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Regular Education and Special Education: toward Improving High School Inclusion

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REGULAR EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION:

TOWARD IMPROVING HIGH SCHOOL INCLUSION

by

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ABSTRACT

Regular Education and Special Education: Toward Improving High School Inclusion

With recent special education law, more special needs students are being educated in the general education classroom than ever before. No Child Left Behind is requiring educators to ensure that special needs students are achieving at the same level as their peers. General educators need training, support and resources in order to be more effective in their classrooms. This means special educators and administrators need to be cognizant of their needs and work to provide general educators the support they need to be successful with special needs students in the general education classroom. In an effort to provide data to administrators for improving inclusionary practices within the district, this study looks at the perceived needs of high school general educators in Montrose County School District in Colorado.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Inclusion is a controversial policy that has become the ideal for policy makers. Since the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142) special education has been developed as an essential part of public education and has continued to change with the demands of parents, lobbyists, and lawmakers. Special education has also been driven by litigation. These elements combined to create the current drive toward the inclusion of special needs children into regular education classrooms.

PL 94-142 mandated the free and appropriate education (FAPE) for all handicap students in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (Connor & Ferri, 2007) which has driven the formation of special education. When PL 94-142 was re-authorized in 1990, it was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and has since been reauthorized twice, most recently in 2004 (Berninger, 2006). The 1997 reauthorization of IDEA mandated that disabled students take the same state and district assessments as their non-disabled peers (Cox, Herner, Demczyk, & Nieberding, 2006). Another piece of federal legislation that has applied further pressure to move toward inclusion is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). According to Cox et al. (2006), NCLB requires that disabled students perform at the same level as their non-disabled peers. The requirements of these particular pieces of legislation force schools to move to a more

inclusionary model for all students. If disabled students are to take the same assessments and be expected to perform to the same level for all content area standards as their non-disabled peers, then disabled students must be exposed to the same content information. Inclusion is the current accepted model in which to achieve these lofty goals.

Whether inclusion is good or bad is not the issue at hand. It has become the requirement of many districts. However, just making inclusion a requirement through policy does not make it work in the classroom. Placing special needs students in regular education classrooms requires additional work and funding on many levels. However, as legislatures have increased the expectations and accountability of educators with respect to special needs students, funding has not kept pace. Berninger (2006) recognized that not only had funds for IDEA dwindled since it was first passed, but that there is not enough money to support everyone who needs special education services. Despite funding issues, all educators must adhere to the legislative requirements regarding special needs students. To do so means administrators, regular education and special education teachers must work together in creative ways to ensure inclusion is implemented in a successful manner for all students. Understanding the needs of regular education teachers is the first step in this process.

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

Regular education teachers are not always adequately trained nor are they comfortable dealing with special needs students in their classrooms. Regular classroom teachers see special education and accommodations as vague and obscure concepts. Such teachers feel unprepared and inadequate with implementing accommodations that they do

not fully understand. These teachers are also uncomfortable with the overall expectation that they participate in the IEP process and special education in general.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to determine the specific aspects of inclusion and special education in which regular education, high school teachers in Montrose County School District need more training and information in order to become more successful participants in the inclusion process. Teachers were asked to complete a survey at a weekly professional learning community (PLC) meeting. The results of this survey provided a starting point to determine how special educators and administrators in Montrose County high schools can best help regular education teachers engage in the inclusion process.

Chapter Summary

IDEA and NCLB has increased the expectations and accountability of all educators with respect to special needs students. This has aided the drive toward inclusion. As such, regular education teachers find themselves increasingly responsible for special needs students. However, with the failure of funding to keep pace with the needs of special education, regular education teachers are not always adequately prepared or supported when dealing with exceptional students. Special educators need to find creative ways to help support the needs of their colleagues and must work with administrators to ensure regular education teachers are adequately prepared to work with special needs students within their classrooms.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Current education laws dealing with SPED, NCLB and IDEA, mandate the use of research-based practices and programs (Clark, Cushing, & Kennedy, 2004). While there is much research in the area of special education and more is being done everyday, there seems to be a relative lack of research for high school inclusion programs. This issue of inadequate research at the secondary level is not only a problem in the United States, but Italy as well; one of the leaders in inclusionary education in the world (Begeny & Martens, 2007). High school is very different from elementary or even middle school in many ways including class scheduling, switching teachers, student responsibility and class selection. Basing mandates and practices for high school SPED programs on what happens at the elementary level is not a best practice. The situation with research forces high schools to be more creative in their approaches toward building effective inclusion programs.

There are four aspects of special education that affect the quality of services special needs students can expect with respect to inclusion. First, there are the legal mandates that drive the special education process and the extent to which regular education teachers understand their roles under these laws. Secondly, the ability and will of governing bodies to provide adequate funding for the legally mandated education of special needs students. Thirdly, the quality and availability of teacher training to ensure that all educators who teach exceptional children are adequately prepared and supported.

Lastly, teacher attitude can be the ultimate factor in providing a quality education for learning disabled students. It is the job of the special educators and administrators to evaluate the needs of regular education teachers with respect to these issues and then to provide support and training to address any weaknesses.

Special Education Law

Legislation regarding special education, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), place more responsibility for educating special needs students on regular classroom teachers. Regular classroom teachers are required to participate in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process, progress monitoring and accommodating and/or modifying instruction for Special Education (SPED) students to the extent that such students are in their classes. Ensuring that regular educators are knowledgeable of their responsibilities under the current laws is essential to effective implementation of any inclusion program.

The Individual Education Plan

Lee-Tarver (2006) addressed the perspectives of elementary school teachers regarding involvement in creating and implementing IEP's. In this study Lee-Tarver (2006) indicated general education teachers see IEP's as useful and feel involved in the process, but also found a large number of teachers who required further training "on the purpose, development and implementation of an IEP." Boyer and Bandy (1997) also indicated that regular education teachers needed additional training to adequately comprehend and use the IEP. One important finding by Lee-Tarver (2006) indicated a lack of accessibility to the IEP concerned 86% of the respondents, all of whom were regular education teachers (Lee-Tarver, 2006). The IEP is a legal document. All

individuals responsible for educating special needs students are required to be involved in the IEP process and as such need to be adequately trained and have access to such documents.

Regular education teachers are also responsible for ensuring that the IEP is being properly implemented in the regular education setting. Ideally there would be a SPED teacher or a para-educator in each classroom to support special needs students. However, reality does not always match the ideal. Inadequate funding does not always facilitate best practice. Regardless of resources and support, both regular education and special education teachers are legally responsible for implementing the IEP and for making the appropriate accommodations and modifications to ensure that SPED students get an adequate free and appropriate education.

Adaptations

Special needs students are expected to cover the same curriculum as regular students. Because of this, the need for appropriate adaptations is crucial. Adaptations include both accommodations and modifications and must be applied to classroom work and assessments as well as to high-stakes testing. The IEP addresses the accommodations and adaptations needed for individual students. Since the IEP is a legal document, these adaptations to the curriculum are not only required, but are often the responsibility of the regular education teacher. This is especially true in situations where there are not adequate resources to provide a SPED teacher or para-professional to support SPED students and general educators in a general education classroom.

Rieck and Wadsworth (2005) stated that general education teachers have misconceptions regarding the nature of accommodations that must be addressed by

ensuring that all educators are aware of the reasons behind the accommodations and how to implement appropriate accommodations. Meikamp and Russell (1996) found that general education teachers in rural Virginia used very few suggested curricular modifications and relied heavily on one particular accommodation: extended time. Meikamp and Russell (1996), concluded that not only did general educators mistakenly surmise that mildly disabled students could do all of the required work as long as they were given more time, but also hypothesized that general educators were uncomfortable and untrained in implementing more effective accommodations.

When there are misconceptions, teachers can not effectively teach. This is especially true with respect to exceptional students who learn differently from traditional students. This leads to frustration for both the teacher and the student. Teachers need to be trained and supported in the use of adaptations for special needs students. General educators not only have a responsibility to their students, but they also have a legal responsibility to the IEP thus ensuring that adaptations are correctly implemented as well as to ensure that students have access to the general education curriculum as determined by the IEP.

Training for general education teachers must include aspects of special education law, the IEP process and teaching exceptional students within the general education setting. Administrators and special educators can help train and support general education teachers, but this should not be the only support for general education teachers. Teachers need access to the materials and training in research-based methods for working with special needs students. All this is necessary in order to facilitate the legal mandates for educating all students. The training and materials needed to provide the free and

appropriate education for all students has a cost. Funding of legally mandated

educational practices continues to be a problem area in the realm of special education.

<div align="center">Special Education Funding</div>

The legislation designed to provide special needs students with access to quality

education has admirable intentions. However, these intentions and mandates are often

not adequately funded. The bottom line, when it comes to training and staffing, is

whether or not the school in question has the funds to hire needed staff, purchase needed

equipment or materials, or provide the needed training to existing staff. There are

competing demands for limited resources in education. However, when it comes to

special education, educators are asked to provide services without adequate resources.

Failure to do so can result in legal action.

Case law has determined that schools must provide the necessary services and

supports in order for a disabled student to have equal access to education (Fischer,

Schimmel, & Stellman, 2003). Such services include, but is not limited to, access to

adaptive technology, modified curriculum, adapted materials and related services

necessary to access the same educational opportunities as non-disabled peers; regardless

of service delivery method.

<div align="center">*Federal Funding*</div>

In an article, Snyder, of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

(ASHA) (2006) voices his concern that the federal government may decrease funding for

IDEA. Snyder (2006) indicates that this will make it highly unlikely that Congress will

ever fund IDEA to the 40% level that is authorized by law. Special education funding at

the federal level is based upon a national per pupil average expenditure and is not

guaranteed to be provided, except that it will not exceed the 40% excess cost for providing special education services (Special Education Law Overview, 2005; Smith & Shreve, 2003). In 2004, congress funded 18.65% of the excess cost (Special Education Law Overview, 2005), this was the highest rate ever funded at that time, but no where near the 40% rate nor the actual costs for educating special needs students. Recent figures indicate that it costs 1.9 times as much to educate a special needs student as it does to educate a regular education student (Chambers, Parrish, & Harr, 2004). All of these figures are based upon national averages and combines all programs and services together. While special education has specific legal mandates that must be met; schools are not guaranteed the funding to provide the required services and must therefore be prudent in how they allocate money.

Cost Analysis of Research-Based Methods and Programs

While educators are mandated to use research-based, best practice methods and programs for teaching all students, they must also consider cost-benefit analysis. However, there is a relative lack of research with respect to the costs of implementing different special education models. Researchers seldom consider costs of implementing or changing special education services when evaluating teaching methods and programming. Two studies were found to address program costs (Odom, Hanson, Lieber, Marquant, Sandall, Wolery, Horn, Schwartz and Beckman, 2001; Pruslow, 2000). Both studies indicated problems with the limited research available for cost analysis of program delivery.

It is equally important to understand the cost ramifications of special education programs along with the educational effectiveness of such program. By beginning to look

at the actual costs of different program models, schools and district can better allocate funds for programs, service delivery and teacher training. Cost analysis of all aspects of special education is essential for future planning to ensure that there are adequate funds for programs and teacher training necessary to develop strong special education programs.

While there is a relative lack of studies analyzing costs of perspective programs, according to Chambers, Parrish, and Harr (2004) the average national per pupil spending on special education students has decreased. The authors attribute this to the trend toward the least restrictive environment, which essentially means special needs students are spending more time in regular education classrooms. The implications of this particular study indicate that it may be more cost effective to educate special needs students in a regular education setting than in special classes. This makes it even more important to ensure regular education teachers are getting the training and support they need in order to be successful with inclusion of exceptional students within their classrooms. Understanding the background training, experiences and attitudes of regular education teachers in teaching special needs students is an important stepping stone to implementing appropriate in-service training for regular educators.

