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Georgia's Special Education Directors' Roles in the Implementation of Inclusion

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GEORGIA'S SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS' ROLES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION

by

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(Under the Direction of Charles A. Reavis)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the roles of Georgia's special education directors in the implementation of inclusion. The researcher surveyed directors' role involvement with inclusion implementation at the district and school levels across eight major categories. Demographic data were collected on the previous work experiences, number of students with disabilities in the school system, and the percentage of students with disabilities served in the general classroom. The researcher used a focus group to investigate the roles of Georgia's directors. Sixty-four percent of Georgia's directors completed the survey, and three directors participated in the focus group.

Georgia's directors reported high levels of district level role involvement. Directors also reported some to high levels of school level involvement across all categories surveyed. Directors in the focus group spoke of their roles with inclusion implementation from a school level perspective.

The researcher also examined the relationships between the directors' previous work experiences and their roles during inclusion implementation. Directors without previous special education teaching experience reported the lowest levels of involvement with the collaboration while directors with previous general education teaching experience reported higher levels of school level vision and provision of professional

learning to regular education teachers. Other previous administrative experience was not significant; however, directors in the focus group spoke of the importance of their previous administrative experiences.

The researcher also analyzed the relationship between the number of students with disabilities (SWD) in the director's district and the percentage served in the general classroom. While there was no determinable relationship between the role of Georgia's directors and the number of SWD served in the general classroom, there was a relationship between the number of SWD in the school system and the roles of the directors, particularly with school level inclusion implementation.

Implications include a need for professional learning in the area of program evaluation. Additionally, principals, general and special education teachers could benefit by developing a better understanding of the director's role with inclusion implementation. Further investigation is needed into the roles of special education directors, particularly in role interaction with principals.

INDEX WORDS: Special education, Director, Roles, Inclusion, Implementation, District, School, Georgia, Dissertation

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Larry and Lavonne Newton, whose love, guidance, patience and support served as a solid foundation as I have pursued my long educational journey over the last thirty-four years of my life. I have been blessed that God has let me be a part of such a great family.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my late paternal grandparents, Pete and Fannie Newton. Their financial and moral support made my undergraduate studies possible in countless ways. Furthermore, I dedicate this dissertation to my late, great aunt, Sara F. Martin. Aunt Sara, a retired school teacher, instilled in me a love for education that words cannot describe. Her moral support also served as a beacon along my high school and undergraduate education career.

I especially dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Tonya. She took a chance fifteen years ago and married a life long learner whose educational journey never seems to end. Her love, support, understanding, and patience have served as the cornerstone of my success.

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Foremost, I thank God for giving me the opportunity and the ability to serve Him by working in the field of education, a profession that is my “calling,” while I walk on this Earth.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Prior to *The Individuals with Disabilities Act* (IDEA) 1997, mainstreaming was the word of choice that referred to the limited time in the school day when students with disabilities attended regular education classes with their peers, often without any additional support (Bateman, 2001). Since the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997, Congress and the Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) have placed a greater emphasis on the inclusion of all students in the general curriculum (Erchul, Osborne, & Schulte, 1998). Inclusion has also gained momentum as Congress reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), commonly referred to as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) in 2001. The provisions of NCLB require that all students, including students with disabilities, attain grade level skills in reading and mathematics by the 2014 school year (Yell, Katsiyannas, & Shiner, 2006). Faced with the new achievement standards created by NCLB, along with the requirements for schools to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP), Georgia's State Department of Education (DOE) leaders have encouraged an increase in the participation of students with disabilities in the regular classroom in an effort to better prepare them for the new academic accountability (O'Hara, 2005).

Background of the Study

In an attempt to meet the requirements of IDEA and NCLB, Georgia's school administrators have begun to utilize inclusion delivery models in order to provide additional academic support to students with disabilities in the general classroom setting. Inclusion delivery models support instruction for students with disabilities in the regular

classroom through collaboration between general and special education teachers (Daane, Beirne-Smith, & Latham, 2001). According to statistics from the Georgia DOE, nearly 50% of students with disabilities in Georgia, as compared to 52% nationally, are educated for a majority of their instructional day in the general education setting, often in inclusion classrooms (O'Hara, 2005). As the statistics indicate, roughly 50% of Georgia's students with disabilities still receive a majority of their instruction in separate, special education settings. Therefore, inclusion implementation will continue to be an ongoing process in most of Georgia's school districts as efforts are made to increase the percentages of students served in the general classroom.

