to increasing dropout numbers of both special and general education students. Schools with career and technical education (CTE) courses have had reductions in students with low academic performance dropping out of high school (Plank, 2001). So, in theory an all-inclusive education foundation has downsides that could possibly greatly impact the future of education and the economy in the United States based on how individual states and school districts choose to provide public education.

Development of Current Special Education Trends

Some current trends in special education revolve around special education identification. Scull and Winkler (2011) reported that from 2001-2010 there was a decline in the identification of "specific learning disabilities" dropping from 2.86 million to 2.43 million or from 6.1% to 4.9% nationwide and identification of "emotional disturbances" numbers fell from 480,000 to 407,000 students or from 1.0 to 0.8%. However, there was a significant increase in students identified as "autistic" from 93,000 to 378,000 and also, students identified as "other health impairment (OHI) increased from 303,000 to 689,000 (Scull & Winkler, 2011). So, identification and documentation processes are ongoing issues that are regularly changed to appease the state and federal governing agencies. As noted earlier, the concerned area is whether students are properly classified for services under the areas of autism and other health impairment.

Politicians and lawmakers are concerned about efficiently providing services based on funding laws from the federal government. They are always probing their states' educational program compliance with such laws as the IDEA, ESSA, and other regulatory issues in

relationship to documentations like the Full Time Equivalency (FTE) counts which directly relate to the distribution of federal and state funds to local districts. Scull and Winkler (2011) claimed there is a need for the federal government to closely evaluate the spending of over $110 billion annually on potentially unmeasured and unreported state and district budgets on all levels in U.S. educational programs. So, it is critical that watch groups monitor and converse with governments to ensure that the funding and laws are available for special education services and foundations. Scull and Winkler (2011) reported that special education spending has risen. Between 1996 and 2005, an estimated 40% of all new spending in education went to special education services (p.12). In the estimated special education expenditure index, Georgia's rate was the 11th highest in the nation with a 1.28 rate for 2008-2009 (Scull & Winkler, 2011).

School administrators are expecting general and special education teachers collaborate to ensure best practices are being employed to provide free and appropriate education for their populace of students with disabilities. An example would be how the state of New Hampshire has engaged special education and general education teachers to collaborate in developing, administering, and scoring performance-based assessments of students' abilities to apply knowledge and skills in curriculum-embedded tasks (Hyslop & Mead, 2015, p. 12). Special education IEP meeting committee members may include school and community psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, special education and general education teachers, principals, special education directors or representatives, parents or guardians, any quests, and agencies. The IEP meeting committee members create a suitable education plan leading to student's achievement and accomplishment in general and special education classrooms. According to Zinskie and Rea (2016), ESSA gives school districts more decision-making authority, therefore, more responsibility in the choice of interventions and strategic plans for

students' IEP. Students are also invited to meetings to help with their own education planning. Schools' special education officials consult routinely with outside agencies and schools, as well, to probe authentication of their service delivery models and implication of state and federal guidance which are forever changing. They often model other successful, progressive school special education programs. Zinskie and Rea (2016) stated an option for schools to determine whether other districts' plans meet ESSA evidence-based research and practice requirements is to review previous literature to determine which decisions have been most effective based on ESSA's definition of evidence-based research and practices.

Inclusion Models in Special Education

It is obvious some parents, lawmakers, and higher state and federal courts have supported the special education inclusion models. Stidham-Smith (2013) contended when a student with disabilities is placed in a classroom setting where normalcy was the norm, it enhanced the child's ability to display more normal behavior (p. 38). Most researchers have targeted a couple of areas as important to those studies. They have gauged students with disabilities' learning based on assessment results. Hyslop and Mead (2015) reported "NCLB reflected this shift by requiring states to disaggregate test results and hold schools accountable for performance of student subgroups—including English-language learners, students with disabilities, and major racial and ethnic groups" (p. 15-16). Also, they examined the social interactions between special education students and their general education peers in general education classroom settings. Goodenow (1993) found the quality of belonging in school was significantly connected with self-reported school motivation, grades, and effort.

In the early 1980s, research showed it was hard to properly identify and classify students with disabilities. In the mid-1980s, the inclusion phase began (Hicks-Monroe, 2011, p. 63).

Students were and still are given special education labels are subject to be changed prior to them graduating from high school. In 1986, the reauthorization [of Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986] mandated services for children with disabilities ages 3-5 (Hicks-Monroe, 2011, p. 62). Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986 required state to establish programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities and create early intervention services (Library of Congress, 1986). Therefore, these students' learning environment would change from no special education services to services in a special education classroom or services in a general education inclusion classroom. These inclusion policies lead to student struggling with curriculum he or she was never exposed to. Opponents point to research showing negative effects of inclusion, often citing low self-esteem of students with disabilities in the general education setting and poor academic grades (Hicks-Monroe, 2011, p. 67). For those supporting inclusion, research exists that shows positive results for both special and general education students, including academic and social benefits (Hicks-Monroe, 2011, p. 67-68).

In the early 1990s, legislation like the Improving America's Schools Act of 1993, which called for inclusion of special needs students, demanded accurate testing and identification of special education students. Algozzine et al. (2012) stated the IDEA of 1990 and its subsequent reauthorizations in 1997 and 2004 focused on inclusive practices (p. 479). The main purpose of special education placement testing is to identify intellectual levels and educational challenges. Then a special education category can be assigned for teachers to appropriately plan instruction and schedule classes. Scull and Winkler (2011) reported there was a decline in diagnosis in disabilities categories such as emotional disturbance, hearing impairments, orthopedic impairments, specific learning disabilities, and visual impairment; however, there has been an increase in diagnosis of students with autism and other health impairment (OHI) over the last

decade.

Co-Teaching

Research has been ongoing since the passage of such laws as above that mandated inclusive educational plans for students with disabilities. Federal policy was created to promote access to general education (Kirby, 2017, p. 175). With these inclusion laws, came the intentional inclusion models requiring cooperation and collaboration between the general and special education teachers—co-teaching. Co-teaching requires the two teachers plan, share and coordinate the learning environment operations to ensure least interruption and optimum learning for all students in the class regardless of learning level. In an inclusive environment the more efficacious general education teacher becomes a partner with the special education teacher in differentiating and delivering quality instruction (Kirby, 2017, p. 188).

The co-teaching model is "best for children" when the classroom provides both general education and special education students access to the most challenging mathematics and reading content within the general education setting and when it is individually planned, specialized, intensive, goal directed, research-based, and guided by student performance (Heward, 2003). The Stidham-Smith (2013) study found 30% of both general and special education teachers responded that the team approach is the best method to teach inclusion classrooms while 40% of the general education teachers responded they had a positive experience with inclusion. The remaining 60% of general education teachers apparently did not have a positive experience with inclusion. It is likely further research is needed to determine why those general education teachers had a less than positive experience.

Summary

The literature exposes many examples of advantages and disadvantages as well as

challenges in the process of including of student with disabilities in general education classroom settings. Findings show parents, students, general and special education teachers have favored co-teaching and indicate when co-teachers work together in harmony with the same goals for outcomes, students with disabilities have a great chance of succeeding. The teacher and student relationships also prove important. Another pressing issue is how general and special education teachers in inclusion classrooms develop ways to teach students in a variety of differentiated methods while maintaining the integrity of state curriculum requirements.

Most recent research in the special education field has pursued best practices and methodologies to effectively teach students in inclusion classrooms. Findings indicate inclusion model success is linked to the availability of new special education teachers with new innovative research based on ideas and practices learned in their college experience. The best practices and methodologies are shared in co-teaching planning sessions within schools. By incorporating research findings in their teaching professions, new special education teachers afford students with disabilities a better opportunity to be successful in general education learning environments. Further research is needed to explore the results of professional development methodology effectiveness in the inclusion classroom settings over the last few years.

Other recent findings are focused in the special education area of continual professional development and continual education for seasoned educators. There was connectivity between those that sought self-improvement, belonged to professional organizations, and collaborated well with peer general education teachers. However, findings showed that efficacy reporting and actual practices seldom matched. Special education teachers felt good about information and instructional tips learned during professional development based on new research findings; however, most special education teachers failed to follow proper practices when returning to

their teaching settings. As a reminder to all on the goals of recent government laws, Hines (2018) reiterated the purpose of federal legislation was that people with disabilities would have equal access to educational opportunities and in turn, be more integrated into society in their adult life (p. 71). However, the literature shows that this vision is not always delivered in schools. This study intended to add to the body of research investigating why that vision is not always attained.

Chapter III: Methodology

Overview

Survey results and analysis were used to gauge perceptions from special education teachers, special education supportive instruction personnel (paraprofessionals) and general education teachers. Responses from these surveys came from educators with at least a year of experience in an inclusion setting. It was assumed that these educators would honestly and genuinely respond to the surveys.

Data collection was based on the existence of themes and issues. One suspected theme would be the continuum of perceptions as reported in other similar research in the area of special education inclusion. Other studies have concluded with their findings of a consensus approval of inclusiveness of students with disabilities in general education classroom. However, results from other research findings are not a determinate of the possible conclusion of this study.

Adult male and female educators participated in the survey process. Based on Federal laws, it is necessary to obtain Institutional Review Board approval for the use of human subjects. Also, it was necessary to obtain permission from school system superintendents, school system special education directors, or high school principals to access educators to participate in the survey. With the school authorities' permission, selected educators from several South Georgia area schools were invited to participate. It was not necessary to obtain consent-to-participate signatures from parents of any students; minors and their parents was not used in the survey process.

The survey produced perception responses from educators that pertain to advantages and disadvantages of inclusion models for students with disabilities. The focus was on the abilities of these students with disabilities to be successful in a general education (inclusion)

environment. Emphasis was placed on the students with disabilities' ability to complete assignments, show proficiency on state standards, pass assessments, and communicate well with peers and educators in general education classrooms.

Data Gathering Procedures

Sample.

High school special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers in inclusion model settings was targeted, with a sample size of 305 educators sought. The population of 336 high school educators was invited to complete the survey. Data were collected from survey responses of adults from education systems in South Georgia. The sample population was selected from the available educators based on those that are in inclusion classes with students with disabilities. Special education and general education educators and paraprofessionals with at least one year of teaching experience in the inclusion model was sought to partake in the survey.

Sample A school district, the largest rural school district in South Georgia, is a properly sized district to examine trends. All data that follows is compiled from Sample A's high school profile. In 2018, the breakdown of high school student ethnicity was 62% Caucasian (1776 White students), 24% African American (688 Black students), 9% Hispanic (258 Hispanic students), 3% Multiracial (86 multiracial students), and 1% other (29 other students) of the 2,865 total student population (Great Schools, n.d.). Among these approximately 2,865 students, 43% (1,232 students) of them came from low income families (Great Schools, n.d.). Limited English proficiency rate of the students was at 2% (29 other students). Students with disabilities population rate was 11% (315 students) (Great Schools, n.d.). The high school graduation rate in 2018 was 90% (2,759 students) (Great Schools, n.d.).

General and special education teachers' experience and education information are indications of the teachers' quality at a school. The general and special education teachers in School A have been working for an average of 15 years. There are 48 general and special education teachers with a bachelor's degree which mean 30% of general and special education teachers have only a bachelor's degree (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, n.d.). The number of general and special education teachers with a master's degree is 83 (51%) and 25 general and special education teachers (15%) have a specialist's degree (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, n.d.). Only seven general and special education teachers (3%) have a doctoral degree (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, n.d.). The ethnic background of general and special education teachers in this district is 143 Caucasian, 16 African American, and four Hispanic general and special education teachers (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, n.d.). The ratio of students to general and special education teachers is 17 students to one general or special education teacher (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, n.d.).

This is an example of the general sample population available for this study. Other schools in this study have fewer students and general and special education teachers. There are few differences in demographics in the smaller counties with the Black, White, and few Hispanic students. The population growth in these local communities is increasingly Hispanic descendants as is the population increase in the United States. However, the general populations in special education have not been affected by this influx of Hispanics mainly because a large percentage of these students are classified and served as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students.

Setting.

Due to distance from the education settings and time constraints, educators participated in

surveys via email and internet websites such as Qualtrics online survey service. The setting was public high schools in a South Georgia educational region. There are 16 educational regions in Georgia with centers that providing training and resources to educators in 185 district or school system across the state. The South Georgia educational region encompasses approximately 12 rural school districts with possible access to educators from a 12 high schools for this research. There are approximately 95 total English teachers, 105 total mathematics teachers, 97 total science teachers, 80 total social studies teachers, 131 Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) teachers, 149 total special education teachers, and 28 total paraprofessionals in the South Georgia educational region. There are approximately 14,178 students in the South Georgia educational region of the approximately 521,741 high school students in all Georgia high schools which represent 2.7% of the total combined high school students in all educational regions in Georgia.

Table 1

Comparison of South Georgia Regional High Schools' Demographics

School Code	Student #s	Econ. Dis.	Sp. Ed.	Sp. Ed. Grad Rate	Overall Grad Rate
A	2865	21%	11%	77.14%	92%
B	2224	34%	10%	68.524%	83.5%
C	2191	44%	12%	72.22%	86.9%
D	1824	32%	12%	63.10%	88.6%
E	861	36%	11%	69.57%	88.3%
F	804	29%	10%	72.22%	90.5%
G	824	35%	14%	72.41%	88.5%
H	474	34%	12%	77.78%	95.2%
I	486	39%	12%	76.47%	97.4%
J	435	32%	9%	28.75%	84.2%
K	335	50%	13%	71.43%	91.2%

L	217	31%	6%	100%	100%

Instrumentation and measures.

The survey used in this study was reviewed by and approved by the researcher's dissertation committee, as well as the Bethel University IRB Committee. The survey was composed of a set of 15 questions that took approximately 20 minutes to answer. The survey was constructed with a multifaceted approach to achieve reporting that is unbiased, valid, and appropriate to this study. Multiple choice and yes or no questions were used throughout the survey format.

The test scores that were analyzed are the student standardized test score results from the Georgia Milestones Assessment System End-of-Course (EOC) subject test scores which was first administered in 2014 to the present. These scores were collected from Georgia's Department of Education resources. These test scores indicated general education teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessional efforts to successfully instruct lessons in a manner that was conducive for students with disabilities to retain and correctly mark answers of EOC subject tests. EOC test score is worth 20% of the student with disabilities' final grade. Data collected from EOC test score results was gathered and patterns revealed.

Georgia high school students take an EOC assessment for each of the 10 courses designated by the Georgia State Board of Education. The EOC assessments count as 20% of high school students' final grade for the course. These 10 high school courses with state EOC assessments are as follows: Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, American Literature and Composition, Coordinate Algebra (Algebra 1 began in Winter 2015), Analytic Geometry (Geometry began in Winter 2015), Biology, Physical Science, Economics or Business or Free Enterprise, and U.S. History. These assessments are given at the end of the first and second

semesters. These assessments are given via computer on the internet on state websites. There are four test score ranges: Beginning Learner (grade conversion 0 to 67), Developing Learner (grade conversion 68 to 79), Proficient Learner (grade conversion 80 to 91), and Distinguished Learner (grade conversion 92 to 100). Special education students receive IEP accommodations during these EOC assessments.

Research was focused on high school academic subject areas to establish an indistinct relationship between educators' perceptions and standardized testing results from Georgia EOC assessments given to student with disabilities over a five-year period. An analysis of large databases acquired from Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) resources revealed students with disabilities progression in inclusion classrooms. This analysis covered four high academic subject areas: English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. This analysis covered all four high school grades: 9^{th}, 10^{th}, 11^{th}, and 12^{th} from 12 South Georgia educational regions' high school students with disabilities. The analyzed data were drawn from Georgia College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) data reports of students with disabilities that took Georgia Milestone EOC assessments between 2014-2019.

Data collection.

Research was conducted by use of the triangulation approach with collection of test data and surveys. The testing data were obtained from a combination of state testing results from Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) websites and data requests when necessary. The GADOE's data collection reports were requested in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format. The focus was on collecting data relating to understanding high school students with disabilities' scores from the latest Georgia state standardized assessment, Georgia Milestone EOC assessments. Data were collected to support the research. For the Georgia Milestone EOC

assessments results, all 10 EOC assessments from the four academic subject areas (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) subgroup assessment scores was requested. The state standardized assessment data from school years of 2014 to 2019 was pursued to be represented in the data collected. The grade levels represented in the data were any results from the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students with disabilities subgroup.

