ATTITUDE OF NINTH GRADE TEACHERS

TOWARD INCLUSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE REFERRALS

Thesis Study
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education
In Professional Leadership

by

Sarah Flournoy

May, 2012

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AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE REFERRALS

A Thesis for the Degree

Doctor of Education
Or Doctor of Philosophy

by

Sarah S. Flournoy

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May, 2012

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An Abstract
of a
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ABSTRACT

This study determined the attitude of ninth grade teachers toward inclusion of special education students was positive overall at 2.78 on a 7-point scale with one being the most positive and seven the least. Further, there is no statistically significant difference in the attitude mean of special education teachers when compared to general and elective teachers. This study proposed to address four questions in two parts. The first part was an ANOVA performed on results of a Likert attitude survey given to 160 ninth grade teachers intended to identify aggregate attitude (question one) and the attitude of core, elective, and special education teachers (question two), at an urban district in Texas. In part two, the attitudinal findings from part one were compared to a district generated report of discipline referrals for ninth grade special education students to determine if any correlation exists between teacher attitude and discipline (question three) and core, elective, and special education teacher attitude and discipline (question four). Questions three and four could not be statistically answered; because of the way discipline data is currently collected by campus rather than by teacher. There was no way to disaggregate the discipline data by teacher or instructional designation. Nevertheless, the campus with the highest number of discipline referrals also had the most negative attitude while the campus with the fewest referrals had the most positive attitude. Three campuses were involved in the study with a potential sample of 160 educators invited to participate. A total of 22 percent, or 35 individuals, returned a completed survey.

A follow-up study should be pursued to both confirm this study's findings regarding teacher attitude toward inclusion and to statistically establish a correlation between attitude and discipline referrals. The low response rate especially among special educators prompts validity questions; while the availability of discipline data only at the campus level limited statistical correlation analysis. Future discipline data should be collected at the teacher level, to parallel student academic performance data. Teacher attitude data toward inclusion could be used to provide professional development.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Since the 1970s, the percentage of the school age population classified as special needs according to federal guidelines has increased from 8.3 percent to 13.4 percent [National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2009]; an increase of 5 percent over 40 years. Special needs, or special education, derived that title because students in this class are special: they do not fit the student norm as defined by society at large and have therefore been educated outside the norm in segregated resource classrooms for over 200 years (Handler, 2007; Schraven & Jolly, 2010). Beginning in 1975, federal legislation changed how school districts educate students with special needs (Handler, 2007; Palley, 2008; Ramanathan, 2008), by returning them to the mainstream general education classroom. By 2008, 15.1 percent of special education students spent most of their days in segregated resource classes down from almost 25 percent in 1989 (NCES, 2010). This paper seeks to investigate how this relocation impacts the discipline encountered by special education students in secondary general education classrooms by examining at the attitude of the adults most affected: general education teachers.

Definitions

Attitude. An evaluation composed of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Ernst & Rogers, 2009, referencing Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

Discipline*.* "The use of punishment…to enforce student conformance with established standards, as expressed by school discipline codes" (Skiba & Peterson, 2003).

General education*.* A standard curriculum or setting adopted by a local education agency for the education of the majority of children they serve.

Resource classroom*.* A segregated educational setting where a teacher with specialized training works with a small group of students with special needs.

Special education student. A student having a disability or special need that qualifies them for special educational services pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Fabelo, Thompson, Plotkin, Carmichael, Marchbanks, & Booth, 2011).

History of Special Education

Prior to 1975, special education students were educated separately from their mainstream peers in self-contained classes because they did not fit the then prevailing model of a typical student (Handler, 2007; Ramanathan, 2008; Landorf & Nevin, 2007). As a result, special education evolved into a broad classification including "students with physical impairments, mental deficits, vision or hearing impairments, or those deemed unruly and ill-fit for participation in the common school classroom" (Handler, 2007, p.381). Handler (2007), quoting Winzer (1993) found that general education teachers tend to believe or view that special education students spend a majority of their day in "small classes with a specially trained teacher [who] could best manage 'dull,' 'excitable' or 'wrongly made' children" (p.

382). Thus, special education became a means for excluding these abnormal children from the normal classroom (Handler, 2007; Schraven & Jolly, 2010).

Dissatisfaction with this treatment of special education students emerged in the 1960s with the recognition of "how results tended to pathologize and further marginalize people with disabilities" (Landorf & Nevin, 2007, p. 4). Greater review of the system revealed two things (Waitoller, Artiles, & Cheney, 2010). First, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds received the special education label a disproportionate amount of the time. And second, the label was actually hindering students from reaching their educational potential. Therefore, what might be a solution for classroom disruptions actually carried a larger cost than previously realized.

When President Lyndon Baines Johnson took office in 1963, he "set forth to enable all American citizens access to the nation's opportunities by attempting to end discrimination and poverty affecting minorities and those with disabilities" (Schraven & Jolly, 2010, p. 423). He wanted to address both problems confronting special education: the civil rights implications of minorities being overrepresented and the inequality of the education received by this group of students. Johnson's Great Society attempted to fix the latter by mandating education as something different for special education and during the early 1970s "approximately 238 pieces of federal legislation passed by Congress to protect rights of people with disabilities" (Schraven & Jolly, 2010, p. 421). In conjunction with this, court cases based on securing the civil rights of special education students made their way through the judiciary. As with the civil rights movement of the 1970s, the court

cases seeking equality for special education students were grounded in the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (Schraven & Jolly, 2010). Using the precedent of Brown vs. Board of Education (1954), advocates alleged the separation of disabled students from their peers gave those students an inherently unequal education and was therefore unconstitutional (Landorf & Nevin, 2007). However, these cases merely granted access to the public education system without ensuring the unique learning needs of this student population were being met (Schraven & Jolly, 2010). In doing so, the overrepresentation issue was addressed indirectly, by endeavoring to return special education students, no matter their race, to the mainstream population.

The first piece of federal civil rights law to protect "the rights of people with disabilities" (Schraven & Jolly, 2010, p. 427) was Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. However, as a civil rights law, it does not provide any additional assistance to schools to facilitate meeting the unique needs of this student group (Schraven & Jolly, 2010). Federal assistance such as money, coupled with access and accountability requirements, was not offered until enactment of Public Law 94-142 in 1975, known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Landorf & Nevin, 2007; Schraven & Jolly, 2010). Public Law 94-142 later became known as the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; Schraven & Jolly, 2010). While Section 504 remains the prevailing civil rights law for students with disabilities, it is IDEA that "governs all special education services in the United States" (Schraven & Jolly, 2010, p. 428). The civil rights of special education students were now being addressed, but it was not until the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997 and 2004, that

the disproportional representation of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds was acknowledged (Waitoller, Artiles, & Cheney, 2010).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) focuses on the needs of special education students and the challenges faced by state and local school districts in meeting the requirements of these students (Palley, 2008; Ramanathan, 2008; Laprairie, Johnson, Rice, Adams, & Higgins, 2010). In doing so, it has six key components:

1. Zero Reject which holds that no student can be denied access to education based upon a disability;

2. Non-discrimination evaluations to assure appropriate assessment practices are used when determining students' eligibility for special education and their progress in meeting their educational goals;

3. FAPE [Free and Appropriate Public Education] and the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which set the standards for what constitutes appropriate education for a particular student;

4. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) which holds that delivery of special education services should occur in the general education classroom to the maximum extent appropriate;

5. Parent and Student Participation which requires that parents partner with schools in the processes related to special education; and,

6. The Right of Students and Parents to Due Process which provides a grievance procedure when parents and schools disagree about services (Laprairie et

al., 2010, pp. 25-26; Turnbull, Wilcox, Turnbull, Sailor, & Wickham, 2001; Ramanathan, 2008). Thus, special education is no longer a setting, but a service provided by schools (Turnbull et al., 2001). This service can be delivered along a range of educational environments from a general education classroom with no support (mainstream) to the residential environment where the student receives one on one attention from a specially trained educator at the student's residence (Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; Yell, n.d.; see Figure 1).

Least Restrictive   Most Restrictive

Mainstream   Inclusion   Homebound

                                        Resource
                                        Room
                                                                        Hospital
        Mainstream with
        Modification   Self-Contained
                                                                            Residential
                        Content
                        Mastery
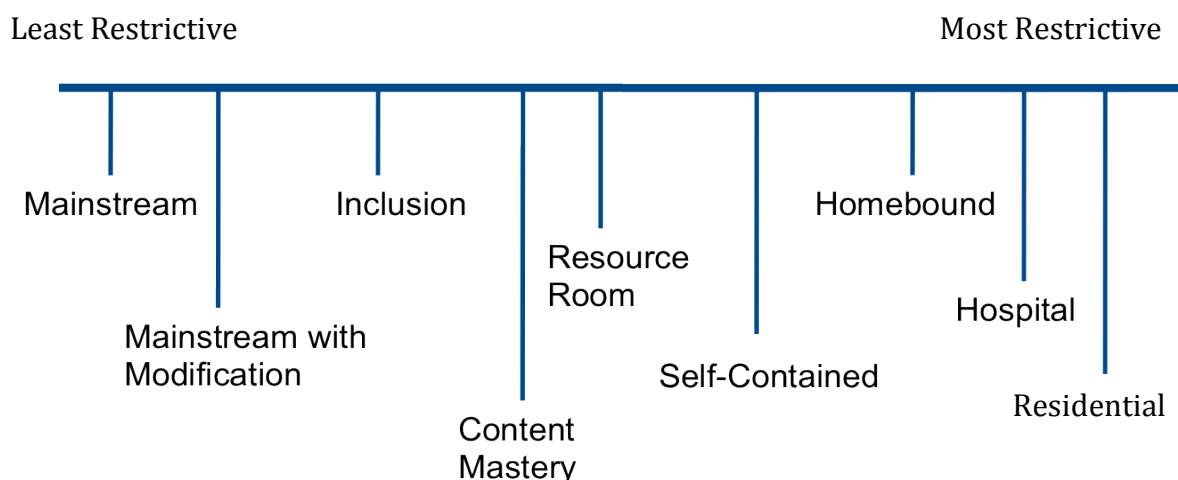
Figure 1. Continuum along which special education services can be provided from least restrictive to most restrictive.

Mainstream is a general education classroom with little to no special services provided by the school and/or faculty. Services increase as they are moved to the right along the scale. For instance, mainstream with modification also means a general education classroom but with additional educational supports such as instructional aids and/or modified assessment. Inclusion is a merging of a traditional resources class with mainstream by bringing a special education teacher into the general education classroom with the traditional general education teacher.

Content mastery is also a merging of mainstream with a resource room. Here, students spend a majority of their time in a general education classroom, but are excused periodically to a separate room where they can receive direct attention from a special education instructor. An individual student's placement on the continuum is based on each child's individual abilities and educational needs (Bain, 2009). Special education students are more likely now to be educated in an inclusion or mainstream environment (Wakeman, Browder, Flowers, & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2006).

Importance of Teacher Attitude Toward Special Education Students

Attitude is the "manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc., with regard to a person or thing" (dictionary.com). It defines how the teacher approaches his or her relationship with students. In turn, how a teacher interacts with his or her students "affect[s] learning and conceptual development" (Akyuz & Berberoglu, 2010, p. 78; Sharma, Forlin, Loreman, & Earle, 2006). In fact, teachers "have twice as much impact on student achievement as assessment policies, community involvement, or staff collegiality" (Beaty-O'Ferrall, Green, & Hanna, 2010, p. 4). While IDEA's creation of inclusive schools "provide[s] a favorable setting for achieving equal opportunity and full participation, [special education student] success requires a concerted effort…" (UNESCO, 1994, p. 11), it is teacher attitude that is key in the successful implementation of inclusion (Dee, 2011; Sharma et al., 2006).

Factors Possibly Contributing to Attitudes of Teachers Toward Special Education Students

      Lack of pre- and in-service development. A survey sample of pre-service teachers "overwhelmingly indicated" a need for greater instruction on serving students with special needs (Laprairie et al., 2010, p. 24). Further, Mulholland and Blecker (2008) found that pre-service teachers, prior to beginning their careers as educators, recognized a need for general educators to receive some minimum level of training from special educators. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (1994) recommends that teacher-training programs include content on inclusion. And a recent study of state certification requirements in the Northeast United States found that 95 percent of teacher training programs surveyed in that region now require some form of curriculum regarding students with disabilities and half require actual field experience (Institution of Education Sciences, 2010).

      Wide variety and constantly changing. Becoming familiar with this group of students can be daunting, as educators must first "clarify which group of students is being included under the umbrella categorical term of 'disabled'" (Handler, 2007, p. 382; Eckes & Swando, 2009). At its base, "disability is conceptualized as an inherent deficit or impairment that inhibits or interferes with academic progress within general education" (Handler, 2007, p. 383). From that general description, IDEA proffers 13 qualifying conditions:

    1. Autism,

2. Deaf/Blind,

3. Deafness,

4. Hearing Impairment,

5. Mental Retardation,

6. Multiple Disabilities,

7. Orthopedic Impairment,

8. Serious Emotional Disturbance,

9. Specific Learning Disabilities,

10. Speech or Language Impairment,

11. Traumatic Brain Injury,

12. Visual Impairment including Blindness, and

13. Other Health Impairment (IDEA, 34 C.F.R. 300.1 et. seq.).

Within each of these qualifying disabilities, students can be further differentiated by degree. For instance, "mental retardation is often categorized as mild, moderate, or severe" (Eckes & Swando, 2009, p. 2481). In addition, Handler suggests the definition of at least some of these disabilities changes in accordance with "the mores and tenor of the times" (2007, p. 383). It is not surprising then, that pre-service teachers and special education parents agree teachers do not really understand some disabilities (Mulholland & Blecker, 2008). For many in education, disabled persons are an unknown resulting in increased levels of discomfort with regard to this subpopulation (Sharma et al., 2006).

Increased burden. "Without appropriate and individualized instruction, students with disabilities have difficulty accessing the general education

curriculum" (Carter, Prater, Jackson, & Merchant, 2009, p. 61). Therefore, teachers must plan incremental objectives for special education students designed to lead the student to their state goals using the students' individualized education plan (IEP) as a guide (Dee, 2011; Carpenter & Dyal, 2007). Further, some special education students may have a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), which details behavioral goals for the student and how teachers are to address any disruptive behavior of the student (Yell & Rozalski, 2008). As a result, teachers could perceive inclusion "as imposing additional demands on teachers and may cause a high degree of concern and anxiety among them" (Sharma et al., 2006). A recent study by Wilczenski (1995b) confirms this. As the burden on teachers to modify curriculum or restructure their classroom to accommodate special needs students increases, the positive attitude of affected teachers declines; especially if these additional demands are perceived as interfering with the learning of other students (Wilczenski, 1995b).

Philosophical skepticism. Some teachers, while acknowledging disabilities, disagree on whether the condition is one the student can or cannot control (Carter et al., 2009). This philosophy then impacts whether a teacher is "even willing to make accommodations for students with learning disabilities" (Carter et al., 2009, p. 67).