Factors Influencing Inclusion Implementation

Researchers have found that inclusion models allow students with disabilities direct access to the instructional content of the regular classroom (Yell et al., 2006). Researchers have also found that inclusion models alone do not lead to academic success for students with disabilities, and there has often been debate concerning the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of inclusion (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxen, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Nevertheless, researchers have consistently found three main factors influencing inclusion practices in the public school setting. These three factors have included (1) the preparation, attitudes, and roles of both regular and special education teachers; (2) the use of effective instructional practices in the inclusive setting; and, most significantly, (3) the need for supportive visionary school administrators, namely principals, who understand, embrace and supervise inclusion programs (Burnstein et al., 2004; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999; Goor & Schwenn, 1997; Praisner, 2003; Villa & Thousand, 2003). While the research recognizes the

importance of the building principal, there is limited empirical research regarding the role of the special education director in the implementation of inclusion.

The Special Education Director's Role

In the State of Georgia, each county or school district is required to employ a special education director to supervise special education programming within the district (Georgia Department of Education, 2000). Although there is no formal job description for the director's position provided by the State DOE, according to information on the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) website, the largest professional organization for special education professionals, special education directors are expected to collaborate with all principals and all instructional staff to ensure services are being provided to students with disabilities according to federal law (http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavingationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/CareerCenter/JobProfiles/).

One of the first references to the roles of the special education director was in the mid 1970s after the passage of P.L. 94-142, *The Education for All Handicapped Act*. Jones and Wilkerson (1975) described special education directors' preparation programs. In the 1970s, the role of the special education director was viewed separately from the role of the general administrator; and there were calls for the leadership preparation of special education directors to mirror or parallel that of their general education counterparts. The literature is void of specific descriptions of the special education director's role until 2001.

The role of the special education director is sometimes perceived to conflict with the role of the principal. Doyle (2001) investigated principals' perceptions of inclusion

and found that principals reported that they have no control over mandates from central office special education directors. The principals also reported that they were unsupported by the central office special education administrators during the implementation of inclusion. Principals also cited the need for greater collaboration, preparation, and communication with the central administrator before inclusion initiatives were implemented. It can be surmised that the role interaction between principals and special education directors was limited.

More recently, Wigle and Wilcox (2002) conducted a study to determine the "competencies of special education directors on a set of 35 skills identified by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) as important for professionals working with special education" in comparison to general education administrators and special education teachers (p. 276). The 35 CEC skills focus on special education competencies that are knowledge and experience based. While Wigle and Wilcox highlighted the lack of formal oversight and professional learning from the state level, particularly with the implementation of inclusion initiatives, their research revealed that special education directors reported higher levels of competencies with the 35 CEC skills (21 of 24 skills as compared to their general education peers and special education teachers in the study). These researchers also reported that 55% of the special education directors had eleven or more years of experience in the field. Furthermore, the research findings revealed that special education directors were better prepared in the areas of assessment, program development, collaboration, communication, advocacy, technology, and behavior management than general education administrators. The researchers highlighted the importance of both the experience and the knowledge of the special education director,

and they recommended that educational leadership programs better prepare general education administrators in these CEC skills.

Thousand, Villa, and Nevin (2006), experts in the area of inclusion, have reviewed the literature and cited numerous studies that support the administrative role in the implementation of inclusion. Thousand et al. encouraged the special education administrator to take a key role in promoting the five variables they identified as important components of co-teaching, inclusion models. Those variables are: vision; skills; incentives; resources; and action planning. In an effort to obtain further information regarding specific empirical studies directly related to the roles of special education directors and inclusion implementation, the researcher of this study contacted Dr. Jacqueline Thousand via email. Dr. Thousand indicated in her email reply that the research in the area of inclusion and administrative roles was not specific "…to special education directors…but we of course 'know' that the vision is greatly influenced by special education directors…" (J. S. Thousand, personal communication, June 26, 2006).