Special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers participated via the Qualtrics survey program on the internet. The data collected from their responses were analyzed and incorporated into the dissertation. Surveys was taken from 13 school systems' special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers within South Georgia school districts. Survey invitations was emailed to participants. The data collected was kept confidential and protected from anyone else accessing it by storing it on electronic devices that are password protected for accessibility.

After attaining approval from the Bethel IRB Committee, the data collection process begun. The data collection process primarily occurred during the Spring semester or second semester of South Georgia school districts. During this time of the school year, multiple scheduled school breaks and state assessments sessions must be considered in the data collection plan.

Georgia standardized test scores from the past five years was incorporated in data analysis as well as survey responses. The Georgia Milestones EOC Assessments scores were also used. The Georgia Milestones EOC Assessments are provided at the end of a particular academic course to assess student achievement. Special education students in general education inclusion classes are required to also take these assessments at the end of selected courses. Data collected on special education students in academic inclusion classes was primarily from EOC

results for students with disabilities on the 10 EOC assessments given to high school students in Grades 9-12. Data collected from special education paraprofessionals, general and special education teachers were solely from surveys.

Analysis of Data

The data collected from surveys was analyzed with T-Tests and ANOVA statistical tools through SPSS Software. Recurring patterns of perceptions retrieved from survey results was calculated for statistical purposes and analytical uses. The Georgia Department of Education provided the special education data for test score analysis. This test datum was used to create a context for the survey findings from special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers' survey responses. The responses from these groups were combined as part of the analysis of data. Each group was analyzed separately to see if there are differences or similarities between group responses.

This quantitative study explored the data collected and create a detailed analysis of progress or non-progress of inclusion students with disabilities. The portion of the data collected from standardized assessment scores served to set a context for the perspectives from special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers that serve students with disabilities. A statistical test of the categorized groups (general education students and Special Education students) was necessary to distinguish differences between average test scores from both groups. Since the statistical process was a comparison of the means, it is appropriate to use variance analysis (ANOVA) and T-Tests.

Data analysis was completed based on the participants' position at their school, and subject taught. This is a short list of the quantitative research emphasis of the surveys. Tables, graphs, and charts display statistical data relating to responses to critical survey questions and

findings from analysis of scores.

Research Questions

A Likert scale survey was used to gather answers to research questions.

RQ1: What are the differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' state test scores in an inclusion model in recent years?

RQ2: What are the differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' classwork and homework completion in an inclusion model in recent years?

RQ3: What are the differences or similarities in the way special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers view the special education students' pass rate on standardized assessments and overall course pass rate in an inclusion model?

RQ4: Do special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers prefer the inclusion model or special education classroom model as the best way to serve high school students with disabilities?

Hypotheses Statements

Specifically, this research was designed to examine the success of students with disabilities in general education classroom settings. It was hypothesized that including students with disabilities in general education classroom settings increases their academic standing, social skills, and their preparedness for adulthood in areas like independent living, training and employment or post-secondary education.

Hypotheses:

H1: There are differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' state test scores in an inclusion model in recent years.

H01: There are no differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' state test scores in an inclusion model in recent years.

H2: There are differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' classwork and homework completion in an inclusion model in recent years.

H02: There are no differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' classwork and homework completion in an inclusion model in recent years.

H3: There are differences or similarities in the way special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers view the special education students' pass rate on standardized assessments and overall course pass rate in an inclusion model.

H03: There are no differences or similarities in the way special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers view the special education students' pass rate on standardized assessments and overall course pass rate in an inclusion model.

H4: Special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers prefer the inclusion model or special education classroom model as the best way to serve high school students with disabilities.

H04: Special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers do not prefer the inclusion model nor special education classroom model as the best way to serve high school students with disabilities.

Chapter Summary

This quantitative research followed a process that led to a collection of data that were analyzed to formulate a conclusive response. Initially, a survey was created to get the best reliable responses from professionals in the education fields. These data collected correlated

with research questions and hypotheses statements. Those professionals in the education fields can be distinguished into three groups: general education teachers, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessional from South Georgia school districts.

This researcher obtained permission to submit surveys electronically to these professionals in the education fields from school administrators from various school districts. With the permission of school administrators, a process of data collection led to an analysis of data for comparison and contrast of answers and responses. The data collection process was focused on professionals in the education fields with special education inclusion setting experience.

Chapter IV: Results

Findings Related to Inquiry Questions

In 2020, after Bethel University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was received, the principals, special education directors, or district superintendents of 38 high schools were contacted via e-mail and telephone calls requesting their permission to contact the general education teachers, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals in their schools (Appendix C). Of the 38 school administrators contacted, there were 13 high school principals that agreed, producing a 34% participation rate from the possible 38 high schools. Unexpectedly, all participating schools did not start the Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey process at the same time due to delayed approval and selective start dates by participating administrators to obtain maximum participation during school opening pre-planning.

Actual educators' participation from the 13 high schools were as follows: 129 general education teachers, 70 special education teachers, and 30 special education paraprofessionals. Overall, there were 229 survey participants of the initial goal of targeting 336 high school educators from Agency #1. Due to poor response from the initial plan of targeting only one regional education service agency, two other regional education service agencies were asked to allow their educators to participate in the research survey. Agency #1 had five high schools participating (42% participation rate). Agency #2 had three high schools participating (38% participation rate). Agency #3 had five high schools participating (28% participation rate).

The high school educators participating in the research survey were sent the Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey online link from their principals, special education directors, or superintendents. In order to sample general education teachers, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals across all subjects, the Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey online

link was sent to general education teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessional with experience educating students with disabilities in any of these five academic areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Career, Technical, Agricultural, and Education (CTAE).

Guidance and instruction and the Qualtrics on-line survey link were emailed to the principals or special education directors who forwarded the email to appropriate school general education teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals. This guidance and instruction email included:

- The Bethel University required informed consent form (Appendix D)
- An invitation to complete the survey for only general education teachers, special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals across all subjects with experience teaching students with disabilities
- An explanation of confidentiality and protection of rights for research participants
- The link to the Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey with 13 questions (Appendix A)

Georgia Milestones Assessment System End-of-Course (EOC) subject test scores were retrieved from Georgia Department of Education resources for scores from 2014 to 2019. The data includes only the 13 participating South Georgia high schools. The 10 high school courses with state EOC assessments were as follows: Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, American Literature and Composition, Coordinate Algebra (Algebra 1 began in Winter 2015), Analytic Geometry (Geometry began in Winter 2015), Biology, Physical Science, U.S. History, and Economics or Business or Free Enterprise. These assessments are given at the end of the first and second semesters. These scores were separated to only identify the students with disabilities' assessment results. The scores were charted and analyzed to show a pattern of students with

disabilities' assessment results for a period from 2014 to 2019. A chart was developed to establish a distinct relationship between educators' perceptions and standardized testing results from Georgia EOC assessments given to student with disabilities over a five-year period. This analysis of the large databases acquired from Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) resources revealed students with disabilities' progression in inclusion classrooms based on assessments over the five-year period on state EOC assessments.

Instrument

The Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey questions (Appendix A) were designed to measure educator's perceptions of inclusive practices in their school. Survey questions were designed with both quantitative and qualitative responses. Participants selected a single multiple-choice item, multiple multiple-choice items, and a single question with a space provided for comments. Each question's choices were summed and divided by the number of items rated. Qualtrics software data analysis provided the rate at which the question's choice item was selected by educators. Items marked "comment" are not included in the scores, but were reported as part of the descriptive statistics (Table 8). The 13 survey questions were organized into a Demographics Information scale and four sub-scales as follows:

1. The Demographics Information Section (3 items; #1, 2, 3) assessed the participants' teaching position, gender, and previous experience teaching and providing special education services to students with disabilities.

2. Academic Efforts and Practices (2 items; #4, 5) asked participants to rate (all the time, most of the time, fail to complete, or never complete) the academic efforts and practices of students with disabilities in inclusion classes.

3. Beliefs about Inclusive Practices (4 items; #6, 8, 10, 11) explored participants' agreement with various statements about inclusive education. Participants responded to when inclusiveness is the best way to serve students with disabilities (never, in some cases, in most cases, or in all cases). Participants were asked to select three efforts that were most important in making inclusion settings successful. The choices were: meeting regularly, developing relationships, development of curriculum and instruction, presentation of curriculum and instruction, and staff development training. Participants also responded to what learning environment is best for teaching students with disabilities. Participants were given the following choices: General Education Classroom (Inclusion) or Special Education Classroom, Resource Classroom or Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA). Participants also were asked if students with disabilities should take state assessments (Yes or No responses).

4. Effects of Inclusive Practices (2 items; #7, 9) asked participants to identify the level students receiving special education services in inclusive settings have met all mandated state education requirements by selecting; meeting all, most, a few, or failing to meet requirements. Participates were also asked to respond to the effectiveness of special education services (not effective, slightly effective, or very effective).

5. Teaching Experience in the High School Inclusion Classroom (2 items; #12, 13) assessed how participants described their experience in high school classes with inclusion, based on positive or negative experiences and whether it led to or did not lead to special education students passing end-of-course tests and passing courses. Participants were asked to describe various personal teaching challenges in high school inclusion classrooms. The participants provided written comments focused on challenges like lack of resources, lack of teacher

experience, lack of funding, general and special education teachers' compassion to students, difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities, etc.

Data Analysis

T-Test calculations were used to analyze the results from Georgia State EOC Milestones Assessments from 2014 through 2019 for students with disabilities in the 13 high schools participating in this research. The findings and analysis of the assessment scores as they related to research question RQ1, as well as the hypothesis, are listed below. Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP), Microsoft Excel, and Qualtrics software features were used to analyze the Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey data. The findings and analysis of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey questions as they relate to research questions RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4, as well as the hypotheses, are organized and discussed below.

Analysis of the state assessments associated with RQ1.

1. Research Question 1

RQ1: What are the differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' state test scores in an inclusion model in recent years?

Eight EOC Assessments started in the initial year (Winter 2014) then two additional EOC Assessments were added in following year (Winter 2015). The Georgia Department of Education field tests questions every year to determine inclusion into EOC Assessments the upcoming year (Georgia Department of Education, 2020).

Table 2

T-Test for Georgia State EOC Milestones Assessments

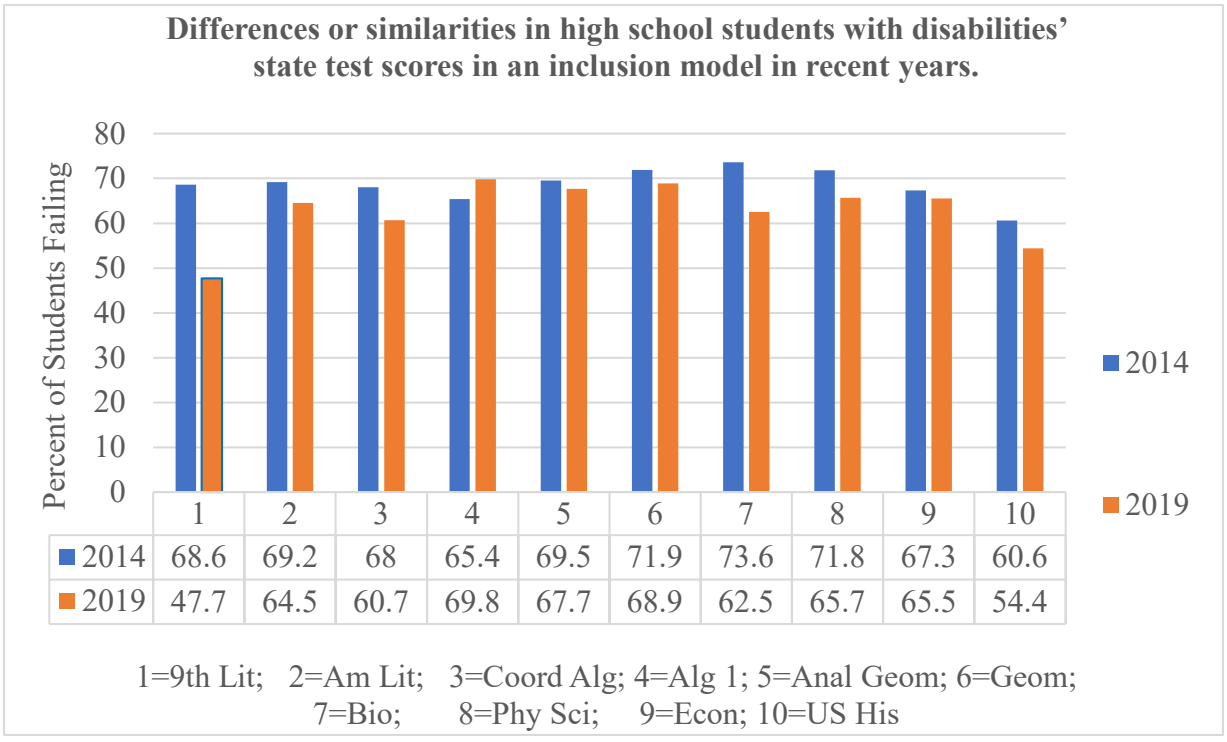
Initial Test Failure (%) 2014/2015	Most Recent Test Failure (%) 2019

	Column1	Column2
Ninth Grade Literature and Composition	68.6	47.7
American Literature and Composition	69.2	64.5
Coordinate Algebra	68	60.7
Algebra 1 [began in Winter 2015]	65.4	69.8
Analytic Geometry	69.5	67.7
Geometry [began in Winter 2015]	71.9	68.9
Biology	73.6	62.5
Physical Science	71.8	65.7
Economics or Business or Free Enterprise	67.3	65.5
US History	60.6	54.4
MEAN	68.59	62.74
SD	3.705686321	6.926952192
	P Value =	0.022030119

Georgia state EOC initial (2014) and recent (2019) test failures for SWD.

There is a 2% chance there is not a significant difference and that the results occurred by random chance, and a 98% chance there is a significant difference. The conclusion is that the p-value is significant because it is at or greater than 95%, as preferred in most scientific studies. This was a two tailed analysis with a paired input.

Figure 1



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2014	68.6	69.2	68	65.4	69.5	71.9	73.6	71.8	67.3	60.6
2019	47.7	64.5	60.7	69.8	67.7	68.9	62.5	65.7	65.5	54.4

T-Test for Georgia State EOC Milestones Assessments Analysis for SWD

The students with disabilities' assessments from general education classroom EOC data collected on the 10 Georgia EOC assessments subjects over the last five years clearly indicate there was a decrease in assessment failure rates on nine out of 10 of the EOC subject assessments. The T-Test score of p value=0.022030119 indicates there is a 2% chance there is not a significant difference in scores. The conclusion is drawn that the p value is significant. Thus, the changes in scores over the period is assumed to not be random.

With a mean score of 68.59% in 2014/2015 and a mean score of 62.74% in 2019, there was a drop of 5.85% failure rate on the combined 10 EOC assessments over the five-year period. Of the 10 subjects' assessments, only the Algebra 1 failure rate increased. Students with disabilities' Algebra 1 assessment scores on Georgia EOC failure rate increased from 65.4% to 69.8% over the five-year period. The Ninth Grade Literature and Composition (Georgia EOC assessment) failure rate decreased from 68.6% to 47.7% over the five-year period. American Literature and Composition (Georgia EOC assessment) failures decreased from 69.2% to 64.5% over the five-year period. The Coordinate Algebra (Georgia EOC assessment) failure rate decreased from 68% to 60.7% over the five-year period. Analytic Geometry (Georgia EOC assessment) failures decreased from 69.5% to 67.7% over the five-year period. The Geometry (Georgia EOC assessment) failure rate decreased from 71.9% to 68.9% over the five-year period. Biology (Georgia EOC assessment) failure rates decreased from 73.6% to 62.5% over the five-year period. The Physical Science (Georgia EOC assessment) failure rate decreased from 71.8% to 65.7% over the five-year period. Economics or Business or Free Enterprise (Georgia EOC assessment) failure rates decreased from 67.3% to 65.5% over the five-year period. And, finally,

the U.S. History (Georgia EOC assessment) failure rate decreased from 60.6% to 54.4% over the five-year period.