Rural Funding Issues

The very nature of special education makes it difficult to find practices and policies that will work in every setting. Each special needs child is completely unique. This is only intensified in rural settings. In a study regarding the affects of NCLB on rural schools, McLaughlin et al. (2005) found it was difficult to monitor and analyze data regarding accountability due to small numbers when accountability measures were

disaggregated. With the new funding formulas, schools that do not progress from year to year will have funds withheld until adequate progress has been made. This can make or break a small, rural district or school. Issues that face rural schools include less state funding due to lower enrollment, limited tax base, limited resources, and teacher retention issues (McLaughlin et al., 2005).

<div align="center">Teacher Training</div>

When discussing teacher training, both pre-service an in-service training must be evaluated. The push for highly qualified teachers as mandated by NCLB is changing who is hired as teachers, and to some degree changing what training teachers entering the field for the first time have had. This, in turn, affects which in-service trainings need to be offered to new and veteran teachers. Combined with funding and accountability issues, in-service training needs to be applicable to the majority of teachers in a given building or district.

<div align="center">*Pre-Service Training*</div>

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996), stated," the lack of improvement in perceptions of teacher preparedness for mainstreaming/inclusion over time suggests that teacher education programs may be no more effective at preparing teachers for mainstreaming/inclusion now than they were more than 2 decades ago." Only 8.3% of teachers in a study by Boyer and Bandy (1997) indicated that they received adequate pre-service training for dealing with special needs students. Even if regular education pre-service teacher training is revised to include preparatory instruction for working with special needs students in a regular setting, there will be many teachers who have already completed their pre-service training and need effective in-service training to bring their

skills and knowledge base to the level needed for successful inclusion. A teacher's education never ends with a degree; it is continual. Therefore, the need for quality in-service training is crucial.

Training Issues for Rural Teachers

Boyer and Bandy (1997) found teachers in rural settings need more training to meet the needs of special education students. Many in this study indicated that they did not receive enough practical training, from any source, with respect to teaching SPED students. In a study by Buell, Hallam, and Gamel-Mccormick (1999), the results indicated that general educators often need even more training and support than special educators in the realm of inclusion. These issues are often exacerbated in rural areas as it is difficult to find, train and retain qualified teachers in rural areas (McLaughlin, Embler, Hernandez, & Caron, 2005). According to IDEA mandates, states are responsible for developing training programs and ensuring that professionals are trained to provide the necessary services to disabled students (Buell et al., 1999). Although the current study is dealing with local issues, adequate training for individuals working with special needs students is also a state issue.

In-Service Training

The areas in which general educators need more in-service training are: development and implementation of IEP's (Lee-Tarver, 2006; Boyer & Bandy, 1997), as well as accommodations and modifications, academic assessment, behavior management and curriculum adaptations (Buell et al., 1999). Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) found that teachers feel that they do not have enough time, training nor resources necessary to successfully include special needs students within the general education classroom. In

rural schools it is even more crucial for general education teachers to experience quality in-service training for dealing with disabled students as there is often a lack of resources and support for general education teachers in small schools.

Methods for In-service Teacher Training

In order for teacher training to be effective, methods used to train teachers must be evaluated. Kelleher (2003) voices a number of concerns in the current professional development of all teachers including disjointed workshops, faculty meetings and guest speakers without follow up nor time to process and practice new skills and teaching concepts. Clark et al. (2004) echo these concerns and provide data regarding the effectiveness of an intensive on-site technical assistance (IOTA) model for professional development. This model included workshops, weekly consultation and the formation of teams within the schools to target specific students. The teaching skills targeted with this training model were selected by the district and administrators as priorities. While this method of professional development proved to be effective, the cost of such training was not included in the research report.

While most would agree that follow up and feed back are important to learning any new skill, this is seldom done with teacher training. Clark (2003) builds upon these concepts and discusses the need for assessment-driven professional development. Clark (2003) goes on to discuss the need to address the cost issues of training, more specifically the need to calculate training costs consistently from district to district, and different methods for providing professional development. Clark (2003) suggests using everything from SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented and time-bound) goals to peer collaboration in teacher training. If we look at what we know are effective teaching

methods and combine this with the individual skills of teachers already in the building or district, we can provide creative training that allows for follow-up and feed back. Education is now a team effort. Teachers can form teams, teach skills or share knowledge amongst each other, observe and provide feed back in a professional manner and in so doing, save money and improve teaching at the same time. This is very similar to teacher coaching, something physical education teachers already do and has proven to be effective (Maeda, 2001).

In 1995, Liebermann not only noted that staff development methods did not relate to what goes on in the classroom, but gave a host of ideas for improving staff development and making it relevant. Putting new and experienced teachers together for planning, using existing staff to provide trainings and interdisciplinary curricular planning are some of the ways teachers can learn from each other (Lieberman, 1995). Involving teachers in setting goals for professional development (Lieberman, 1995; Kelleher, 2003) allows teachers to prioritize their classroom needs and to take ownership of their professional development. Having clear goals makes it easier to retain and use the information learned; the learning now has a purpose. It is expected that teachers be creative and make learning relevant to students; if we want teachers to teach this way, then we must train them this way.

<div align="center">Teacher Attitude</div>

When dealing with including exceptional students, a teacher's attitude can have great affect on performance. It can also affect professional relationships. Teaching is no longer done in an isolated classroom; especially when dealing with exceptional students. Teaching now needs to be a team effort.

Inclusion has been a hard pill to swallow for some. According to Snyder (1999), inclusion was a push by special education with little input from general educators. It has also been a push from legislative bodies and education activists. Training and support from administrators and special educators are crucial for the success of both the general educator and the student in an inclusive environment (Snyder, 1999). Just mandating a policy does not make it work. The school atmosphere and administrator's attitude can and will affect the general educators' attitude and more importantly, will affect the level of success the exceptional student will achieve in a general education setting.

Many studies have found that the nature and the severity of the disability can affect a teacher's attitude (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). This is true even with student teachers (Hastings & Oakford, 2003). More exposure to and training for dealing with special needs students was found to improve teacher and student teacher attitudes toward exceptional students (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). General education teachers need support and training in order to work with special needs students in the general education environment. Even in Italy, where inclusion has been mandated since the 1970's, teachers still feel that they need more support in the classroom (Begeny & Martens, 2007).

Supporting General Educators

Support in the general education classroom can take many forms. In the world of tight budgets and teacher shortages schools must be creative in providing support for inclusive, educational settings. One of the most discussed methods for supporting general educators is collaboration. This includes a range of options from consultation to co-teaching. However, this requires egos to be checked at the door. Collaboration can

only be successful if the collaborating parties are willing to work together and respect what each other brings to the table. In a case study, Mastropieri et al. (2005) found that co-teachers with conflicting ideas and methods can have negative effects on students. However, in the same case study Mastropieri et al. (2005) observed and described effective co-teaching. In both cases the interpersonal relationships between teachers influenced the efficacy of co-teaching.

Co-teaching is just one aspect of collaboration that can make inclusion successful. Co-teaching brings the expertise of general educators and special educators together making both parties responsible for educating all of the students in an inclusive classroom. However, there is not always the time, money nor personnel for co-teaching. Joint planning and consultation between general and special educators (Carpenter & Dyal, 2007) is another method for making inclusion successful. Lack of planning time is one of the main concerns of teachers when it comes to including special needs students (Snyder, 1999; Buell et al., 1999). This planning time is crucial to student success.

During joint planning, educators can explore and employ a number of strategies for making inclusion successful. This is where special educators can help accommodate or modify assignments or curriculum. Teachers can work together to find alternative reading materials that cover the same content. They can informally assess individual student progress or evaluate the needs of a struggling student who has not been identified. Teachers can also use this time to determine other supports, materials, needs or training that they may require to ensure that special needs students are successful. Once needs are identified, the teachers can go to other teachers, specialists or administrators for further

support. This creates a team atmosphere and helps all teachers become better prepared, which in turn, makes all students more successful.

Chapter Summary

NCLB and IDEA have moved special education into the general education classroom. This means general educators have to be more responsible for special education students, which includes understanding SPED laws, IEP responsibilities and best-practice methods for dealing with diverse student populations. Since many teachers feel their pre-service training did not adequately prepare them for dealing with special needs students in their classrooms, this training must be provided by other means.

Teachers need more training in implementing and developing IEP's. General educators must be aware of their responsibilities under education law with respect to SPED students. General educators must also be provided support and training for dealing with all special needs students in their classrooms. Severe social, emotional or cognitive students can be intimidating for general educators to deal with if they have had no training. Teachers who are prepared or supported will be more effective at teaching all students, and more willing to include needier students in classroom based activities. Knowledge is power.

Researchers need to look at the dynamics of high school inclusion programs. Students are with different teachers for every class and students must be more responsible for themselves at the high school level. For example, general educators need to know strategies that work with non-readers at the high school level in content area classes; these students will be very different from an elementary non-reader who does not have to

worry about such things. Research into methods and programs need to reflect not only the academic level of the special needs student, but age level and instructional setting.

While the research is being done, researchers need to consider cost-benefit analysis of the programs and methods being studied. With more accountability and tighter purse strings, education dollars must be wisely spent. Teachers want effective methods and programs for teaching special needs students, and administrators need to spend their limited funds wisely.

Teachers are expected to use effective, research-based instruction. The same quality of instruction is not always provided when training teachers. General educators need good quality, cost effective, in-service training. Teachers need to see the purpose and applicability of what they are being asked to learn and implement. They also need follow-up and opportunities to practice new teaching methods.

Education is becoming a team effort. This is especially true with regard to high school special education inclusion programs. High school SPED students often spend more time in the general education setting, and very little time with any single teacher. This means the general educators are needed more than ever to help evaluate progress and develop effective IEP's. Teachers can collaborate through informal meetings, joint planning and co-teaching. However, there is not always the time, money, or personnel resources for effective collaboration, even though collaboration has been proven to be effective for improving student learning.

With limited funds and research, schools must learn to be creative with their high school special education inclusion programs. Cost, time, resources, personnel issues and student achievement must all be considered when considering inclusion. Decisions can

not be made lightly. General educators are essential to the success of any high school

inclusion program, but are often the least prepared for such a task. Administrators and

special educators need to be aware of the needs of the general educators in their buildings

and help prepare and support the general educators as best they can with the tools at

hand.

Chapter 3

METHOD

The purpose of this survey is to help improve and streamline inclusionary practices in Montrose County School District high schools. In order to do this, there needs to be a clear starting point or baseline with respect to what general educators know and understand with respect to special education laws, responsibilities and teaching practices within their own classrooms. There is a need, also, to discover how they feel about the inclusionary process. Once this had been determined, then training and resources can be prioritized and money can be more effectively allocated. Further, a dialogue can be opened between the two high schools in the district. By collaborating, schools can share resources, knowledge and expertise which may improve district high school special education practices.

Participants

High school teachers from Montrose High School and Olathe High School were asked to participate in this survey during the last Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting of the 2006-2007 school year. The district Special Education Director asked that special educators take the same survey as the general educators. Teachers from Olathe Middle School also participated in the study as Olathe Middle and Olathe High School are in one building and do share staff and resources.

Procedures

Prior to distributing the survey, building administrators and the district Special

Education Director were sent drafts of the survey and the cover letter that was to

accompany the survey. They were asked to make any changes or recommendations to

that survey. The survey has a demographic section to gather some basic information and

is followed by four sections via a combination of Lickert scale and open ended questions.

Following the demographic section, there are sections that relate to special education in

general, IEP's, staff support, and a final section entitled "How can we help you?" There

was space provided at the end of the survey for teachers to include anything they felt was

important and should be considered with respect to inclusion practices.

Participation was voluntary. A short introduction to the study was given prior to

distributing the survey. Teachers were informed that the survey is anonymous and that

individual surveys were not to be shared with administrators, only the results of the entire

study were shared. Teachers were specifically asked to be honest; teachers were asked to

share what they really know and feel and not to try to give the answers they thought the

researcher or the administrators wanted to hear.