Although the research is limited regarding the role of the special education director during the implementation of the inclusion model, the Georgia DOE has placed greater accountability on the position (O'Hara, 2005). In 2005, the Division for Exceptional Students at the Georgia DOE adopted sixteen performance indicators which were crafted by the State Advisory Committee, a group formed by the Division of Exceptional Children. The adoption of these performance indicators was a requirement of the accountability mandates set forth in IDEA 2004 and NCLB. The Georgia DOE has set forth expectations, at regional conferences, that the special education director play a greater role in promoting and increasing inclusive special education initiatives in school

districts in an effort to increase the academic achievement of students with disabilities (O'Hara, 2005) (see Appendix A). Performance indicator 9 in Appendix A specifically mandates the "increase of the percentage of students with disabilities who receive their instruction in the general education setting with supports and accommodations." While this indicator could be accomplished by mainstreaming disabled children into general education setting without additional special education support, IDEA 1997 clearly states that students with disabilities must be afforded instructional supports in the general education setting as part of a continuum of educational services offered by the school district. The instructional support is much better achieved through the use of inclusion practices that consist of placing special education teachers and other support staff in the general classroom during regular instruction to support the needs of students with disabilities (Lipsky, 2003).

In Georgia, special education directors are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all students with disabilities in school districts are offered a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and are provided the necessary educational supports and services needed to make reasonable progress in school. Special education directors are also responsible for ensuring the school district's adherence to all federal and state guidelines regarding the education of students with disabilities (O'Hara, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

The education of students with disabilities has received widespread attention over the last twenty years. From the advent of P.L. 94-142, the *Education for all Handicapped Act* in 1975, to the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997, and with the substantial educational reforms created since NCLB, Congress has enacted laws affording greater opportunities

for the inclusion of disabled students. As a result of these recent federal mandates, the Georgia DOE recently mandated an increase in the participation of students with disabilities in the general classroom setting. One way to accomplish this goal is for special education directors to increase the level of inclusion implementation in Georgia's schools. The researcher's review of the literature, however, has exposed a gap in the literature related to the special education director's actual role in the implementation of inclusion programs.

Much of the available research in the area of the inclusion implementation and supervision focuses on the building administrator's perception or role (Praisner, 2003; Villa & Thousand, 2003) or suggested conflicts between the special education director and the principal's role (Doyle, 2001). Wigle and Wilcox (2002) discovered that special education directors reported higher levels of both the knowledge and experiences of the 35 CEC skills than their general education counterparts. This researcher examined the roles of Georgia's special education directors in the implementation of inclusion.

Research Questions

This researcher examined the roles of Georgia's special education directors in the implementation of inclusion programs.

The following questions related to Georgia's special education directors' roles with inclusion implementation guided the study:

1. What is Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at the school district level?
2. What is Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at the school building level?

3. Is there a difference in the level of role involvement based on educationally related work experiences?
4. Is there a difference in the level of role involvement based on system demographics?

Significance of the Study

Finding effective ways of educating students with disabilities is a timely topic in public education. In light of the recent accountability mandates resulting from IDEA and NCLB, educational leaders are striving to close the achievement gap for their disabled students. Inclusion is one viable option educational leaders are now utilizing in an attempt to teach students with disabilities in the general classroom in an effort to increase their achievement. However, if special education directors are expected to implement inclusion models, it might prove helpful for them to reflect on and refine their roles in the process since inclusion implementation is an ongoing process.

While researchers have thoroughly investigated the roles of the building principal in the implementation of inclusion, the present study served to fill the gap in the educational literature regarding the roles of the special education director. Seeking the answers to the questions posed in the present study will also assist principals in understanding the role of special education directors, as both groups work to implement inclusion practices in schools. Georgia's school superintendents may find the results of this research helpful with the special education director's performance evaluation since this study should reveal a clearer picture of the director's role. Also, universities may find the results of this study helpful as leadership programs are restructured to meet the needs of future administrators leading inclusion implementation in schools.