Analysis of the survey questions (Q4, Q5) associated with RQ2.

2. Research Question 2

RQ2: What are the differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' classwork and homework completion in an inclusion model in recent years?

Table 3

Frequencies for Q4

Q4	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Students with disabilities complete their classwork all the time	6	2.62009	2.62009	2.62009
Students with disabilities complete their classwork most of time	160	69.86900	69.86900	72.48908
Students with disabilities often fail to complete their classwork	63	27.51092	27.51092	100.00000
Students with disabilities never complete their classwork	0	0.00000		
Total	229	100.00000		

Table 4

Frequencies for Q5

Q5	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Students with disabilities complete their homework all the time	4	1.74672	1.74672	1.74672
Students with disabilities complete their homework most of time	119	51.96507	51.96507	53.71179
Students with disabilities often fail to complete their homework	106	46.28821	46.28821	100.00000
Students with disabilities never complete their homework	0	0.00000		
Total	229	100.00000		

Survey question Q4 revealed the educator's perceptions about the rate at which students with disabilities complete classwork assignments. The educators responded at a rate of 70% that students with disabilities complete their classwork assignments most of the time. Educators chose students with disabilities often fail to complete their classwork at a rate of 27%. Therefore, educators only chose students with disabilities complete their homework all the time at the very low rate of 3%.

Survey question Q5 revealed the educator's perceptions about the rate at which students with disabilities complete homework assignments. The educators responded at a rate of 52% that students with disabilities complete their classwork assignments most of the time. Educators chose students with disabilities often fail to complete their homework at a close rate of 46%. Therefore, educators only chose students with disabilities complete their homework all the time at the very low rate of 4%.

Analysis of the survey question (Q12) associated with RQ3.

3. Research Question 3

RQ3: What are the differences or similarities in the way special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers view the special education students' pass rate on standardized assessments and overall course pass rate in an inclusion model?

Research survey results from survey question Q12 gauged the educators' perceptions on their experience in inclusion classes as it related to being positive or negative and also to the pass or failure of students with disabilities on end-of-course tests and passing courses. It was discovered that 182 (79%) of survey participants had a positive experience without regard to

students with disabilities passing or failing assessments or courses. In comparison to negative responses, 47 (21%) of the educators revealed negative experiences without regard to students with disabilities passing or failing assessments or courses.

Table 5

Frequencies for Q12

Q12	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
positive experience that led to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses	74	32.31441	32.31441	32.31441
positive experience that did not lead to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses	108	47.16157	47.16157	79.47598
negative experience that led to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses	18	7.86026	7.86026	87.33624
negative experience that did not lead to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses	29	12.66376	12.66376	100.00000
Missing	0	0.00000		
Total	229	100.00000		

Table 6

Breakdown of Educators' Inclusion Experience

	Positive Experience = Students Passed	Positive Experience = Students Failed	Negative Experience = Students Passed	Negative Experience = Students Failed
General Education Teacher	48 (37%)	54 (42%)	11 (9%)	16 (12%)
Special Education Teacher	20 (29%)	37 (53%)	6 (9%)	7 (10%)
Special Education Paraprofessionals	6 (20%)	17 (57%)	1 (3%)	6 (20%)
Total = 229	74	108	18	29

Analysis of the survey question (Q10) associated with RQ4.

4. Research Question 4

RQ4: Do special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers prefer the inclusion model or special education classroom model as the best way to serve high school students with disabilities?

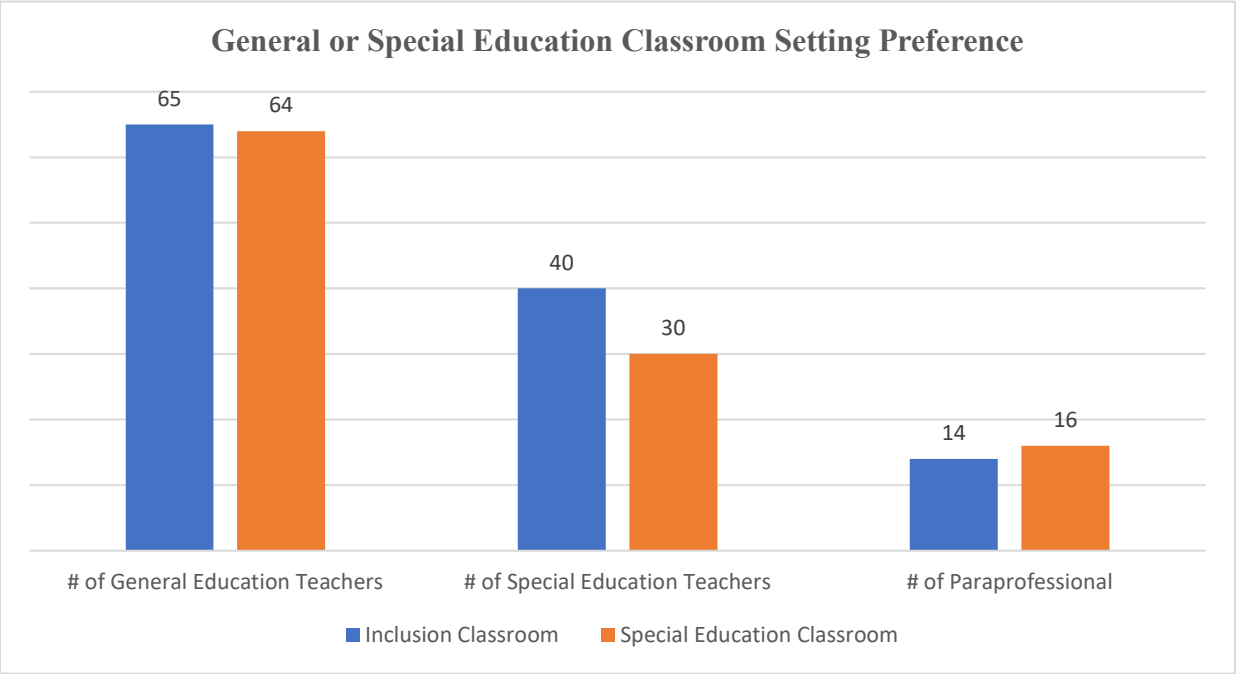
Table 7

Frequencies for Q10

Q10	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
General Education Classroom (Inclusion) with special education staff support	119	51.96507	51.96507	51.96507
Special Education Classroom, Resource Classroom or Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA) Classroom	110	48.03493	48.03493	100.00000
Missing	0	0.00000		
Total	229	100.00000		

Survey question Q10 explored the educators' perception of whether general education classroom (inclusion) or special education classroom would best serve the needs of students with disabilities. The responses were almost evenly divided as 52% of the educators chose general education settings and 48% of the educators chose special education settings as the most effective environment to serve students with disabilities.

Figure 2



General or Special Education Classroom Setting Preference

There were 55% general education teachers, 34% special education teachers, and 12% paraprofessionals that stated they preferred a "General Education Classroom (Inclusion) with special education staff support" to best serve the needs of students with disabilities. There were 58% general education teachers, 27% special education teachers, and 15% paraprofessionals that stated they preferred a "Special Education Classroom, Resource Classroom or Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA) Classroom" to best serve the needs of students with disabilities.

Teacher self-efficacy survey descriptive statistics results.

The results of the JASP Survey Descriptive Statistics contain: (a) descriptive statistical information from the overall Qualtrics survey, (b) the quantitative results of survey questions Q1, Q2, Q3, and (c) the qualitative results from several survey questions (Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q9, Q11, Q13).

Descriptive statistical information from Qualtrics survey results.

The results are reported in the order they appear on the JASP Survey Descriptive Statistics Data Report.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics

	Valid Responses	Missing Responses	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Q1	229	0	1.56769	0.71390	1.00000	3.00000
Q2	229	0	1.78166	0.41402	1.00000	2.00000
Q3	229	0	2.83843	1.13752	1.00000	4.00000
Q4	229	0	2.24891	0.49031	1.00000	3.00000
Q5	229	0	2.44541	0.53216	1.00000	3.00000
Q6	229	0	2.47162	0.87124	1.00000	4.00000
Q7	229	0	2.48908	0.67285	1.00000	4.00000
Q8-1	115	114	1.00000	0.00000	1.00000	1.00000
Q8-2	178	51	1.00000	0.00000	1.00000	1.00000
Q8-3	78	151	1.00000	0.00000	1.00000	1.00000
Q8-4	145	84	1.00000	0.00000	1.00000	1.00000
Q8-5	99	130	1.00000	0.00000	1.00000	1.00000
Q9	229	0	2.35808	0.56443	1.00000	3.00000
Q10	229	0	1.48035	0.50071	1.00000	2.00000
Q11	229	0	1.58515	0.49377	1.00000	2.00000
Q12	229	0	2.00873	0.95509	1.00000	4.00000
Q13	203	26	---	---	---	---

Note. Not all values are available for Nominal Text variables.

Quantitative results of survey questions (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q11).

Survey question Q1 revealed the Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey participation pool was responded to by general education teachers at a rate of 56% (n = 129); special education teachers participated in the survey at a rate of 31% (n = 70); and special education paraprofessionals participated in the survey at a rate of 13% (n = 30). The paraprofessional number of participants was very low initially and led to an extension on the original survey deadline to allow for additional time to seek more paraprofessional participants within the participating high schools.

Table 9

Frequencies for Q1

Q1	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
General Education Teacher	129	56.33188	56.33188	56.33188
Special Education Teacher	70	30.56769	30.56769	86.89956
Paraprofessional	30	13.10044	13.10044	100.00000
Missing	0	0.00000		
Total	229	100.00000		

Survey question Q2 revealed the gender difference was nearly a 3 to 1 ratio, women to men (179/50). The female demographics (n = 179) revealed 78% female participation in the Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey. The male demographics (n = 50) revealed 22% male participation in the survey.

Table 10

Frequencies for Q2

Q2	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	50	21.83406	21.83406	21.83406
Female	179	78.16594	78.16594	100.00000
Missing	0	0.00000		
Total	229	100.00000		

Survey question Q3 revealed nearly half (41%) of Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey participants had greater than 15 years of experience teaching students with disabilities. The number of participants with 1-5 years of experience teaching students with disabilities was 17% (n = 38). Number of participants with 6-10 years of experience teaching students with

disabilities was 24% (n = 55). The number of participants with 11-15 years of experience teaching students with disabilities 18% (n = 42). The number of participants with 16 or more years of experience teaching students with disabilities 41% (n = 94).

Table 11

Frequencies for Q3

Q3	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-5	38	16.59389	16.59389	16.59389
6-10	55	24.01747	24.01747	40.61135
11-15	42	18.34061	18.34061	58.95197
16 or more	94	41.04803	41.04803	100.00000
Missing	0	0.00000		
Total	229	100.00000		

Survey question Q6 probed the participants perception on whether or not the special education inclusion model is the best way to serve students with disabilities.

Table 12

Frequencies for Q6

Q6	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	5	2.18341	2.18341	2.18341
In some cases	164	71.61572	71.61572	73.79913
In all cases	7	3.05677	3.05677	76.85590
In most cases	53	23.14410	23.14410	100.00000
Missing	0	0.00000		
Total	229	100.00000		

Survey question Q7 revealed participants' perceptions on the impact the special education inclusion mandate had on students with disabilities meeting state requirements.

Table 13

Frequencies for Q7

Q7	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Students with disabilities are meeting all requirements	9	3.93013	3.93013	3.93013
Students with disabilities are meeting most requirements	113	49.34498	49.34498	53.27511
Students with disabilities are meeting only a few requirements	93	40.61135	40.61135	93.88646
Students with disabilities are failing to meet requirements	14	6.11354	6.11354	100.00000
Missing	0	0.00000		
Total	229	100.00000		

Survey question Q8 asked participants to identify the most important ways of possibly creating a successful inclusion setting by selecting three of five possible choices.

Table 14

Frequencies for Q8_1

Q8_1	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Meeting regularly with parents, students, teachers, and administrators	115	50.21834	100.00000	100.00000
Missing	114	49.78166		
Total	229	100.00000		

Frequencies for Q8_2

Q8_2	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Developing relationships with special needs students	178	77.72926	100.00000	100.00000
Missing	51	22.27074		
Total	229	100.00000		

Frequencies for Q8_3

Q8_3	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Timely development of curriculum and instruction	78	34.06114	100.00000	100.00000
Missing	151	65.93886		
Total	229	100.00000		

Frequencies for Q8_4

Q8_4	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Presenting quality curriculum and instruction for all students	145	63.31878	100.00000	100.00000
Missing	84	36.68122		
Total	229	100.00000		

Frequencies for Q8_5

Q8_5	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Continual staff development training on educating both general and special education students	99	43.23144	100.00000	100.00000
Missing	130	56.76856		
Total	229	100.00000		

Survey question Q9 revealed the participants' perceptions on the effectiveness of special education services in their schools based on individual student growth and behaviors.

Table 15

Frequencies for Q9

Q9	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
not effective at all	10	4.36681	4.36681	4.36681
slightly effective	127	55.45852	55.45852	59.82533
very effective	92	40.17467	40.17467	100.00000
Missing	0	0.00000		
Total	229	100.00000		

Survey question Q11 asked the participants to reveal whether or not they thought students with disabilities should be required to take state assessments, end-of-course tests, etc. for graduation requirements.

Table 16

Frequencies for Q11

Q11	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	95	41.48472	41.48472	41.48472
No	134	58.51528	58.51528	100.00000
Missing	0	0.00000		
Total	229	100.00000		

Qualitative results of survey question Q13.

Survey question Q13 revealed various comments from general education teachers, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals.

Table 17

Frequencies for Q13

Q13	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Responded "n/a"	2	0.87336	0.98522	
Responses with full comments	201			
Responses Missing or Blank	26	11.35371		
Total	229	100.00000		

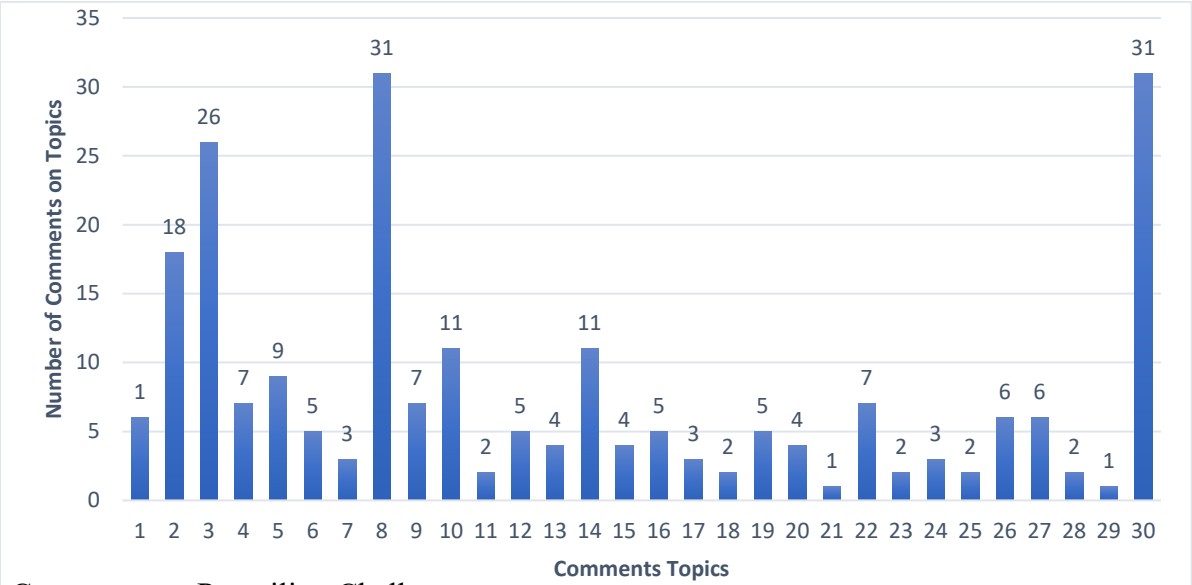
There were many instructive and criticizing comments. The survey participants' comments can be summed up as follows below in Table 18 and Figure 3. Responses with full comments are listed in Appendix B.