The surveys at Montrose High School (MHS) were collected over a two week

period at the end of the school year. The surveys from Olathe Middle/High School

(OMHS) were collected at the PLC meeting at which the survey was presented.   Data

was compiled for the individual schools and then compared with the other schools. Data

was also be compiled for OMHS to give the administrator a building wide view of needs

and perceptions of the inclusion program in that building.

Project Goals

The goal for this project was to establish what general education teachers know about special education law and practices, what training they have had, perceptions of support and their general understanding of the IEP process and procedures and how they feel towards SPED students. This survey gave administrators a snap shot of the perceptions about the current high school inclusion program. This allowed administrators to view the needs of each high school individually and then to compare the needs of the high schools in the district. By comparing data the two high schools may be able to provide joint training and resources for general education teachers. More collaboration between the schools should improve teaching practices and ultimately ensure that all special needs students within the district have access to good teachers and needed resources.

Summary

The purpose of this project was to discover what general education teachers know and how they feel about special education and their current involvement in the inclusion process as well as what they understand regarding special education and inclusion. By obtaining this data, building and district administrators tasked with improving the education of all students, more specifically special needs students, should be able to make more informed decisions regarding funding, training and allocation of resources for educating special needs students.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this research project was to determine which aspects of inclusion and special education that high school teachers in Montrose County School District needed more training and support for in order to become more successful participants in the inclusionary process. The results of this survey were based on the perspectives of teachers and not based on observation or scientific study. The results, nonetheless, are important as the perceptions of educators will affect their attitudes toward working with special needs students and ultimately will affect the learning of special needs students.

The Survey

The majority of Montrose County School District (MCSD) secondary general education teachers surveyed indicated they support inclusion, with conditions, and do need additional support and training in order to make inclusion more successful for special needs students.   While this study omitted two MCSD middle schools, the intention was to evaluate the needs of secondary schools. Given the unique set up of Olathe Middle High School (OMHS) and the shared teachers and facility, it was difficult to exclude Olathe Middle School (OMS) and still provide workable data to OMHS administrators.

Surveys distributed in this study were color coded according to the building: Montrose High School (MHS) was pink; Olathe High School (OHS) was blue; and

Olathe Middle School was white. The color coding was done only to ease analysis of the data to ensure surveys did not get mixed up. The surveys were the same for each school. According to the Montrose County School District web site (2006), MHS had 70.47 teachers (rounded to 70 for the purpose of this study) and OMHS had 38.17 teachers (rounded to 38 for the purpose of this study). MHS staff returned 24 surveys for a 34% return rate. OMS returned 11 surveys and OHS returned 15 surveys, for a building total of 26 surveys for a 68% return rate. OMHS shared teachers were given the option to choose between either the blue or white survey. The survey return rate for OMHS was 68%. The higher return rate may have been due to the fact that surveys were collected before OMHS teachers left the Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting in which the survey was presented. MHS teachers were given the option to put the completed study in the inter-office mail box of the researcher at MHS.

<div align="center">Demographics</div>

The average ages of teachers from building to building were very close with MHS average age being 43.6 years at the high end, and OMS at 42.45 years at the low end. The average age of survey participants was 43.26 years. While there were a few younger teachers, many respondents were in their 40's and 50's with one teacher at each high school over 60 years old. This researcher does not have figures with which to compare these results in order to determine if this is representative of the actual teacher age population in the schools or if older teachers saw more purpose or usefulness than younger teachers in responding to a survey designed to help improve the educational outcomes of special needs students.

Interesting differences between the schools and buildings were in those who had masters' degrees and those who had additional endorsements (see chart 1). MHS had 62.5% of respondents with masters' degrees or higher, but had only 20.8% indicating additional endorsements. OHS had 53.3% of respondents with masters' degrees or higher, but had 60% of respondents indicating additional endorsements. OMS had 45.5% of respondents with masters' degrees or higher, but 63.6% indicated additional endorsements. It could be concluded that since OMHS is a more rural school than MHS that teachers may teach more than one content area, making it necessary to earn more endorsements, while MHS is large enough where teachers tend to teach in one content area only and are better able to specialize in a particular content area. This is a good question for future research.

Chart 1
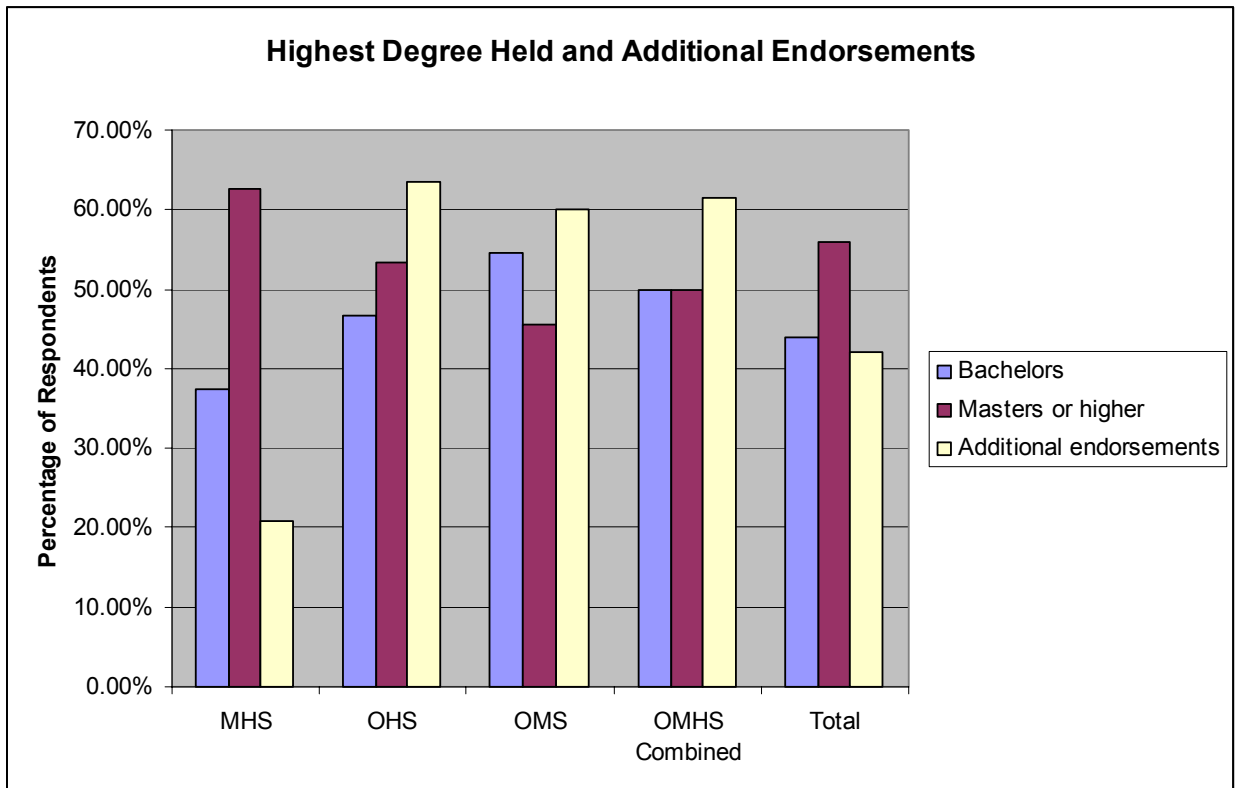
All three schools indicated that more than 70% of teachers participated in the new teacher induction program. There were at least two teachers in each building who did not indicate whether they participated as mentors or new teachers. However, there are some teachers who have participated as both mentors and new teachers.

There was a difference in the average years of teaching experience among schools. OMS had the lowest with a school average of 10.4 years, followed by OHS with 13.2 years and MHS with an average of 15.08 years of teaching experience. MHS has both the highest level of teachers with masters' degrees as well as teachers with the most experience, yet MHS had the most teachers with negative philosophies on inclusion.

<center>Special Education</center>

For question number one, teachers were asked about their personal philosophies regarding special education students in the general education classroom. While the analysis of this data is purely subjective, the majority of respondents to this survey supported inclusion, 39 out of 50 or 78%. However, the majority of respondents who supported inclusion did so with conditions, 28 of the 39 supporters indicated they were supportive of inclusion providing there were appropriate support and resources. Concerns regarding inclusion were time, support, and the needs of all students. Teachers were concerned with the impact that the inclusion of SPED students had on general education and advanced students as well as the difficulty of including severe behavioral and cognitive students in general education classrooms. One teacher commented that it was okay to do inclusion at the elementary and middle school level, but it was much more difficult at the high school level. This statement seemed to summarize the varied

list of concerns regarding inclusion. It was interesting to note that 8 of the 9 survey

respondents who were negative towards inclusion came from MHS.

For questions two and three which dealt with SPED law, some teachers indicated

an understanding of the law, but used this survey as a political platform. Answers

regarding how IDEA affects general educators ranged from, "no IDEA," and, "makes

teachers stressed," to, "I must follow all 504 plans and IEP's to make modifications for

special needs students". Results were similar for question three which asked how NCLB

affected special needs students in the regular education setting. One teacher indicated

that NCLB was a joke, while others just stated their opinions regarding this legislation.

Of the 24 who responded there were some good answers but many who did respond

indicated little understanding of the law. Another 26 of 50 respondents indicated they did

not know how NCLB affected SPED students in general education or declined to answer.

These were difficult questions to analyze, but the result indicated a need for training in

SPED law. SPED law was also specifically mentioned as a training need later in the

survey in question 24.

When asked to rate their level of comfort with SPED students in their classrooms,

teachers indicated they were fairly comfortable. OHS was the least comfortable with the

average Lickert scale score being 7.9 on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the most

comfortable. Teachers indicated that they have always had SPED students in their room,

or that having a para or a special educator with them helped make them feel more

comfortable. One teacher summed it up nicely with the comment, "(inclusion is) part of

the job. They're just kids who learn differently." While not all teachers feel this way,

this is where we need to get to as far as comfort level for all general education teachers who have SPED students in their classrooms.

When asked if there were exceptions to their level of comfort teachers once again indicated disruptive, severe behavioral and severe cognitive students made it more difficult to teach. One music teacher pointed out it was difficult to include SPED students in some music performance settings. Some teachers were uncomfortable with the increased time and work it takes to include SPED students, while others were uncomfortable changing grading methods or performance expectations for SPED students. One teacher did indicate that an accommodation such as small group settings is not applicable to the general education classroom. Teachers are concerned that some of the accommodations specified in the IEP are not transferable to a general education classroom. Teachers also indicated that they were uncomfortable with students leaving their classrooms to get help on tests or assignments. One teacher even questioned whether or not the students were doing their own work. Special educators need to help general educators understand the intent and implementation of accommodations as well as what really goes on in a resource room.

The last two questions of this section dealt with training. When pulling out the data for special educators, the average perceived pre-service teacher training for dealing with special education for all respondents on the Lickert scale was 3.58 on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest level of training (see appendix D). This result was slightly higher at 3.81 for the general question regarding training for dealing with special needs students (see appendix D). When asked about specific training for inclusion and disabilities, the only two areas in which more than 50% of respondents indicated training

were differentiation and accommodating for special needs students. There were some respondents who had received training in differentiation for English as a Second Language (ESL) students and one teacher who had received training in differentiation for Gifted and Talented (GT) students. Universal designed caused the most confusion among respondents with one respondent asking if it was similar to Intelligent Design. Those who did indicate training specified college or online classes, conferences and workshops as places where training did occur. There were a few respondents who indicated their training came from on-the-job experience or from reading articles. These questions should have been more specific in order to clarify the actual level of training teachers have had in these areas. Assuming that those who did not respond did not receive training in any area listed, there is a need for targeted training among the general educators in the two high schools for dealing with inclusion of special needs students in the regular education setting.