While the Georgia State DOE has placed greater accountability on the special education director for the inclusion of students with disabilities as a result of performance indicator 9, state officials have not clearly defined the expectations for the role of the special education director in the inclusion implementation process. Therefore, new job descriptions for Georgia's schools regarding the special education director's role during the implementation of inclusion practices could be developed as a result of this study. Furthermore, professional organizations, such as the Georgia Council for Administrators of Special Education (G-CASE), may use the findings from this study to support the professional learning of special education directors. The G-CASE organization formed a partnership with the State DOE and provides the professional development for new and veteran special education directors by facilitating workshops and a new directors' academy. The researcher has served on the G-CASE professional learning committee for Georgia's special education directors. It was also the desire of the researcher that the findings of this study aid in the development of professional learning opportunities for special education directors in the implementation of inclusion.

The researcher's findings concerning the roles of Georgia's special education directors may improve the practices of regular and special education classroom teachers as all of Georgia's educators continue to explore ways to close the achievement gap for students with disabilities. While the educational literature clearly outlined the roles of the regular and special education teachers and principals with the implementation of inclusion, the literature was limited regarding the role of the special education director. Both special and regular education teachers and principals will hopefully gain a clearer

understanding of the special education director's role in the inclusion implementation process as a result of this study.

Delimitations

1. While this researcher attempted to gain a better understanding of the special education director's role in the implementation of inclusion, the researcher did not solicit any direct participation from principals, teachers, or other parties regarding the role of the special education director.
2. The researcher could not control bias for or against the inclusion model of the special education directors participating in the study.

Limitations

1. One cannot generalize the findings of this study to the population of special education administrators outside of the state of Georgia because the population of the survey was limited only to Georgia's special education directors.
2. This researcher did not use controls for the various inclusion models or levels of inclusion implementation across the State of Georgia. Therefore, special education directors who responded to this survey have responded based on their personal knowledge and varied experiences with the inclusion model.

Procedures

Design

The researcher conducted a mixed methods study of the roles of Georgia's special education directors during the implementation of inclusion. The researcher utilized a survey instrument and a focus group.

Participants

The participants included the entire population of Georgia's special education directors (n = 180), excluding the researcher (N. O' Hara, personal communication, September, 8, 2006). The State Director of Special Education, Ms. Marlene Bryar, provided the researcher with the names, addresses and mailing labels for the 180 directors. Six special education directors in the researcher's RESA area participated in the pilot of the instrument; however, only three directors participated in the focus group. The researcher mailed surveys (after revisions were made at the completion of the pilot study) to the remaining 174 special education directors in the state with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study. Participants returned completed surveys by mail in a self-addressed stamped envelope provided by the researcher.

After the collection and analysis of the completed surveys, the researcher invited six special education directors in the researcher's local and surrounding Regional Education Service Area (RESA) District to participate in a focus group in an effort to further define the roles of Georgia's special education directors. The questions and topics for the focus group were based on the research questions.

Instrumentation

The researcher developed a two part survey instrument designed to measure the experiences and roles of Georgia's special education directors with the implementation of inclusion. The questions in the survey instrument were based on a review of the literature related to educational leadership, special education, inclusion practices, and the limited research of the special education director's role. The researcher consulted with two experts in the field of special education and inclusion to develop and modify test items

for the survey instrument. The researcher clarified and eliminated survey questions based on the feedback from experts who have assisted with the development of the instrument. Questions for the focus group were designed to answer each of the research questions.

Definition of Terms

Educational Administrators- Individuals, employed by school systems, who supervise schools or school programs.

Experiences of special education directors- For purposes of this study, referred to the work experiences of Georgia's special education directors including, but not limited to, their previous teaching experiences (e.g., general and special education), previous administrative experiences and experience as a special education director.

General education classroom- Also referred to as the regular classroom. This is the physical setting in which instruction occurs for all regular education students and students with disabilities who are served via the inclusion model.

Inclusion or inclusive education- Used throughout this research, these terms referred to any instructional delivery model incorporating students with disabilities into the regular classroom with appropriate support and collaboration between general and special education personnel (Daane, Beirne-Smith, & Latham, 2001).

Roles of the special education directors- Referred to the part that Georgia's special education directors contribute to inclusion implementation at either the district or school level.

Special education directors (also directors)– Educational administrators who directly supervise and administer special education programs in Georgia's school districts.