Failure to meet average yearly progress (AYP) requirements. General educators could harbor animosity toward special education students included in their general education classrooms because of high stakes testing mandated by No Child Left Behind (NCLB; Eckes & Swando, 2009; Ramanathan, 2008). Specifically the special education sub-population "is expected to maintain the exact same

proficiency levels as their general education peers" (Eckes & Swando, 2009). While data shows special education students are increasing their knowledge at a rate comparable to that of non-disabled peers, they have been unable to catch up with those peers in performance (Eckes & Swando, 2009). As a result, many schools that fail to meet the average yearly progress (AYP) requirements of NCLB, do so solely because of the performance of their special education students achievement gains (Eckes & Swando, 2009).

Classroom Discipline

Discipline within the public school system is a top concern nationally (Freiberg & Lamb, 2009; Freiberg, Stein, & Parker, 1995). Traditionally, teacher directed, "the amount of time and resources devoted to discipline is in the thousands of hours and comes at the expense of learning" (Freiberg et al., 1995, p. 437). This is true whether the discipline is in response to minor student behavior such as being tardy to class or something more substantial such as a fight (Freiberg et al., 1995). Instruction is paused while the teacher reacts to the behavior problem and then resumes the lesson. Further, "for most secondary teachers, the process of discipline referrals is one way – students are sent out of the classroom to the office without any feedback to the resolution of the problem" (Freiberg et al., 1995, p. 425).

Teacher Attitude and Classroom Discipline

Wide variance exists among teachers in the rate at which they refer students for discipline (Skiba, 2002). Each teacher determines their own form of classroom

management which drives discipline and is "characterized by specific behaviors, strategies, and fundamental attitudes demonstrated by the teacher" (Beaty-O'Ferrall et al., 2010, p. 5; Leflot, van Lier, Onghena, & Colpin, 2010). Just as positive teacher attitude is key to successful classroom management (Dee, 2011; Sharma et al., 2006), a teacher's negative attitude has a profound influence on student behavior in the classroom (Kennedy, 2011; Leflot et al., 2010; Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). When students' needs are not met, such as when a teacher yells, makes negative remarks, or is perceived to be disrespecting the student, students regularly exhibit disengaged and defiant behavior (Kennedy, 2011; Leflot et al., 2010). This is especially true when exclusionary discipline techniques are employed (Kennedy, 2011).

Adverse Discipline has Long Term Impact

Within the classroom, disruptive behaviors have negative consequences for the class generally and for the disruptive student specifically (Freiberg & Reyes, 2008; Gorman & Pauken, 2003). For the class at large, such disruptions distract from the learning process and "steal valuable teaching and learning time" (Freiberg & Reyes, 2008, p. 149), while the student becomes increasingly disengaged academically and socially (Achilles, McLaughlin, & Croninger, 2007). Students with records of repetitive disciplinary action are more likely to drop out of school (Freiberg & Reyes, 2008; Skiba, 2010). As "one's level of education is correlated with future potential income" (Palley, 2008, p. 16) discipline can therefore have a lifelong impact on a student's quality of life. In addition, a teacher's negative

attitude, "may lead to low expectations of person with disabilities" further inhibiting the student's education (Sharma et al., 2006, p. 90).

Preemptive IDEA Provisions

IDEA attempted to preemptively address possible discipline increases by incorporating procedural safeguards in the law. For instance, the law "requires that state education agencies provide guidance on licensure and certification to ensure that general education teachers receive training in the subject matter and pedagogy that will enable them to effectively serve students with disabilities" (Institution of Education Sciences, 2010). Further, for any special education student generating behavioral concerns, IDEA requires a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and the creation of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) designed to assist the student in modifying their behavior in order to be educationally successful (Palley, 2008; Skiba, 2000). Thus provisions are in place to ensure the continuity of a special education student's placement despite disciplinary issues (U.S. Department of Education, 2006; Turnbull et al., 2001).

Conclusion

IDEA mandates the placement of students in their least restrictive environment (LRE; Bain, 2009; Ramanathan, 2008). As a result, more and more special education students are being serviced in general education classrooms either through mainstream or inclusion (Wakeman et al., 2006; Laprairie et al., 2010; Trent, 1998; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002). There, this special group of students may encounter teachers with limited knowledge of disabilities in general (Mulholland &

Blecker, 2008), limited training on how to work with special education students
(Dee, 2011), and who may have an adverse attitude as a result of an increased work
load (Wilczenski, 1995b) or high stakes testing (Eckes & Swando, 2009). While
cognitively this move may be beneficial (Trent, 1998), what is the non-cognitive
impact on special education students?

Chapter Two

Selected Literature Review

This chapter seeks to briefly review available literature regarding the current education of special needs students and the discipline they receive. While little targeted work has been done recently in the area of special education discipline, three primary areas of inquiry into the relationship between special education student and teacher emerge:

1. Relationship between the Individuals with Disability Education Act and No Child Left Behind (Palley, 2008; Ramanathan, 2008);

2. Practical issues related to successful inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom (Browder et al., 2007; Trent, 1998; Amato-Zech, Hoff, & Doepke, 2006; Carter et al., 2009; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002; Handler, 2007; Dunn, 2006); and,

3. Attitude of teachers toward special education students (Wilczenski, 1995b; Ernst & Rogers, 2009; Sharma et al., 2006; Wakeman et al., 2006; Eckes & Swando, 2009; Mulholland & Blecker, 2008; Dee, 2011).

This last category can be further broken down into two sub-parts: the development of scales to measure educator attitude toward special education students (Wilczenski, 1995b; Ernst & Rogers, 2009) and possible areas of influence on teacher attitude (Wakeman et al., 2006; Eckes & Swando, 2009; Mulholland & Blecker, 2008; Dee, 2011). Expanding the inquiry to include research into studies of the basic relationship between teacher attitude and students yielded additional

results. In addition, a recent newspaper article noting a disproportionate number of special education students receiving discipline (Mellon, 2011), suggests a resurgence of interest in this topic.

IDEA and NCLB

When initially researching key terms such as "special education" and "discipline" in conjunction, articles regarding the legislative relationship between the Individuals with Disability Education Act and No Child Left Behind, a major piece of contemporary legislation, were returned (Palley, 2008; Ramanathan, 2008). An article by Elizabeth Palley (2008) focuses on what she perceives to be the conflicting nature of the two laws. Ramanathan (2008) approaches the intersection from a policy perspective noting how the disparate implementation provisions have affected the success of each. Both articles, however, are textually based discussions without support from field research.

Elizabeth Palley's (2008) article *Federal School Law and Social Work Practice* is a practical description of two pieces of federal legislation: No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and how these two cooperate at the level of the local education agency. The article's purpose is to provide school social workers with a framework understanding to assist them in carrying out their duties particularly in advocating for special education students. Grounded in a review of the importance of education and the purposes of these two pieces of legislation, the article concludes the policies of the acts are in conflict, thereby impeding both attainment of their goals and the education of students. After giving a brief history of the two laws, she states:

> Under NCLB, student needs are met through the use of school-based programs, whereas under IDEA, students receive assistance on the basis of their individual needs and classifications connected to medically related disabling conditions (Palley, 2008, p. 20).

It is the conflicting nature of the legislation that impedes successful implementation (Palley, 2008).

Within the context of conflicting premises, Palley (2008) discusses the discipline policies of each. The procedural and individualized safeguards of IDEA are given several pages, while the zero tolerance policies of NCLB receive no explanation at all. Further, Palley acknowledges states are using NCLB as a means to pursue more extensive zero tolerance policies, not the federal government. Finally, Palley notes the most recent reauthorization of IDEA includes changes intended to bring the discipline policies of that law more into line with NCLB.

Ms. Palley's article reviews two important pieces of federal legislation helping to frame the discussion of school environment for special education students. It lacks concrete conclusions though, regarding the discipline faced by these students daily in classrooms.

Arun Ramanathan (2008) provides not only an extensive review of NCLB and IDEA, but also researched analysis on implementations of the two laws. Ramanathan's evaluation utilizes multiple streams of policy development theory. The approach is based on the idea that there are three legs to any governmental policy: recognition of a problem; engineering policy options; and, politics. All three must align to create a usable stool or program.

Ramanathan (2008) begins with a compare and contrast discussion of NCLB and IDEA focusing on one aspect: enforcement evolution. The narrow focus enables the author to provide a detailed construct of the two pieces of legislation highlighting the give and take as the respective enforcement mechanisms move toward each other. Ramanathan ultimately concludes that IDEA's provisions granting due process rights to parents, unlike NCLB which does not, affects both the success of the legislation and the public's perception of it.

Again, this article is a theoretical discussion of the texts with added insight gleaned from the historical context of each. As with Palley's (2008) report, Ramanathan (2008) speculates about disparities in enforcement. He offers no quantitative data indicating his concerns have been manifested.

Inclusion

In an effort to move beyond superficial textual study, subsequent searches used terms found in both Palley's (2008) and Ramanathan's (2008) work to focus on practical problems of implementing the inclusion provisions of IDEA where both authors agreed discipline issues might arise (Browder et al., 2007; Trent, 1998; Amato-Zech et al., 2006; Carter et al., 2009; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002). The subsequent articles identify impediments to the incorporation of special education students into the general education classroom and range from faculty conflicts (Carter et al., 2009; Dee, 2011, etc.) to devices that can facilitate inclusion (Amato-Zech et al., 2006). While some touch tangentially on the attitude of teachers toward special education students, it is not the primary focus.

Like Ramanathan (2008), Browder et al. (2007) emphasize one aspect where the two laws converge: "increased access to general curriculum content for students with significant cognitive disabilities" (p. 3). The authors begin by arguing the benefits of such a policy and then proceed to give readers a methodology for accomplishing the policy goal. Finally, they pre-emptively address potential problems with implementation by suggesting a methodology. Rather than a theoretical discussion, Browder et al. provide practitioners with immediately usable information.

The seven criteria used by the authors originate with the federal NCLB act and include:

1. the alternative content is academic,
2. the alternative content is based off of the student's grade level content,
3. successful achievement is also based off the student's grade level content,
4. there is some achievement differentiation across levels,
5. achievement promotes access to grade level curriculum,
6. achievement maintains fidelity to grade level curriculum, and,
7. multiple levels of access accommodate varying skills levels (Browder et al., 2007, pp. 4-11)

For example, if the student's general education peers are learning U.S. History, the alternative content and assessment would also revolve around U.S. History with a greater depth of understanding required as the student progressed through grade levels.

Browder et al. (2007) identify three potential impediments. First, little evidence for best practices exists. Second, general curriculum often assumes skills students with alternative assessments do not possess. And finally, there are alignment difficulties. In other words, implementation of inclusion is new and best

practices will develop over time. Alternative content should be differentiated by the student's level of communication. This too would aid in alignment validity.

The detailed descriptions of methodology and potential problems highlight the complex nature of inclusion. By the authors' suggestion, aligning curriculum to accommodate special education students is a multiple step process with seven factors to consider. Further, it is new, without established implementation practices that teachers can utilize.

Carter, Prater, Jackson, and Marchant (2009) approach the same differentiation issues of an inclusive classroom from the perspective of successful collaboration between special and general education teachers. The authors begin with the premise that effective collaboration "can facilitate the successful inclusion of students with disabilities" (Carter et al., 2009, p. 60). In concluding that collaboration is difficult for teachers if they lack the skills for collaborating and problem solving, the authors note that educating special education students is essentially a problem-solving process.

The researchers looked at "six pairs of elementary teachers from five elementary schools in a large western U.S. state" (Carter et al., 2009, p. 62). The pairs were selected according to a predetermined set of qualifications. Two meetings occurred between the researchers and the teaching pairs—first, to train the pairs as a group on the use of the CRIME model of collaboration, and second, individually, to interview them regarding their experience in implementation. The researchers discovered that all pairs attempted to use the CRIME model of collaboration, but two were unable to complete the process due to philosophical

differences regarding the nature of disabilities. The authors suggest "teacher-preparation and professional development programs should equip teachers with skills for addressing philosophical differences" (Carter et al., 2009, p. 68).

Both studies highlight the complex nature of inclusion. The Browder et al. (2007) study focused on the curriculum complexity while Carter et al. (2009) highlighted the human aspect of implementation. Though neither addressed students, the research demonstrates the important role of the teacher in inclusion.

Stanley Trent (1998) also investigates the implementation of inclusion as it manifests itself through co-teach programs. Specifically, he describes a qualitative investigation "of a collaborative teaching model in a suburban high school to determine how this move toward inclusive education benefited teachers and students" (Trent, 1998, p. 1). The author concludes that in the instant implementation "too much was left to chance" (Trent, 1998, p. 7). He urges educators to go beyond "this cosmetic and contrived implementation of education reform" (Trent, 1998, p. 8).

This case study is a time series. The author first investigated the collaborative teaching relationship between two general educators and two special education teachers at a suburban, predominantly white, middle class high school in the Fall of 1989 (Trent, 1998). The researcher returned in the fall of 1991 to study the ongoing relationship of these four teachers, only to find the two special education teachers no longer working there. Rather than studying the same pair over a period of time, the study became an investigation of how collaboration can change as collaboration teams change. Specifically, the study looks at a single social

studies teacher and her experience teaching with two different special education teachers.

The general educator sought participation in the co-teach program in order to improve her ability to serve special education students in her classroom (Trent, 1998). The initial pairing was a great success with both educators comfortable in their different yet complimentary classroom roles. Her second pairing was equally random yet much less successful. Though the school year began with essentially the same discussion of teaching philosophy, implementation was much less cohesive. Trent (1998) suggests a four-fold scaffolding to support teachers in collaboration:

1. Help establish relationships based on compatible goals that result in improved student outcomes;
2. Help them move beyond a safe discourse to one that challenges both participants;
3. Expose them to multiple research based instructional models and practices; and,
4. Establish and sustain learning communities (p. 8).

While the reader can conceptualize how the second element would have benefited the second co-teach pairing, the author fails to clearly draw this link for the reader. Instead, he identifies the support and then moves on to discuss the lack of research currently available in the area of "purposes and discourses that lead to change and improved outcomes for [special education] students" (Trent, 1998, p. 8).

As with Carter et al. (2009), Trent's (1998) research highlights the important role of the teacher in successful inclusion. His research goes a step further though. The general educator's attitude was positive toward special education students. It was the special educator's attitude that proved critical in making the pairings a

success. Therefore, any study addressing the implications of inclusion should involve special educators as well as their general education peers.

Margaret Weiss and John Lloyd (2002) contribute additional information regarding the important role of the special education teacher when they employed a qualitative methodology in examining the role of special education teachers in general education classrooms. They then compared that role with the special educators' performance in resource rooms, the more traditional venue of a special education classroom. The result was a series of conclusions. First, "special educators implemented co-teaching in a variety of ways" (Weiss & Lloyd, 2002, p. 66). The authors classified the roles into four broad categories. Which role the special educators chose depended not only on their personal view of co-teaching, but also on internal and external influences on the classroom. For the most part, three of the four possible roles involved the special educator in instruction. All three proved to be a limited role for the special educator who also provided "more specific explanations, questions, help, and feedback" when the lead teacher was in a special education classroom (Weiss & Lloyd, 2002, p. 66).