<div align="center">IEP's</div>

For the most part the teachers participating in this survey understood they have a role in developing IEP's for SPED students, but they did not all understand what that entails. One teacher did comment "not my job" when asked what the role of the general educator was in developing IEP's. Similar comments were made by teachers at all the schools. More teachers had answers indicating different levels of responsibility with respect to the IEP. For some it was only to attend meetings and sign papers, but others indicated greater levels of involvement. Many teachers indicate their roles in the IEP process were advisory, input and development, assessing growth and progress monitoring

and facilitating the needs of students according to the IEP. Some teachers understood they had a responsibility to the IEP, but were unclear what that role was.

Questions seven and eight covered teachers' roles in the IEP process; for number seven, 7 of the teachers who responded rated their level of understanding at a 1 (the least) and 8 rated their level of understanding at a 10 (the most). The average score was 5.29 with responses for special educators included and 4.59 with responses from special educators excluded. The answers and comments to these questions set the tone for the rest of this section (see table 1 and appendix D).

Table 1

Question	MHS (n=24)	OHS (n=15)	OMS (n=11)	OMHS Combined (n=26)	Total Survey Participants (n=50)
7. How well do you understand the role of the regular education teacher in developing the IEP for SPED students?					
Least 1	6	1	0	1	7
2	1	2	1	3	4
3	3	1	3	4	7
4	3	1	2	3	6
5	2	3	2	5	7
6	1	0	0	0	1
7	2	2	0	2	4
8	2	1	1	2	4
9	1	1	0	1	2
Most 10	3	3	2	5	8
Average with SPED teachers	4.75	5.87	5.18	5.58	5.29
Average without SPED teachers (n=21/n=13/n=10/n=23/n=44)	4.14	5.23	4.70	5.00	4.59

There was some confusion regarding access to IEP's and preferences between confidential student profiles and IEP's. However, more teachers indicated they would rather have a confidential student profile, 18 of 50 or 36%, than an IEP, 7 of 50 or 14%. When asked to rate the usefulness of the IEP, OMS teachers averaged 3.13 on the Lickert scale while MHS averaged 6.91 and OHS averaged 7.38. Teachers at the middle school do not find the IEP useful, while the high school teachers indicate that the information is somewhat useful.

Table 2

12. How useful is the information in the IEP or confidential student profile?	MHS n=23	OHS n=13	OMS n=8	OMHS n=21	Survey Total n=44
Least 1	1	1	2	3	4
2	0	20	2		2
3	1	11	0		2
4	2	10	1		3
5	0	11	0		1
6	6	10	1		7
7	2	22	0		4
8	6	00	0		6
9	1	87	1		9
Most 10	4	1	0	1	5
Average with SPED teachers	6.91	7.38	3.13	5.04	5.96
Average without SPED teachers (n=23/n=13/n=7/n=21/n=44)	6.75	7.38	2.71	5.48	5.68
**SPED teachers for OHS did not answer this question. One SPED teacher rated IEP usefulness as a 4, and another SPED teacher rated it as a 6.					

When asked what additional information teachers would like to receive on students, there were many good answers (see appendix D). Teachers wanted to know family and

personal background, personal interests, strategies that have worked in the past and strategies that have not worked in the past. Teachers also wanted to know reading levels and how to specifically implement modifications and accommodations for individual students. One teacher wanted no, "theoretical stuff," only, "stuff that works." One teacher wanted an, "honest assessment of what we can expect them to do." General education teachers want specifics about the SPED students in their classrooms.

When asked about being comfortable accommodating for SPED students, teachers were somewhat comfortable. The average Lickert scale score for all respondents was 7.87. One teacher commented, "I am uncomfortable with the contradictory nature of some accommodations." Teachers at the two high schools indicated that they were uncomfortable with different grading systems for general education and special education students. One teacher was uncomfortable with giving the same grade for half the work, while others indicated concern with allowing SPED students to turn in late work. One teacher indicated unease with sending SPED students to the resource room stating, "it ends up not being their work all the time." There was apprehension for accommodations that bring undue attentions to SPED students; teachers indicated this made both special education and general education students uncomfortable. Some teachers were concerned with trying to accommodate for the needs of some students while trying to raise test scores (see appendix D). Teachers see accommodating for SPED students and raising test scores as competing interests. Teachers also indicated a need for more support in order to make accommodations more effective. Support for general educators is the basis to ensuring a successful inclusion program.

Staff Support

Support for general educators is essential for successful inclusion of SPED students and it begins with building administrators. Teachers at OMS rated their administrators as less supportive than the two high schools with an average rating of 4.38 with the SPED teacher's data pulled out. This is quite interesting as OHS rated administrator support for inclusion at 7.45 with SPED teacher data pulled out. This was higher than MHS which had 7.29 as the average Lickert rating for the same question and same conditions (see table 3). OMS and OHS share a building administrator. It is this researcher's opinion that this may be due to communication issues since building policies and practices for both OMS and OHS should be similar.

Table 3

17. Are Administrators in your building supportive of your needs with respect to inclusion?	MHS n=19	OHS n=12	OMS n=9	OMHS n=21	Survey Total n=40
Least 1	1	0	3	3	4
2	1	00	0		1
3	0	11	0		1
4	0	00	0		0
5	3	42	2		7
6	1	10	1		2
7	3	10	1		4
8	3	44	0		7
9	2	43	1		6
Most 10	5	2	1	3	8
Average with SPED teachers	7.21	7.67	5.00	6.52	6.85
Average without SPED teachers (n=17/n=11/n=8/n=19/n=36)	7.29	7.45	4.38	5.84	6.69

There were many good suggestions for how building administrators could better support the inclusionary needs of general educators. One teacher commented that the roles of the special and general educators need to be specifically defined. Other comments included lowering class sizes, providing a specialist, providing more time for collaboration, and more training. Teachers said administrators need to keep teachers better informed and communicate more with teachers. Teachers wanted administrators to be more aware of SPED law and best practices. Teachers at OMS also wanted administrators to visit the classrooms more often. While there were many comments on how administrators could better support teachers, these comments were all productive.

Table 4

19. Do special educators in your building provide support or information for including SPED students within regular education classrooms?	MHS n=21	OHS n=13	OMS n=9	OMHS n=22	Survey Total n=43
Least 1	1	1	3	4	5
2	0	11	0		1
3	0	11	0		1
4	1	11	0		2
5	1	00	0		1
6	0	22	0		2
7	4	11	0		5
8	5	43	1		9
9	3	32	1		6
Most 10	6	1	4	5	11
Average with SPED teachers	7.86	6.23	6.67	6.41	7.65
Average without SPED teachers (n=19/n=12/n=8/n=20/n=43)	7.74	6.67	6.25	6.50	7.10

Both MHS and OMS rated support from special educators as being higher than that of the building administrators. Only OHS rated support of special educators lower than support from administrators. OMHS combined average rating was more than 1 full point below MHS average rating. The comments associated with this question were less positive than the comments associated with administrator support although the ratings of special educator support were higher. Comments ranged from, "they don't," to, "all I have to do is ask." (See appendix D.)

When asked how special educators could better support them, teachers were once again productive in their responses. Teachers wanted more help solving day to day issues that arise with assignments and lessons; more specifically teachers wanted help accommodating and modifying lessons and assignments. Teachers would like more time to collaborate with special educators. They wanted more and better communication. Teachers also wanted special educators to come into the classrooms to do more observations on SPED students. General educators wanted special educators to better prepare students for general education. Teachers wanted more training and more specific information and strategies on individual students.

OHS indicated they had more opportunity to collaborate with special educators than either respondents from MHS or OMS. This perception of the lack of opportunity to collaborate could be why perceptions of special educator support are low. Even some of the comments on question 23 were somewhat negative, indicating there is a lack of opportunity to collaborate. Some teachers indicated there was no collaboration; another stated, "if they would collaborate all levels would benefit." Other teachers indicated collaboration worked to give insight into the strengths and needs of students, helped

implement teaching methods that help all students, and gave teachers a support system.

One teacher indicated that collaboration helped it multiple ways, and not just with SPED

students (see appendix D). Teachers see collaboration as a good thing, but do not always

have the opportunity to collaborate.

Table 5

22. Do you have the opportunity to collaborate with special educators?	MHS n=20	OHS n=13	OMS n=9	OMHS n=22	Survey Total Participants n=42
Least 1	6	1	2	3	9
2	1	1	3	4	5
3	2	0	0	0	2
4	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0
6	2	0	0	0	2
7	3	2	0	2	5
8	1	4	0	4	5
9	0	3	0	3	3
Most 10	5	2	4	6	11
Average with SPED teachers	5.25	7.38	5.33	6.55	6.23
Average without SPED teachers (n=19/n=12/n=9/n=20/n=40)	5.00	7.17	5.33	6.38	5.73
**One SPED teacher from each high school responded to this question.					

How can we help you?

The last section of the survey allowed teachers to elaborate on what they needed to

make inclusion more successful for special needs students. Respondents from all three

schools indicated they needed clarification of SPED law, specifically guidelines and

training for compliance and implementation. Teachers want teaching techniques for

working with students, strategies for inclusion, knowledge of specific disabilities, and

methods of inclusion. Teachers want more training and support in all these areas. They also want to know how to differentiate curriculum. Teachers in all schools surveyed once again reiterated the need to know what goes on in the resource room; what is taught in pull out versus what is taught in inclusion; what is happening when SPED students take exams in the resource room (see appendix D).

When asked if teachers needed supplemental materials for making inclusion more successful, the two high schools were very close in responses. With the SPED teachers pulled out MHS average need was 7.06 and OHS average need was 7.09, with 10 being the highest need on the scale. OMS was at 8.25 with the SPED teacher data included and 8.00 with the SPED teacher data pull out. Teachers do need supplemental materials to help deal with the individual needs of SPED students.

Table 6

25. Do regular education teachers need access to supplemental materials or resources concerning special education to make inclusion more successful?	MHS n=20	OHS n=11	OMS n=8	OMHS n=19	Survey Total Participants n=39
Least 1	1	1	0	1	2
2	0	1	0	1	1
3	0	0	1	1	1
4	0	1	0	1	1
5	4	0	1	1	5
6	3	1	0	1	4
7	0	1	0	1	1
8	5	0	1	1	6
9	3	2	0	2	5
Most 10	4	4	5	9	13
Average with SPED teachers	7.30	7.09	8.25	7.58	7.44
Average without SPED teachers (n=18/n=10/n=9/n=18/n=36)	7.06	7.09	8.00	7.44	7.25

Once again the range of comments was great. Some teachers indicated it was not the materials; they just did not have time to deal with accommodating. One teacher stated, "If students can't learn in the regular classroom with minor mods (modifications) they should be where they can." Other comments included more time, para support, special educator in the classroom, and collaboration time. Other materials listed were leveled reading materials, modified assessments, books on tapes, summarized books. Other teachers wanted to know what kind of resources are available. Teachers want materials that will help them teach all their students.

Table 7

27. Do regular education teachers need more training for dealing with inclusion?	MHS n=19	OHS n=13	OMS n=9	OMHS n=22	Survey Total Participants n=41
Least 1	2	1	0	1	3
2	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	1	1	2	2
4	0	0	0	0	0
5	2	1	0	1	3
6	1	0	0	0	1
7	2	2	0	2	4
8	4	1	0	1	5
9	1	0	0	0	1
Most 10	7	7	8	15	22
Average with SPED teachers	7.53	7.77	9.22	8.36	7.98
Average without SPED teachers (n=17/n=13/n=8/n=20/n=40)	7.29	7.77	9.13	8.20	7.78

OMS indicated the greatest perceived need for training general educators for dealing with inclusion. Average scores for OMS with and without the SPED teacher were

above nine on the Lickert scale, with 10 being the greatest need of training. MHS indicated the least need but still had average scores above 7. Special educators did not respond to this question for OHS, the average perceived need for training was 7.77. It is clear that the general educators in the two high schools and OMS all would like to see additional inclusion training.