Students with disabilities (SWD)- Students who have been identified by the school district as needing special education services under the provisions of IDEA.

Summary

Congress intended that no student, including students with disabilities, will be left behind educationally as evidenced through passage of federal laws like IDEA and NCLB. Educational leaders are compelled to address the academic needs of all students, regardless of disability, in order to meet the new accountability mandates of these federal statutes. Additionally, the Georgia DOE has developed new performance indicators for students with disabilities, particularly in the area of increasing the percentage of students with disabilities who are educated in the general classroom for a majority of their school day. As a result of the new performance indicators, Georgia's special education directors must find ways to successfully increase the participation of students with disabilities in the regular classroom with the appropriate supports and services. Inclusion services are a viable way to meet the new participation requirements.

Researchers have found that inclusion for students with disabilities can potentially serve as one avenue to assist school administrators and teachers as they attempt to meet the new federal and state accountability standards. Many researchers in the area of inclusive education have also recognized the importance of the roles of both regular and special education teachers; utilization of instructional practices in the inclusion setting; and the need for supportive visionary principal leaders. However, there was a gap in the educational research regarding the role of the special education director in the process of inclusion implementation. Therefore, this researcher examined the roles of Georgia's special education directors during the implementation of inclusion.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed the literature that provides the rationale for the present study. The first section of this chapter includes an outline of the relevant research in the area of inclusion implementation (see Table G1). Also, a history of special education will be provided that describes the evolution of inclusion in public schools. Subsequent sections of this chapter include an overview of the research of the main factors that influence the successful implementation of inclusion practice. Next, this chapter outlines the research into the principal's role with inclusion implementation and highlights the limited research of the knowledge, experiences and roles of the special education director with inclusion implementation.

There was often great debate over what factors contribute to the successful implementation of inclusion practice (Walther-Thomas, 1997; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxen, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004) in special education. A review of the educational literature related to the topic of inclusion outlined the main factors influencing the success of inclusive practices in the public school setting. These factors included the preparation via professional learning, attitudes, and collaborative roles of both regular and special education teachers; the use of effective or proven instructional practices in the inclusive setting; and, most significantly, the need for supportive visionary school principals and administrators who understand, embrace and supervise inclusion programs in their schools.

While a common thread throughout the research included the role of the principal with inclusion implementation, this researcher, a special education director, recognized the special education director's role in the implementation and supervision of inclusive special education programs. However, there was a significant gap in the educational research regarding the specific roles of the special education director with the implementation of inclusion. Therefore, this researcher attempted to fill this void by investigating the roles of Georgia's special education directors in the implementation of inclusion programs. Table G1 (see Appendix G) lists the relevant research regarding successful inclusion practices, the roles of the principal, and the role of the special education director.

History of Inclusion

Inclusion, or the term inclusive education, refers to any instructional delivery model incorporating students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate support and collaboration between general, special education teachers and other personnel (Daane, Beirne-Smith, & Latham, 2001). Inclusion gained widespread support in the 1990s (Schrag & Burnette, 1994) and over the last decade, the educational literature has highlighted the positive effects of inclusive education in both the social and academic arenas (Hewitt, 1999). However, the full inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular school setting is a relatively new phenomenon in public education. Despite the successes and recent support for the practice, the path to inclusive education has involved many legal and legislative initiatives over the last thirty years. The following provides an overview of the history of special education and the evolution of inclusion practices.

The 1970s

Prior to 1975, students with disabilities were often refused services, or they were educated in facilities separate from the public schools. Two landmark court decisions in the early 1970s, *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* and *Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia*, clarified the responsibility that states had regarding the education of students with disabilities (Schiller, O'Reilly, & Fiore, 2006). Not long after those landmark cases were decided, Congress took action by passing the *The Education for All Handicapped Children Act* (*EHA*) (PL 94-142) of 1975. Through *EHA,* Congress intended for public schools to provide disabled students with greater access to a higher quality and equal education in the public schools.