The Weiss and Lloyd (2002) study involved six secondary teachers from a rural mid-Atlantic education district reporting a total special education population of approximately 17 percent of its 1,500-students. Five of the six educators held master's degrees in special education and all six teachers served as both co-teachers and resource teachers on their respective campuses. Data was collected in two ways. First, each teacher was observed an average of nine times for 30 minutes each time. Observations were conducted in both their co-taught classroom and

their resource classroom. During each observation, the authors noted "the actions of the special educator in a narrative form for later analysis" (Weiss & Lloyd, 2002, p. 61). Second, each teacher was also interviewed on three separate occasions with each occasion having a defined purpose. The above two methods of data collection were supplemented with teacher journals updated after each observation, an interview with the district IEP coordinator, and an examination of special education policy on integration and job responsibilities as laid out in the district's handbook.

Using a three-part constant comparative method to code their observations, the researchers identified four roles for the co-teacher during teacher directed instruction:

1. Providing support;
2. Teaching same content in a separate classroom;
3. Teaching different part of content; and,
4. Team teaching (Weiss & Lloyd, 2002, p. 64).

In contrast, the special education teacher in the resource room is responsible for all aspects of instruction, assessment, and feedback (Weiss & Lloyd, 2002). These roles were then compared across specific instructional actions such as: explaining, questioning, giving help, and giving feedback. In each instance, the role of the special education teacher was more in-depth and involved more detail in the resource room than in the co-teach general education classroom. Thus the researchers conclude that co-taught might not be the best environment for special education students, even if they can be educationally successful in that environment.

Confirming the work of Trent (1998) to some degree, Weiss & Lloyd (2002) found special education teachers are often marginalized in the general education classrooms. While Trent's results seem to suggest this is a result of the special

educators' attitudes and philosophies toward co-teaching, the instant research insinuates the relationship between general and special educator is more complex. This may be a direct result of the expanded sample used by Weiss & Lloyd.

Though a deviation from the surrounding literature, Amato-Zech, Hoff, and Doepke's (2006) article on tactile self-monitoring strategies is informative with regard to the nature of special education students and their environment. The purpose of the study was to examine the effectiveness of a new device that provided a tactile cue to self-monitor. Though only three students participated, the device was found to increase "levels of on-task behavior from a mean of 55% to more than 90%" (Amato-Zech et al., 2006, p. 218). Positive results remained even after the stimulus was removed, though at a reduced rate.

The device is an example of a non-distracting tool used to facilitate success of special education students in any environment, including a general education classroom. The device placed few demands on the teacher, and students did not feel it was intrusive (Amato-Zech et al., 2006). Despite the ease of implementation, the results were dramatic.

Helpful in developing best practices for inclusion, the Amato-Zech et al. (2006) study does not offer any information on how use of such devices might curtail class disruptions and ease resultant classroom management issues. As a result, this author did not pursue further articles on the subject of instructional aids for special education students.

In this set of research, practical issues of implementation are explored rather than theoretical discussions. Issues range from applied tools to facilitate

implementation of inclusion to faculty collaboration issues. The latter group highlights the potential impact of teacher attitude on the inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom and the need to look at special educators as well as general educators in any study of the subject.

Teacher Attitude Toward Special Education Students

Further research sought to explore the relationship between teachers and students with special needs. Two types of articles were discovered by this search. The first set deals with possible influences on teacher attitude, but does not draw a direct correlation (Sharma et al., 2006; Wakeman et al., 2006, Eckes & Swando, 2009, Mulholland & Blecker, 2008, Dee, 2011). The second consists of attitude scales designed to measure an educator's attitude toward special education students (Wilczenski, 1995b, Ernst & Rogers, 2009). Unfortunately, the latter set fails to identify the positive or negative attitudes in favor of correlating them to whatever variable the researcher is interested in studying.

Influences. Wakeman et al. (2006) probe the role of the campus principal in special education. The authors begin with the premise that principals are not only responsible for the "growth and development of all students" (Wakeman et al., 2006, p. 153), but that they have a substantial influence on student achievement.

Their survey of principals revealed:

1. Principals feel they are well informed on special education issues.
2. Principals agree all students should have access to the general curriculum and classroom, but

   a. more than 30 percent were unclear how to accomplish inclusion and

b. a majority believes special education students have access to the general curriculum but not necessarily the general education classroom.

3. Most principal knowledge regarding special education came from personal experiences rather than any formalized or required training (Wakeman et al., 2006).

Thus, in the authors' assumed role of principals as instructional leaders on campus, principals believe themselves well informed generally and agree philosophically with the dictates of NCLB, but may lack practical knowledge; and increased knowledge directly correlates to increased involvement in special education programs.

In their study, Wakeman et al. (2006) note a concern among principals regarding the application of accountability standards to their special education population. According to a recent study their concern is well founded. While the stated purpose of the study by Eckes & Swando (2009) was to "examine what impact the No Child Left Behind Act has had on students with disabilities" (p. 2479) the article concludes "that schools fail to make AYP most often because of the students with disability subgroup" (p. 2500). Average yearly progress (AYP) is a two-part test developed by the United States Supreme Court to determine if schools have met IDEA's requirements to provide a FAPE (Eckes & Swando, 2009). The authors go on to speculate this reality may adversely affect teacher attitude toward this classification of students.

Sharma et al. (2006) consider whether teacher attitude is pre-determined or a result of the campus environment by looking into the nature of concerns and attitudes held by pre-service teachers regarding inclusive education and their

degree of comfort on interaction with people with disabilities. This international qualitative study of pre-service teachers from Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, and Singapore determined participants from Western countries were generally more positive toward special education students than their Eastern counterparts. Further, the authors speculate that exposure to people with disabilities is both important and necessary "in countries where pre-service educators are less likely to come in contact with persons with disabilities during their school years" (Sharma et al., 2006, p. 90).

Across four international jurisdictions: Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, and Singapore, 1,060 pre-service teachers were purposefully selected to participate in the study (Sharma et al., 2006). Each participant completed a single survey covering the following four parts:

1. General demographic data of participant;
2. Attitudes towards inclusive education scale;
3. Modified version of interaction with disabled persons scale; and,
4. Concerns about inclusive education scale.

Thus, part one helped the researchers identify more about whom the participants were while the other three were comprised of separate, distinct, and well-accepted attitude scales. The questionnaire was administered "during the first week of a unit of study on teaching children with special needs" (Sharma et al., 2006, p. 86). Though the institutions and classes were deliberately selected, all students in each class were invited to participate with approximately 95 percent choosing to do so. Responses were then transformed into quantitative data for analysis.

With regard to pre-service teachers' attitudes toward and concerns about inclusion, a one-way ANOVA was employed in determining that in general, Canadian

pre-service teachers have the most positive attitudes with Hong Kong and Singaporean pre-service teachers having the lowest (Sharma et al., 2006). A similar result was reached with regard to differences in pre-service teachers' sentiments toward person with disabilities. Canadian pre-service teachers had the least discomfort while Singapore had the highest level, though only marginally more than Australia and Hong Kong. Finally, this data was combined to determine a positive relationship did exist between knowledge and attitude.

The Sharma et al. (2006) study indicates teacher attitude may be as much a function of their familiarity with the special education population as campus environment, while the accountability pressures of NCLB and additional workload may exacerbate previously held attitudes. In either event, previous research suggests there are a multitude of factors that can contribute to a teacher possessing a negative, rather than positive, attitude toward their special education students.

Research by Mulholland and Blecker (2008) touches on the impact additional exposure to the special education population would have on pre-service teachers. They begin with the commonality theory that both IDEA and NCLB "stress the importance of family/school partnerships" (Mulholland & Blecker, 2008, p. 48). The authors conclude that field interviews by pre-service teachers of special education parents and teachers followed by an immediate opportunity to debrief led to a greater understanding of special education over and above traditional coursework in the area. Thus their initial assumption regarding school parent partnerships being productive is validated when addressing special education.

The instant study derives from a best practices analysis of a pre-service course in special education (Mulholland & Blecker, 2008). While always requiring teaching students to interview a parent of a special needs student and a special education teacher, the intervention addressed here was the addition of class time dedicated to a discussion of what students learned from these interviews. Prior to this intervention, students simply reported on their findings without class discussion or feedback from the professor. The study is therefore divided into two parts: parent interviews and teacher interviews. For both, the authors looked at the types of questions prepared by the students prior to the interview and the substance of the discussions that followed.

With regard to special education parents, the questions were grouped by the authors into three basic categories:

1. Rudimentary information,
2. Meeting the needs of special education children; and,
3. Parental perceptions regarding their child's life in special education (Mulholland & Blecker, 2008, p. 49).

The subsequent discussion, however, focused on diagnosis: age of child when first diagnosed, age of diagnosis effect on educational experience, different types of diagnoses, and personal experiences of diagnosis. In addition, students discussed the various services available under special education and parents' level of satisfaction with school efforts to address the needs of their children.

Pre-service teacher interest with regard to special educators was slightly different. With this group, the authors believe the interview questions centered on:

1. Rudimentary information on logistics of the job,
2. Interactions with parents of special needs students; and,
3. Personal implications of the job (Mulholland & Blecker, 2008, p. 51).

As with the parent discussion, the teacher dialogue ranged away from these questions. Through interactions between students and their professor, it became clear many students approached the special education teacher interview with negative feelings toward special education. The discussion allowed the professor to highlight this bias. The discussion also addressed concerns regarding the logistics of meeting legal requirements in this area as a teacher and maintaining good classroom management strategies. Further, pre-service teachers saw a need for greater training for both general and special education teachers. And finally, the discussion revealed concerns about administrative support for teachers in this specialized field.

The study seems to confirm the findings of Sharma et al. (2006) regarding exposure positively impacting teacher's attitude toward special education students. Though the study dealt specifically with an intervention to improve student understanding, the post-visit discussion served as a means for students to share the knowledge they gained and expand that knowledge. It is the expansion of knowledge the authors labeled as a success.

Amy Lynn Dee (2011) recently investigated a different area of pre-service training. Rather than looking at the comfort level of educators with special education students, she looked at one element in their ability to instruct them. Specifically, she examined the success of pre-service teachers in compiling lesson plans that differentiated instruction for special education students. Dee performed a work sample analysis on a document produced by pre-service teachers working toward elementary certification. The document was intended to outline

> a working unit of instruction that includes unit goals and objectives, pre- and post-assessments, lesson plans, and an analysis of student learning and reflections. The document also includes a description of each student in the class. The work sample requires a section on accommodations for students with learning exceptionalities. (Dee, 2011, p. 58)

This is a cumulative document prepared at the end of the potential new teacher's training and "should reflect best practices, methods and differentiation" (Dee, 2011, p. 58). Samples were collected from both undergraduate and graduate pre-service teachers according to a stratified sampling methodology—five randomly selected from each program. Data was then "recorded in seven categories corresponding to the sections of the work sample" (Dee, 2011, p. 60). From this, Dee (2011) concludes, "little if any differentiation appears in the lessons plans" and "there exists a question as to the quality of inclusion" pre-service teachers are seeing as part of their cooperative teaching program (p. 67).

Dee's (2011) article raises concerns about educators' ability to differentiate instruction for special education students. Whether a result of the training they received or their own attitude toward the assignment, the pre-service teachers still remained predominately unable to provide the kind of instruction needed by special education students. Therefore, though it does not directly address issues of attitude, Dee's research does show a lack of understanding among pre-service teachers regarding what is needed for special education students to be successful.

Research by Michael Dunn (2006) into the factors influencing teacher decisions to refer students for special education services is instructive. In his 2006 qualitative study of 13 primary school classroom teachers he discovered the key criteria for referral to be: atypical behavior/look. In other words, a student "who

presents himself/herself as different, academically unable, or with atypical comportment to the teacher is interpreted as needing referral for special education services" (Dunn, 2006, p. 135). Beth Handler (2007) identified almost the exact same student characteristics as the reason for referral for special education services prior to enactment of IDEA. Thus, the use of special education by general educators as a means to address the needs of abnormal children remains despite IDEA.

In order to collect data for the study, the researcher met with each subject "for a mutually agreed upon 45-60 minute session" (Dunn, 2006, p. 130). Each session began with the same question series and was taped for later transcription by the researcher. After verifying the accuracy of his data, Dunn (2006) began to analyze the data "by searching for common concepts and practices" (p. 131). He discovered five recurring themes:

1. Inability to Apply the Presented Information;
2. Needing Assistance/Requiring Repetition of Directions or Instructions;
3. Inattention;
4. Inability to Complete Task in the Allotted Time; and,
5. "Look"/Atypical Behavior (Dunn, 2006, pp. 131-135).

According to the author, these can then be lumped together as atypical performance or behavior.

As with the other research in this vein of exploration, Dunn identifies a possible means of conflict between general educators and the special education students they serve. Principals believe they understand the issues confronting education and say the right things, but lack practical exposure and knowledge to ensure successful inclusion (Wakeman et al., 2006). Sharma et al. (2006) shows such exposure plays a substantial factor in an educator's attitude toward special

education. Further, the rise in importance of accountability standards can negatively impact teacher attitude. Research by Mulholland and Blecker (2008) along with Dee (2011), regarding exposure to special education population, shows pre-service programs can be helpful in increasing the knowledge of teachers toward special education populations, but also that such knowledge may not be enough to ensure the differentiated instructional needs of such students are being met. Finally, Dunn (2006) demonstrates that the referral criteria used by general educators remains abnormal behavior. Thus, existing research into the intersection of general educators and special education students demonstrates a plethora of reasons exist for potentially negative attitudes among general education teachers toward this discrete population.

Attitude scales. A number of attitude scales have been developed to explore whether general education teachers do hold negative attitudes toward students with special needs, but the attitude scores are reported as part of correlational studies and not independently. For instance, in 2009, Catherine Ernst and Margaret Rogers published an article detailing their efforts to develop "a new scale to measure high school teacher attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities" (p. 305). The scale they developed included 27 items with three factors accounting for 44.5 percent of the common variance and .91, .85, and .77 coefficient alphas for each of the three factors respectively. The following summarizes the authors' findings:

1. positive correlation between attitude and the completion of courses on special education (whether formal university classes or in-service training),

2. positive correlation between attitude and years of experience with inclusion,

3. positive correlation between attitude and teacher's knowledge of the availability of instructional materials to implement inclusion, and

4. male teachers were more favorably disposed toward special education than female teachers (Ernst & Rogers, 2009).

Thus exposure, either through formal training or experience, positively correlated to a positive attitude. The attitude of the teachers studied was not reported.