Table 18

Qualtrics (Q13 Comments Results Statistical Data)

		Number of Participants Making This Comment (Q13)
1	Cannot Keep Up with Lesson	6
2	Lack of Funding	18
3	Lack of Resources	26
4	Lack of Time	7
5	Large Class Size	9
6	Poor Co-teaching Skills	5
7	Array of Issues	3
8	Difficult Curriculum	31
9	Lack of Training	7
10	Lack of Compassion	11
11	Ineffective Use of Accommodations	2
12	Lack of Special Education Experience	5
13	Low Expectations for Special Education	4
14	Poor Co-teaching Relationships	11
15	Poor Teaching Skills	4
16	Lack of Motivation	5
17	Feeling Embarrassed	3
18	Assessments	2
19	Parental Support	5
20	Disruptive Learning Environment	4
21	Classwork and Homework Completion	1
22	Differentiation	7
23	Attendance	2
24	Functionable Program with No Problems	3
25	Teachers' Work Ethic	2
26	Best Learning Setting	6
27	Administrative Decisions	6
28	Teacher Support	2
29	Ready for Adulthood after High School	1
30	No Response	31
	TOTAL	229
	MEAN	7.633333333
	SD	8.197911144

Figure 3



Comments on Prevailing Challenges

Survey questions analytical breakdown (Q1 through Q13).

1. Which category best describes your position?

This survey question had three choices with the following responses: general education teacher (n = 129), special education teacher (n = 70), and paraprofessional (n = 30). Table 9 above presents the Frequencies for Q1 using JASP.

2. What is your gender?

This survey question had two choices with the following responses: male (n = 50) and female (n = 179). Table 10 above presents the Frequencies for Q2 using JASP.

3. How many years have you been teaching and providing special education services to students with disabilities (special education students)?

This survey question had four choices with the following responses: 1-5 (n = 38), 6-10 (n =55), 11-15 (n = 42), and 16 or more (n = 94). Table 11 above presents the Frequencies for Q3 using JASP.

4. A study reported students' classroom engagement, academic effort, and subsequent school

success or failure are influenced not only by individual differences in skills, abilities, and predispositions, but also by many situational and contextual factors. To what extent are students with disabilities completing classwork in inclusion model classes in your educational setting? This survey question had four choices with the following responses: Students with disabilities complete their classwork all the time (n = 6), Students with disabilities complete their classwork most of time (n = 160), and Students with disabilities often fail to complete their classwork (n = 63), and students with disabilities never complete their classwork (n = 0). Table 3 above presents the Frequencies for Q4 using JASP.

5. It has been reported from a mathematics classes study an average of 87.55% of homework assignments are completed. To what extent are students with disabilities completing homework in inclusion model classes in your educational setting?

This survey question had four choices with the following responses: students with disabilities complete their homework all the time (n = 4), students with disabilities complete their homework most of time (n = 119), students with disabilities often fail to complete their homework (n = 106), and students with disabilities never complete their homework (n = 0). Table 4 above presents the Frequencies for Q5 using JASP.

6. A research study discovered many students with disabilities repeat regular education courses. Is the special education inclusion model (placing special education students in general education classes with their peers) the best way to serve students with disabilities?

This survey question had four choices with the following responses: never (n = 5), in some cases (n = 164), in all cases (n = 7), and in most cases (n =53). Table 12 above presents the Frequencies for Q6 using JASP.

7. The graduation rates for student with disabilities only lingers around 50%. What has been the

impact of the mandate to include students with disabilities in learning environments with general education students?

This survey question had four choices with the following responses: students with disabilities are meeting all requirements (n = 9), students with disabilities are meeting most requirements (n = 113), students with disabilities are meeting only a few requirements (n = 93), and students with disabilities are failing to meet requirements (n = 14). Table 13 above presents the Frequencies for Q7 using JASP.

8. A previous study found 30% of both general and special education teachers responded the team approach is the best method to teach inclusion classrooms. Of the following, which three efforts would be most important in making inclusion settings successful?

(Please select only three.)

This survey question had an option of choosing three of five possible choices with the following responses: meeting regularly with parents, students, teachers, and administrators (n = 115), developing relationships with special needs students (n = 178), timely development of curriculum and instruction (n = 78), presenting quality curriculum and instruction for all students (n = 145), and continual staff development training on educating both general and special education students (n = 99). Table 14 above presents the Frequencies for Q8 using JASP.

9. The U.S. Department of Education reports 44.8% of students with disabilities graduated with regular high school diplomas, 26.5% transferred to another school, 11.2% dropped out, 9.3% transferred to general education, 7.1% received a certificate, and 1.0% exited for other reasons. After reviewing these national statistics, how effective were services in your local educational setting, based on your perceptions of individual student growth and behaviors?

This survey question had three choices with the following responses: not effective at all (n = 10),

slightly effective (n = 127), and very effective (n = 92). Table 15 above presents the Frequencies for Q9 using JASP.

10. Students with Specific Learning Disability had the highest dropout rates at 34.8% in a recent U.S. Department of Education report. In your experience, which of the following approaches seems most effective in meeting the needs of most students with disabilities?

This survey question had two choices with the following responses: general education classroom (inclusion) with special education staff support (n = 119), and special education classroom, resource classroom or Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA) classroom (n = 110). Table 7 above presents the Frequencies for Q10 using JASP.

11. A study results indicates most students with disabilities score below average on most portions of state standardized assessments. Should students with disabilities be required to take state assessments, end-of-course tests, etc. for graduation requirements?

This survey question had two choices with the following responses: yes (n = 95) and no (n = 134). Table 16 above presents the Frequencies for Q11 using JASP.

12. It was reported 30% of teachers apparently did not have a positive experience with inclusion. How would you describe your experience in high school classes with inclusion?

This survey question had four choices with the following responses: positive experience that led to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses (n = 74), positive experience that did not lead to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses (n = 108), negative experience that led to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses (n = 18), and negative experience that did not lead to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses (n = 29). Table 5 above presents the Frequencies for Q12 using JASP.

13. What are some of the most prevailing challenges in Special-Needs-Inclusive Classrooms (i.e., lack of resources, lack of teacher experience, lack of funding, teachers' compassion to students, difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities, etc.)? Please explain below.

Qualitative open-ended questions.

The final survey question Q13 was answered by one hundred and twenty-six of one hundred and twenty-nine survey participants. Table 17, Table 18, and Figure 3 above present the Frequencies for Q13 using JASP and provide additional analysis of the survey participants' comments. A breakdown of the responses below are organized into seventeen categories. Each category has a response(s) relating a particular topic. The term "co-teacher" is used in some survey participants' comments. Co-teacher refers to the additional teacher, usually special education teacher, assigned with the general education teacher to teach a group of students (general and special education students) in the same classroom sharing resources, responsibilities, instructions, and plan as a team.

Category 1: Cannot keep up with lesson (6).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Having to slow down general education for inclusion students to keep up
- Having a hard time keeping up with the class and understanding instruction
- Most regular ed classes move at a pace that is far beyond most students with disabilities.
- A difficulty of keeping both general students and special needs students going at the same pace.
- One significant challenge is general education teachers often expect special education students to perform like general education students.

- One of the prevailing challenges in Special-Needs-Inclusive Classrooms is that things move so quickly that many SWD's cannot keep up with the regular class so they are perpetually behind, even if they know how to do the work and even if they have a co-teacher available in the classroom. Another challenge is trying to keep SWD's motivated to put in the extra work and homework needed to keep up with the class. A third challenge is teacher experience. Few teachers are trained in depth and specifically how to teach or work with multiple types of disabilities. A fourth challenge is lack of time for co-teachers to do special education paperwork as well as planning with several teachers on multiple subjects without having to work outside of school or work hours.

Category 2: Lack of funding (18).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Funding
- Money; lack of
- Lack of funding
- Lack of funding
- Lack of funding
- Lack of funding
- Lack of funding
- Funding would help.
- More help is needed to help students
- Teacher experience and lack of funding
- Lack of funding, resources, and training
- Lack of funding to adequately serve the students.

- Funding and teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
- Lack of enough help in terms of paraprofessionals & lack of funding.
- Lack of funding. Teachers are having to use their personal funds to purchase some special material.
- Lack of teacher experience and funding. There are also teachers getting into this profession for the wrong reasons and not for the kids.
- Funding is sometimes an issue. Preparing the students to leave the high school setting and be successful in the workforce is the most important skill taught to them. Focus on skills to make sure they can easily transition from high school to life after graduation.
- Lack of funding an overall look and a type of a new setting that can be taught to reach kids development like music instruments, chalkboard setting around the whole wall of a classroom to have hands on for writing and drawing and etc. for a classroom setting.

Category 3: Lack of resources (26).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Lack of resources
- Lack of resources
- Lack of resources
- Lack of resources
- Lack of resources
- Lack of resources.
- Time and resources
- Lack of resources, training
- Lack of Resources and Class size

- Lack of resources and foundational skills.
- Lack of resources, No co-teachers available.
- Lack of resources and compassion to students
- Lack of resources and professional development.
- Lack of resources, co-teacher being stretched thin.
- Lack of teacher experience, lack of resources and lack of funding
- Lack of resources, lack of teachers or co-teachers, lack of funding.
- Students need more time and resources to help close achievement gap.
- Lack of resources, lack of funding, difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities.
- Resources, co-lab teachers being pulled in too many directions to effectively help the classroom teacher.
- When students transfer into the system from another district which offered one on one paras and our district does not offer that service.
- The most prevailing challenge in special-needs inclusive classrooms is lack of home resources (Basic needs, consistent medication, parent involvement).
- The most prevailing challenges in Special-Needs-Inclusive Classrooms is the lack of resources and support staff that does not have any background on how to teach Special Needs Kids.
- Lack of resource, mainly lack of staff to work with students effectively. Compassion for students, especially from Gen Ed. As students get older, the curriculum is harder and the gap is farther. They struggle with the age level standards.

- Lack of resources, lack of effective help in the classroom, not enough of time to focus on the students with disabilities. Lack of resources is a problem it's hard to find resources that appeal to the inclusion students that work with General Education students.
- Lack of resources and lack of teacher experience. In my experience with inclusion my co-teacher had very little experience and we had very little resources to provide training so my inclusion students did not receive the full benefits that an inclusion class is meant to offer.
- I find that students with disabilities struggle in a general ed environment because I do not have enough the resources to provide the one-on-one assistance that they need. I also feel that teachers are not fully equipped to meet the needs of the students. I have had students that suffered emotionally because they could not keep up with their peers without special attention. I attempted last year to bring the self-contained students into the class with my advanced students so that they could teach them the skills they had just learned. Both groups benefited from the experience in my opinion.

Category 4: Lack of time (7).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Time demands. Inclusion should be as needed.... not just the way.
- Lack of time to prep for teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities.
- Special education teachers are stretched thin so they cannot spend adequate amount of time for each class.
- Sufficient time for general ed teacher and special ed teachers to collaborate and plan for instruction together. It is difficult to teach grade level content to students with such learning gaps because they have learning disabilities that keep them behind their peers.

- Time. Most of these students need extended time. However, with the number of standards that I have in my area, we only have about a week per topic. If they don't finish their work within a week, they are behind. It is hard for them to catch up once they get behind. They are supposed to do that for homework, but some don't have computer access or WiFi.
- A major challenge with Inclusion Classrooms is having the time and skill to teach my students how to participate in whole group instruction. Many of my students have incomplete workbooks, notebooks, study guides, and other necessary materials related to the general education curriculum, because they are either out of the class for resource or cannot keep up with the academic rigor. This is especially prevalent when my co-teacher and I change from Station Teaching to another method, e.g., One Teach-One Observe and Assist or Team Teaching, and I can observe my General Education attempt to keep our student with disabilities on task or simplify the task, but the student cannot keep up.
- The problem here with this survey, is the same problem that exist with exceptional students. There are many layers that contribute to a student success in the classroom and not just: lack of resources, lack of teacher experience, lack of funding, teachers' compassion to students, difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities, and it cannot just be about funding and passing along it has to be about truly educating. We have to stop putting the blame on the home life and understand that from the time a student starts school until their senior year the school has had the student for over 2300 days, over 120 months, and more than 18,000 hrs. This is more than enough time to produce a decent product that can be successful in society. The results happen when there is true vertical alignment.

Category 5: Large class size (9).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Classroom size
- Larger class size is the biggest challenge to meet the needs of all students
- Large class size which sometimes means half the class are inclusion students.
- Differentiation meeting the needs of special education students and all students in courses where class sizes are large.
- Lack of common planning time with the co-teacher and large class size are the two main challenges faced when teaching inclusion classes.
- Teaching general ed curriculum to students with disabilities in the same time window as general ed students. The large class size is another big challenge.
- I think that many times schools are forced to one size fits all although the legislation is meant for students to be able to have individual needs met. For instance, co-taught classes should not have huge numbers of students however it often does.
- I fully believe that the inclusion model is effective for students with learning disabilities; however, I feel that large class sizes overall take away from the effectiveness of the inclusion model. More students mean less time a teacher can spend working with individual students, especially from a management perspective.
- I love having my inclusion students in my classroom; however, these classes tend to be larger in size and these students need more one-on-one instruction. It is hard to justify a smaller classroom with two teachers, but if these students are going to be blended in with the general ed classes they still need smaller class sizes or math specific inclusion teachers.

Category 6: Poor co-teaching skills (5).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Both teachers in the classroom need to be qualified and ready to serve.
- Inclusion SPED teachers' lack of content knowledge. Lack of adequate collaboration time with general and SPED teachers.
- Having a co-teacher or para-pro who is unfamiliar with the content, unwilling to participate, or lets kids copy from them have been some of the experiences I've had
- (Q12) Experiences have been positive and negative (mixed) that led to some students passing EOC and most passing courses. (Q13) The ability and the opportunity to follow a true co-teaching model where each student's need is met.
- Effective co-teachers that actually know the math and are WILLING to truly coteach is the biggest challenge that I have!!!! Typically, teachers either do not know enough about the math to help OR they just really don't want to help teach! I need a co-teacher that will pull small groups of struggling students to the side and help them fix their problems!!!!

Category 7: Array of issues (3).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Array
- Array
- There are all kinds of problems. From kids being in the wrong class to material that is just too much for them

Category 8: Difficult curriculum (31).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Difficultly teaching students with disabilities

- Sometimes it is difficult to teach general curriculum
- Teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
- Teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
- Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities.
- Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities.
- Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
- Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
- Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
- Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
- Curriculum needs to be modified to accommodate special ed students
- Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities at times.
- Difficult to remediate one group of students while challenging the others at the same time
- Juggling too much curriculum per student with divergent needs and interventions. But this is specific to my multi-grade, multi subject class.
- Regular students are not challenged because we have a watered-down curriculum. It has been like that for years in education and continues to get worse
- The biggest challenge that I've witnessed is the difficulty of teaching the curriculum on the student's ability level as well as the other different ability levels.
- General education teachers understanding sped requirements and Sped teachers not knowing the curriculum to actually be beneficial in the co-taught setting.
- At times it is difficult to teach general curriculum to students with disabilities without causing frustration due to abundance of material covered within the standard(s).

- Difficulty accommodating the needs of students with disabilities while in a General Education classroom. Modifying the pacing of lessons for students with disabilities.
- Difficulty of trying to teach to so many different ability levels in one classroom when sharing inclusion teacher with other teachers so they are not in one classroom at all times
- Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities. Some special education students need customized curriculum that will help with their life after graduation.
- Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities is a challenge if they are allowed to progress to the next grade while staying well below grade level is areas of reading and math.
- In my opinion, it is challenges with teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities. Having to develop a lesson plan to meet both your students with disabilities and one's without.
- Most times there is a difficulty teaching the general curriculum to students with disabilities. Also, SWD students are often more distracted in the larger class setting of inclusion classes.
- I would say curriculum. If a child has a document reading disability, why cannot they have their Science and Social Studies lessons in a video or computer module that removes reading out of the equation.
- Students with learning disabilities who are not going to attend a regular college should not have to take certain classes. They would benefit greatly from taking classes that teach a skill or trade rather than taking classes that are too advanced.

- Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities- some of these students will not need Geometry, Biology or some of the other required courses. They need basic courses where they learn life skills: how to manage a home, family, finances, etc.
- Teaching a general Ed curriculum to students who are three grade levels or more below where they should be is difficult. If special ed students are going to be out in general ed classes, then there should absolutely be a special ed teacher in that class to meet their specific needs. this special ed teacher typically has a relationship with the student and parent, which leads to more positive influence.
- In an inclusive classroom, students with special needs are required to complete the same work as all of the other students. It is difficult to provide the same curriculum, with the same expectations for all students. It is not right that a student with disabilities is provided several accommodations to be successful, and then they are given grades and scores higher than the students that did it independently.
- Special needs students need their own adapted curriculum. Instead of trying to cover the same material as gen ed but with accommodations, I feel they should just focus on mastering the main standard or concept. Another issue is that most of these students don't have effective help at home which is when they need it the most. Parents should be included in refresher courses for their child's subjects as well.
- The math curriculum is designed using a one-size-fits-all approach to instruction. Students who do not have basic mathematical skills should not be expected to solve quadratic equations, find arc measures, etc. There should be alternative routes for students. Many years ago, students could choose a college prep pathway or a vocational

pathway. As educators, we are setting some of these students up for failure. We need to be teaching basic skills that will allow them to become productive members of society.

Category 9: Lack of training (7).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Lack of teacher training for specific student
- To have train and experience teachers and paraprofessional
- Lack of training for regular Ed teacher on how to teach SWD
- In my case, the main challenge would be lack of training. As support staff I can only do as well as I am informed. Lack of teacher certification should not be cause to withhold training. Professional development education should not be on the spot troubleshooting.
- Lack of trained inclusion teachers to facilitate learning with the content teacher. Lack of resources (i.e., not enough staff for small group testing, read aloud testing, etc.) Teacher training in instructional techniques to deliver content to students with disabilities most effectively.
- A two-pronged problem of lack of training in HOW to co-teach a classroom with another teacher and a lack of fore-thought in scheduling so that co-teachers are able to work and plan together consistently. It is impossible for an inclusion teacher to participate in teaching if he or she goes from teacher to teacher, all day, and it's difficult for gen ed teachers to know how to work such an inclusion teacher into their course effectively.
- General Education teachers are focused on covering all standards prior to the EOC. Therefore, they are teaching at a pace that is not conducive to most special education students that require more time to learn the material. Many special education teachers are not trained in the content at the high school level and therefore team, parallel, and all

other types of co-teaching do not really happen in the classroom. They function more as support staff which is truly sad. Special education teachers and general education teachers need more training on working with students with disabilities. They often struggle to mean the needs all students because of the wide ranges of ability levels in the classrooms. With EOC's it seems pretty much impossible for a resource math student and only 25% possible a sped student in a gen. ed classroom. We use to have a CRT-M and I used to laugh because there was not a high school M test. Reality is a brick wall in high school. Students with disabilities come to HW on elementary math and reading levels. They are expected to remember and be proficient at all pre-requisite skills. They are not! On top of that many schools will not let the general education classroom spend time on recovering pre-requisite standards. The education system is failing our student with disabilities. Teachers need more training. I know some that are very close minded about special ed students being in a general education environment. They believe that all sped students should be resource. I believe that with better and more training teachers' eyes, hearts, and minds would open to reaching these students.

Category 10: Lack of compassion (11).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Lack of compassion
- Lack of teacher compassion
- Teachers' compassion to students
- Teachers, compassion to students. Students cannot learn from someone they think doesn't care for them.

- The lack of teachers who don't adapt their lesson plans to the needs of inclusion or special needs students.
- Lack of parent involvement; lack of training in specific disabilities and what they entail; teacher compassion
- I think the main challenge is teachers being able to build the relationship they need to support the students and then having time to fulfill the needs of each student.
- General education teacher's compassion and empathy towards special education students is a big prevailing factor. Not having a resource class for those special education students in inclusive settings is also hindering their progress.
- Teachers that do not want to teacher co-taught classrooms. These teachers make it very hard for us to come into the classroom and provide services. I have been blessed with amazing co-teachers but have seen the damage it has done.
- The number one thing at our school is keeping the Special Ed teacher in the classroom to help the students. It seems as if they think it is another planning time for them to do whatever they want to do during the class time. If they would stay in the classroom the kids would receive more help from the sped teacher.
- For some, it is understanding and compassion. At times it can be overwhelming depending on the amount of support received from administration. I've worked in schools and districts where there was solid support for Special Ed kids in the inclusion class and I've been in others where that was NOT the case and students suffered because of it. I understand "least restrictive environment" for the student, but by the same token many of those students would flourish if they were in smaller classes with more direct attention. I am not a fan of EOCs for regular education students much less Special Ed students- if I

have the flexibility to determine that a student has mastered the standard verbally but the EOC doesn't allow for that it must be completed online or paper. Forcing Special Ed students into a general education setting can also be a major disruption for the regular education students (I have seen co-taught classes have 30+ students and admin did not bat an eye due to there being "2" teachers in there). I am hopeful with my new school that it isn't the same as I've had in the recent past.

Category 11: Ineffective use of accommodations (2).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Phonics
- Teachers need to be made more aware of how to meet the needs of SWDs

Category 12: Lack of special education experience (5).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Lack of teacher experience
- Lack of teacher experience and communication between the general ed and special ed teacher.
- Lack of experience. Because Students may have a disability but some students react differently.
- Lack of teacher experience and difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities.
- Teacher experience. We are expected to treat them like normal students, and it's just not possible. Lack of support.

Category 13: Low expectations for special education (4).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Lowered expectations and lack of resources
- Clear expectations and roles explained to both Sp. Ed. and Gen. Ed. Teachers.
- Most special needs students put forth little effort. Often, they seem to have the expectation of passing the course regardless of any effort on their part.
- Students, parents, and PEC teachers having low expectations for the student and expecting the general education teacher to have the same. Also, the prejudice toward the general education teacher that includes placing blame and IEP documents with generic or old modifications or strategies.

Category 14: Poor co-teaching relationships (11).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Co-teacher relationships - if it's a positive relationship, the students will succeed.
- I would say collaboration between Regular Ed teacher and the Special Ed teacher.
- Building relationships between Regular Education and Special Education teachers.
- The challenges we face is not enough staff to aid the regular education teachers for each class period.
- General education and special education teachers working together to better the quality of education for students.
- I have found in the past that a lack of communication or miscommunication between staff has been the biggest challenge.
- Co-Teacher relationships must be strong. If they are weak and not efficient, it will also affect the overall delivery of instruction and support for all students.

- The inconsistency of teachers. SWD teachers has to start over all the time to establish and build work relationships. Also, cookie cutter schedules due to lack of resources and teachers.
- The most challenging aspects include planning between the general education teachers and special education teachers especially at the high school levels. Also, most special educators are placed in special education not because they want to be there but because there is a need.
- It is important for the regular ed teacher and special ed teacher to have a positive working relationship. If those two cannot get along, students suffer (both regular ed and SPED students). Planning time is often a factor when considering lessons for regular ed and SPED students in the same classroom.
- A lot of times it is the general ed teacher and the special ed teacher relationship that influences whether an inclusive class was successful or not successful. There are times that General Ed teachers do not like another teacher "raining on their parade". The General Ed teacher wants to be TOTALLY in charge of their classroom. This makes the Special Ed. Teachers feeling left out or isolated.

Category 15: Poor teaching skills (4).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Lack of content knowledge
- Lack of special education teachers that work well in an inclusion situation; i.e., content knowledge was not strong for the class.

- It is my belief that teachers have difficulty adjusting to the blended learning environment between the two group of students. The level of difficulty could vary depending on the course., i.e., Dance Class vs Math Class. So, the answer to this question would vary.
- In my experience, the sped teacher doesn't know the math concept to be effective in teaching it. The concepts required by the EOC are too difficult for the student to learn. Therefore, they are getting lost in the shuffle of the regular ed classroom. I think those students with disabilities would benefit more from a small group classroom and not be required to take the standardized tests. These students need basic remediation, not higher order thinking required by the upper level math courses of high school.

Category 16: Lack of motivation (5).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Student apathy.
- Students with disabilities are not motivated.
- Lack of student motivation, difficulty with co-teaching knowledge
- Many of the issues with our co-taught classes is the inclusion of students without and IEP that are labeled as low performing because of lack of motivation and behavior problems. Those students keep the co-teacher from being able to provide more specialized instruction for students with disabilities.
- Many high school special education students have developed learned helplessness or put forth minimal effort. They also do not know how to advocate for themselves. Once we label students in elementary and middle grades, we often times do not challenge special education students appropriately. My own son, who has dyslexia and APD has a very high IQ, however I see where he is "tracked" in certain classes with certain teachers, even

though he has an IQ in the upper 10% of the population. Things are "watered down" and he is not challenged based on his intelligence because he has a reading disability. If students are given the appropriate accommodations and research-based interventions are implemented with fidelity, not a one size fits all approach, we would see greater success from the population of special education students. That combined with teaching them genuine self-advocacy and coping skills, instead of simply passing them on for convince.

Category 17: Feeling embarrassed (3).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- The students do not want to be singled out and do not utilize their accommodations.
- Most inclusion students who fail my class should've been in the resource classes but they were embarrassed to be seen going to those classes.
- Students usually do not like the stigma of being special ed in the high school setting. They generally refuse to utilize the resources for fear of being singled out in the general ed classroom. They often lack support at home to complete tasks or finish tasks not completed in school and this generally leads to them falling behind. Some students with disabilities can function in the classroom, but I have seen this to be seldomly true. There is a benefit to having them in general ed for social reasons, but they are unable to keep up with the tasks even when adapted.

Category 18: Assessments (2).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Testing special needs students, the same way regular ed students are tested with no accommodation allowed.

- The rigor of the general education classroom assessment is worded in such a manner as to be confusing to regular education children leaving the special education students out. The tests do not show what they know about a subject. On an individual basis, modifications to testing should be allowed for co-taught students.

Category 19: Parental support (5).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Lack of support at home.
- Lack of parental support or parental understanding or knowledge of procedures.
- Students with disabilities want to do well and most of them try really hard. Parental involvement is needed.
- Family impact plays an important part in a child's life. Families with a child with special needs sometimes, let the teachers take their role and not participate in their child's curriculum.
- Parental support and help maybe not because they don't want to but maybe they are not able to help with homework and studying. Students need home support and assistance as well as school in my opinion.

Category 20: Disruptive learning environment (4).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Depending on the needs of the students, I believe students that are severe and profound should not be put in a general educational setting alone.
- In my experience, students with behavior problems are often put in the inclusion classroom so that two teachers can "watch" said students. This takes away from others'

learning, both SPED and non-SPED students. (When I mention behavior problems, I am not taking about students with diagnosed behavior disorders.)

- I believe the most stressing issue is how to ensure that the special needs students do not alter the learning for the general students. When dealing with the long list of accommodations for the special needs students it is easy to get into educational doldrums. If the general education students are not challenged or engaged it can be chaotic. I don't believe modifications would work in a standard classroom either.
- There are a lot of distractions for general education students which means there's a lot of distractions for Special Ed as well. I feel that a lot of success comes from pull-out with the inclusion teacher. It limits the Special Ed students' distractions and allows them to feel more at ease to ask questions. While I love having them in my classroom, I notice around 75% every year are very withdrawn and afraid to ask for help for fear of looking "slower" than the other students.

Category 21: Classwork and homework completion (1).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Students with disabilities sometimes feel they do not need to complete their coursework; therefore, I hold them as accountable as possible, within the restraints of IEPs.

Category 22: Differentiation (7).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Differentiation of curriculum
- Confusing understandings of "differentiation"
- Difficulty teaching Gen. curriculum to students with disabilities

- Special education students are similar to regular educations students. Some excel, some fail. Inclusion setting works best, but must take into account the individual needs of each students.
- Slowing down the educational process. Admin needs to start differentiation during the development of the schedule not expect classroom teachers to try to develop different lesson for several different students in a single class.
- The amount of differentiation that is expected in the inclusion setting is unrealistic. There is no amount of planning that will allow for a co-taught class to be able to teach to a high-level learner, our low-level learner and all the others in between in a single block and actually believe that they will all receive the same educational experience.
- It is double, sometimes triple the work load for a general ed teacher to do all the special ed requirements, recommendations and still deliver a quality education to all in an inclusion class. Regular students suffer in their education due to the extra time needed to include the special ed needs and differentiated instruction. Spend some time actually going into classrooms and listening to the concerns of teachers, rather than going "this is a great idea, implement it" with little teacher input.

Category 23: Attendance (2).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Absenteeism
- Student attendance

Category 24: Functionable program with no problems (3).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- We have no problem from our school. We are trained very well! We are trained how to approach the kids with needs
- We have an amazing support staff for our inclusion students. They go above and beyond to help these students. We also offer after school tutoring that many inclusion students take advantage of. The key to having successful inclusion is having staff that is trained and supportive of special needs students.
- Thankfully, my current school adjusts schedules and provides support for students in inclusive classrooms. Many of our academic courses have co-teacher, and our elective courses have a co-teacher when necessary. Students who require more direct supervision are accompanied in every class. I do have peers who work in other counties who do not have sufficient support for inclusive instruction.

Category 25: Teachers' work ethic (2).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Quality of paraprofessionals and teachers assigned to help special needs students is very low. Most teachers assigned to help this population spend their time playing on phones or answering e-mails instead of helping their assigned student.
- There are too many coaches in these slots who are not dedicated to the educational part of their job. They are primarily dedicated to sports and choose to be a co-teacher because they don't want to do lesson plans. This is a lose-lose situation.

Category 26: Best learning setting (6).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Most special ed students do better in non-inclusion special ed classrooms.

- I think there should be a balance for inclusion and separation depending on the student and academic.
- Some students do not fit the mold for inclusion and need something in between that and self-contained.
- I do not currently teach with an inclusion teacher, although I have in the past. I did not see the positive impact.
- It takes a special person to be able to teach special needs students, so putting them in general ed classes is not always the best solution for the student. Plus, you don't want those kids to feel overwhelmed when they are placed in general ed classes.
- Inclusion has both pros and cons. Inclusion classroom setting should not implemented in the Pre-K setting. PreK is the molding and shaping stage. Children learn everything that they see. Inclusion settings in Pre-K has too many daily distractions with too many adults entering the room, too many types of behaviors being displayed, and too much added stress on everyone. Inclusion settings should start on the elementary level. Some of those questions should have answers above according to data.

Category 27: Administrative decisions (6).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Lack of continuity. Sped teachers constantly be reassigned.
- Lack of administrative support with erratic or aggressive special needs students.
- Students being placed to the next grade even though they have failed all subjects.
- Scheduling for both students and teachers, student access to interventions at an EARLY age to close gaps...perhaps even at the preschool age.

- Lack of teacher or paras in CTAE classes. CTAE classes are not assigned a specific teacher or para to assist their students, it is up to the CTAE teacher to assist these students.
- I believe the most prevailing challenge faced in the inclusive classroom is same challenge faced in the non-honors' general education classroom, which is more poverty based than academic based. I believe other challenges that have a negative impact on the effectiveness of inclusion classrooms are the inability to have common planning amongst co-teachers, special educations teachers teaching multiple content areas, and grouping non-IEP behavior students in co-taught classes because there are two teachers.

Category 28: Teacher support (2).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Lack of regular ed teacher support.
- Lack of new teacher preparation from college level, lack of perceived support (we think we're supporting our new teachers, but resignations seem to contradict that).

Category 29: Ready for adulthood after high school (1).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- Life post high school. Many are unemployed, and living with parents.

Category 30: No response (31).

Responses from survey participants relating closely to this category are as follows:

- "."
- n/a
- n/a
- NA

- NA
- None
- I'm not sure. This answer requires a lot of thought.