The *EHA* also included provisions that students with disabilities should receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), described various categories of special education eligibility, and used the term 'least restrictive setting' in describing the services afforded to disabled students (Erchul, Osborne, & Schulte, 1998). For the first time, students with disabilities were afforded real legal protections and access to education in a public school environment. The new access to public education also referred to as FAPE serves as the cornerstone to special education practice today (Harben & Hartley, 1997).

In addition to the new legal protections and educational access afforded to students with disabilities, special education teachers were also required to write individualized education plans (IEPs) to address each student's needs. Often, IEP's provided for educational services in a separate special education setting while students

were mainstreamed in general education classrooms without any additional support from a special education teacher (Bowen & Rude, 2006).

The 1980s

Although federal law does not specifically mention the term inclusion, the first reference to the practice of inclusive education appeared in the 1980s with the Regular Education Initiative (REI), a movement referenced by Madeline Will in 1986 (Shade & Stewart, 2001). In a position paper presented to OSEP, Will called for the education of mildly disabled students in the general classroom with special education teachers acting in consulting roles. While this initiative did not cause major changes in the way students with disabilities were educated in public schools, REI did help create debate among educators and researchers over the appropriateness of separate education programs for students with disabilities (Valesky & Hirth, 1992).

In the 1980s, mainstreaming was the term that most educators referenced when describing the limited time that special needs students spent in regular classrooms (Lewis & Doorlag, 1991). Lewis and Doorlag described mainstreaming from this perspective:

> Rather than being allowed to flounder and fail in the mainstream, their individual needs are considered, and they are placed with regular class peers only when successful learning is probable (p. 9).

As a result, the perception from most educators that mainstreaming was appropriate for most special education students was limited at best.

The 1990s

In 1990, Congress reauthorized *EHA* and changed the name to the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).* The 1990 reauthorization changed the language of the law by removing the word handicap and included the disability categories of

autism and traumatic brain injury. With *IDEA*, however, Congress did not significantly change the language describing the actual services for students with disabilities (Schiller, O'Reilly, & Fiore, 2006). However, the subsequent 1997 reauthorization of the special education law, now referred to as *IDEA 1997*, led to some of the most sweeping changes in how educators now view a disabled child's access to the regular classroom (Walther-Thomas, 1997).

With the reauthorization of *IDEA* in 1997, Congress specifically referenced the need for students with disabilities to have appropriate access to the general curriculum with appropriate supports and services (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Schiller, O'Reilly, & Fiore, 2006). *IDEA* 1997 also included mandates that students with disabilities participate in statewide and other assessments like their general education peers. As a result of *IDEA 1997,* IEP placement committees clearly had the responsibility to prove that the general education setting with appropriate supports and services was not the first service choice or the least restrictive educational environment for students with disabilities (Bowen & Rude, 2006).

2000 to the Present

Significant changes began to take place in the education of students with disabilities when Congress reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), commonly referred to as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) in 2001. *NCLB* requires that all students, including students with disabilities, meet certain accountability standards including the acquisition of grade level reading and math skills (Yell, Katsiyannas, & Shiner, 2006). Furthermore, the Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) adopted a new standard for least restrictive environment (LRE)

decision making practices in school systems and challenged all states to meet the standard of including 90% of students with disabilities in the general curriculum for a minimum of 80% of the school day. In response, the Georgia DOE crafted *An Administrators' Guide to the Instruction of Students with Disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment,* posted as a link at the Department's website in an attempt to educate local school systems in the practice of furthering inclusion initiatives (http://public.doe.k12.us/ci_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXLREAdminGuide).

As a result of the new accountability facing students with disabilities resulting from *IDEA* and *NCLB*, the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) formed a state advisory committee comprised of educators, DOE staff, parents and other individuals to create performance indicators and goals for students with disabilities in Georgia (O'Hara, 2005). As a result of the work of the advisory committee, the State DOE adopted four goals with sixteen performance indicators (see Appendix A). Indicator 9 specifically mandates the "increase in the percentage of students with disabilities who receive their instruction in the general education setting with supports and accommodations" (see Appendix A). In an effort to support the increased percentages on Indicator 9, the state DOE offered support for school systems through the LRE initiative and posted information regarding appropriate practices in making placement decisions (http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXLREFAQ).