Similarly, in 1995, Felicia Wilczenski developed a scale with which to measure attitudes toward inclusive education (1995a) and then used that scale to gauge the attitude of school psychologists toward inclusive education (Wilczenski, 1995b). She determined that the greater the degree of accommodation necessary to integrate the student, the more adverse the attitude of the school psychologist (Wilczenski, 1995b). Again though, the attitude of the participating subjects was not reported.

Research regarding teacher attitude toward special education students falls into two primary categories: potential conflicts and attitude scales. The first identifies a multiple of items characterizing that relationship which might lead to conflict between the two groups, such as high stakes accountability and lack of understanding. The published scales also seek to explore potential areas of conflict. While grounded in data on the issue being investigated, none report the attitude of teachers toward special education and none address potential disciplinary outcomes.

Impact of Teacher Attitude on Student Discipline

Therefore, the research identifies potential conflicts that may lead to negative attitudes among teachers with regard to their special education students. While no current reporting addresses a causal link between that and discipline, there are several articles that presume a link between teacher attitude and classroom discipline generally. Many of these propose methods for capitalizing on this link in order to improve student behavior in the classroom. For instance, Guardino and Fullerton (2010) advise that a "well-organized classroom permits more positive interactions between teachers and children, reducing the probability that challenging behaviors will occur" (p. 9). Beaty-O'Ferrall, Green, and Hanna (2010) advocate for relationship development to improve classroom management. Others spend time investing the relationship further, but all focus on the role teachers play in affecting the behavior of their students and thus classroom discipline.

Through a qualitative case study of 75 observation hours of seven teachers and over 50 interviews of students, teachers, and administrators, Brianna Kennedy (2011) grouped the attitude of the teachers she saw into three categories: rapport builders, subject matter specialists, and blamers. Rapport builders "emphasized the development of positive relationships with students and used this focus to drive decision making" (Kennedy, 2011, p. 34). In contrast, subject matter specialists view the teaching of curriculum content to be their most important function rather than relationship building. Finally, blamers "consistently experienced frustration with students' behavior and their lack of engagement" (Kennedy, 2011, p. 38). This

latter group experienced a greater degree of disruptive behavior in their classroom. According to Kennedy, the teachers' lack of rapport with their students actually reinforced disruptive behavior. It was the teachers' attitude that perpetuated the bad classroom behavior rather than the student.

A report by Leflot, van Lier, Onghena, and Colpin (2010) investigated "the consequences of teacher behavior management for children's further disruptive behavior and about *how* teacher behavior management may affect this further development" (p. 869, emphasis in original text). In their experiment, the authors evaluated the effectiveness of the Good Behavior Game as an intervention technique. Their study encompassed 30 classrooms from 15 different schools (two classrooms per school). One classroom from each school was randomly assigned to either the intervention or control group. Student behavior was evaluated at four points in time: "prior to the implementation at the beginning of the second grade, at the end of the second grade, at the beginning of the third grade, and at the end of third grade, after terminating the intervention" (Leflot et al., 2010, p. 871). Behavior was studied using two means. First, students were asked at each evaluation point to nominate fellow students who could not sit still and those who disobeyed. This information was then quantified for analysis. In addition, at each measurement point, "two trained observers using an instrument developed by van der Sar" (Leflot et al., 2010, p. 872) observe individual student on- and off-task behavior six times during a morning for intervals of 20 seconds each.

The results demonstrate that universal classroom prevention, such as the Good Behavior Game, can result in "marginally significant reduced growth of

hyperactive and a significant decrease in growth in oppositional behavior from the beginning of second to the end of third grade" (Leflot et al., 2010, p. 879). From this, the authors extrapolate that a reduction in negative remarks and interactions on the part of the teacher reduces a student's negative classroom behavior. The study therefore endorses the theory teacher attitude is a factor in student behavior.

Waller and Higbee (2010) sought to extend the body of knowledge regarding the effect of fixed-time (FT) schedules on students' disruptive and academically appropriate behavior. By analyzing the behavior of two male eighth grade students, the authors conclude FT reinforcement is effective in reducing disruptive behavior and increasing appropriate academic behavior. Fixed-time (FT) schedules require the instructional leader to visibly cue the student to work and then break at decreasing fixed-time intervals. Here again, while the students' behavior improved, it was the actions of the teacher that prompted the improvement.

Literature regarding student behavior highlights the important role played by teachers. While some articles assume this causation by suggesting methodologies to capitalize on it to improve classroom behavior, others seek to further investigate the issue by observing teacher behavior in challenging classrooms or studying the effectiveness of intervention strategies such as the Good Behavior Game and fixed-time interventions. Throughout them all, the teacher is the actor. It is the teacher's behavior that is pivotal in improving student behavior.

Summary

The table below offers a snapshot summary of the literature presented above. Its headings mirror those as they appeared in the review. While the far left

column identifies the source or article, the middle column refers to the author's stated purpose in composing the article while the right column gives a one to two sentence summary of the articles basic conclusions or findings.

Table 2.1

Summary of Literature Review

Source	Purpose	Findings
IDEA & NCLB		
Palley, E. (2008). Federal school law and social work practice. *School Social Work Journal, 33*(1), 16-34.	Review intended purposes and beneficiaries of IDEA and NCLB, the means used to implement them, and their implications for primary and secondary education.	The guidelines for school personnel conflict resulting in the needs of special education students not necessarily being met. Recent revisions have narrowed this conflict, but not enough. Individual protections of IDEA should be extended to all high-risk students.
Ramanathan, A. (2008). Paved with good intentions: The federal role in the oversight and enforcement of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). *Teachers College Record*, *110*(2), 278-321.	Analyze federal role in implementation of NCLB using its historic oversight and enforcement of IDEA as the pattern.	IDEA oversight and enforcement model is effective because it avoids the shenanigans associated with state politics. NCLB accountability should move in that direction allowing states to control for local demographic differences.

Inclusion

Browder, D. M., Wakeman, S. Y., Flowers, C., Rickelman, R. J., Pugalee, D., & Karvonen, M. (2007). Creating access to the general curriculum with links to grade-level content for students with significant cognitive disabilities: An explication of the concept. *The Journal of Special Education*, *41*(1), 2-16.	Propose a conceptual definition and criteria for linking instruction and assessment to grade-level academic content for purposes of federal achievement assessments.	Proposed definition and seven criteria for understanding the content and the student so access can better be created to the general curriculum.
Carter, N., Prater, M. A., Jackson, A., & Marchant, M. (2009). Educators' perceptions of collaborative planning processes for students with disabilities. *Preventing School Failure*, *54*(1), 60-70.	Investigate the nature of a collaborative planning experience for pairs of special and general education teachers.	Difficult for teachers to collaboratively plan effective accommodations and adaptations if they lack skills for collaborating and solving problems. Educating special education students is essentially a problem-solving process.
Trent, S. C. (1998). False starts and other dilemmas of a secondary general education collaborative teacher: A case study. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *31*(5), 503-513.	Case study describing the difficulties and complexities faced by general education secondary social studies teachers who agreed to collaborate with special education teachers to serve students with disabilities in general education classroom.	Barriers to collaborative teaching, such as lack of planning time, changes in organizational structure, and administrative and fiscal support that existed in the 1970s persist in the late 1990s. Research must move beyond this cosmetic analysis in order to provide a benefit to teachers and students.

Weiss, Margaret P. & Lloyd, J. W. (2002). Congruence between roles and actions of secondary special educators in co-taught and special education settings. *The Journal of Special Education*, *36*(2), 58-68.	Used qualified and grounded theory method of data analysis to identify salient and recurrent patterns in the roles and actions of special educators in general and special education classrooms.	Special educators implemented co-teaching according to personal definition of their role and internal & external influences. Special educators participated in some aspect of instruction but in providing support they did not participate in as much instruction in the general education classroom as they did in the special education classroom.
Amato-Zech, N. A., Hoff, K. E., & Doepke, K. J. (2006). Increasing on-task behavior in the classroom: Extension of self-monitoring strategies. *Psychology in the Schools*, *43*(2), 211-221.	Examine the effectiveness of a tactile self-monitoring prompt to increase on-task behaviors among three elementary-aged students in a special education classroom.	Students with learning and behavioral challenges can effectively use a tactile self-monitoring prompt for behavior change.

Teacher Attitude Toward Special Education Students

Influences

Wakeman, S. Y., Browder, D. M., Flowers, C., & Ahlgrim-Delzell, L. (2006). Principals' knowledge of fundamental and current issues in special education. *NASSP Bulletin, 90*(2), 153-174.	Determine comprehensive knowledge base of national secondary principals related to special education issues.	Principals with more knowledge are involved in more aspects of special education programs. The following practices positively correlated with knowledge: reflection, regular meetings with teachers, provision of resources for effective instructional practice, participation in program decisions, and a willingness to take risks except with regard to the law.

Eckes, S. E., & Swando, J. (2009). Special education subgroups under NCLB: Issues to consider. *Teachers College Record*, *111*(11), 2479-2504.	Examine the impact of NCLB on students with disabilities.	Schools fail to make AYP most often because of students with disability subgroup which is unfair to students and school as a whole. NCLB needs to be modified to provide greater flexibility for this subgroup.
Sharma, U., Forlin, C., Loreman, T., & Earle, C. (2006). Pre-service teachers' attitudes, concerns and sentiments about inclusive education: An international comparison of the novice pre-service teachers. *International Journal of Special Education*, *21*(2), 80-93.	Investigate the nature of concerns and attitudes held by pre-service teachers regarding inclusive education and their degree of comfort on interaction with people with disabilities.	Attitude, sentiments toward persons with disabilities and concern about inclusive education all appear tied to pre-service teachers' prior exposure to persons with disabilities.
Mulholland, R., & Blecker, N. (2008). Parents and special educators: Pre-service teachers' discussion points. *International Journal of Special Education*, *23*(1), 48-53.	Summarizes class discussion from 90 pre-service teachers over a three-year period to highlight their reflections on interviewing a parent of a special needs child and a special education teacher.	Students' immediate opportunity to debrief and share their reflections following interviews of special education parents and teachers, led to more active involvement by the students and a greater depth of understanding.
Dee, A. L. (2011). Preservice teacher application of differentiated instruction. *The Teacher Educator, 46*, 53-70.	Investigate the manifestation of differentiation for special education students in work sample lesson plan written by pre-service teachers working toward an elementary school credential.	Little actual differentiation taking place due to a lack of understanding and successful modeling.

Dunn, M. W. (2006). It was written all over him: Classroom teachers' referral criteria for special education services. *International Journal of Special Education*, *21*(2), 124-139.	Determine which criteria classroom teachers use to determine which students should be referred for special education services.	Teachers used a combination of student characteristics including inattention, lack of comprehension, inability to complete tasks in the allotted time, and poor test performance, along with inferences from what they observe, in deciding whether to refer a student for special education services.

Attitude Scales

Ernst, C. & Rogers, M. R. (2009). Development of the inclusion attitude scale for high school teachers. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, *25*, 305-322.	Development of Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers and investigation of relationship between attitude and (a) professional development, (b) years of experience with inclusion, (c) access to instructional supports, and (d) gender.	Developed scale is reliable and valid; significant correlation between positive attitude and professional development, years of experience, and access to instructional supports; male teachers more likely to have positive attitude toward inclusion
Wilczenski, F. L. (1995a). Development of a scale to measure attitudes toward inclusive education. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *55*, 291-299.	Examine scalability of the Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) to measure attitudes toward including children with various disabilities in regular classes.	ATIES is an acceptable linear measure in which scoring is not dependent on local data, and attitudes toward inclusive education can be established based on these scaling results.
Wilczenski, F. L. (1995b). *School Psychologists' Attitudes toward Inclusive Education: A Rasch Analysis*. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/ ERIC	Assess attitudes of school psychologists toward inclusive education and to demonstrate the utility of Rash analysis for scaling the ATIES into a measure of attitudes toward inclusion education among school psychologists.	Full inclusion models were not favored. Found it hardest to agree with items addressing the integration of students manifesting significant academic and behavioral problems which would require substantial accommodations.

Impact of Teacher Attitude on Student Discipline

Kennedy, B. L. (2011, March). Teaching disaffected middle school students: How classroom dynamics shape students' experiences. *Middle School Journal*, *42*(4), 32-42.	Add to knowledge of possibilities and limitations of current practices at alternative campuses for students with demonstrated behavioral issues through an in-depth observation of classrooms on such a campus.	Three types of teachers: (a) Rapport Builders, (b) Subject Matter Specialists, and (c) Blamers. Rapport builders have less discipline issues in their classrooms while Blamers have the most. Authors speculate the Blamers actually reinforce poor classroom behavior through their own behavior.
Leflot, G., van Lier, P. A. C., Onghena, P., & Colpin, H. (2010). The role of teacher behavior management in the development of disruptive behaviors: An intervention study with the good behavior game. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *38*, 869-882.	Evaluate the effectiveness of the Good Behavior Game in moderating disruptive behavior of students.	Reduced use of negative remarks by teachers resulted in an increase in student on-task behavior and a decrease in talking-out behavior.
Waller, R. D. & Higbee, T. S. (2010). The effects of fixed-time escape on inappropriate and appropriate classroom behavior. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis. 43*(1), 149-153.	Investigate effects of fixed-time reinforcement on behavior of students in classroom setting	Fixed-time reinforcement resulted in a substantial decrease in disruptive behavior and increase in engaged behavior.

Research Questions

The current body of research suggests a multitude of reasons exist for general educators to possess a negative attitude toward special education, but the scales available to date do not report the attitude themselves and fail to correlate this attitude toward special education discipline. A recent study by the Justice Center of the Council of State Governments and the Public Policy Research Institute of Texas A & M University (Fabelo, et al., 2011), found that 75 percent of students who "qualified for special education services during the study period were suspended or expelled at least once between their seventh- and twelfth-grade schools years" (p. 47). A review of the research presented in this thesis indicates a link between teacher attitude and student discipline. There are few studies that explore this potential link and this investigation proposes to fill that gap by addressing the following questions:

1. Do ninth grade teachers have a positive or negative attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities?

2. Does the attitude of ninth grade teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities vary according to the teacher's designation as either a core, elective, or special education teacher?

3. Does the attitude of ninth grade teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities relate to the total number of office discipline referrals written for ninth grade students with disabilities?

4. Does the attitude of ninth grade core, elective, or special education teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities relate to the total number of office discipline referrals they write for ninth grade students with disabilities?

Chapter Three

Study Design and Methodology

Exploring the relationship between teacher attitude and discipline referrals necessitates a two-part process. First, the attitude of teachers was determined. In this exploration, a Likert attitude scale survey developed and validated by Rogers & Carter (2009) was adopted and used. Second, the calculated attitude for a given body of teachers was compared to discipline referrals for that same group to determine if a correlation existed. Developing a direct link between individual teachers and their referrals would be preferred, but such data is unavailable. Instead, the researcher went one level up to compare a defined group of teachers with the discipline referrals that can reasonably be ascribed to them: specifically ninth grade teachers by campus. Through this two-part process, the researcher explored the following four questions:

1. Do ninth grade teachers have a positive or negative attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities?

2. Does the attitude of ninth grade teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities vary according to the teacher's designation as either a core, elective, or special education teacher?