When asked what training teachers would like to see, it was more of the same. Teachers wanted training in diversifying instruction, differentiation, inclusion strategies, practical implementation, methods for accommodating, team teaching models, effective collaboration and classroom management with inclusion. Once again there were teachers who felt they did not need more training and some who were not sure what training they needed and still others indicating they needed training in anything and everything.

Summary

General educators kept reiterating the need for specifics throughout this survey. They need more specific details on responsibilities and SPED law, specific needs and details of SPED students and specific strategies for working with SPED students. Teachers indicated they generally support inclusion, but have concerns regarding who should be included and when, and receiving the needed support for those who are included. Teachers see the need for more training and better understanding when it comes to dealing with SPED law and SPED students in the general education classroom. Other specific needs seen through out this survey are time for planning and accommodating, time for joint planning with special educators, smaller classes, more support staff, more communication and more training. Teachers are concerned with the perceived conflicting nature of special education and general education. This will take

team work and creative planning to ensure general educators get what they need, enabling

special education students to be more successful in an inclusive setting.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The current era of education endorses inclusion (to various degrees) as the most effective method for teaching special needs students. While many are divided on this issue, that is not important on the front lines. Teachers in the classrooms are required to use research-based methods and programs for teaching all students. This is difficult to do when there are gaps in the research and the costs associated with research-based methods and programs are not clear.

There were over 53 articles reviewed for this project. None addressed the costs of teacher training. Only two dealt with the costs of inclusionary education, one was dealing with early childhood education (Odom et al., 2001) and the other dealt with a New York school district and looked at elementary through high school programs (Pruslow, 2000). Two studies funded by the U.S. Department of Education looked at the cost of special education services at the national level (Chambers, Parrish, & Harr, 2004) and the other looked at spending differences according to disability at the national level (Chambers et al. 2004). Neither study provided specific information that could help evaluate the cost effectiveness of individual programs or methods. Pruslow (2000) noted the lack of data relating to costs of local and state special education programs and the disconnect between costs and student outcomes. In order to effectively evaluate different SPED programs, more specifically inclusion, the cost and student outcomes must be considered.

Regarding best practice, methods and programs need to be evaluated with respect to student outcomes and cost analysis. However, it must also be evaluated across settings, i.e. high school versus early childhood and resource versus severe needs. Of 53 articles only 7 dealt directly with high school needs. Two dealt with inclusion, one of those was a foreign study dealing with teacher attitudes (Koutrouba, Vamvakari, & Steliou, 2006) and one was an informal case study (Anderson, 2006). Neither article provided any data for this document.

Much of the information gained for what general education teachers know relied on surveys that were based upon teachers self perception (Snyder, 1999). Although Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) had similar concerns, both of these studies provided good insight into what general educators need with respect to inclusionary education. In order to develop successful inclusion programs there needs to be a starting point. This starting point has to be with the general educator. Understanding how they feel, what they know, what they need to know and what supports they need gives administrators and special educators a place to start.

<center>Implications for Montrose County School District</center>

High school general educators in MCSD have the same needs as other secondary teachers. They need good, solid, research-based data that specifically deals with the needs of high school SPED students. General educators need support from administrators and special educators on a regular basis to ensure effectiveness of teaching strategies and methods. Teachers need good quality training that deals with the specifics of teaching SPED students, with appropriate follow-up and feedback to improve all

aspects of classroom management and teaching with SPED students. In order to do this, administrators must provide a positive team atmosphere.

Teachers need to work together and share knowledge, frustrations and ideas. They must work together towards common goals on which they all can agree. Teachers need to see purpose in what they are doing in the classrooms. All members of the team, administrators, general educators and special educators, must take responsibilities for their actions and must put personalities behind them. They all need to have buy-in toward educating all students in a least restrictive environment. Until the research improves, all those involved in educating special needs students in an inclusionary high school setting must work together and use the data that is available in order to provide the best possible education for the students who can least afford to fail.

Limitations of the Study

The very nature of this study was a limitation in itself. Surveys, while useful for providing information, do not provide hard scientific evidence of best practice. While OMHS had a greater participation rate than MHS in this study, only 50 of a possible 108 surveys were returned for a rate of 46.3%.   The data in this study was based on personal perspectives of teachers, resulting in somewhat subjective data. However, the personal perspectives also allowed the author to better understand the attitudes of the respondents.

Suggestions for Further Research

There are many implications from this study for future research. Future researchers should include both cost analysis and student outcomes to determine if specific programs, strategies or accommodations will be effective in high school inclusionary settings. Studies need to be done in high schools, with high school teachers and high school

students. Researchers should also look at how teachers are trained, and determine the most effective methods for training teachers which will result in changes in classroom practices of teachers. Researchers studying teacher training should also include cost analysis and look at student outcomes as a result of teacher training. The current trend of accountability requires that schools take cost and student outcomes into consideration before making changes in teaching practices. Researchers need to understand and consider the accountability issues faced by schools in order to provide more realistic and applicable research data that can actually be used in a high school inclusionary setting.

<center>Conclusion</center>

High school is different from middle school and elementary school. OMHS is different from most high schools. Educators must work as a team to develop a specific and successful inclusion program for their individual schools, and their individual students. Teachers and administrators alike must be willing to reflect on practices and look at student outcomes to measure success. Team members must also be willing to look for new and better practices, making changes when needed. Every year different students, at all levels, enter the building all having different needs.

Collaboration has proven to be successful in many forms, providing personalities are checked at the door. General and special educators alike can share expertise and training with colleagues. They need to share responsibility for teaching students, especially in a high school setting where students may see different teachers for every class. Teachers must also be willing to take on responsibility for training each other and working together. In the regular work force people must work as a team to be successful,

this is now true of the teaching profession as well. It also sets a positive example for all students.

There is too much information regarding teaching in general and teaching special needs students. No single person can know it all. Team work again will help alleviate some of this problem. Administrators can provide training opportunities and information; then different teachers can work on acquiring the different bits of knowledge and share it with one another. This will save time and money and maximize resources. However, teachers must be given time in which to share professional knowledge.

As SPED students spend more and more time in the general education setting there is a greater need for content specialists and learning specialists to work together. Joint planning, consultation on students, and help with differentiating or finding alternative materials are all ways special and general educators can work together if they do not have the opportunity to collaborate in the classroom. All these strategies also improve the collaboration in the classroom if teachers are given the opportunity to team teach which has proven to benefit all students in the general education setting. However, personalities must be checked at the door in order for collaboration to be successful.

Inclusion is not going away, and waiting it out will not work. There is no time to sit and debate the issue of inclusion or to wait for high school specific research to tell secondary teachers how to best include special needs students. There are students in the classroom right now who deserve to have the best quality education. Teachers do not get to choose who they want to teach. It is time to step up, use the tools and knowledge at hand, and work together to create a positive learning environment in which all students can be successful.

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APPENDIX A

Letter of Permission for Study

E-mail from Montrose County School District Special Education Director

Donna White

From:	Lynn Gentry	**Sent:** Wed 6/27/2007 9:02 AM
To:	Donna White.	
Cc:		
Subject:	Letter to conduct study	

Attachments:

June 27, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

Donna White is conducting a study in the district for her Special Education Program. I endorse the study and have knowledge of the activities associated with the study. Therefore, permission is granted.

APPENDIX B

Cover Letter for Survey

May 9, 2007

Survey Participants:

 The survey attached to this letter is designed to provide data to the district about the needs of regular education teachers with respect to instructing special education (SPED) students who are in the classrooms of these teachers. The survey is also part of my Master of Education project for Regis University. The data collected not only provides basic demographic information, but will help determine the base knowledge and skills of general educators about an inclusive setting for special education students.

 The areas of focus for this survey are: SPED law, teacher training, teacher attitudes and staff/building support. The survey participants include teachers from both of the high schools in the Montrose County School District and is anonymous. Individual surveys will not be shared with the district, but the cumulative data will be shared with district administrators.

 Please answer the survey questions to the best of your ability. There are no wrong answers. The results of the survey will help determine which trainings and supports are needed in order to help make high school inclusion productive and positive for all concerned.

 If you have any questions, please contact me at (970) 275-2733 or through the district e-mail donna.white@mcsd.k12.co.us. Thank you for participating in this survey.

Sincerely,

Donna L. White

APPENDIX C

Survey

TEACHER SURVEY

DEMOGRAPHICS

Age: _____
Gender: _____

Degrees Held:

1.
2.
3.

Initial Teaching Endorsement:

_____

Additional Endorsements:

1.
2.
3.

How many years have you been a teacher?

_____

List the types of teaching positions held.

1.
2.
3.
4.

Did you participate in the new teacher induction program held by the district?

_____

Did you participate as a mentor or as a new teacher?

_____

SPECIAL EDUCATION

1.   What is your personal philosophy on inclusion of special education (SPED) students in regular education classrooms?

2.   Are you familiar with the Individuals with disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA) legislation? How does it affect general education teachers?

3.   How does the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) affect special needs children in the regular education setting?

4.   Are you comfortable with SPED students in your classroom?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Least)   (Most)

a.   Why or why not?

b.   Are there exceptions?

5.   How much training did you receive in your teacher education program for dealing with special needs students?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Least)   (Most)

6. Have you ever received training for dealing with special needs students?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(None)   (Adequate Training)

a. For dealing with specific learning disabilities?

Which ones?

Where?

b. For dealing with emotionally disturbed students?

Where?

c. On facilitating inclusion?

Where?

d. About differentiating instruction?

Where?

e. About Universal Design?

Where?

f. For accommodating or modifying for SPED students in your classroom?

Where?

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS

7. How well do you understand the role of the regular education teacher in developing the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for SPED students?

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    (Least)   (Most)

8. What is the role of the general educator in developing an IEP?

9. Do you have access to the IEP for SPED students who are in your classroom?

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    (Least)   (Most)

10. If not, do you receive a confidential student profile for those students?

11. Do you understand the information in the IEP or in the confidential student profile?

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    (No)   (Yes)

12. How useful is the information in the IEP or confidential student profile to the general education teacher for the purpose of inclusion?

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    (Not useful)   (Very useful)

13. Which would you prefer, a copy of the IEP or a copy of a confidential student profile?

14. What additional information about the student would you like to receive?

15. Are you comfortable accommodating for SPED students in your classroom?

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
    (No)   (Yes)

16. Are there accommodations with which you are uncomfortable implementing in your class room? Why?

STAFF SUPPORT

17.   Are administrators in your building supportive of your needs with respect to inclusion?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(No)   (Yes)

18.   How can they better support you?

19.   Do special educators in your building provide support or information for including SPED students within regular education classroom?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(No)   (Yes)

20.   How do special educators support you?

21.   How could special educators better support regular education teachers deal with SPED students?

22.   Do you have the opportunity to collaborate with special educators?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(No)   (Yes)

23.   If so, how is collaboration with special educators helpful?

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

24.   On what aspects of Special Education do regular education teachers need more clarification?

25.   Do regular education teachers need access to supplemental materials or resources concerning special education to make inclusion more successful?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(No)   (Yes)

26.   If so, what kinds of materials and resources are needed?

27.   Do regular education teachers need more training for dealing with inclusion?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(No)   (Yes)

28.   If so, what trainings would you like to see?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

If there are any additional issues regarding inclusion or special needs students not addressed in this survey that you would like to address please use this space to do so.