In November 2004, Congress reauthorized *IDEA 1997.* Although the most recent changes again make no reference to the term inclusion, Congress, through this reauthorization, aligned the accountability mandates of *NCLB with IDEA 2004*,

solidifying the position that students with disabilities would be a part of the educational accountability mandates facing all school districts (Schiller, O'Reilly, & Fiore, 2006).

As this historical account has shown, substantial changes have occurred over the last thirty years, affording students with disabilities greater access to public education. Nevertheless, if school system leaders are expected to meet the mandates of *NCLB* and *IDEA* and attempt to provide more inclusion services for students with disabilities, it is imperative that all administrators understand the factors that support inclusion practice in schools (Thousand et al., 2006).

Factors Influencing Inclusion Implementation

Preparation/Professional Learning for Teachers

An essential element found in all effective inclusion classrooms was well-trained personnel, specifically regular education and special education teachers who have the desire to provide a quality education to all students regardless of ability (Vaughn & Schumm, 1995; Burstein et al., 2004). It was necessary, however, for teachers to feel prepared to meet the needs of all students in the included classroom. Professional development or learning was supported through traditional in-house models, through colleges and universities, or through peer mentoring. Consequently, it was imperative that professional development activities include the needs of the teachers (Vaughn & Schumm, 1995; Burstein et. al, 2004).

Without attention to the teachers' professional learning needs, there is often little or no ownership of the inclusion model. Professional development is a key component to fostering the success of an inclusive classroom and can set the tone for the teacher's attitude about the practice. Daane, Beirne-Smith, and Latham (2001) discovered that

administrators and teachers, while generally supportive of inclusion, often feel they lack the knowledge and training to effectively implement the practice. Nevertheless, Daane et al. concluded that principals must seek out and lead the inclusion professional development initiatives for their schools in order for inclusion to be most effective. Daane et al. surveyed 324 general education teachers, 15 administrators, and 42 special education teachers. The purpose of their study was to survey administrators, general and special education teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. The variables considered were: teacher collaboration, instruction, teacher training, and perceived achievement outcomes. All participants agreed that inclusion via a collaborative model was the most effective inclusion practice. However, most participants acknowledged problems with personalities between the general and special educator, difficulty finding common planning time, and trouble with scheduling the special education teacher. Daane et al. also discovered that both groups of teachers disagreed that the inclusion setting was the most effective environment for special education students. Nevertheless, while the principals indicated that the inclusion setting was the most appropriate service model on the survey, results from the direct interviews with the same principals acknowledged the need for resource services for students with disabilities. All groups agreed that regular education teachers were not prepared for the demands of the inclusion setting creating the need for additional inclusion training.

Teacher Attitudes

Professional learning alone cannot lead to a successful inclusive classroom. The teachers' attitudes also play a critical role in the success of any inclusive initiative (Daane et al., 2001). Baglieri and Knopf (2004) argued that "… a truly inclusive school reflects a

demographic philosophy whereby all students are valued…" (p. 525). Vaughn et al., (1995) also echoed the need for inclusive classrooms in which "general education teachers who work in inclusive settings need to demonstrate beliefs and skills that will allow them to address the needs of their students with learning disabilities" (p. 264).

Glatthorn and Jailall (2000), contributors to the text *Education in a New Era,* outlined several barriers to change in the school curriculum. The first barrier was the "beliefs and values (of those) involved" (p. 101). Inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom directly affected how the curriculum was delivered. Some regular educators might perceive that inclusion places an extra burden or even acts as a barrier for the regular educator who must provide modifications and instruction to special needs students who were once taught by another teacher in a separate, special education classroom.

Teacher Roles and Collaboration

Teacher attitudes can also emerge from the collaborative relationship between the regular and special education teacher in the inclusive classroom. Keefe and Moore (2004) investigated the challenges of co-teaching at the high school level. They conducted interviews with eight general and eight special education teachers. The purpose of the study was to help teachers with the implementation of inclusion. The interviews were coded for themes, and three main themes emerged from the study. The first theme was collaboration, or the ability to get along as professionals. This factor also included communication between teachers and time for planning. The second theme revolved around the roles of the teachers. Keefe and Moore found that general education teachers were usually more responsible for instruction while the special education teachers

provided the needed modifications. Furthermore, the study revealed that neither the special education nor the general education teachers felt prepared for their roles in the inclusion setting. However, all participants believed that inclusion resulted in positive outcomes for students with disabilities. Overall, Keefe and Moore discovered the co-teaching model was most effective when both the regular and special education teachers are compatible and each understands the other's role.