3. Does the attitude of ninth grade teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities relate to the total number of office discipline referrals they write for ninth grade students with disabilities?

4. Does the attitude of ninth grade core, elective, or special education teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities relate to the total number of office discipline referrals they write for ninth grade students with disabilities?

Setting

According to the most recent Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) data available (2010), Target ISD is a Texas Recognized Independent School District with a total student enrollment of just over 19,000 serving a population of 118,296. It is considered an urban, though not an inner-city, district. Ethnically, the district is primarily African American, but also includes large Hispanic and White populations. Over 72 percent of the district is economically disadvantaged and approximately 20 percent of the students have spent some time outside the classroom for disciplinary reasons.
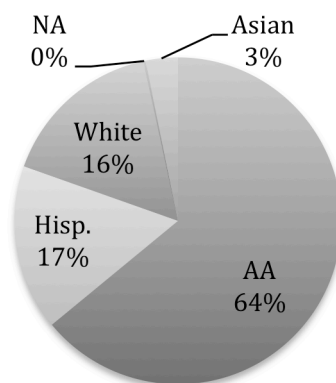
Figure 2. Target ISD student population by ethnicity

The district contains three high schools. Small High School is the smallest campus with a student population of 1,205 and a faculty of 114. It is a Texas Academically Recognized campus with 372 students in its ninth grade population comprising 30.9 percent of total enrollment. The largest campus is Large High School. Also a Texas Academically Recognized campus, it has a student population of 2,458. Large's ninth grade class is the biggest across the district at 692, but comprises only 28.2 percent of the total student population on campus. Large retains 164 teachers on staff. Sandwiched between these two is the Texas Academically Acceptable campus of Medium High School. Medium serves a student body of 1,596 with 482 (30.1 percent) being ninth graders and a total faculty of 118.
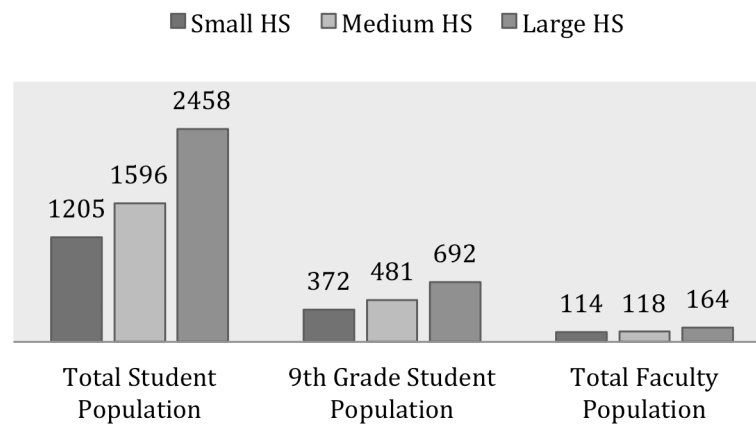
Figure 3. Campus size by populations

Campus Demographics. The smallest of the three high school campuses in Target ISD, Small High School, has a student-teacher ratio of 13.6 to 1. With an average of 11.9 years of experience, the faculty is primarily African American (56.4 percent) and White (35.7 percent). In contrast, the student population is overwhelmingly African American (89 percent). Seventy-four percent of the

student population is classified as economically disadvantaged and almost 35 percent spent time outside the classroom for disciplinary reasons. The 10.9 percent of the student population classified as special education is served by 4.7 percent of the faculty, consuming approximately 14.7 percent of the school's total funds budget or roughly $1,172.00 per student.

The largest high school in the district, Large High School, has a slightly higher student-teacher ratio of 15 to 1, but the faculty has an average of over 15 years of experience. The faculty is predominately White (77.5 percent), with only 17 percent classified as African American. Further differentiating between the two campuses, the large campus has a much more ethnically diverse student population with African Americans still the largest group at 42 percent, but with the White population at 37.6 percent and the Hispanic population at 13.4 percent. Economically Disadvantaged students make up only 40.9 percent of the total population. Thirty–five percent spent time outside the classroom for disciplinary reasons. Special education students comprise a relatively small 8.1 percent of the total student population. A little over 17 percent of the total funds budget for the school and 4.6 percent of the faculty goes to special education. This means $922.00 for each student.

The final high school, Medium High School, is the middle child in terms of student population with a slightly higher student-teacher ratio of 13.6 to 1. Teachers on this campus have an average of 11.4 years of experience, are predominantly African American (67.8 percent), and serve a primarily African American student body (81.1 percent). Similarly, 81.3 percent of the student

population is classified as economically disadvantaged with 46.4 percent spending time outside the classroom for disciplinary reasons. This campus also has a relatively large special education population of 12.5 percent, but only directs 13.1 percent of its total funds budget to special education. As a result, expenditures per student are only $879.00.

Table 3.1

Student Body Demographics by Campus

Campus	Rating	Total	AA	Hisp.	White	NA	Asian	ED	Disc.
Small	Recog.	1205	89.0%	9.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.7%	74.4%	34.9%
Medium	Accep.	1596	81.1%	15.2%	2.7%	0.0%	1.0%	81.3%	46.4%
Large	Recog.	2458	42.0%	13.4%	37.6%	30.0%	6.8%	40.9%	35.3%

Table 3.2

Faculty Demographics by Campus

Campus	Rating	Student-Teacher Ratio	AA	Hisp.	White	NA	Asian	Avg. Years Exp.
Small	Recog.	10.6	56.4%	6.2%	35.7%	0.0%	1.8%	11.9
Medium	Accep.	13.6	67.8%	2.6%	27.1%	0.0%	2.6%	11.4
Large	Recog.	15	17.0%	4.9%	77.5%	0.0%	0.6%	15.2

Table 3.3

Special Education Demographics by Campus

Campus	Rating	Classified Special Education			
		% Student	% Faculty	% Total Funds Budget	Expenditure per Student
Small	Recog.	10.9%	4.7%	14.7%	$1,172.00
Medium	Accep.	12.5%	4.4%	13.1%	$879.00
Large	Recog.	8.1%	4.6%	17.1%	$922.00

Participants

Ideally a study of teacher attitude and then the attitude's correlation to behavior would occur at the level of individual teacher. Discipline data at that level is difficult to access for several reasons. First, the state of Texas does not require that amount of detail when reporting discipline, so many districts and campuses do not track it. Second, even when it is available, access requires obtaining permission from the teacher subjects themselves prior to participation for privacy reasons. Seeking such permission might influence participants' responses to the attitude survey being utilized. This study, therefore, moved one level of detail above that by aggregating the data from a single grade.

The ninth grade was selected for a variety of reasons. First, across the United States it has the highest rate of enrollment and therefore the largest data set available (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010; Kennelly & Monrad, n.d.). Second, as the transition year into high school, students in this grade are most vulnerable to the attitude of teachers (Herlihy, 2007; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). Third, student performance, absences, and discipline during the ninth grade year have all been investigated as predictors of high school completion and performance (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). And finally, interventions designed to improve students' ninth grade experience are extensive both in concept and geography (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). As a result, more is known about the ninth grade than any other secondary level.
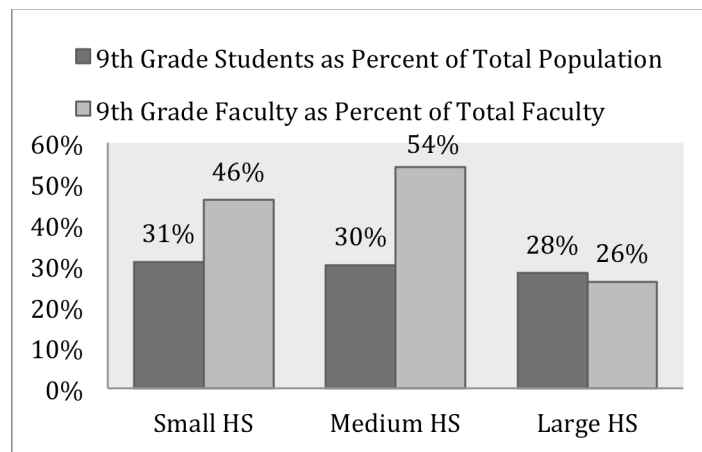
Figure 4. Ninth grade demographics by campus

At the district being studied herein, ninth graders comprise approximately 29 percent of the district's total senior high school population. It is assumed that the ninth grade student demographics at each campus are consistent with the larger student body. Ninth grade faculty size varies dramatically from campus to campus with Large HS utilizing 26 percent of its faculty, or 43 individuals, to educate ninth graders, while Medium HS employs 64 individuals or 57 percent of its total faculty. The three campuses combined yielded a sample population of 160 ninth grade faculty members. As with the ninth grade student population, it is assumed the ninth grade faculty is demographically reflective of the entire faculty for each campus. In an effort to ensure respondent anonymity and encourage participation, additional demographic information was not sought from participants.

Instrumentation

Attitude of ninth grade teachers was investigated using a survey developed by Catherine Ernst and Margaret R. Rogers in 2009 (see Appendix A for survey content). It includes twenty-seven items that participants ranked on a seven-point scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. These entries resulted in "three factors

accounting for 44.5% of the common variance" (Ernst & Rogers, 2009). Further, the "coefficient alphas for the three factors and total scale were .91, .85, .77, and .92 respectively" (Ernst & Rogers, 2009).

The Ernst and Rogers scale was developed in several parts (Ernst & Rogers, 2009). First, the authors reviewed aggregated questions from five previously developed inclusion attitude scales; 124 items total. Using grounded theory method developed by Charmaz and Henwood & Pidgeon, the following themes were identified:

1. Inclusion's Impact on Academic and Learning Opportunities,

2. Inclusion's Impact on the Curriculum,

3. Inclusion's Impact on Safety,

4. Inclusion's Impact on Social and Emotional Development of Students,

5. Inclusion's Impact on Student Behaviors,

6. Inclusion's Impact on the Teacher,

7. Teacher Preparation Time,

8. Teacher Self-Efficacy,

9. Teacher Training,

10. Teacher Methods, and

11. Teaching Philosophy (p. 311).

Two independent raters, educational professionals trained but uninformed as to the purpose of the study, were asked to perform the same task. "Interrater agreement was .80 and .91" (p. 311).

The second phase consisted of generating items "for each of the 11 categories based on Eagly and Chaiken's theory that there are three underlying components of attitude" (Ernst & Rogers, 2009, p. 311): cognitive, affective, and behavioral. "Special attention was devoted to ensuring items were not exceptionally lengthy, double barreled, or contained double negatives" (Ernst & Rogers, 2009, p. 311). Fifty-one items were advanced as a result representing all 11 categories with at least one item per category representing the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components.

During phase three, a panel of inclusion experts was tasked with reviewing the 51 items for representativeness, clarity and relevance. In selecting the panel, three criteria were used: they were a primary or secondary author of two or more publications on inclusion, they were employed as an educator who participated in inclusive practices for at least five years, and they were employed as a faculty member in a graduate program that emphasizes inclusive practices. Each of the three panel members selected met at least two of the three criteria. The 51 items were then "modified, deleted, or retained" (Ernst & Rogers, 2009, p. 311) based on the panel's feedback resulting in a 43-item survey with a 7-point Likert response scale.

Finally, to test whether "the items could be conceptualized as a tri-dimensional measure of attitudes about inclusion" (Ernst & Rogers, 2009, p. 313) a principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed on the remaining 43 items. The three factors were again:

1. Cognitive Beliefs About Inclusion,

2. Affective Responses to Inclusion, and,

3. Behavioral Responses to Inclusion.

Only items that loaded on only one factor with a factor loading greater than .40 were retained resulting in the 27 items Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers used herein (Ernst & Rogers, 2009).

Data Collection Procedure

Identification of specific faculty members that meet the parameters of the sample set and subsequent requests to participate were conducted through the district, pursuant to their guidelines and suggestions. The primary investigator began by contacting the district's Assistant Superintendent for Research, Planning and Evaluation who met with the campus principals. From there, the researcher was provided with campus contacts with which to work.

Attitude survey. Once approval was obtained from the University of Houston's Human Subject's Committee (see Appendix B for IRB Letter of Approval) and at the district and campus levels for target district, the primary investigator contacted each campus seeking a list of ninth grade faculty for their campus. Once received, the investigator waited until the final two weeks of the fall semester in an effort to approach teachers during a small lull in work.

Participants were contacted via electronic mail. The email contained the Informed Consent Notice and a hyperlink to the attitude survey housed at SurveyMonkey.com. The notice clearly stated that by accessing the survey, participants were acknowledging they had read the Informed Consent Notice and understood its contents. Clicking on the hyperlink led participants directly to the

survey, which consisted of the 27-question attitude survey preceded by two requests for demographic data. In order to ensure the anonymity of participants to the largest extent possible, only the following demographic data was collected: campus they work at and their designation as a core, special education, or elective faculty member.

The survey itself directed the teacher to rate each item in terms of the participant's knowledge and beliefs regarding inclusion of students with disabilities within general education classrooms. Within the instructions, the participants were given the following definition for inclusion: "Inclusion represents a belief that a student with disabilities should be integrated into general education classrooms regardless of whether the student can or cannot meet the traditional curricular standards." This definition was used by the survey's authors and is included in the instructions in order to maintain the survey's validity. Participants had a two-week window within which to access and complete the survey. At the beginning of week two, an identical email was sent to the same participant list. The Assistant Superintendent also sent out an email reminding faculty of the survey and requesting their participation.

Discipline referrals. Congruent with the administration of the attitude survey, the primary investigator asked each campus for data on ninth grade special education discipline referrals for the fall 2011-2012, semester. The original request was presented to each campus contact and sought information on the campus, total number of ninth grade special education referrals for that campus, and the total number of ninth grade special education referrals at each disciplinary level for that

campus; allowing investigator to complete Table 3.4. Investigator was subsequently contacted by the district PEIMS (Public Education Information Management Systems) Supervisor, who upon receipt of a second request sent directly to him, was able to provide investigator with special education discipline information disaggregated by campus and grade.

Campus	Discipline Referrals				
	Total	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 & 5
Small					
Medium					
Large					

Figure 5. Suggested format for ninth grade discipline referrals by campus

Texas classifies all disciplinary action into five possible categories according to the severity of the punishment available for the given offense (Texas Safe Schools Act*).* Level 1 offenses can result in in-school suspension or ISS and generally include less serious nuisance offenses such as being tardy to class, cursing, or being out of dress code (Fabelo, et al., 2011). Level two is for more serious offenses that might result in out of school suspension (OSS). The third level is a breaking point; the severity of the transgressions increases. Discipline remains within the local education agency, but the student is removed from the general education population to an alternative setting for an extended period of time. While level three offenses may involve local law enforcement authorities, level four and five mandate it. These are the most serious violations and the assignment of consequences is generally removed from the local district.