Chapter V: Discussion, Implications, Recommendations

Final Analysis

The purpose of this study was to explore the negative and positive impacts of the inclusion model for instruction to children with disabilities within 12 southern counties in the state of Georgia. From a statistical point of reference, the researcher explored differences in students with disabilities' end-of-course state assessment scores in 10 main academic subjects. This in-depth study looked at how rural, secondary students with disabilities progressed in general education inclusion model environments and how their general education teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals perceived their inclusion experience in the general education environment.

The purpose of using a survey in addition to collection and compilation of past assessment scores was to triangulate the data from different sources. To clarify association of the categories, the study utilized elements of several disabilities to create analytical data reviews of assessment scores. Assessment scores and survey participants remain anonymous. Therefore, the identities of students, special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers are kept confidential. Variables such as academic or performance grades and disabilities are stressful collection items for some counties to reveal due to the beforementioned confidentiality concerns. However, making the most of these variables is important when compiling the final assembly of the overall results.

There are various categories of special education classification for students with disabilities. The range of disabilities include but is not limited to emotional behavior disorders (EBD), specific learning disorders (SLD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), mild intellectual disability (MI), moderate intellectual disability (MO), and other health impairment (OHI). Some

of these disabilities are easier to find test results data on than others. Some disabilities have more data available than others. Therefore, this study was constructed around the aspects of disability data that were available. However, compiling various categories of special education classification of students with disabilities would very possibly infringe on the confidentiality of students due to the small population of some high schools, and small numbers of students in some categories, participating in the research study. Therefore, various categories of special education classification for students with disabilities was not identified in this research study.

This study considered special education disabilities and focused on grouping achievement based on the particular disabilities serviced in general education classrooms. Students with disabilities serviced in other school settings are important; however, this study was limited to special education students served by special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers in an inclusion setting. These identified students participate in state assessments due to several critical disability differences in qualification categories of state and federal requirements for assessments.

Research Questions

RQ1. What are the differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' state test scores in an inclusion model in recent years?

With the use of a T-Test, an overall significant difference was revealed between the initial Georgia Milestone End-of-Course Test scores from 2014/2015 and the most current Georgia Milestone End-of-Course Test scores from 2019. These scores were tested using two tails and a paired input. With a $p = 0.022030119$ result, the p value is statistically significant at the .05 level. With a 2% chance there is not a significant difference, there is a 98% chance there is a significant difference. It is not likely due to randomness that these results appear. Therefore,

it is stated in conclusion that the p-value is significant because it is at or greater than 95%.

An analysis of historical and current Georgia Milestone End-of-Course Test scores revealed that nine out of 10 subjects' assessments scores had a decrease in failures over a five-year period. Therefore, there was a positive difference in high school students with disabilities' state assessments scores in an inclusion model in the recent five years.

RQ2. What are the differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' classwork and homework completion in an inclusion model in recent years?

Results from the Qualtrics survey indicate that educators perceive students with disabilities complete classwork most of time at a rate of 70% while frequently completing homework at an average rate of 52%. Therefore, there is a difference in high school students with disabilities completion of classwork and homework. Students with disabilities are more likely to complete classwork in an inclusion learning environment versus completing homework outside of the inclusion learning environment. The possible reason for the difference is the likelihood that educators are aggressively pushing students with disabilities to complete classwork whereas when the educators are not present the students with disabilities do not complete homework tasks at the same rate.

RQ3. What are the differences or similarities in the way special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers view the special education students' pass rate on standardized assessments and overall course pass rate in an inclusion model?

Results from the Qualtrics survey indicated that 40% of educators perceive their experience with students with disabilities in inclusion models led to special education students passing end-of-course tests and passing courses. Therefore, there is a difference in the perceived

pass rates and the actual pass rates. The T-test indicates a decrease in failure rates on standardized assessments whereas educators perceive there are much lower passing rates for students with disabilities in the inclusion classroom setting.

Survey participants believe that the inclusion model did not help the students pass state assessments, but the actual test results showed students with disabilities improved their test scores from 2014/2015 to 2019 on EOC assessments except on one assessment. Therefore, there is a difference in educators' perceptions and actual results from data regarding students with disabilities' passing rates. Although 79% of participants responded that they had a positive experience with the inclusion model, there were 60% of participants that responded they did not believe it led to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses. This implies the possibility that the data indicating a trend of growth on EOC assessments over the last five years is not disseminated to educators by school administration.

When comparing participants' perceptions, the special education educators were more apt to state that they had a positive experience at a rate of 79%. Paraprofessionals were more apt to state that they had a negative experience at a rate 23%. The general educators were more apt to state that their experience with students with disabilities led to them passing end-of-course tests and passing courses at a rate 46%. However, paraprofessionals were more likely to state that their experience with students with disabilities did not lead to them passing end-of-course tests and passing courses, at a rate 77%. Overall, all educators had similar views that their experiences were positive with 79% response from general educators, 82% response from special education educators, and 77% response from paraprofessionals. However, a large number of educators believe that their experience working in inclusion led to students with disabilities' eventual failure on end-of-course assessments and failing courses with 54% response from

general educators, 63% response from special education educators, and 54% response from paraprofessionals. This clearly indicates that opinions collected give a different picture than what the educators believe, since test data shows improvement in scores and passing classes.

RQ4. Do special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers prefer the inclusion model or special education classroom model as the best way to serve high school students with disabilities?

Results from the Qualtrics survey indicate that a little more than half of educators perceive students with disabilities would be best served in a general education classroom setting (inclusion). There were 52% of the educators supporting the inclusion model setting as best for students with disabilities and 48% of educators supporting the non-inclusion special education setting as the best possible setting for students with disabilities. The Georgia Milestone EOC assessments results clearly show that the inclusion model has produced better EOC assessment performance for students with disabilities in all but one of the 10 course areas. However, there were approximately 48% of educators who thought going back to a non-inclusion model (special education classroom settings) would benefit students with disabilities more. Further research should be conducted to determine what those educators feel would be improved by abandoning the inclusion model approach.

Findings and Data Summary

Specifically, this research was designed to examine the success of students with disabilities in general education classroom settings. The literature indicated that including students with disabilities in general education classroom settings would increase their academic standing, social skills, and their preparedness for adulthood in areas like independent living, training and employment or post-secondary education. Hines (2018) contended that "the

benefits are clear for the students with and without disabilities, and for society as a whole" (p. 71). Standardized test results over the last five years indicate some inclusion classroom success based on the decline in the failure rate on these tests by students with disabilities. This study did not research the impact of inclusion on social skills, training and employment, post-secondary education, or independent living skills, however, further research in those areas would prove beneficial. In a similar study of schools using a Multi-Tiered System of Support for students with disabilities in general education classrooms, Choi, McCart, and Sailor (2020) concluded that "growth trends showed that the estimated probability of being proficient continuously increase at the second and third study years [2015-16 & 2016-17] in ELA and math" (p. 18).

Literature about inclusion settings for students with disabilities is showing research results with evidence supporting inclusion as the best education setting. Cosier, White, and Wang (2018) believed any form of segregation of students with disabilities may prevent special education students from authentically participating in school and becoming productive members of society. Hines (2018) expressed the belief that all students benefit from the inclusion model and not just the students with disabilities. Inclusion special education models allow general education students to find understanding in those with intellectual disabilities and also allows special education students to gain many living and social skills through interactions with general education peers and general educators.

Survey results relating to the question whether inclusion or separate special education classroom is the best setting for students with disabilities indicated a surprising dissonance. Nearly half of the educators (48%) preferred returning students with disabilities back into separate resource classrooms. The reason behind their lack of preference for the inclusion model is not clear. The researcher speculates that possible reasons are: educator burn-out, frustration

with students with disabilities' non-productive efforts, their perceived notion that students fail general education courses at a high rate, and behaviors that are disruptive in the general education classroom setting. Although students didn't participate in the survey, the researcher believes that most students prefer the inclusion model over the separate special education classroom. The researcher observed that most students with disabilities seem to relish the opportunity to integrate with general education students in academic and extra curricular activities settings.

This difference in perception versus reality was also seen in the educators' response to whether serving students with disabilities in the inclusion model was a positive or negative experience that led to passing or failing tests and courses. It may be attributed to educator's negative experiences stemming from frustration trying to help students with disabilities pass tests and courses. Educators responded at a rate of 60% stating they had experiences in inclusion settings that led to students with disabilities failing the tests and courses. However, results from state assessments indicate that over the last five years, students with disabilities' failure rate have decreased on nine of the ten end-of-course assessment content areas. These test results expose the troublesome fact that perception doesn't always match reality.

Comments from survey participants revealed a theme of troublesome issues that prevent the smooth implementation of inclusion short- and long-term objectives. Some of the most difficult complaints to solve were those relating to lack of resources, lack of funds, poor motivation, and lack of compassion from educators. Some issues that can be resolved with school administration assistance were complaints of low teaching skills, inadequate time for team collaboration and planning. The results from this research suggest that successful school systems can share practices and policies that allow other school systems to excel in providing the

best inclusion setting for all involved: students, educators, and parents.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses, H1, which states "There are differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' state test scores in an inclusion model in recent years." is accepted. The null, H01, which states "There are no differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' state test scores in an inclusion model in recent years" is rejected.

The hypotheses, H2, which states "There are differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' classwork and homework completion in an inclusion model in recent years" is accepted. The null, H02, which states "There are no differences or similarities in high school students with disabilities' classwork and homework completion in an inclusion model in recent years" is rejected.

The hypotheses, H3, which states "There are differences or similarities in the way special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers view the special education students' pass rate on standardized assessments and overall course pass rate in an inclusion model" is accepted. The null, H03, which states "There are no differences or similarities in the way special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers view the special education students' pass rate on standardized assessments and overall course pass rate in an inclusion model" is rejected.

The hypotheses, H4, which states "Special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers prefer the inclusion model or special education classroom model as the best way to serve high school students with disabilities" is rejected. The null, H04, which states "Special education teachers, special education paraprofessionals, and general education teachers do not prefer the inclusion model nor special education classroom

model as the best way to serve high school students with disabilities" is accepted. The p-value from the T-Test shows a value of 0.37 which is not significant. About half of the educators (52%) selected the current inclusion model and nearly half of the other educators (48%) selected the old system of separate special education classrooms settings for students with disabilities.

Implications for Educational Practice

With a focus on educators' perceptions and state assessments results, this research set out to determine the perceived versus actual success or failure of inclusion models in South Georgia region high schools for students with disabilities. The survey participants provided over 30 categories of challenges with the inclusion model in their particular high school (see Table 19 below). These challenges are not new to those pursuing best practices for educating special education and general education students in the same classroom while learning standardized curriculum with accommodations. The survey participants reported challenges in resources, time, training, collaborations, administrative decisions, lessons being too rigorous for students with disabilities, etc. Perhaps, what wasn't discussed are the methods and practices to ensure students with disabilities have success in general education classrooms.

Table 19

List of Categories of Challenges from Educators' Survey Comments

Category #	**Challenges**	**# of Comments**
1	Cannot Keep Up with Lesson	6
2	Lack of Funding	18
3	Lack of Resources	26
4	Lack of Time	7
5	Large Class Size	9

6	Poor Co-teaching Skills	5
7	Array of Issues	3
8	Difficult Curriculum	31
9	Lack of Training	7
10	Lack of Compassion	11
11	Ineffective Use of Accommodations	2
12	Lack of Special Education Experience	5
13	Low Expectations for Special Education	4
14	Poor Co-teaching Relationships	11
15	Poor Teaching Skills	4
16	Lack of Motivation	5
17	Feeling Embarrassed	3
18	Assessments	2
19	Parental Support	5
20	Disruptive Learning Environment	4
21	Classwork and Homework Completion	1
22	Differentiation	7
23	Attendance	2
24	Functionable Program with No Problems	3
25	Teachers' Work Ethnic	2
26	Best Learning Setting	6
27	Administrative Decisions	6
28	Teacher Support	2
29	Ready for Adulthood after High School	1
30	No Responses	31

For as long as there have been special needs students in school buildings, there has been a need to educate these students inclusively. Their rights for a free and accessible education have always been at the forefront of the educational debate. To properly provide these students with adequate services, good policies need to be implemented by well trained, sensitive educators that can collaborate and communicate well with peers, parents, and administrators. Federal, state, and local school governing bodies must have the same passion to serve students with disabilities equally, as compared to the efforts put forth for general education students. It is imperative that changes are implemented to fulfill the efforts to make all education areas accessible to all students. Since survey participants identified many challenges within special education inclusion settings, following are recommendations for correcting or improving these challenges.

Collaboration, communication, training, funding, and curriculum modifications are the most prevailing challenges. General and special education educators need to meet and plan regularly to ensure that students with disabilities progress is planned, structured, implemented, and monitored frequently to ensure the team is focused on objectives and goals tailored specifically for individual students. Educators need to meet regularly with other educators in their local school district as well as other neighboring school districts to share methodologies, practices, strategies, and policies that have led to inclusion classroom success. Funds and resource distribution are limited by districts' and state's education administrators; however, local administrators can monitor proper usage, equitable distribution, and inquire about opportunities to share and exchange resources with other districts. Administrators needed to set aside times to allow in-house training and support educator training from outside their districts. Lastly, states need to reconsider mandating the same curriculum and assessments for the general and special

education students in inclusion settings. Curriculum and assessments can be customized and modified for students with disabilities and allow different graduation diplomas.

Principals should get general education teachers and special education teachers to accept the inclusion process by emphasizing the positive results during data analysis sessions to avoid misunderstandings and low morale. School districts can collect data relating to the high school end-of-course scores and plan educators' meetings around informing them about students with disabilities' progress or lack of progress. This information can be used as a motivational tool to inspire educators to continue with effective lessons and co-teaching methodologies. These opportunities would allow educators to be able to evaluate their shortcomings in class through test trends and exploration of special education inclusion services and practices that lead to failures.

Implications for Further Research

Several areas mentioned by educators in the survey comments are worthy of further research. However, there are two important questions requiring further research. What are the elements of the inclusion model that resulted in improved students with disabilities performance on state assessments over time? What are the elements of the inclusion model that caused 48% of the educators participating in the survey to believe there is a better approach to educating students with disabilities other than inclusion? Higher education could target this new research toward ways to assist other educators with productive analysis and diagnosis of particular methodologies and instruction of students with disabilities. There could possibly be certain accommodations, test taking skills training, etc., that account for the reduction in student EOC assessment failures.

To improve the completion of homework, the researcher recommend administrator

develop a program for completing homework at school prior to students with disabilities leaving for home. Consider the fact that students with disabilities would need adult supervision in a homework session at the end of the school day to assist and motivate them.

Also, further research is necessary to look into the reasons the Algebra assessment scores were the only end-of-course assessments that did not have a decrease in failures. There may be some accommodation that can target students with disabilities taking these Algebra I assessments. An educator that is successful in getting his or her students' scores to improve may have some methodology to share with the research team and colleagues. It is possible to share these skills through mentorship, training, or instructional modalities.

As recommended by several survey participants, further research is needed in the area of developing separate curriculum exclusively for special education students. Many survey participants supported improving the efforts of administration to aid with creating better differentiation learning settings to include concentration on a clear definition of differentiation, slowing down the education process to allow ease in providing differentiation in general education settings, and allow more time to both general and special education to collaborate and plan for curriculum demands. Survey participants expressed a need for further research in the areas of co-teaching, collaboration, and educators working together longer to build consistent relationships and education teams. Furthermore, survey participants mentioned a need for researching ways to increase resources, funds, teaching skills, and educators' compassion.

Researchers should investigate why educators do not believe that there has been improvement in students with disabilities' test results. This researcher recommends principals share data with educators. The data analysis can be held during teacher meetings or professional learning training. Educators would be more productive, enthused, and look forward to students

with disabilities achievements on end-of-course assessments and course passing rates.

Finally, researchers should investigate why the 48% of teacher want to return to the old special education classroom model. More research is need because almost half of the educators are unhappy and this research does not identify the reason for their favoritism toward separate classes for students with disabilities. Their demographics (i.e., age, years of experience, subject teaching, etc.) would be interesting to know to explore their reasons for being interested in returning to older ways of educating students with disabilities.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this research study that accompany the details of the findings. Prior knowledge, previous experience, and personal bias may have influenced the response of the survey participants. There were administrators that chose not to allow their high school educators to participate potentially because of the fear of their educators' responses and how it may reflect negatively upon their school despite the promised confidentiality. So, researchers should be cautioned about the interpersonal perceptions that are not logically thought out for inclusion in such a research.