APPENDIX D

Data Summary

SURVEY DATA SUMMARY

Demographics

Question	Montrose High School (n=24)	Olathe High School (n=15)	Olathe Middle School (n=11)	OMHS Combined (n=26)	Total Survey Participants (n=50)
Age					
Average Age of Teachers in the building	43.6	43.3	42.45	42.96	43.26
Age Range	26 - 60	27-61	25-59	25-61	25-61
Age Range - years	34	34	34	36	36
Gender	**MHS**	**OHS**	**OMS**	**OMHS Combined**	**Total**
Male	41.60%	53.30%	45.50%	50%	46%
Female	58.30%	46.70%	54.50%	50%	54%
Highest Degree Held					
Bachelors	37.50%	46.70%	54.50%	50%	44%
Masters or higher	62.50%	53.30%	45.50%	50%	56%
Endorsements					
Additional endorsements	20.80%	63.60%	60%	61.50%	42%
Years Teaching					

Average years of teaching	15.08	13.2	10.4	12.08	12.55
Range	2-32	4-28	1-31	1-31	1-32
Range Total	30	24	30	30	31
New Teacher Induction Program					
Participated	70.80%	73.30%	72.70%	73.10%	72.00%
Did not participate	29.20%	26.40%	27.30%	26.90%	28%

Special Education General

Question	Montrose High School (n=24)	Olathe High School (n=15)	Olathe Middle School (n=11)	OMHS Combined (n=26)	Total Survey Participants
1. What is your personal philosophy on inclusion of special education (SPED) students in regular education classrooms?	n=24	n=13	n=11	n=24	n=48
Supportive	3.00	3.00	5.00	8.00	11.00
Supportive with conditions	13.00	9.00	6.00	15.00	28.00
Not supportive	8.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	9.00
Comments: **MHS**	- most students, depending on level of needs, can be successful in my classroom - Very difficult because of the requirement to individualize, would be awesome with a specialist for daily support - Do it if the student has a chance at being successful - with support - its good - Good to include SPED kids, but there needs to be a balance of gifted students to help me help them. - Include as much as students are able				

- Inclusion is good with support, co teaching. Ability grouping is important so that the needs of all students can be met.

- can be successful in some regular ed rooms

- "Least restrictive environment is a good policy until teacher time & focus is taken away from regular classroom students"

- "I prefer teaching, grouping kids by ability, unless that student possesses the potential to perform academically and socially in the mainstream classroom"

- SPED students have difficulty with language - discrepancy between regular ed and SPED IN LANGUAGE is too broad to be effective

- "For students with adequate functioning it is fine. Too many SPED students in one class lowers the expectations of the class."

- "I would have to disagree with this approach. I would agree if SPED students had more support outside"

- "I believe students should be included in the regular classroom. However, additional interventions may be required. Classroom inclusion per se does not solve problems."

- "Equal opportunity for all students"

- "I think it is a great idea for elementary and middle school; much more difficult at the H.S. level."

- as long as student can manage themselves without additional support

- It takes a lot of teacher time from regular ed students, I am not trained in SPED

- "It is not an effective means to ensure all students capitalize on potential."

- "Inclusion is beneficial for kids who have basic skills in the content area. The collab teacher should know the subject and work with all students to increase achievement."

OHS

- makes the class more difficult, should spend more time with advanced student

- "I see the need for socialization but (depending on level) it is extremely difficult because the grading is very difficult"

- Good when appropriate, but regular education kids have a right to learn as well

- with a Para it works

- Rely on judgment of SPED teacher to determine viability and usefulness of inclusion

- important but situational

- as long as students can function in some capacity and not be a constant distraction "I welcome it".

- need both pull out and inclusion

- included with appropriate support

- as long as the kids can do what regular education kids are doing and they don't stand out as being different

- good ideas with differentiation and comprehensible input and assessments

- good for resource students and some level 3

- "mainstream as much as possible"

OMS

- all students should be in a regular classroom

- needs to be team work, collaboration and cooperation for inclusion to work

- the regular education teacher needs to be in tune with the students needs and there needs to be support from the SPED teachers

- great idea but not possible without support

- if they can function with or without help in a general education classroom

- "It feels good to be included in most activities."

- "Essential to help build social and life skills for special needs students"

- "All students have a right to the same education - with all the same content, and access to all forms of education."

- "I think they should be included as much as possible. There are some problems with overcrowded classrooms that can be challenging for classroom teachers with students of varying levels of abilities."

- as long as it does not impact the learning environment and safety of other students

- As long as the child is not too disruptive or to low functioning

2. Are you familiar with the Individuals with Disabilities Act 2004 (IDEA) legislation? How does it affect regular education teachers?	MHS n=24	OHS n=15	OMS n=11	OMHS Combined n=26	Total Survey Participants n=50
Yes	12.00	6.00	6.00	12.00	24.00
No	8.00	6.00	5.00	11.00	19.00
No Response	4.00	3.00	0.00	3.00	7.00

Comments:

MHS

- There will be more SPED students in the classroom because of the LRE requirement
- General educators are responsible for being part of the team that makes decisions on the placement of students.
- requires teachers to make accommodations for SPED learning in the classroom
- "Vaguely familiar, little effect."
- "Don't know"
- "I must follow all 504 plans & IEP's to make modifications for special needs students."
- General educators must be part of the IEP team for the student to participate in the general education environment
- requires teachers to meet the requirements of the students IEP
- equal access
- general and special educators must all adhere to the laws
- "I know that I need to differentiate for all students because that will make me the best teacher. This sometimes requires me to give them special provisions - which I don't mind doing"
- "Makes us accountable for all"
- increased responsibilities
- "makes teachers stressed"
- not really

- I forgot

OHS
- Teachers must provided accommodations in IEP's
- "requires SPED students to be in LRE which means that general education teachers will have more SPED students in their classes.
- "Some. Not real sure. Inclusion I believe."
- not really
- "General ed needs to be familiar with what modifications and accommodations are needed for individual students."
- "in many ways"
- "They have no choice in working with SPED kids. All are included."

OMS
- "Requires us to cooperated with SPED teachers & find least restrictive environment."
- "It can make their jobs more challenging depending on the student & level of assistance."
- "Somewhat. It presents additional challenges for G.E. teachers as they try to provide quality instruction to all students including those with special needs."
- "Teachers in mainstream classes need to know and to implement specific differentiation procedures all students."
- "General education teachers partner with special education teachers to make the most of special needs education"
- don't know
- "no IDEA"
- not really
- "Rights of access, etc. must be followed."

3. How does the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) affect special needs children in the regular education setting?	MHS n=24	OHS n=15	OMS n=11	OMHS Combined n=26	Total Survey Participants n=50
Response	12.00	4.00	8.00	12.00	24.00
No Response	1.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	5.00
Does not know	11.00	7.00	3.00	10.00	21.00

Comments:
MHS

- "What?"
- "Very little"
- There's little to no follow up on what potentially could be a great idea
- NCLB is a bad idea for special needs children. I can't see any benefit from standardizes tests for these students.
- Not sure it is really any different than IDEA
- "NCLB does not equip teachers with the number one growing disability: autism. Again, NEA questions the interpretation of IDEA and "highly qualified" teachers."
- SPED students are expected to compete with regular ed students
- "Can no longer to just "teach to the middle" or the op. Teachers need to differentiate instruction to meet all students' needs. Teachers need to document student growth."
- "I know there is a big push for inclusion, but other than that I don't know"
- "It means I need to see to the needs of all my students - I also feel a moral obligation to do so."
- Forces gen ed teachers to do more for SPED students
- requires as normal a placement as possible
- modification
- "Jury is still out on this one."

- "It places more responsibility on regular education teachers to address those students needs"
- "We need to find places for all students to be successful."
- don't know
- SPED students must adhere to the same standards as their general ed peers

OHS
- "They must be tested with regular ed kids & measured based on those standards."
- "It increases the pace and standard of their academic education"
- unsure
- "I adjust my instruction, so most of the time it doesn't."
- "Requirement for special needs kids to be in reg. ed. Classes as much as possible."

OMS
- "Right of access means students can attend reg ed classes."
- "I have no idea"
- teachers are responsible for students meeting goals
- "No Child Left Behind is a joke."
- Don't know
- "NCLB doesn't take special needs children into as much consideration as it should. NCLB is a blanket fix for the general population and may no apply to all students."
- "NCLB specifically addresses how special needs students are to be included and taught. There are many ways to bring a quality education to a sp. needs child."
- "I think it can be very discouraging in some cases especially using the current testing methods (CSAP)."
- it can create tension between individual student need and teacher responsibility
- "Unrealistic - not every child will ever be able to perform to a prescribed level at a certain time."

4. Are you comfortable with SPED students in your classroom?	MHS n=23	OHS n=15	OMS n=11	OMHS Combined n=26	Total Survey Participants n=49
Least comfortable 1	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	1	1	1
4	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	2	0	2	2
6	1	1	0	1	2
7	2	2	0	2	4
8	8	3	2	5	13
9	7	1	1	2	9
Most Comfortable 10	5	6	7	13	18
Average with SPED teachers	8.56	8.20	8.90	8.50	8.53
Average without SPED teachers (n=20/n=13/n=10/n=23/n=46)	8.35	7.90	8.80	8.30	8.33

Comments:
MHS
Why or Why not?

- Poor at differentiating instruction
- various teaching strategies are needed
- "Good kids. Work hard."
- "SPED students capable of being a part of the class help to enrich classroom environment."
- "I have always had them there."
- "I currently have SPED teachers support to help teach the 18 SPED students enrolled in two of my sections. Without that support, I would response differently!"

- "I like making my lessons easy enough that everybody can understand them. (In their explanation) However, it is difficult to motivate SPED students to learn because it is so hard for them. It requires a great deal of patience."

- widened viewpoint

- "Part of the job. They're just kids who learn differently."

- "I am comfortable - all students need instruction. It is extremely burdensome b/c the needs are great and time involved can take away from the needs of other students."

- "The way we teach foreign lang. applies well to most students."

- "My elective courses require much independent learning. I am fine w/ modifications, but I do not want to set students up for failure."

- I do well with the SPED students.

- They do not get the individual attention they need in the larger classes.

- difficulty in a music performance setting

- "forces me to be more efficient reaching all learning styles"

- "Need additional information and more realistic planning by all participants (reg t, spec ed t, parent, child) to be effective."

- lack of training with SPED students

- hard time with disruptive students.

Are there exceptions:

- "SPED students are more of a challenge for me."

- some with behavioral disorders

- behavior problems and academic problems requires much of the teachers time - takes away from other students

- some emotional problems

- "there are students who should be excelling but are limited due to inclusion"

- "I am not as comfortable with severe needs students." (SPED Teacher)

- "The way it is done here, no."

- "extreme disruption scenarios"

- if there are too many without support or accommodations

- "I would like to see them take tests in my room"

	- "I have a severe mental handicap student that does not belong in the regular classroom. He has no clue what we do, even the most fundamental." - "It is most difficult to have students who have difficulty working in large group, less structured environments. It is also difficult to plan for Level 3 students when they are placed in and advanced class." - they can be successful in Physical Education classes
OHS **Why or why not?**	- "Through past experience, most SPED students tend to work hard." - Yes, "when instruction, interaction, & assessment are modified to accommodate their needs." - "They are still just kids. As long as they do hard work, they tend to do fine." - "I am comfortable teaching all students." - "All students are important and should be a part of the classroom environment." - "Uncomfortable as to how I might benefit them without reducing effectiveness to other students." - "I don't like the different grading & I don't like having to change my rules. Example - I don't accept late work." - "In most cases, very comfortable, but must modify expectation as needed."
Are there exceptions?	- of course - yes - "Had a kid in a wheelchair, very limited physical & mental capacity. She didn't learn much but we all did fine." - maybe severe needs, but I have taught them in regular education classes - not so far - always - severely disabled would be hard - kids unable to handle the material

OMS	
Why or why not?	- require extra work
	- "don't always feel I meet their needs adequately"
	- "Students in my class work at their own pace individually so it is fairly easy to mainstream special needs kids in."
	- prior knowledge and experience with disabilities makes it easier
	- "I have had training in differentiated instruction and I actually use the training."
	- "I have not had much experience with them."
	- "Usually they cause me to differentiate more and that helps everyone.
	- "I enjoy SPED students, and the challenges they present. Trying to figure out what works best for them helps me with my teaching."
Are there exceptions?	- probably
	- "I haven't found any yet."
	- chronic disruptive and dangerous behavior
	- "Autism can be a little scary and unpredictable."
	- of course
	- "Only when there is no support."
	- "Behavioral needs are more difficult for me because I do not know effective strategies to maintain a student w/ behavioral problems."
	- behavioral

5. How much training did you receive in your teacher education program?		MHS n=22	OHS n=14	OMS n=11	OMHS Combined n=25	Total Survey Participants n=47
Least	1	3	5	0	5	8
	2	5	2	3	5	10
	3	3	2	2	4	7
	4	3	2	1	3	6
	5	3	1	0	1	4
	6	0	1	1	2	2
	7	2	0	1	1	3
	8	1	0	0	0	1
	9	0	0	1	1	1
Most	10	2	1	2	3	5
Average with SPED teachers		4.14	3.14	5.27	4.08	4.11
Average without SPED teachers (n=20/n=14/n=9/n=22/n=40)		3.55	2.43	4.22	3.13	3.58

*Even though there is one SPED teacher at OMS, there are two teachers with SPED degrees, both were removed to calculate the average Lickert score without SPED teachers. One SPED teacher from MHS did not answer this question.