Data Analysis Procedures

As with data collection, analysis was a multistep process. First, the survey results for each respondent were used to generate a cognitive attitude mean, an affective attitude mean, and a behavioral attitude mean for each respondent in accordance with the scale's design. These results were then aggregated to generate a total attitude mean for each participant.

Second, the data was analyzed to determine what if any statistical significance existed between the four means (cognitive, affective, behavioral, and total) when factored by campus affiliation. Basic descriptive data shows the four means for each of the three campuses and the district as a whole. A Levene Test of Homogeneity of Variance was then run to determine if the variances of the groups being compared were similar. Based on the results an ANOVA was run to determine if there were any significant differences between the groups. Finally a Tukey HSD Post Hoc test was performed to determine which groups differed from each other where a statistical significance was manifest. This process was repeated factoring by the respondent's instructional designation.

In step three, the campus attitude data from step one was compared to the campus total ninth grade student discipline data. While the study originally envisioned using Spearman Rho to facilitate this comparison, the available data was insufficient to support this. Instead, a table was populated allowing a visual comparison of the two data groups.

Finally, a comparison could not be drawn, either statistical or visual, between the discipline data and attitude by instructional designation. The discipline data

was only available by campus and could not be disaggregated by teacher designation. Therefore, question four was abandoned for the immediate study.

Limitations

As previously stated, the ideal form of this study would be a one to one comparison of teacher attitude to their special education discipline referrals. Since the current study is one step removed from that, any link identified can only be assumptive. Further, the demographics of Target ISD may not be sufficiently representative to generalize from the study's results. Target ISD has an economically disadvantaged population of 72 percent, while Texas, as a whole is substantially lower at 58.9 percent. In Texas, 37.5 percent of schools received a recognized ranking with an additional 31.3 percent being ranked exemplary. Further, other studies have shown that exposure to some special education training and gender can have an impact on teacher attitude. These potential moderating variables are not being considered in this study.

Another limitation worth noting is the survey return rate. While 160 teachers were surveyed, only 35 surveys were completed: 15 core teachers, five special education teachers, and 15 elective teachers across all three campuses. The breakdown of survey completion by campus and by designation is displayed in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

Survey Completions by Campus and Designation

Campus	Instructional Designation			
	Core	Sped.	Elective	Total
1	4	3	4	11
2	5	1	5	11
3	6	1	6	13
Total	15	5	15	35

Conclusion

In order to identify whether a link exists between teacher attitude and discipline referrals, the present study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Do ninth grade teachers have a positive or negative attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities?

2. Does the attitude of ninth grade teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities vary according to the teacher's designation as either a core, elective, or special education teacher?

3. Does the attitude of ninth grade teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities relate to the total number of office discipline referrals they write for ninth grade students with disabilities?

4. Does the attitude of ninth grade core, elective, or special education teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities relate to the total number of office discipline referrals they write for ninth grade students with disabilities?

To do so, the investigator first gathered data from ninth grade teachers regarding their attitude toward inclusion using a Likert scale. The attitude data was then compared to discipline data to determine if a correlation exists between them.

Table 3.5 identifies the four questions being posed along with details for each such as what data will be used to answer the questions posed, how that date will be collected, and what analysis methodology will be employed.

Table 3.5

Research Design and Data Analysis Summary

Research Questions	Data Source	Collection Procedure	Data Analysis
1) Do ninth grade teachers have a positive or negative attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities?	Sample of ninth grade teachers; Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers developed by Ernst & Rogers	Survey Monkey	ANOVA
2) Does the attitude of ninth grade teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities vary according to the teacher's designation as either a core, elective, or special education teacher?	Sample of ninth grade teachers; Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers developed by Ernst & Rogers	Survey Monkey	ANOVA
3) Does the attitude of ninth grade teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities relate to the total number of office discipline referrals they write for ninth grade students with disabilities?	Discipline referrals for ninth grade special education students by campus and level	Discipline Data requested from District	Visual comparison via table. Limited data prevents statistical analysis.
4) Does the attitude of ninth grade core, elective, or special education teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities relate to the total number of office discipline referrals they write for ninth grade students with disabilities?	Discipline referrals for ninth grade special education students by campus and level	Discipline Data requested from District	Abandoned. Data limitations prevent statistical and/or visual analysis.

Note. Table format provided by H. J. Freiberg (1989-2011)

Chapter Four

Study Results

Data collection for this study involved two parts: an attitude survey and a discipline report. The results of each will be discussed in turn with a third section addressing analysis of the intersection.

Survey Results

The survey consisted of 29 total questions: two demographic and 27 engineered to determine the respondents' attitude toward inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. After electronic distribution to 160 ninth grade teachers across three high school campuses in the target district 35 completed surveys were returned via SurveyMonkey within a two-week period. The three campuses are relatively evenly represented within the sample group with 11 responses from Small High School, 11 responses from Medium High School, and 13 from Large High School. Of the 35 responding ninth grade teachers, five were special education teachers with the remaining 30 evenly split between core and elective teachers.

In the survey, the three campuses were listed alphabetically. As a result, in the survey analysis they are also listed that way as Campus 1, Campus 2, and Campus 3. Translated, Small High School is Campus 2, Medium High School is Campus 1, and Large High School is Campus 3.

Table. 4.1

Survey Responses by Question, Likert Level, and Domain

Question	Strongly Agree		Moderately Agree		Mildly Agree		Neither Agree not Disagree		Mildly Disagree		Moderately Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Q1	11	31%	8	23%	4	11%	--	--	2	6%	2	6%	11	31%
Q2	11	31%	8	23%	3	9%	2	6%	2	6%	2	6%	11	31%
Q3	9	26%	2	6%	8	23%	3	9%	2	6%	2	6%	9	26%
Q4	5	14%	3	9%	5	14%	7	20%	5	14%	5	14%	5	14%
Q5	7	20%	8	23%	6	17%	4	11%	--	--	6	17%	7	20%
Q6	6	17%	3	9%	1	3%	8	23%	6	17%	9	26%	6	17%
Q7	13	37%	7	20%	3	9%	4	11%	--	--	2	6%	13	37%
Q8	13	37%	7	20%	1	3%	2	6%	1	3%	4	11%	13	37%
Q9	11	31%	8	23%	4	11%	3	9%	1	3%	4	11%	11	31%
Q10	4	11%	4	11%	2	6%	9	26%	6	17%	7	20%	4	11%
Q11	1	3%	2	6%	3	9%	6	17%	3	9%	1	3%	1	3%
Q12	7	20%	5	14%	5	14%	4	11%	2	6%	1	3%	7	20%
Q13	9	26%	7	20%	4	11%	2	6%	2	6%	--	--	9	26%
Q14	12	34%	6	17%	4	11%	1	3%	--	--	--	--	12	34%
Q15	5	14%	4	11%	7	20%	7	20%	5	14%	3	9%	5	14%
Q16	10	29%	5	14%	5	14%	3	9%	3	9%	1	3%	10	29%
Q17	11	31%	4	11%	5	14%	6	17%	--	--	--	--	11	31%
Q18	19	54%	5	14%	5	14%	4	11%	1	3%	4	11%	19	54%
Q19	4	11%	4	11%	7	20%	10	29%	3	9%	4	11%	4	11%
Q20	14	40%	2	6%	3	9%	--	--	3	9%	--	--	14	40%
Q21	4	11%	--	--	1	3%	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	11%
Q22	8	23%	1	3%	1	3%	--	--	1	3%	--	--	8	23%
Q23	6	17%	2	6%	5	14%	--	--	--	--	--	--	6	17%
Q24	11	31%	1	3%	4	11%	--	--	--	--	--	--	11	31%
Q25	9	26%	2	6%	12	34%	--	--	2	6%	--	--	9	26%
Q26	11	31%	2	6%	6	17%	1	3%	1	3%	--	--	11	31%
Q27	5	14%	1	3%	2	6%	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	14%

The attitude survey itself is composed of 27 questions ranked on a seven-degree scale from "Strongly Agree" with a value of 1 to "Strongly Disagree" with a value of 7. Questions 1 through 12 are designed to address the cognitive domain exclusively. The following 7 questions concern the affective domain. While the remaining questions, numbers 20 through 27, refer to the behavioral domain only. All questions are worded such that a "Strongly Agree" response is the most receptive to inclusion students and vice versa. Thus a mean score for each respondent can be generated to determine both their overall attitude toward inclusion of special education students in the general education class, but also a mean for each of the three domains. A neutral score would be a mean of 4; with a

lower mean indicating a positive disposition toward inclusion and vice versa. In preparation for analysis, the survey results were used to generate a cognitive, affective, behavioral, and total mean for each respondent to act as their survey score, or attitude, toward inclusion of special education students.

Table 4.1 gives an overview of the survey responses. For each question, the number of responses at every level of the Likert scale is listed along with the percentage of the total responses received. For instance, for question 1 "Strongly Agree" received 8 responses or 22.86 percent of the total received to that question. The responses in the cognitive domain are fairly evenly weighted across all seven levels with a shift toward more positive responses as you move down the table through the affective questions to the behavioral domain questions. Each of the questions in the first set, cognitive domain, received at least one "Strongly Agree" response while none of the behavioral questions generated this answer choice. On the other end of the spectrum, the same trend is visible. The average number of "Strongly Agree" responses by question in the cognitive domain was 6.9 compared to 7.6 and 19.8 in the affective and behavioral domains. The highest number of "Strongly Agree" responses in the cognitive domain was 19 for question 11, while the highest number in the behavioral domain was 30 for question 21. From this initial inspection of the survey data, it appears teachers are more positively disposed toward the behavioral than the cognitive domain.

District Discipline Report

Target district provided a computer generated report of all written disciplinary referrals attributed to students classified as special education from the 2011-2012 fall semester disaggregated by campus and then grade level. Only data related to ninth grade students was input for analysis purposes; 260 total data
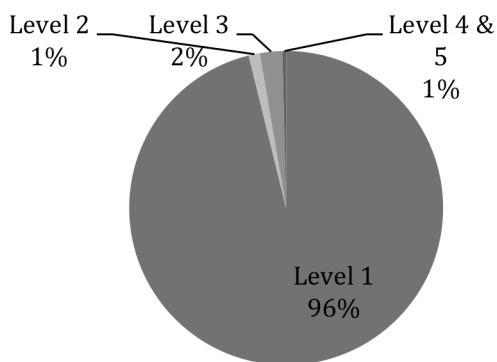
Figure 6. Target district discipline referrals by Texas
Education Agency level

points with 24 different infraction types ranging from "No Identification" to "Criminal Mischief." Target district does not code discipline infractions according to the levels defined by the Texas Education Agency (Safe School Act), but rather in a manner consistent with their reporting requirements under Public Education Information Management Systems (PEIMS).

The Public Education Information Management Systems (PEIMS) is a data collection and management system employed by the state of Texas to gather and track all data requested and received by the Texas Education Agency about public education within the state. Each local education agency is required to report this set of information annually. The set includes district information on student

demographics, academic performance, personnel, financial, and organizational information (Texas Education Agency).

To facilitate analysis of the discipline data provided by the target district, investigator used the PEIMS coding provided by them and the state guidelines to classify each of the 24 discipline infraction types by level either 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5; with one being the least severe and five the most. For a list of all 24 infractions and how they were coded, see Appendix D. The chart above illustrates how each level is represented within the total. Serious infractions rising to the level of 3, 4 or 5; requiring a student be expelled from campus or assigned to an off campus Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) facility, were rare for the reporting period.

Table 4.2

Discipline Referrals by Campus and Level for Fall 2011

	Discipline Referrals				
Campus	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 & 5	Total
1	10	1	0	0	11
2	76	0	4	1	81
3	164	2	2	0	168
District	250	3	6	1	260

The low number may be anomalous or annually increase in the spring semester, though. According to the district's PEIMS report for the previous school year (2010-2011) 83 special education students in the district received some type of off campus placement (level 3 or higher) during that school year. This far exceeds the pace reported here, 7, in the fall semester for the current school year. Therefore, discipline of special education students within the target district has dramatically

improved from the previous year, infractions increase significantly during the spring semester, or the method used for reporting is different. In any event, the disparity is worth noting for further investigation.

Analysis

  Question 1. Do ninth grade teachers have a positive or negative attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities? For the target district, the attitude mean was 2.78, demonstrating an overall positive attitude toward inclusion by

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics of the Four Survey Means By Campus and District

Campus	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Min.	Max.
Cognitive Domain								
Campus 1	11	2.42	0.88	0.27	1.82	3.01	1.00	3.58
Campus 2	11	3.64	1.63	0.49	2.54	4.73	1.58	5.92
Campus 3	13	4.02	1.02	0.28	3.40	4.64	2.50	6.00
District	35	3.39	1.36	0.23	2.93	3.86	1.00	6.00
Affective Domain								
Campus 1	11	2.70	1.14	0.34	1.94	3.47	1.00	4.71
Campus 2	11	3.08	0.94	0.28	2.45	3.71	1.71	4.43
Campus 3	13	3.47	0.88	0.24	2.94	4.01	2.43	5.43
District	35	3.11	1.01	0.17	2.76	3.45	1.00	5.43
Behavioral Domain								
Campus 1	11	1.58	0.73	0.22	1.09	2.07	1.00	3.38
Campus 2	11	1.86	0.71	0.21	1.39	2.34	1.00	2.75
Campus 3	13	2	0.69	0.19	1.58	2.42	1.25	4.00
District	35	1.83	0.71	0.12	1.58	2.07	1.00	4.00
Total Attitude Mean								
Campus 1	11	2.23	0.74	0.22	1.73	2.73	1.13	3.68
Campus 2	11	2.86	0.97	0.29	2.20	3.51	1.51	4.27
Campus 3	3	3.16	0.66	0.18	2.76	3.56	2.22	4.25
District	35	2.78	0.87	0.15	2.48	3.07	1.13	4.27

educators in the district. In the behavioral domain, the positive attitude is even more pronounced at 1.83 while the opposite is true in the cognitive (3.39) and affective (3.11) domains. All four attitudes means were on the positive side of the neutral value 4. Further inquiry revealed homogeneity of variances for the affective domain, behavioral domain, and overall attitude. An ANOVA was then performed showing a statistically significant difference for the overall attitude and the cognitive domain.

Two Robust Tests for Equality of Means, the Welch and Brown-Forsythe, were also performed, they both confirmed a statistically significant difference for overall attitude, but also for the cognitive domain. According to the Tukey HSD post hoc test the statistically significant difference for the cognitive domain was between Campus 1 and Campus 3 previously identified as Medium High School and Large High School. This was also true for overall attitude.