This research was focused on 13 South Georgia high schools. Take caution when using the results and findings in other school districts and high schools. Georgia may have a different inclusion model than other states' school systems. Therefore, the findings may not be valid in other states. Also, it is important to remember this study only looked at a five-year span of data and a larger data set may reveal different results. This research did not explore all aspects or goals of a special education inclusion program for students with disabilities. Goals like social skills development, workplace readiness, independent living skills, etc., may be addressed more or less successfully than the aspects of this research study.

Summary

The idea of placing students with disabilities in general education classroom settings seems to some like an unreasonable idea, and to others like a great idea. The inclusion concept has been around for decades and has had moderate success, as some of these students with disabilities have shown measurable gains and access to educational realms that were previously not available many years ago. However, the debate must continue as barely half of those involved with special education believe inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes has positively impacted those students. It is important to continue the study of the impact of inclusion on students with disabilities. Researchers should remember the importance of the relationship between students, parents, educators, and administrators to make the inclusion model even more successful for students with disabilities as well as general education students in the same settings. Be mindful of the fact that both positive and negative aspects of inclusion models exist. Instruction and curriculum will continue to need to be accommodated and modified for all involved. As research continues to guide present and future practices, methodology, administration, litigation, and policies, the most important focus should be the well-being of the students with disabilities.

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Appendix A

Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey

1. Which category best describes your position?

- a. General Education Teacher
- b. Special Education Teacher
- c. Paraprofessional

2. What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female

3. How many years have you been teaching and providing special education services to students with disabilities (special education students)?

- a. 1-5
- b. 6-10
- c. 11-15
- d. 16 or more

4. A study reported students' classroom engagement, academic effort, and subsequent school success or failure are influenced not only by individual differences in skills, abilities, and predispositions, but also by many situational and contextual factors. To what extent are students with disabilities completing classwork in inclusion model classes in your educational setting?

- a. Students with disabilities complete their classwork all the time
- b. Students with disabilities complete their classwork most of time
- c. Students with disabilities often fail to complete their classwork
- d. Students with disabilities never complete their classwork

5. It has been reported from a mathematics classes study an average of 87.55% of homework assignments are completed. To what extent are students with disabilities completing homework in inclusion model classes in your educational setting?

- a. Students with disabilities complete their homework all the time
- b. Students with disabilities complete their homework most of time
- c. Students with disabilities often fail to complete their homework
- d. Students with disabilities never complete their homework

6. A research study discovered many students with disabilities repeat regular education courses. Is the special education inclusion model (placing special education students in general education classes with their peers) the best way to serve students with disabilities?

- a. Never
- b. In some cases
- c. In all cases
- d. In most cases

7. The graduation rates for student with disabilities only lingers around 50%. What has been the impact of the mandate to include students with disabilities in learning environments with general education students?

- a. Students with disabilities are meeting all requirements
- b. Students with disabilities are meeting most requirements
- c. Students with disabilities are meeting only a few requirements
- d. Students with disabilities are failing to meet requirements

8. A previous study found 30% of both general and special education teachers responded the team approach is the best method to teach inclusion classrooms. Of the following, which three efforts would be most important in making inclusion settings successful? (Please select only three.)

- a. Meeting regularly with parents, students, teachers, and administrators
- b. Developing relationship with special needs students
- c. Timely development of curriculum and instruction
- d. Presenting quality curriculum and instruction for all students
- e. Continual staff development training on educating both general and special education students

9. U.S. Department of Education reports 44.8% of students with disabilities graduated with regular high school diplomas, 26.5% transferred to another school, 11.2% dropped out, 9.3% transferred to general education, 7.1% received a certificate, and 1.0% exited for other reasons. After reviewing these national statistics, how effective were services in your local educational setting, based on your perceptions of individual student growth and behaviors?

- a. not effective at all
- b. slightly effective
- c. very effective

10. Students with Specific Learning Disability had the highest dropout rates at 34.8% in a recent U.S. Department of Education report. In your experience, which of the following approaches seems most effective in meeting the needs of most students with disabilities?

- a. General Education Classroom (Inclusion) with special education staff support)
- b. Special Education Classroom, Resource Classroom or Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA) Classroom

11. A study results indicates most students with disabilities score below average on most portions of state standardized assessments. Should students with disabilities be required to take state assessments, end-of-course tests, etc. for graduation requirements?

- a. Yes
- b. No

12. It was reported 30% of teachers apparently did not have a positive experience with inclusion. How would you describe your experience in high school classes with inclusion?

- a. positive experience that led to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses
- b. positive experience that did not lead to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses
- c. negative experience that led to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses
- d. negative experience that did not lead to special education student(s) passing end-of-course tests and passing courses

13. What are some of the most prevailing challenges in Special-Needs-Inclusive Classrooms (i.e., lack of resources, lack of teacher experience, lack of funding, teachers' compassion to students, difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities, etc.). Please explain below.

Survey for Michael Adams

(229) 560-3657

"Impact of the Inclusion Model on Students with Disabilities in Academic Settings"

Appendix B

Educators' Survey Comments and Responses

	13. What are some of the most prevailing challenges in Special-Needs-Inclusive Classrooms (i.e., lack of resources, lack of teacher experience, lack of funding, teachers' compassion to students, difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities, etc.). Please explain below.
1	(Q12) Experiences have been positive and negative (mixed) that led to some students passing EOC and most passing courses. (Q13) The ability and the opportunity to follow a true co-teaching model where each student's need is met.
2	.
3	a difficulty of keeping both general students and special needs students going at the same pace.
4	A major challenge with Inclusion Classrooms is having the time and skill to teach my students how to participate in whole group instruction. Many of my students have incomplete workbooks, notebooks, study guides, and other necessary materials related to the general education curriculum, because they are either out of the class for resource or cannot keep up with the academic rigor. This is especially prevalent when my co-teacher and I change from Station Teaching to another method, e.g., One Teach-One Observe and Assist or Team Teaching, and I can observe my General Education attempt to keep our student with disabilities on task or simplify the task, but the student cannot keep up.
5	A two-pronged problem of lack of training in HOW to co-teach a classroom with another teacher and a lack of fore-thought in scheduling so that co-teachers are able to work and plan together consistently. It is impossible for an inclusion teacher to participate in teaching if he or she goes from teacher to teacher, all day, and it's difficult for gen ed teachers to know how to work such an inclusion teacher into their course effectively.
6	Absenteeism
7	A lot of times it is the general ed teacher and the special ed teacher relationship that influences whether an inclusive class was successful or not successful. There are times that General Ed teachers do not like another teacher "raining on their parade". The General Ed teacher wants to be TOTALLY in charge of their classroom. This makes the Special Ed. Teachers feeling left out or isolated.
8	Array
9	Array
10	At times it is difficult to teach general curriculum to students with disabilities without causing frustration due to abundance of material covered within the standard(s).
11	Both teachers in the classroom need to be qualified and ready to serve.
12	Building relationships between Regular Education and Special Education teachers.
13	classroom size
14	Clear expectations and roles explained to both Sp. Ed. and Gen. Ed. Teachers.
15	Co Teacher relationships must be strong. If they are weak and not efficient, it will also affect the overall delivery of instruction and support for all students.
16	confusing understandings of "differentiation"

17	co-teacher relationships - if it's a positive relationship, the students will succeed.
18	Curriculum needs to be modified to accommodate special ed students
19	Depending on the needs of the students, I believe students are severe and profound should not be put in a general educational setting alone.
20	Differentiation meeting the needs of special education students and all students in courses where class sizes are large.
21	differentiation of curriculum
22	Difficult to remediate one group of students while challenging the others at the same time
23	Difficultly teaching students with disabilities
24	Difficulty accommodating the needs of students with disabilities while in a General Education classroom. Modifying the pacing of lessons for students with disabilities.
25	Difficulty of trying to teach to so many different ability levels in one classroom when sharing inclusion teacher with other teachers so they are not in one classroom at all times
26	Difficulty teaching Gen. curriculum to students with disabilities
27	DIFFICULTY TEACHING GENERAL CURRICULUM TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
28	difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
29	Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
30	difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
31	Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities at times.
32	Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities is a challenge if they are allowed to progress to the next grade while staying well below grade level is areas of reading and math.
33	difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities- some of these students will not need Geometry, Biology or some of the other required courses. They need basic courses where they learn life skills: how to manage a home, family, finances, etc.
34	Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities.
35	Difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities.
36	difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities. Some special education students need customized curriculum that will help with their life after graduation.
37	effective co-teachers that actually know the math and are WILLING to truly coteach is the biggest challenge that I have!!!! Typically, teachers either do not know enough about the math to help OR they just really don't want to help teach! I need a co-teacher that will pull small groups of struggling students to the side and help them fix their problems!!!!
38	Family impact plays an important part in a child's life. Families with a child with special needs sometimes, let the teachers take their role and not participate in their child's curriculum.
39	For some, it is understanding and compassion. At times it can be overwhelming depending on the amount of support received from administration. I've worked in schools and districts where there was solid support for Sp. Ed. kids in the inclusion class and I've been in others where that was NOT the case and students suffered because of it. I understand "least restrictive environment" for the student, but by the same token many of those students would flourish if they were in smaller classes with more direct attention. I

	am not a fan of EOCs for regular education students much less Sp. Ed. students- if I have the flexibility to determine that a student has mastered the standard verbally but the EOC doesn't allow for that it must be completed online or paper. Forcing Sp. Ed. students into a general education setting can also be a major disruption for the regular education students (I have seen co-taught classes have 30+ students and admin did not bat an eye due to there being "2" teachers in there). I am hopeful with my new school that it isn't the same as I've had in the recent past.
40	Funding
41	Funding and teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
42	Funding is sometimes an issue. Preparing the students to leave the high school setting and be successful in the workforce is the most important skill taught to them. Focus on skills to make sure they can easily transition from high school to life after graduation.
43	Funding would help.
44	general education and special education teachers working together to better the quality of education for students
45	General Education teachers are focused on covering all standards prior to the EOC. Therefore, they are teaching at a pace that is not conducive to most special education students that require more time to learn the material. Many special education teachers are not trained in the content at the high school level and therefore team, parallel, and all other types of co-teaching do not really happen in the classroom. They function more as support staff which is truly sad. Special education teachers and general education teachers need more training on working with students with disabilities. They often struggle to mean the needs all students because of the wide ranges of ability levels in the classrooms. With EOC's it seems pretty much impossible for a resource math student and only 25% possible a sped student in a gen. ed classroom. We use to have a CRT-M and I used to laugh because there was not a high school M test. Reality is a brick wall in high school. Students with disabilities come to HW on elementary math and reading levels. They are expected to remember and be proficient at all pre-requisite skills. They are not! On top of that many schools will not let the general education classroom spend time on recovering pre-requisite standards. The education system is failing our student with disabilities. Teachers need more training. I know some that are very close minded about special ed students being in a general education environment. They believe that all sped students should be resource. I believe that with better or more training teachers' eyes, hearts, and minds would open to reaching these students.
46	General education teacher's compassion and empathy towards special education students is a big prevailing factor. Not having a resource class for those special education students in inclusive settings is also hindering their progress.
47	General education teachers understanding sped requirements and Sped teachers not knowing the curriculum to actually be beneficial in the co-taught setting
48	Having a co-teacher or paraprofessional who is unfamiliar with the content, unwilling to participate, or lets kids copy from them have been dome of the experiences I've had
49	having a hard time keeping up with the class and understanding instruction
50	Having to slow down general education for inclusion students to keep up

51	I believe the most prevailing challenge faced in the inclusive classroom is same challenge faced in the non-honors' general education classroom, which is more poverty based than academic based. I believe other challenges that have a negative impact on the effectiveness of inclusion classrooms are the inability to have common planning amongst co-teachers, special educations teachers teaching multiple content areas, and grouping non-IEP behavior students in co-taught classes because there are two teachers.
52	I believe the most stressing issue is how to ensure that the special needs students do not alter the learning for the general students. When dealing with the long list of accommodations for the special needs students it is easy to get into educational doldrums. If the general education students are not challenged or engaged it can be chaotic. I don't believe modifications would work in a standard classroom either.
53	I do not currently teach with an inclusion teacher, although I have in the past. I did not see the positive impact.
54	I find that students with disabilities struggle in a general ed environment because I do not have enough the resources to provide the one on one assistance that they need. I also feel that teachers are not fully equipped to meet the needs of the students. I have had students that suffered emotionally because they could not keep up with their peers without special attention. I attempted last year to bring the self-contained students into the class with my advanced students so that they could teach them the skills they had just learned. Both groups benefited from the experience in my opinion.
55	I fully believe that the inclusion model is effective for students with learning disabilities; however, I feel that large class sizes overall take away from the effectiveness of the inclusion model. More students mean less time a teacher can spend working with individual students, especially from a management perspective.
56	I have found in the past that a lack of communication or miscommunication between staff has been the biggest challenge.
57	I love having my inclusion students in my classroom; however, these classes tend to be larger in size and these students need more one-on-one instruction. It is hard to justify a smaller classroom with two teachers, but if these students are going to be blended in with the general ed classes they still need smaller class sizes or math specific inclusion teachers.
58	I think that many times schools are forced to one size fits all although the legislation is meant for students to be able to have individual needs met. For instance, co-taught classes should not have huge numbers of students however it often does.
59	I think the main challenge is teachers being able to build the relationship they need to support the students and then having time to fulfill the needs of each student.
60	I think there should be a balance for inclusion and separation depending on the student and academic.
61	I would say collaboration between Regular Ed teacher and the Special Ed teacher.
62	I would say curriculum. If a child has a document reading disability, why cannot they have their Science and Social Studies lessons in a video or computer module that removes reading out of the equation.
63	I'm not sure, this answer requires a lot of thought.
64	In an inclusive classroom, students with special needs are required to complete the same work as all of the other students. It is difficult to provide the same curriculum, with the

	same expectations for all students. It is not right that a student with disabilities is provided several accommodations to be successful, and then they are given grades and scores higher than the students that did it independently.
65	In my case, the main challenge would be lack of training. As support staff I can only do as well as I am informed. Lack of teacher certification should not be cause to withhold training. Professional development education should not be on the spot troubleshooting.
66	In my experience, students with behavior problems are often put in the inclusion classroom so that two teachers can "watch" said students. This takes away from others' learning, both SPED and non-SPED students. (When I mention behavior problems, I am not taking about students with diagnosed behavior disorders.)
67	In my experience, the sped teacher doesn't know the math concept to be effective in teaching it. The concepts required by the EOC are too difficult for the student to learn. Therefore, they are getting lost in the shuffle of the regular ed classroom. I think those students with disabilities would benefit more from a small group classroom and not be required to take the standardized tests. These students need basic remediation, not higher order thinking required by the upper level math courses of high school.
68	In my opinion, it is challenges with teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities. Having to develop a lesson plan to meet both your students with disabilities and one's without.
69	Inclusion has both pros and cons. Inclusion classroom setting should not implemented in the PreK setting. PreK is the molding and shaping stage. Children learn everything that they see. Inclusion settings in PreK has too many daily distractions with too many adults entering the room, too many types of behaviors being displayed, and too much added stress on everyone. Inclusion settings should start on the elementary level. Some of those questions should have answers above according to data.
70	Inclusion SPED teachers' lack of content knowledge. Lack of adequate collaboration time with general and SPED teachers.
71	It is double, sometimes triple the work load for a general ed teacher to do all the special ed requirements, recommendations and still deliver a quality education to all in a inclusion class. Regular students suffer in their education due to the extra time needed to include the special ed needs and differentiated instruction. Spend some time actually going into classrooms and listening to the concerns of teachers, rather than going "this is a great idea, implement it" with little teacher input.
72	It is important for the regular ed teacher and special ed teacher to have a positive working relationship. If those two cannot get along, students suffer (both regular ed and SPED students). Planning time is often a factor when considering lessons for regular ed and SPED students in the same classroom.
73	It is my belief that teachers have difficulty adjusting to the blended learning environment between the two group of students. The level of difficulty could vary depending on the course., i.e., Dance Class vs Math Class. So, the answer to this question would vary.
74	It takes a special person to be able to teach special needs students, so putting them in general ed classes is not always the best solution for the student. Plus, you don't want those kids to feel overwhelmed when they are placed in general ed classes.
75	Juggling too much curriculum per student with divergent needs and interventions. But this is specific to my multi-grade, multi subject class.
76	Lack of administrative support with erratic or aggressive special needs students