75

6. Have you ever received training for dealing with special needs students?	MHS n=23	OHS n=14	OMS n=11	OMHS Combined n=25	Total Survey Participants n=48
Least 1	1	5	4	9	10
2	1	3	0	3	4
3	2	0	2	2	4
4	5	2	0	2	7
5	6	1	1	2	8
6	1	0	1	1	2
7	1	0	0	0	1
8	2	1	0	1	3
9	1	0	2	2	3
Most 10	3	2	1	3	6
Average with SPED teachers	5.52	3.71	4.45	4.04	4.85
Average without SPED teachers (n=20/n=12/n=10/n=22/n=42)	4.95	2.67	3.90	3.23	3.81

a. For dealing with specific learning disabilities?	MHS n=24	OHS n=15	OMS n=11	OMHS Combined n=26	Total Survey Participants n=50
Yes	11.00	5.00	4.00	9.00	20.00
No or no answer	13.00	10.00	7.00	17.00	30.00

Comments:

MHS
- reading disabilities
- SPED in general
- most except autism
- ADHD/ADD and Gifted Education
- LD, Dyslexia. Dysgraphia, Dysarithmia
- All
- slow learners, readers
- PC, reading and math
- college classes was the only source for training mentioned in this section

OHS
- ADD/ADHD
- reading disabilities
- survey class in college
- college
- no formal training
- most of them (SPED Teacher)

OMS
- language and learning disabilities
- college
- audition
- in SPED resource room
- ADD/ADHD/ Visual Perceptual/ Dyslexia/ Visual Motor
- out of state
- multiple, PCD, SLIC, ED, TBI, Hearing Impairment, ELA Learners
- colleges and district

b. For dealing with emotionally disturbed students?	MHS n=24	OHS n=15	OMS n=11	OMHS Combined n=26	Total Survey Combined n=50
Yes	9.00	3.00	3.00	6.00	15.00
No or no answer	15.00	12.00	8.00	20.00	35.00

Comments:

MHS
- at college
- some
- minimal
- on the job training
- certified by CDE for Crisis Advocate and at risk children
- at several conferences years ago
- degree in sociology and major in psychology

OHS
- counseling program in college
- on the job training

OMS
- "No (only during a prolonged exposure to these students in a HS resource setting.)"
- college
- on the job training
- out of state

c. On facilitating inclusion?	MHS n=24	OHS n=15	OMS n=11	OMHS Combined n=26	Total Survey Participants n=50
Yes	8.00	6.00	6.00	12.00	20.00
No or no answer	16.00	9.00	5.00	14.00	30.00

Comments:

MHS - college
- on the job training
- out of state
- minimal observation from touring a G.J. facility
- in-service
- only in teacher ed

OHS - district workshops
- admin program
- don't remember where
- in-service
- out of state
- some

OMS - district training
- little
- on the job training
- college
- some

d. About differentiating instruction?	MHS n=24	OHS n=15	OMS n=11	OMHS Combined n=26	Total Survey Participants n=50
Yes	18.00	9.00	8.00	17.00	35.00
No or no answer	6.00	6.00	3.00	9.00	15.00

Comments:

MHS - college

OHS
- some
- out of state
- minimal in graduate course
- conference
- a little
- in service
- on-line course
- ESL class
- long time ago

OHS
- district workshops
- out of state
- college
- ongoing
- various
- in-service
- reading articles

OMS
- some
- college
- district training
- some classes in ESL
- in-service
- out of state
- ESL
- 2 years ago
- Gifted and talented differentiation training in Montrose

e. About Universal Design?	MHS n=24	OHS n=15	OMS n=11	OMHS Combined n=26	Total Survey participants n=50
Yes	4.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	7.00
No or no answer	20.00	14.00	9.00	23.00	43.00

Comments:
MHS - "Is that like Intelligent Design?"
      - college
OHS - ?
OMS - some – college
      - state conference

f. For accommodating or modifying for SPED students in your classroom?	MHS n=24	OHS n=15	OMS n=11	OMHS Combined n=26	Total Survey Participants n=50
Yes	15.00	9.00	5.00	14.00	29.00
No or no answer	9.00	6.00	6.00	12.00	21.00

Comments:
MHS - experience
      - on the job training
      - teacher ed
      - "Not in many years. College - undergraduate."
      - out of state
      - "No formal training, but we practice it here."

- in-service training over the years
- on-line course
- a long time ago
- masters program

OHS
- "I am on the other end." (SPED teacher)
- reading articles
- on the job training
- various
- in-service
- out of state
- site training

OMS
- out of state
- some
- in-service
- college
- everywhere

IEP's

Question	Montrose High School (n=24)	Olathe High School (n=15)	Olathe Middle School (n=11)	OMHS Combined (n=26)	Total Survey Participants (n=50)
7. How well do you understand the role of the regular education teacher in developing the IEP for SPES students?					
Least 1	6	1	0	1	7
2	1	2	1	3	4
3	3	1	3	4	7
4	3	1	2	3	6
5	2	3	2	5	7
6	1	0	0	0	1
7	2	2	0	2	4
8	2	1	1	2	4
9	1	1	0	1	2
Most 10	3	3	2	5	8
Average with SPED teachers	4.75	5.87	5.18	5.58	5.29
Average without SPED teachers (n=21/n=13/n=10/n=23/n=44)	4.14	5.23	4.70	5.00	4.59

8. What is the role of the general educator in developing an IEP?	
Comments:	
MHS	- not in my current position/none - modification, help with what we observe - read and implement IEP - participate in meetings - input in development of IEP & strategies to help students - advisory - assessing growth and progress on IEP - understanding and supporting accommodations
OHS	- not my job - to sign the paper - participate in conferences - inclusion of curriculum being taught - facilitating needs - do what I am told - to understand and follow IEP and help identify which students need IEP or accommodations -very minimal
OMS	- no idea - no experience - didn't know there was one - unsure since our SPED teacher does it - all I know about is being on IEP's - the g.e. should be involved from beginning to end in developing IEP's - to assist in determining needs, maybe behavior differences

- to help special needs align with general goals as much as possible
- collaboration
- I have been with mainstream teachers and with SPED teacher when they have developed IEP's - teachers need to define and recommend intervention for each student.

9. Do you have access to the IEP for SPED students who are in your classroom?	MHS n=21	OHS n=12	OMS n=9	OMHS Combined n=21	Total Survey Participants n=42
Least 1	1	0	1	1	2
2	1	1	1	2	3
3	1	0	2	2	3
4	1	0	1	1	2
5	0	1	0	1	1
6	2	1	1	2	4
7	1	1	1	2	3
8	1	1	0	1	2
9	0	3	0	3	3
Most 10	13	4	2	6	19
Average with SPED teachers	7.95	7.92	5.11	5.64	7.33
Average without SPED teachers (n=18/n=10/n=8/n=18/n=36)	7.61	7.50	4.50	6.17	6.89

	MHS n=24	OHS n=13	OMS n=10	OMHS Combined n=23	Total Survey Participants n=47
10. If not, do you receive a confidential student profile for those students?					
Yes	18.00	6.00	1.00	7.00	25.00
No	6.00	7.00	9.00	16.00	22.00

Comments: MHS does confidential student profiles.
One OHS teacher responded to this question with one word "accommodations".
OMS teachers indicated they do not receive a student profile, with one exception that was just yes.
More clarification is needed on this from OMHS.

	MHS n=22	OHS n=14	OMS n=10	OMHS Combined n=24	Total Survey Participants n=47
11. Do you understand the information in the IEP or the confidential student profile?					
Least 1	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	2	2	2
3	0	1	2	3	3
4	0	1	1	2	2
5	1	0	0	0	1
6	1	1	1	2	3
7	1	2	0	2	3
8	8	3	2	5	13
9	2	1	0	1	3
Most 10	9	5	2	7	16
Average with SPED teachers	8.64	7.86	5.60	6.92	7.57

	MHS n=23	OHS n=13	OMS n=8	OMHS n=21	Survey Total n=44
Average without SPED teachers (n=20/n=12/n=9/n=23/n=44)	8.50	7.50	5.11	6.48	7.52

**One MHS SPED teacher did not use the Lickert scale to answer this question. His answer was disregarded for this question.

12. How useful is the information in the IEP or confidential student profile?	MHS n=23	OHS n=13	OMS n=8	OMHS n=21	Survey Total n=44
Least 1	1	1	2	3	4
2	0	0	2	2	2
3	1	1	0	1	2
4	2	0	1	1	3
5	0	1	0	1	1
6	6	0	1	1	7
7	2	2	0	2	4
8	6	0	0	0	6
9	1	7	1	8	9
Most 10	4	1	0	1	5
Average with SPED teachers	6.91	7.38	3.13	5.04	5.96
Average without SPED teachers (n=23/n=13/n=7/n=21/n=44)	6.75	7.38	2.71	5.48	5.68

**SPED teachers for OHS did not answer this question. One SPED teacher from

	MHS rated IEP usefulness as a 4, and the OMS SPED teacher rated it as a 6.				
13. Which would you prefer, a copy of the IEP or a copy of the confidential student profile?	**MHS**	**OHS**	**OMS**	**OMHS Combined**	**Survey Total**
IEP	3.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	7.00
Confidential Student Profile	8.00	7.00	3.00	10.00	18.00
Both	9.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	13.00
Doesn't matter	2.00	0.00	4.00	4.00	6.00
No answer or ?	2.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	6.00

Comments:

MHS
- communication with SPED teacher is more valuable

OHS
- One teacher indicated a preference for an IEP but then commented "I haven't really heard of it!"
- One teacher did not answer but asked for a "functional plan written not just compliance."