Table 4.4

Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Four Survey Means

Domain	Levene Statistics	df1	df2	Sig.
Cognitive	5.606	2	32	.008
Affective	.164	2	32	.849
Behavioral	.535	2	32	.591
Total Attitude Mean	2.252	2	32	.122

Table 4.5

ANOVA for Four Survey Means

Domain	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Cognitive					
Between Groups	16.235	2	8.117	5.552	0.009
Within Groups	46.784	32	1.462		
Total	63.019	34			
Affective					
Between Groups	3.557	2	1.778	1.832	0.177
Within Groups	31.07	32	0.971		
Total	34.626	34			
Behavioral					
Between Groups	1.077	2	0.539	1.069	0.355
Within Groups	16.116	32	0.504		
Total	17.194	34			
Total Attitude Mean					
Between Groups	5.282	2	2.641	4.171	0.025
Within Groups	20.259	32	0.633		
Total	25.541	34			

Table 4.6

Descriptive Statistics of the Four Survey Means by Instructional Designation

Designation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Cognitive Mean								
Core	15	3.78	1.31	0.34	3.05	4.50	1.67	6.00
Special Education	5	2.62	1.64	0.73	0.58	4.65	1.00	4.67
Elective	15	3.27	1.28	0.33	2.56	3.98	1.50	5.92
Total	35	3.39	1.36	0.23	2.93	3.86	1.00	6.00
Affective Mean								
Core	15	3.12	1.01	0.26	2.57	3.68	1.71	4.71
Special Education	5	2.26	1.01	0.45	1.01	3.51	1.00	3.43
Elective	15	3.37	0.91	0.24	2.86	3.88	1.86	5.43
Total	35	3.11	1.01	0.17	2.76	3.45	1.00	5.43
Behavioral Mean								
Core	15	1.80	0.58	0.15	1.48	2.12	1.00	2.75
Special Education	5	1.25	0.26	0.12	0.92	1.58	1.00	1.63
Elective	15	2.04	0.84	0.22	1.58	2.50	1.00	4.00
Total	35	1.82	0.71	0.12	1.58	2.07	1.00	4.00
Total Attitude Mean								
Core	15	2.90	0.84	0.22	2.43	3.37	1.51	4.27
Special Education	5	2.04	0.79	0.35	1.06	3.02	1.13	2.93
Elective	15	2.89	0.84	0.22	2.43	3.36	1.83	4.25
Total	35	2.77	0.87	0.15	2.48	3.07	1.13	4.27

Question 2. Does the attitude of ninth grade teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities vary according to the teacher's designation as either a core, elective, or special education teacher? Educator attitude toward inclusion varies only moderately by instructional designation. As previously stated, the overall attitude for the district's educators as represented in the sample was a positive mean score of 2.78. Core and elective teachers scored slightly higher than this at 2.90 and 2.89 respectively. Special education teachers were lower at 2.04 (see Table 4.6), indicating overall a more positive attitude toward inclusion. Further analysis was again undertaken. Homogeneity of variances was found for all three domains and for total attitude, but a subsequent ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences. Investigation of this question was significantly hampered by the low response from special education teachers (only 5).

Table 4.7

ANOVA for Four Survey Means by Instructional Designation

Domain	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Cognitive					
Between Groups	5.453	2	2.726	1.516	0.235
Within Groups	57.566	32	1.799		
Total	63.019	34			
Affective					
Between Groups	4.664	2	2.332	2.491	0.099
Within Groups	29.962	32	0.936		
Total	34.626	34			
Behavioral					
Between Groups	2.367	2	1.183	2.554	0.094
Within Groups	14.827	32	0.463		
Total	17.194	34			
Total Attitude Mean					
Between Groups	3.145	2	1.572	2.246	0.122
Within Groups	22.396	32	0.7		
Total	25.541	34			

Question 3. Does the attitude of ninth grade teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities relate to the total number of office discipline referrals they write for ninth grade students with disabilities? Originally, the data collected in response to this question was to be analyzed using Spearman Rho. Unfortunately, the discipline data was only available by campus. With only three campuses in the target district, no more than six data points were available leaving Spearman Rho impossible. There simply was not enough data for a statistical comparison; however, a visual comparison can be conducted.

In Table 4.8, the different campuses were ranked first according to their faculty's attitude toward inclusion with first being the most positively disposed and

Table 4.8

Comparisons Between Educator Attitude Means and Discipline by Campus

Campus	Mean	# of Discipline Infractions by Campus	Rank of Positive Attitude Toward Inclusion (1 Most Positive - 3 Least Positive)	Rank of Total Discipline Infraction by Campus (1 Lowest - 3 Highest)
Cognitive Mean				
1	2.4	11	1	1
2	3.6	81	2	2
3	4.0	168	3	3
Affective Mean				
1	2.7	11	1	1
2	3.1	81	2	2
3	3.5	168	3	3
Behavioral Mean				
1	1.6	11	1	1
2	1.9	81	2	2
3	2.0	168	3	3
Total Attitude Mean				
1	2.2	11	1	1
2	2.9	81	2	2
3	3.2	168	3	3

three the least, and then second by discipline data first being given to the campus with the least number of referrals and three to the campus with the most. The actual numbers for each were provided as well. The rankings track for the two data types being compared. Campus 1 (Medium High School) ranked first for both with the lowest, or most positive, attitude mean and the lowest number of referrals. In contrast, Campus 3 (Large High School) was third with the least positive attitude toward inclusion and the largest number of discipline referrals. Campus 2 (Small High School) fell as second place in both the attitude and discipline rankings. Therefore, from the available data it would appear a correlation exists between educator attitude toward inclusion and discipline referrals.

Question 4. Does the attitude of ninth grade core, elective, or special education teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities relate to the total number of office discipline referrals they write for ninth grade students with disabilities? Given the current data available, this question cannot be answered. The discipline information provided by the district is aggregated by campus, but the survey responses are by teacher. While a correlation between teacher attitudes by designation and discipline was difficult to establish due to limitations with the data, a significant difference was found between the teachers' attitude toward inclusion by campus. Overall, campuses with more positive attitude toward inclusion exhibited lower discipline infractions. With regard to the discipline data by teacher, investigator requested additional information from target district and was told teacher level data on discipline was not available. The referring teacher is not recorded in their discipline database and original hard copy referrals are destroyed

after a week. According to target district, the PEIMS system does not require this level of detail and so they do not expend their limited resources tracking it.

Possible Explanations. In reviewing the survey results with greater depth, additional information manifests itself. For instance, a review of the response mean by question shows 10 of the 27 questions generated strongly negative or strongly positive answers. Further, analysis of the attitude survey by campus rather than teacher designation underscores one campus is far more receptive to inclusion than the other two. While not directly addressed by the study questions, these results are no less instructive and are therefore discussed below.

Survey Question Analysis. The mean for each of the survey questions was generated using the 35 responses received. The median mean was 2.85. Ten questions exceed the standard deviation. All of the questions with a more positive mean, indicating a more negative attitude, are in the cognitive and affective domains
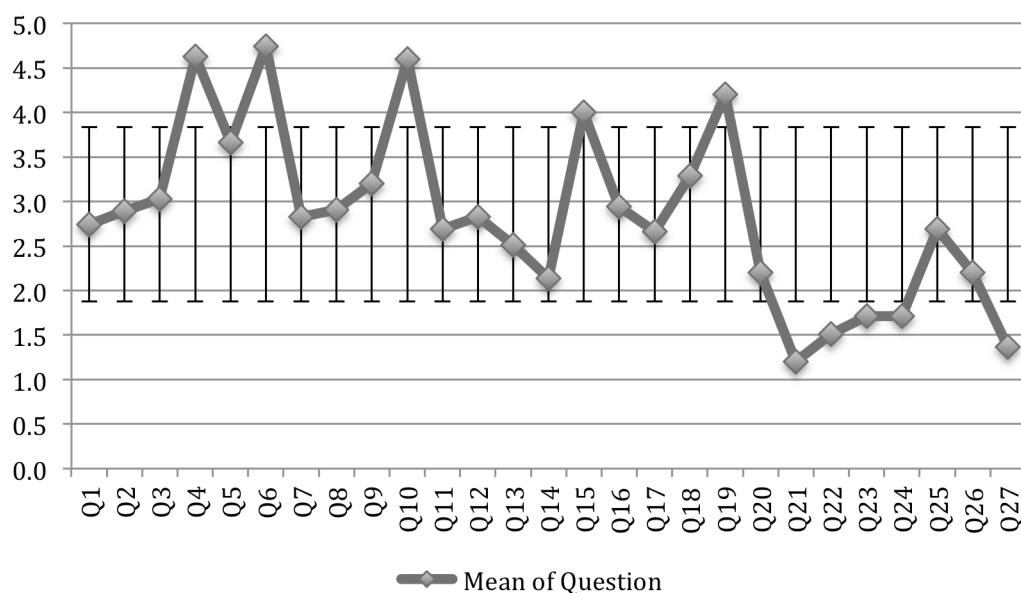

Figure 7. Mean of each question with standard deviation guides

while all with a more negative mean or positive attitude are in the behavioral domain. Figure 7 shows these questions and their degree of departure.

Questions six and eight address whether students with disabilities can and should be educated in the general education classroom. The positive deviation indicates teachers have a more negative attitude toward this proposition. Teachers also disagreed with the idea students with disabilities exhibited the same level of behavioral difficulties as their peers (question 12). Finally, teachers felt they did not have enough time to adequately prepare for inclusion of students with disabilities within the general education classroom (questions 17 and 21). At the other end of the spectrum, the five positive responses show willingness by teachers to work with students with disabilities, foster their independence, and accept responsibility for their education.

By Campus Analysis. Previously the means of each campus were ranked from most positive toward inclusion to least positive and then compared with discipline
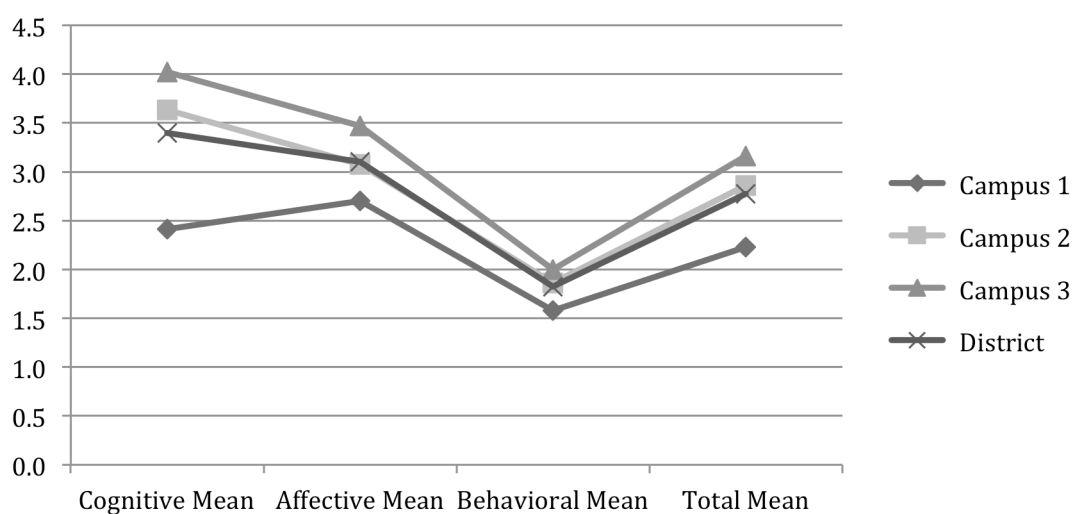

Figure 8. Four attitude means by campus and district

information from each campus. An independent examination of the campus means is also illustrative.

Campus 2 tracks district means most closely with Campus 3 consistently displaying a value greater than the district mean while Campus 1 was regularly below. Moderators such as training and faculty demographics may explain the campus disbursement. The differential between the campuses was greatest for the cognitive mean and most clustered at the behavioral mean. Combined with the initial observation that teachers are more positively disposed toward the behavioral than the cognitive domain, investigation of this differential should be pursued.

Conclusion

Thirty-five responses were returned to the study's survey. While evenly distributed between the three campuses, special education teachers were under represented in the sampling with only five surveys returned as opposed to fifteen for the other two educator designations. The mean attitude score on the survey of 4 represented a neutral attitude toward inclusion of special education students within the general education classroom. Overall teachers showed a favorable attitude with a lower mean of 2.78. Special education teachers scored lowest (most positive) with a 2.04, core and elective teachers scored 2.90 and 2.89 respectively. However, there was no statistical difference between these groups and the low level of return from special educators means a sampling error is likely. The nature of the available data made a statistical comparison between attitude and discipline referrals by campus impossible with too few data points available. A visual review does show the possibility of a correlation existing. The campus with the most positive attitude

toward inclusion also had the fewest discipline referrals while the campus with the

most negative attitude had the most discipline referrals.

Conclusions

According to a 2009 report from the National Center for Education Statistics, the percentage of the school age population classified as special education has grown approximately 5 percent since the 1970s (NCES). Treatment of this student group received attention as part of the civil rights wave that swept United States' education system in the 1960s (Landorf & Nevin, 2007; Waitoller, Artilles, & Cheney, 2010; Schraven & Jolly, 2010). As a result, special needs students gained access to the general education curriculum and then eventually to the general education classroom (Landorf & Nevin, 2007; Schraven & Jolly, 2010; Handler, 2007; Ramanathan, 2008). Further, researchers noted special education students were disproportionately represented in disciplinary actions. Unfortunately, despite the strides made toward equal treatment, this last fact remains true today (Fabelo, et al., 2011) and continues to have an adverse impact on the academic and post-graduation success of this population (Freiberg & Reyes, 2008; Skiba, 2010; Palley, 2008; Sharma et al., 2006).

Purpose

This study sought to identify potential causes for this disparate discipline treatment of special education students by first identifying the attitude, positive or negative, of general education teachers toward inclusion of special education students and then exploring a possible relationship between the identified attitude and disciplinary referrals for this sub population. Previous studies noted the

importance of teacher attitude in both the behavioral and academic success of their students (Akyuz & Berberoglu, 2010; Sharma at al., 2006; Beaty-O'Ferrall et al., 2010). Unlike the majority of students, there are many reasons why a general education teacher might be less than favorable disposed toward special education students in their classroom. First, teachers recognize a need for additional training in order to best serve this sub population (Laprairie et al., 2010; Mulholland & Blecker, 2008). Second, though one all-encompassing label is applied to this group of students, there is a tremendous amount of variety within the faction both in terms of type and degree of severity (Handler, 2007; Eckes & Swando, 2009). Third, teachers might see special education students as burdensome given the additional work required to best educate them and associated paperwork (Carter et al., 2009; Dee, 2011; Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; Yell & Rozalski, 2008; Sharma et al., 2006; Wilczenski, 1995b). Fourth, a general skepticism exists with some educators regarding the amount of control special education students have when attempting to overcome their disability (Carter et al., 2009). And fifth, a recent study found that schools are most likely to miss their average yearly progress goals due to the performance of their special education population on federally mandated annual assessments (Eckes & Swando, 2009; Ramanathan, 2008). For all these reasons, it seemed probable teachers might have a negative attitude toward students with disabilities which resulted in increased discipline referrals. Therefore, four questions were posed in this study: what is the attitude of teachers toward special education students, is this attitude dependent on the teachers staffing designation,

is there a correlation between attitude and discipline, and finally, does discipline correlate differently depending on the instructional label.