77	Lack of common planning time with the co-teacher and large class size are the two main challenges faced when teaching inclusion classes.
78	lack of compassion
79	Lack of content knowledge
80	Lack of continuity. Sped teachers constantly be reassigned.
81	Lack of enough help in terms of paraprofessionals & lack of funding.
82	Lack of experience. Because Students may have a disability but some students react differently.
83	Lack of funding
84	Lack of funding
85	Lack of funding
86	lack of funding
87	Lack of funding an overall look and a type of a new setting that can be taught to reach kids development like music instruments, chalkboard setting around the whole wall of a classroom to have hands on for writing and drawing and etc. for a classroom setting.
88	Lack of funding to adequately serve the students.
89	Lack of funding, resources, and training
90	lack of funding. Teachers are having to use their personal funds to purchase some special material.
91	Lack of new teacher preparation from college level, lack of perceived support (we think we're supporting our new teachers, but resignations seem to contradict that)
92	lack of parent involvement; lack of training in specific disabilities and what they entail; teacher compassion
93	Lack of parental support or parental understanding and knowledge of procedures
94	lack of regular ed teacher support
95	Lack of resource, mainly lack of staff to work with students effectively. compassion for students, especially from Gen Ed. As students get older, the curriculum is harder and the gap is farther. They struggle with the age level standards.
96	Lack of resources
97	Lack of resources
98	Lack of resources
99	Lack of resources
100	lack of resources
101	Lack of Resources and Class size
102	Lack of resources and compassion to students
103	Lack of resources and foundational skills.
104	Lack of resources and lack of teacher experience. In my experience with inclusion my co-teacher had very little experience and we had very little resources to provide training so my inclusion students did not receive the full benefits that an inclusion class is meant to offer.
105	Lack of resources and professional development
106	Lack of resources is a problem it's hard to find resources that appeal to the inclusion students that work with General Education students.
107	lack of resources, co-teacher being stretched thin

108	Lack of resources, lack of effective help in the classroom, not enough of time to focus on the students with disabilities.
109	lack of resources, lack of funding, difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities,
110	Lack of resources, lack of teachers or co-teachers, lack of funding
111	Lack of resources, No co-teachers available
112	lack of resources, training
113	lack of resources.
114	Lack of special education teachers that work well in an inclusion situation; i.e., content knowledge was not strong for the class.
115	Lack of student motivation, difficulty with co-teaching knowledge
116	Lack of support at home.
117	lack of teacher compassion
118	lack of teacher experience
119	lack of teacher experience and communication between the general ed and special ed teacher
120	Lack of teacher experience and difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities.
121	Lack of teacher experience and funding. There are also teachers getting into this profession for the wrong reasons and not for the kids.
122	lack of teacher experience, lack of resources and lack of funding
123	Lack of teacher or paras in CTAE classes. CTAE classes are not assigned a specific teacher or para to assist their students, it is up to the CTAE teacher to assist these students.
124	lack of teacher training for specific student
125	lack of time to prep for teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
126	Lack of trained inclusion teachers to facilitate learning with the content teacher. Lack of resources (i.e., not enough staff for small group testing, read aloud testing, etc.) Teacher training in instructional techniques to deliver content to students with disabilities most effectively.
127	Lack of training for regular Ed teacher on how to teach SWD
128	Large class size which sometimes means half the class are inclusion students.
129	larger class size is the biggest challenge to meet the needs of all students
130	Life post high school. Many are unemployed, and living with parents.
131	Like of funding
132	Lowered expectations and lack of resources
133	Many high school special education students have developed learned helplessness or put forth minimal effort. They also do not know how to advocate for themselves. Once we label students in elementary and middle grades, we often times do not challenge special education students appropriately. My own son, who has dyslexia and APD has a very high IQ, however I see where he is "tracked" in certain classes with certain teachers, even though he has an IQ in the upper 10% of the population. Things are "watered down" and he is not challenged based on his intelligence because he has a reading disability. If students are given the appropriate accommodations and research-based interventions are implemented with fidelity, not a one size fits all approach, we would see greater success

	from the population of special education students. That combined with teaching them genuine self-advocacy and coping skills, instead of simply passing them on for convince.
134	Many of the issues with our co-taught classes is the inclusion of students without and IEP that are labeled as low performing because of lack of motivation and behavior problems. Those students keep the co-teachers from being able to provide more specialized instruction for students with disabilities.
135	lack of money
136	More help is needed to help students
137	Most inclusion students who fail my class should've been in the resource classes but they were embarrassed to be seen going to those classes.
138	Most regular ed classes move at a pace that is far beyond most students with disabilities.
139	Most special ed students do better in non-inclusion special ed classrooms
140	Most special needs students put forth little effort. Often, they seem to have the expectation of passing the course regardless of any effort on their part.
141	Most times there is a difficulty teaching the general curriculum to students with disabilities. Also, SWD students are often more distracted in the larger class setting of inclusion classes.
142	n/a
143	n/a
144	NA
145	NA
146	None
147	One of the prevailing challenges in Special-Needs-Inclusive Classrooms is that things move so quickly that many SWD's cannot keep up with the regular class so they are perpetually behind, even if they know how to do the work and even if they have a co-teacher available in the classroom. Another challenge is trying to keep SWD's motivated to put in the extra work and home work needed to keep up with the class. A third challenge is teacher experience. Few teachers are trained in depth and specifically how to teach or work with multiple types of disabilities. A fourth challenge is lack of time for co-teachers to do special education paperwork as well as planning with several teachers on multiple subjects without having to work outside of school or work hours.
148	One significant challenge is general education teachers often expect special education students to perform like general education students.
149	Parental support and help maybe not because they don't want to but maybe they are not able to help with homework and studying. Students need home support and assistance as well as school in my opinion.
150	Phonics
151	Quality of paraprofessionals and teachers assigned to help special needs students is very low. Most teachers assigned to help this population spend their time playing on phones or answering e-mails instead of helping their assigned student.
152	Regular students are not challenged because we have a watered-down curriculum. It has been like that for years in education and continues to get worse
153	Resources, co-lab teachers being pulled in too many directions to effectively help the classroom teacher.

154	scheduling for both students and teachers, student access to interventions at an EARLY age to close gaps...perhaps even at the preschool age
155	Slowing down the educational process. Admin needs to start differentiation during the development of the schedule not expect classroom teachers to try to develop different lesson for several different students in a single class.
156	Some students do not fit the mold for inclusion and need something in between that and self-contained.
157	Sometimes it is difficult to teach general curriculum
158	Special education students are similar to regular educations students. Some excel, some fail. Inclusion setting works best, but must take into account the individual needs of each students.
159	Special education teachers are stretched thin so they cannot spend adequate amount of time for each class.
160	Special needs students need their own adapted curriculum. Instead of trying to cover the same material as gen ed but with accommodations, I feel they should just focus on mastering the main standard or concept. Another issue is that most of these students don't have effective help at home which is when they need it the most. Parents should be included in refresher courses for their child's subjects as well
161	Student apathy.
162	student attendance
163	Students being placed to the next grade even though they have failed all subjects.
164	Students need more time and resources to help close achievement gap
165	Students usually do not like the stigma of being special ed in the high school setting. They generally refuse to utilize the resources for fear of being singled out in the general ed classroom. They often lack support at home to complete tasks or finish tasks not completed in school and this generally leads to them falling behind. Some students with disabilities can function in the classroom, but I have seen this to be seldomly true. There is a benefit to having them in general ed for social reasons, but they are unable to keep up with the tasks even when adapted.
166	Students with disabilities are not motivated.
167	Students with disabilities sometimes feel they do not need to complete their coursework; therefore, I hold them as accountable as possible, within the restraints of IEPs.
168	Students with disabilities want to do well and most of them try really hard. Parental involvement is needed.
169	students with learning disabilities who are not going to attend a regular college should not have to take certain classes. They would benefit greatly from taking classes that teach a skill or trade rather than taking classes that are too advanced.
170	Students, parents, and PEC teachers having low expectations for the student and expecting the general education teacher to have the same. Also, the prejudice toward the general education teacher that includes placing blame and IEP documents with generic or old modifications or strategies.
171	Sufficient time for general ed teacher and special ed teachers to collaborate and plan for instruction together. It is difficult to teach grade level content to students with such learning gaps because they have learning disabilities that keep them behind their peers.
172	teacher experience and lack of funding

173	Teacher experience. We are expected to treat them like normal students, and it's just not possible. Lack of support.
174	teachers' compassion to students
175	Teachers need to made more aware of how to meet the needs of SWDs
176	Teachers that do not want to teacher co-taught classrooms. These teachers make it very hard for us to come into the classroom and provide services. I have been blessed with amazing co-teachers but have seen the damage it has done.
177	Teachers, compassion to students. Students cannot learn from someone they think doesn't care for them.
178	Teaching a general Ed curriculum to students who are three grade levels or more below where they should be is difficult. If special ed students are going to be out in general we classes, then there should absolutely be a special ed teacher in that class to meet their specific needs. this special ed teacher typically has a relationship with the student and parent, which leads to more positive influence.
179	teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
180	Teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities
181	Teaching general ed curriculum to students with disabilities in the same time window as general ed students. The large class size is another big challenge.
182	testing special needs students, the same way regular ed students are tested with no accommodation allowed
183	Thankfully, my current school adjusts schedules and provides support for students in inclusive classrooms. Many of our academic courses have co-teacher, and our elective courses have a co-teacher when necessary. Students who require more direct supervision are accompanied in every class. I do have peers who work in other counties who do not have sufficient support for inclusive instruction.
184	The amount of differentiation that is expected in the inclusion setting is unrealistic. There is no amount of planning that will allow for a co-taught class to be able to teach to a high-level learner, our low-level learner and all the others in between in a single block and actually believe that they will all receive the same educational experience.
185	The biggest challenge that I've witnessed is the difficulty of teaching the curriculum on the student's ability level as well as the other different ability levels.
186	The challenges we face is not enough staff to aid the regular education teachers for each class period.
187	The inconsistency of teachers. SWD teachers has to start over all the time to establish and build work relationships. Also, cookie cutter schedules due to lack of resources and teachers.
188	The lack of teachers who don't adapt their lesson plans to the needs of inclusion and special needs students.
189	The math curriculum is designed using a one-size-fits-all approach to instruction. Students who do not have basic mathematical skills should not be expected to solve quadratic equations, find arc measures, etc. There should be alternative routes for students. Many years ago, students could choose a college prep pathway or a vocational pathway. As educators, we are setting some of these students up for failure. We need to be teaching basic skills that will allow them to become productive members of society.

190	The most challenging aspects include planning between the general education teachers and special education teachers especially at the high school levels. Also, most special educators are placed in special education not because they want to be there but because there is a need.
191	The most prevailing challenge in special-needs inclusive classrooms is lack of home resources (Basic needs, consistent medication, parent involvement).
192	The most prevailing challenges in Special-Needs-Inclusive Classrooms is the lack of resources and support staff that does not have any background on how to teach Special Needs Kids.
193	The number one thing at our school is keeping the Sped teacher in the classroom to help the students. It seems as if they think it is another planning time for them to do whatever they want to do during the class time. If they would stay in the classroom the kids would receive more help from the sped teacher.
194	The problem here with this survey, is the same problem that exist with exceptional students. There are many layers that contribute to a student success in the classroom and not just: lack of resources, lack of teacher experience, lack of funding, teachers' compassion to students, difficulty teaching general curriculum to students with disabilities, and it cannot just be about funding and passing along it has to be about truly educating. We have to stop putting the blame on the home life and understand that from the time a student starts school until their senior year the school has had the student for over 2300 days, over 120 months, and more than 18,000 hrs. This is more than enough time to produce a decent product that can be successful in society. The results happen when there is true vertical alignment.
195	The rigor of the general education classroom assessment is worded in such a manner as to be confusing to regular education children leaving the special education students out. The tests do not show what they know about a subject. On an individual basis, modifications to testing should be allowed for co-taught students.
196	The students do not want to be singled out and do not utilize their accommodations.
197	There are a lot of distractions for general education students which means there's a lot of distractions for Sp. Ed. as well. I feel that a lot of success comes from pull-out with the inclusion teacher. It limits the Sp. Ed. students' distractions and allows them to feel more at ease to ask questions. While I love having them in my classroom, I notice around 75% every year are very withdrawn and afraid to ask for help for fear of looking "slower" than the other students.
198	There are all kinds of problems. From kids being in the wrong class to material that is just too much for them
199	There are too many coaches in these slots who are not dedicated to the educational part of their job. They are primarily dedicated to sports and choose to be a co-teacher because they don't want to do lesson plans. This is a lose-lose situation.
200	Time and resources
201	Time demands. Inclusion should be as needed.... not just the way.
202	Time. Most of these students need extended time. However, with the number of standards that I have in my area, we only have about a week per topic. If they don't finish their work within a week, they are behind. It is hard for them to catch up once they get behind. They are supposed to do that for homework, but some don't have computer access or Wi-Fi.

203	To have train and experience teachers and paraprofessional
204	We have an amazing support staff for our inclusion students. They go above and beyond to help these students. We also offer after school tutoring that many inclusion students take advantage of. The key to having successful inclusion is having staff that is trained and supportive of special needs students.
205	We have no problem from our school. We are trained very well! We are trained how to approach the kids with needs
206	When students transfer into the system from another district which offered one on one paras and our district does not offer that service

Appendix C

Survey Permission Letter

Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Mr.

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your school. I am currently enrolled in the Ed.D. in K-12 Administration (Ed.D.) doctoral program at Bethel University of St. Paul, MN, and am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled Inclusion Model Impact on Students with Disabilities in Academic Settings.

I hope that the school administration will allow your general education teachers, special education teachers, and special education paraprofessionals that educate students with disabilities in inclusion classrooms from the school to anonymously complete a 13-question survey on the Qualtrics Survey Tool.

If approval is granted, participants will complete the survey process within a two-week period during specify dates. Participants would complete the survey at home or school. The survey results were pooled for the dissertation project and individual results of this study will remain confidential and anonymous. Should this study be published, only pooled results were documented. No costs were incurred by either your school or the individual participants.

Your approval to conduct this study was greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call next week and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at that time. You may contact me at my email address: michael-adams@bethel.edu.

If you agree, kindly sign electronically below and email the signed form acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this survey at your school.

Sincerely,

Michael Adams

cc: Dr. Michael Lindstrom, Research Advisor, Bethel University

Approved by:

_____

Print your name and title here

_____

Signature and Date here

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form for Level 1 Research with Humans

Dear Participants,

My name is Michael Adams, Lanier County High School special education teacher, working on my dissertation at Bethel University (MN). You are invited to participate in a study of Inclusion Model Impact on Students with Disabilities in Academic Settings. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you assist students with disabilities (special education students) in a general education classroom setting. I hope to learn educators' demographics, perceptions, and common practices in South Georgia high schools' general education classroom settings.

As a teacher or paraprofessional participating in this research survey, you are hereby informed of the following; this survey is optional, you can stop taking the survey at any point if you choose, your name will remain anonymous, your participation or non-participation will not impact your employment or future relationship with Bethel University or your school of employment, and your responses was private and confidential.

This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel's Levels of Review for Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research or research participants' rights or wish to report a research related injury, contact Dr. Peter Jankowski, xxx-xxx-xxxx/pjankows@bethel.edu or Michael Adams, xxx-xxx-xxxx/michael-adams@bethel.edu.

As a teacher or paraprofessional participating in this survey, you are hereby being informed in both this email and in the introduction to the survey in Qualtrics that there are no risks mentally nor physically associated with completing this survey.

This survey will take approximately 4 minutes to complete. Completion of this 13-question survey will serve as your consent to participate in this study.

Thanks,

Michael Adams
xxx-xxx-xxxx