OMS
- "ONE would be great"
- "Don't know, haven't seen a student profile"

14. What additional information about the student would you like to receive?

Comments:

MHS
- medical needs or physical limitations

	- interventions that have worked
	- reading level
	- prefer to get to know the student
	- be aware of behavioral or social needs
	- who the SPED teach is, when they get the SPED class
	- background on behavior and performance
	- a defined contract between the student and the teacher
	- family background and dynamics
OHS	- details on how they are to be graded and assessed
	- anything pertaining to teaching
	- verbal communication
	- personal background
	- what has or has not worked in the past
	- strategies to work with students
	- honest assessment of what we can expect them to do
OMS	- no theoretical stuff, just stuff that works
	- list of modifications with details on how to implement them
	- anything
	-personal interests and general background information

15. Are you comfortable accommodating for SPED students in the classroom?	MHS n=22	OHS n=14	OMS n=11	OMHS Combined n=25	Total Survey Participants n=44
Least 1	1	0	0	0	1
2	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	1	1	1
4	0	1	0	1	1
5	1	2	0	2	3
6	1	0	1	1	2
7	6	1	0	1	7
8	6	3	5	8	14
9	1	3	2	5	6
Most 10	6	4	2	6	12
Average with SPED teachers	7.77	8.00	7.91	7.96	7.87
Average without SPED teachers (n=19/n=12/n=10/n=22/n=41)	7.53	7.67	7.70	7.68	7.61

16. Are there any accommodations with which you are uncomfortable implementing in your classroom? Why?
Comments:
MHS
-small group settings does not work in our large classes
-having a specialist would be helpful
- some issues with music performance, don't want to affect whole class in a negative way
- a dummy downed curriculum for the same credit
- "I am uncomfortable with the contradictory nature of some accommodations"
- sometimes the student is self-conscious of the accommodations
- any that embarrasses the student
- allowing SPED students to turn work in late and others can not
- different assessments due to time constraints
- without a special I feel I have to choose how to use my time
- sometimes I wish I could be doing a better job to make the student more successful
OHS
- giving a grade when they do half the work
- "sending work/test papers to the SPED room for help since it ends up not being their work all the time"
- Each teacher handles kids differently and what works for one may not work for another.
- not sure
- whatever it takes

	- it is more difficult to accommodate special difficulties while under pressure to raise test scores. Don't feel like I have the time.
OMS	- I have no problem with standard accommodations as long as accommodations don't outweigh the needs of other students - you have to do it - no experience - it is more difficult to accommodate special difficulties while under pressure to raise test scores. Don't feel like I have the time.

STAFF SUPPORT

Question	Montrose High School (n=24)	Olathe High School (n=15)	Olathe Middle School (n=11)	OMHS Combined (n=26)	Total Survey Participants (n=50)
	MHS n=19	OHS n=12	OMS n=9	OMHS n=21	Survey Total n=40
17. Are Administrators in your building supportive of your needs with respect to inclusion?					
Least 1	1	0	3	3	4
2	1	0	0	0	1
3	0	1	0	1	1
4	0	0	0	0	0
5	3	2	2	4	7
6	1	0	1	1	2
7	3	0	1	1	4

8	3	4	0	4	7
9	2	3	1	4	6
Most 10	5	2	1	3	8
Average with SPED teachers	7.21	7.67	5.00	6.52	6.85
Average without SPED teachers (n=17/n=11/n=8/n=36)	7.29	7.45	4.38	5.84	6.69

18. How can they better support you?

Comments:

MHS
- time for collaborations with SPED teachers
- know SPED law better and trust SPED staff to manage themselves
- training for specific disabilities
- training during PLC
- lower class size in general
- provide a specialist
- "do more than paperwork, there is a belief if the form is filled out the action will occur"
- "there should be a structured process for dealing with students who are not managing themselves or can't stay on task for 90 minutes"

OHS
- keep us better informed, more communication, better training
- more training
- more understanding of the SPED program
- more help in regular classes with SPED students

OMS
- come into the classrooms

- know best practices for ESL/SPED students
- follow through on decisions
- more knowledgeable of student needs
- more support staff
- define roles of general educators and special educators

19. Do special educators in your building provide support or information for including SPED students within regular education classrooms?	MHS n=21	OHS n=13	OMS n=9	OMHS n=22	Survey Total n=43
Least 1	1	1	3	4	5
2	0	1	0	1	1
3	0	1	0	1	1
4	1	1	0	1	2
5	1	0	0	0	1
6	0	2	0	2	2
7	4	1	0	1	5
8	5	3	1	4	9
9	3	2	1	3	6
Most 10	6	1	4	5	11
Average with SPED teachers	7.86	6.23	6.67	6.41	7.65
Average without SPED teachers (n=19/n=12/n=8/n=20/n=43)	7.74	6.67	6.25	6.50	7.10

20. How do special educators support you?	
Comments:	
MHS	-provide info but not much support - availability, information, guidance - only with occasional discussions - in class with students - "they try, I think they are still looking for the trail" - "don't do their work for them" - all we have to do is ask - provide confidential student profiles
OHS	- Para support when available - very well - "they don't unless I ask" - provide necessary information and help when needed - help to understand the disability and what works best - talk and brainstorm
OMS	- "They don't" - "Not at all. They us a report at the beginning of school, arrange annual reviews but I do not see or hear from them the rest of the year." - with students needs and time - talking - communicating, sharing information and coordinating instruction - "A special educator is in my classroom 2 out of 6 periods of the day"

21. How could special educators better support regular education teachers' deal with SPED students?	
Comments:	
MHS	- more informal communication about specific problems as they arise per content/assignment - time to collaborate - IEP Plans - answer questions when I have them - by better understanding the curriculum and giving ideas and help in modifying lessons and tests - they are supportive, but I have been lucky - follow up, I get too busy and forget about IEP's - continue what you are doing - help to modify difficult assignments - more information - get into the classroom more often to observe how their students are doing and give feedback and strategies - "Don't do their work for them" - Give concrete examples of how to modify for individuals. The accommodations list is very general. - "It is best to return to "pull out" system" - Greater numbers and more time
OHS	- make rubric to show level of support on assignments done outside the classroom - have more training for teachers

OMS

- meet with teachers; make kids complete work, communicate home
- effective communication, not just seat time
- help develop lesson plans for SPED students
- help modify lesson plans
- stop in more often
- help in the classroom
- help prepare SPED students for the general education classroom
- more planning with general education staff
- more support staff to support students
- inform them of exact exceptionalities
- help make transition into a general education classroom as uneventful as possible
- help SPED students be prepared for class and work with the class as much as possible

22. Do you have the opportunity to collaborate with special educators?	MHS n=20	OHS n=13	OMS n=9	OMHS n=22	Survey Total Participants n=42
Least 1	6	1	2	3	9
2	1	1	3	4	5
3	2	0	0	0	2
4	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0
6	2	2	0	0	2
7	3	4	0	2	5
8	1	4	0	4	5
9	0	3	0	3	3
Most 10	5	2	4	6	11

Average with SPED teachers	5.25	7.38	5.33	6.55	6.23
Average without SPED teachers (n=19/n=12/n=9/n=20/n=40)	5.00	7.17	5.33	6.38	5.73
	**One SPED teacher from each high school responded to this question.				

23. If so, how is collaboration with special educators helpful?

Comments:

MHS
- helpful in understanding background affecting behavior, etc. on many of these kids
- no collaboration
- this would be possible during PLC but is not made available
- able to assist student more effectively
- "We are working on it still. It depends on the personalities involved."
- helps implement ways of reaching all students
- work 1 on 1, or 1 on 3 instead of 1 on 32
- it is beneficial to discuss student needs and their strategies for success
- form a plan of kids needs and how to educate them better
- In multiple ways, not all about SPED
- insight into strength/weaknesses of IEP students

OHS
- gives a support system
- "communication positive"
- talk about positive and negative things that are working for students

	- see different perspectives and get new ideas
OMS	"- from middle to high school" - "if they would collaborate all levels would benefit" - work towards the same goals - make students more accountable - things are easier to implement if everyone I on the same page working towards the same goals - it was invaluable when I had the opportunity to team teach with a SPED teacher

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Question	Montrose High School (n=24)	Olathe High School (n=15)	Olathe Middle School (n=11)	OMHS Combined (n=26)	Total Survey Participants (n=50)
24. On what aspects of Special Education do regular education teachers need more clarification?					
Comments: MHS	- importance of compliance and suggestions for implementation - goals and progress monitoring of goals - specifics of the law, especially 504 - strategies for inclusion				

- newer teachers need more training
- methods of accommodations

- specific disabilities
- what is being done when we send students to the resource room for exams
- teaching techniques that work for SPED students and understanding their needs based on their condition
- classes limited to 15, teachers could better accommodate for all students
- differentiation training
- "Can't even answer, I know too little."
- how to modify assignments, accommodate for LD's and how to deal with SPED students generally
- learn how to diversify the way we teach
- "All!"
- Differentiating curriculum to meet needs

OHS
- methods of inclusion
- keep teachers informed of chances and clarify terminology
- most aspects
- grading and what accommodations actually happen
- explanation of the law
- guideline laws and training

OMS
- modifications
- IEP's
- how to make inclusion work
- laws and responsibilities
- interventions and modifications
- what is taught in pullout versus inclusion
- how to adapt curriculum and why

- any training might be helpful
- more training, workshops, classes, etc.

25. Do regular education teachers need access to supplemental materials or resources concerning special education to make inclusion more successful?	MHS n=20	OHS n=11	OMS n=8	OMHS n=19	Survey Total Participants n=39
Least 1	1	1	0	1	2
2	0	1	0	1	1
3	0	0	1	1	1
4	0	1	0	1	1
5	4	0	1	1	5
6	3	1	0	1	4
7	0	1	0	1	1
8	5	0	1	1	6
9	3	2	0	2	5
Most 10	4	4	5	9	13
Average with SPED teachers	7.30	7.09	8.25	7.58	7.44
Average without SPED teachers (n=18/n=10/n=9/n=18/n=36)	7.06	7.09	8.00	7.44	7.25

26. If so, what kinds of materials and resources are needed?	
Comments: **MHS**	- books on tapes and summarized books - lower level reading materials, text books on CD and ideas for modifying - "It is not about the materials it is making time for the teacher to do the extra tests, handout, notes oral testing, etc. for the SPED student" - paras should be paid more and be better trained - What's available? - methods of accommodations - materials for implementation in regular classroom - paras - materials that can compliment mainstream curriculum - modified assessment, tools to modify assignments, list of resources with easy availability. - in-service/collaboration time - teachers lack time to read extra material/ plus, we aren't up on the latest terminology - specific strategies for dealing with specific students - the more specific the better - "Can't even answer - I know too littler." - texts on CD's, using authentic assessments, etc. - simplified versions or alternative ways of teaching what they already do
OHS	- leveled, content reduced - "We don't have time" - "If students can't learn in the regular classroom with minor modifications they should be where they can." - whatever works and is available

- stuff specific to students they have

OMS
- all applicable
- more people
- hearing equipment
- complete folders of each SPED student
- curriculum specially designed for intervention as well as manipulatives to help with various learning styles
- "I am not sure"
- lower levels, possible teacher made materials

27. Do regular education teachers need more training for dealing with inclusion?	MHS n=19	OHS n=13	OMS n=9	OMHS n=22	Survey Total Participants n=41
Least 1	2	1	0	1	3
2	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	1	1	2	2
4	0	0	0	0	0
5	2	1	0	1	3
6	1	0	0	0	1
7	2	2	0	2	4
8	4	1	0	1	5
9	1	0	0	0	1
Most 10	7	7	8	15	22
Average with SPED teachers	7.53	7.77	9.22	8.36	7.98

Average without SPED teachers (n=17/n=13/n=8/n=20/n=40)				
7.29	7.77	9.13	8.20	7.78

28. If so, what training would you like to see?
Comments:
MHS
- diversifying instruction
- situational training, examples of how to modify
- How to do it. How to be effective. What works. What does not work.
- trainings on strategies
- SPED laws, modifying, using more adaptive techniques
- in-service/collaboration time
- "I don't feel any need, others may."
- practical implementation
- how to make inclusion more successful
- workshops
- methods for accommodations
- "What is available?"
- lower class size and bring in better trained paras
- team teaching models
OHS
- All
- Anything and everything
- "I'm not sure."

OMS	- "All teachers should be required to put a certain amount of time in both level I and level 3 environments to help build knowledge and experience with special needs." - training about different disabilities and the best ways to include - team teaching strategies and inclusion strategies - "Any training might be helpful" - classroom management with inclusion - how to effectively collaborate - how to differentiate assignments so all students are learning to their level
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	
Comments: **MHS**	- "It seems like most of the SPED kids I talked with needed more time with their SPED teacher instead of just inclusion."