Results Summary

Teachers generally have a positive attitude toward inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. When the cognitive, affective, behavioral, and total attitude means were analyzed by campus using an ANOVA a statistical significance was identified for the total attitude mean. When disaggregated by instructional designation, no statistical significance was manifest between the attitude means of the three educator types: core, special education, or elective. It is difficult to draw any conclusions from this latter finding given the low response rate of special education teachers. Therefore, it would be a mistake to assume this study fails to confirm previous findings regarding the benefits of additional training and access to instructional support with regard to teacher attitude toward inclusion. The overall positive attitude does refute the literature's prevailing assumption that general education teachers are, or at least are likely to be, negatively disposed toward inclusion of special education students within their classroom.

A statistical correlation between attitude and discipline could not be determined because of the data's nature. Disciplinary data is stored at the campus rather than teacher level. As a result, with three participating campuses, insufficient data existed for such a statistical analysis. Instead, the campuses were ranked from positive attitude to negative and from least number of discipline referrals to most. For both categories the campuses ranked in the same order indicating a potential

correlation may exist between the two. Given the malleable nature of educator attitude toward inclusion, such a finding would highlight a potential intervention method that could have a profound classroom impact with regard to the discipline of special education students.

Additional Research

Several paths of research should be pursued based on the results of this study. First, a follow-up study should be conducted posing the same research questions to a greater number of campuses. Concerted efforts should be made to increase the response rate of invited participants either by gaining greater buy-in from campus principals or utilize a reward mechanism for involvement. The number of campuses should exceed sixteen so a statistical correlation between campus attitude and discipline is feasible. In this way, the overall results of the instant study regarding attitude can be confirmed using a greater sample size that hopefully would include a larger return from special education teachers thus also enabling a statistically significant analysis of attitude by instructional designation. In addition, the anonymity offered by a larger study would enable the inclusion of additional demographic questions in the survey so previously identified moderators could be controlled for.

Second, the possible explanations introduced in chapter 4 should be pursued. Specifically, research should be conducted to identify why a higher degree of variance existed for the cognitive domain as opposed to the affective and especially the behavioral. The inclusion of additional demographic questions in the survey as

suggested in the previous paragraph may offer revealing information with regard to this potential area of investigation. Further, the differential between teachers' expressed willingness to work with special education students and their concerns regarding implementation of inclusion should be explored. Since the study is self-reporting, the professed willingness may be more self-serving than actual. In contrast, it could indicate an opportunity for effective intervention by designing training that equips teachers to meat the concerns identified.

Recommendations

In the age of seemingly endless standardized testing coupled with increased classroom demands for differentiated instruction across not only cognitive abilities, but socioeconomic and ethnic characteristics, teacher and district resources are stretched thin. Though a growing portion of the population (NCES, 2009) and many times the squeaky wheel (Carter et al., 2009; Dee, 2011; Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; Yell & Rozalski, 2008; Sharma et al., 2006; Wilczenski, 1995b), special education is still a relatively low priority for many districts and often relegated to exclusively the purview of the department bearing their name. This will need to change with local education agencies at least taking a greater responsibility for the performance of special education students, but states and federal government as well.

Further, recent reform efforts in education have focused on promoting student achievement by rewarding teachers for their student's academic success (Azordegan, Byrnett, Campbell, Greenman, & Coulter, 2005; Florida Department of Education, 2006). A large urban district recently introduced its ASPIRE program which grants monetary awards to teachers as a way to "recognize those whose hard

work resulted in students making more progress in one year than their peers elsewhere" (Houston Independent School District, 2012). In announcing the 2012 awards the superintendent of schools noted the district's improved classroom success describing an increased number of students passing state assessments, an increased number of students passing the state assessment at the commended level, a lower drop out rate per the state's reporting system, and an increased graduation rate. These are the criteria upon which the state of Texas assesses the district's performance annually. Nowhere does the superintendent mention lower rates of disciplinary action; nor is it considered in granting ASPIRE awards to educators within the district. The state does not consider it for accountability purposes and so the district does not. In fact, no reforms regarding teacher compensation include disciplinary information (Azordegan et al., 2005; Florida Department of Education, 2006). This too must change. Discipline must be given some weight when evaluating the performance of districts so such accountability will trickle down to teachers in the classroom. Even if not used for evaluation purposes, this data should be accumulated for the purposes of professional development.

At the district level, administrators should utilize the experts they already have within their employ to conduct training sessions for their faculty. Campus and district special education personnel can be charged with creating a curriculum designed to educate core and elective teachers on special education students. Such a curriculum must be preceded by a diagnostic evaluation of where the audience most feels they need assistance. Since the basic premise regarding the benefits of training revolves around teacher attitude, it is critical educators see the new

training as beneficial. The training itself could be a portion of in-service time at the beginning of the school year, shorter seminars spaced throughout the school year, lunch and learns available on a regular basis, or some combination thereof. The important aspect is the dissemination of information necessary to increase the general teacher populations' knowledge base with regard to this sub population.

What works with regard to special education training for core and elective teachers is an under addressed area within educational research and a perfect opportunity for state education agencies to provide local education agencies with assistance. While some districts are large enough to design their own curriculum, many are not. State agencies have the resources, and sometimes the expertise, smaller districts lack. Using best practices and diagnostic information from around the state, these agencies can design a sampling of trainings for districts to utilize and evaluate. By doing the bulk of the work for districts, state education agencies not only have an opportunity to provide districts with a quality product, but to facilitate necessary training that might otherwise be beyond a district's ability. In this, the state has an opportunity to serve a critical function.

While federal legislation encourages state and local education agencies to train teachers in this subject area (Institution of Education Sciences, 2010), it could do more. As previously discussed, schools are most likely to fail their federal average yearly progress (AYP) requirements because of their special education population. The federal government, through legislation, regulation, or executive order, could put more meat behind this training requirement by giving districts and campuses training credits that could be applied against AYP deficiencies in this

category. Rather than receiving waiver for promises of better efforts/performance in future years, districts would be rewarded for what they are already doing. By 2014, the federal NCLB Act requires 100% of special education students pass their state's competency assessment. While a laudable goal, current trends make success unlikely. By providing credits, the federal government brings this goal back to earth while still encouraging educators to reach for the moon.

Limitations

Several limitations should be discussed. First, while 35 surveys were returned this is still a relatively small sample population. A larger sample size might generate different results. This is especially true with regard to any attitude results developed according to instructional designation. With only five surveys returned for special education teachers, sample size is an impediment to any generalization. Second, the sample size was too small to meaningfully answer study questions regarding a correlation between teacher attitude toward inclusion of special education students and disciplinary actions toward that subpopulation. Third, participation was voluntary. It may be those negatively disposed toward special education students refused to participate because of their pre-existing attitude in which case the mean attitude was skewed in the positive direction. Fourth, the survey was self-reporting and so some responses may be self-serving. This would also bias the attitude results in a positive direction. Fifth, the target district's demographics with a high concentration of economically disadvantaged and African American students, coupled with its above average academic assessment

performance, may limit generalization. Finally, known moderators such as training and gender were not addressed in the study.

Conclusions

Teachers from the sample of this study generally have a positive attitude toward inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. Further, there is reason to believe this attitude does impact the discipline received by those students as evidenced in the directional relationship between campus attitude and number of disciplinary referrals. The education community can use this information as a tool in providing special education students with the free and appropriate public education afforded them under IDEA. Policy changes at the local and state level are necessary to focus attention on development of best practices for special education and to incorporate student discipline referrals in evaluating the success of students, their teachers, and districts. State education agencies have the resources and mandate to seize the lead in developing such curriculum for local education agencies to implement. Doing so moves educators beyond the letter of the law, to fulfilling the intent originally envisioned by the civil rights litigants on which current special education law is built and meets the needs of this ever growing population within the nation's schools.

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Appendix A

Appendix A
Inclusion Attitude Survey for High School Teachers

Directions: Rate the items in terms of your knowledge and ideas about the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. For the purposes of this survey, inclusion represents a belief that a student with disabilities should be integrated into general education classrooms regardless of whether the student can or cannot meet the traditional curricular standards.

Demographic Questions	Responses						
D1. To what campus are you assigned? If you work on more than one, please select the campus where you spend a majority of your time.	Medium High School Small High School Large High School						
D2. What is your instructional designation? If you serve more than one function, please select the designation where you spend a majority of your time.	Core Special Education Elective						
Questions	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Mildly Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I believe teaching students with disabilities in a general education classroom will encourage their academic growth.							
2. Inclusion within the general education classroom will have a positive impact on the social and emotional development of students with disabilities.							

3. I am receptive to including all students with disabilities into the general education classroom.							
4. All students with disabilities can be educated in the general education classroom.							
5. I am receptive to including students with disabilities because their presence increases all students' learning opportunities.							
6. All students with disabilities should be included in the general education classroom.							
7. Including students with disabilities in the classroom helps foster an understanding of differences.							
8. I have high expectations that all students, including students with disabilities, can learn and achieve in the general education classroom.							
9. Including students with disabilities in the general education classroom facilitates advancements in teaching methods that benefit all students.							

10. Students with disabilities exhibit the same level of behavioral difficulties as their peers within the general education classroom.							
11. I will give the same amount of academic attention to all students when including students with disabilities in the general education classroom.							
12. I believe that I can be effective in teaching all students in the general education classroom.							
13. As a result of my training, I feel comfortable teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom.							
14. I feel emotionally prepared to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom.							
15. I have adequate preparation time in my schedule to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom.							
16. I am comfortable with the level of safety in the general education classroom when students with disabilities are included.							

17. I feel confident with my ability to teach students with disabilities effectively in the general education classroom.						
18. I received adequate training to teach students with disabilities in the general education classroom.						
19. I am satisfied with the amount of preparation time I have for including students with disabilities in the general education classroom.						
20. I am open to changing my teaching methods to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.						
21. I will work to ensure the safety of all students when including students with disabilities in the general education classroom.						
22. I will foster the social/emotional independence of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.						
23. I accept responsibility for teaching students with a variety of learning difficulties in the general education classroom.						

24. I help students with disabilities employ appropriate behaviors in the general education classroom.							
25. I will change the amount of time I spend on preparation in order to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom.							
26. I effectively adapt materials to the core curriculum in order to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom.							
27. I am pleased when classmates social accept students with disabilities.							

Appendix B

Appendix B
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project: Attitude Of Ninth Grade Teachers Toward Inclusion Of Special Education Students And It's Relationship To Classroom Discipline Referrals

To Whom It May Concern:

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Sarah Flournoy from the College of Education, Curriculum and Instruction Department at the University of Houston. The project is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Jerome Freiberg of the same college and department.

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any question.

This study seeks to identify the attitude, whether positive or negative, of ninth grade teachers toward inclusion of students with special needs and how that attitude impacts office discipline referrals. The survey will be available via the World Wide Web for two weeks with results then correlated to data on the referral of ninth grade special education students for administrative discipline. The entire study should be completed not later than May 2012.

A total of 118 subjects at 3 locations will be asked to participate in this project. You will be one of approximately 40 subjects asked to participate on your campus.

As a participant you will be asked to rate 27 items in terms of your knowledge and ideas about the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. For the purposes of this survey, inclusion represents a belief that a student with disabilities should be integrated into general education classrooms regardless of whether the student can or cannot meet the traditional curricular standards. The entire survey should take less than twenty minutes to complete. Further, you will not be asked to complete any subsequent activities.

Your participation in this project is anonymous. Please do not write your name on any of the research materials to be returned to the principal investigator.

The software being used to collect your survey responses also records the IP address of the computer being used to access the survey. As such, there is a slight risk your identity could be discovered and connected to your survey responses.

If a link can be established between attitude and student discipline, additional training could be used to ease both the teacher and student experience with inclusion and prevent special education students from suffering the long-term impacts of advertise discipline such as an increased likelihood of dropping out and lower income potential.

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

The results of this study may be published in professional and/or scientific journals. It may also be used for educational purposes or for professional presentations. However, no individual subject will be identified.

If you have any questions, you may contact Sarah Flournoy at 713-240-6602. You may also contact Dr. Jerome Freiberg, faculty sponsor, at 713-743-4953.

ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (713-743-9204).

By proceeding with the survey, you acknowledge you have read the content of this Consent to Participate in Research and understand its content.

Very truly yours,

Sarah S. Flournoy
Principal Investigator

Appendix C

Appendix C
IRB Letter of Approval

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

November 22, 2011

Ms. Sarah Flournoy
c/o Dr. H. Jerome Freiberg
Curriculum and Instruction

Dear Ms. Sarah Flournoy,

The University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1) reviewed your research proposal entitled "Attitude of Ninth Grade Teachers Toward Inclusion of Special Education Students and It's Relationship to Classroom Discipline Referrals" on October 21, 2011, according to institutional guidelines.

At that time, your project was granted approval contingent upon your agreement to modify your proposal protocol as stipulated by the Committee. The changes you have made adequately respond to those contingencies made by the Committee, and your project has been approved. However reapplication will be required:

     1. Annually
     2. Prior to any change in the approved protocol
     3. Upon development of the unexpected problems or unusual complications

Thus, if you will be still collecting data under this project on **October 1, 2012** you must reapply to this Committee for approval before this date if you wish to prevent an interruption of your data collection procedures.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Scott B. Stevenson, Chair
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (1)

PLEASE NOTE: (1) All subjects must receive a copy of the informed consent document. If you are using a consent document that requires subject signatures, remember that signed copies must be retained for a minimum of 3 years, or 5 years for externally supported projects. Signed consents from student projects will be retained by the faculty sponsor. Faculty is responsible for retaining signed consents for their own projects; however, if the faculty leaves the university, access must be possible for UH in the event of an agency audit. (2) Research investigators will promptly report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects and others.

Protocol Number: 12083-01   Full Review: <u>X</u>   Expedited Review ___

316 E. Cullen Building   Houston, TX 77204-2015   (713) 743-9204   Fax: (713) 743-9577
COMMITTEES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

Appendix D

Appendix D
Special Education Students'
Disciplinary Infraction by Level

Offense	Nos. of Incident	Level
Bullying	1	2
Bus Violation	4	1
Campus Disruption	6	1
Classroom Disruption	36	1
Criminal Mischief-SEC 37.007F	1	5
Dress Code	15	1
Excessive Tardies	17	1
Fighting/Mutual Combat	4	3
Incomplete SAC Assignments	1	1
Insubordination	54	1
Left Class Without Permission	6	1
No Identification	12	1
One Sided Hitting	2	2
Pos-cell PH, Pager, CD/MP3 Player	1	1
Skipping Class	8	1
Skipping Detention	38	1
Suspicn Pos/Sold/Use Marijuana	1	3
Tardy	33	1
Truancy - At Least 10 Unex Abs	1	1
Truancy - At Least 3 Unex Abs	2	1
Truancy-Parent Contributing	1	1
Unauthorized Area	4	1
Use Vulgar Language/Gestures	11	1
Viol Dist Stu Code of Conduct	1	3
TOTAL	260	