The understanding of roles, however, most often comes as a result of arbitrary co-teaching assignments and not through direct professional training experiences. Villa and Thousand (2003) described collaboration as another key variable in the implementation of inclusion. As the roles of teachers and administrators change, the authors concluded, "collaboration emerged as the only variable that predicted positive attitudes towards inclusion among general and special educators as well as administrators" (p. 22).

Caron and McLaughlin (2002) discovered in their research of inclusive schools that collaboration between regular and general education teachers emerged as a key variable for student success. Two of the five themes that emerged from their study involved collaboration. Caron and McLaughlin found most of the principals allowed for collaborative planning. There were different variations of collaboration in the schools that were studied. The teachers spent a great deal of time co-planning face to face or through the use of technology (e.g., email, voicemail). Furthermore, the administrators supported collaboration by arranging substitutes to ensure common planning time. Most importantly, the principals created a collaborative culture in all of the schools by supporting collaboration through direct participation in planning meetings.

Recent research in the area of inclusion supports the importance of teacher collaboration (Jacobson-Stevenson, Jacobson, & Hilton, 2006) in the inclusive classroom. Jacobson-Stevenson et al. surveyed principals' perceptions of the skills that principals need to supervise instructional programs for students with disabilities. Of the principals surveyed, 70.2% expressed that knowledge of collaborative teaching strategies was second only to managing students in the LRE as the greatest professional learning need.

Instructional Practices

Baglieri and Knopf (2004) found that teachers often were concerned about meeting the diverse needs of all of the students in the inclusive classroom. While some educators might argue that professional learning, teacher attitudes and collaboration are the most critical components of inclusion, it is noteworthy that Erchul et al. (1998) found that inclusion (versus resource models) had little or no impact on student achievement unless proven instructional practices were in place. These authors reviewed studies in the area of inclusive education and found that inclusion models alone do little to close the achievement gap for students with disabilities. However, they discovered that teachers who used direct instruction and formative curriculum based measurement (CBM) often experienced greater achievement gains from students with disabilities in the inclusion classroom. CBM is a means of authentic feedback allowing the student and the teacher to chart and monitor progress directly related to the curriculum. Erchul et al. also argued the merits of direct instruction for the acquisition of basic skills. Although there were critics of this practice, Erchul et al. found that direct instruction can be paired with other proven methods helping students with disabilities find success in the regular classroom.

Caron and McLaughlin (2002) found inclusive schools that were most successful with achievement for students with disabilities used curricula and assessment measures that were standards-based. In these inclusive schools, both the general and special educators worked together using the same set of curriculum standards. Villa and Thousand (2003) also hailed additional curricular and instructional practices that positively impact the success of the inclusion model. Some of the concepts these authors supported were the use of multiple intelligences and constructivist learning theories, as well as utilization of teaching practices that add relevance by promoting real learning experiences. In addition, Villa and Thousand indicated the need for a balanced method in literacy development through the use of interdisciplinary approaches and acknowledged both technology and differentiated instruction were essential components of inclusion. These researchers emphasized the need for educators to recognize and address the diversity of learners in their classrooms before the delivery of instruction.

Robert Marzano (2000) referred to the curriculum shift that occurred in the 1970s "…from what is taught to how instruction should occur" (p.75). Several instructional models (e.g. mastery learning, cooperative learning) which resulted from this shift a few decades ago are still in practice today and are vital components of the inclusive classroom. As Caron and McLaughlin (2002) also discovered in their research on collaborative practices, it was essential for students with disabilities to have access to a standards-based curriculum. More importantly, these researchers concluded that the teachers must remain focused on the students' understanding and mastery of the standards, and instruction should be varied and include both traditional and cooperative learning strategies.

Inclusion classrooms often have a more diverse composition and pose a challenge to educators who must continually assess individual student progress in order to direct day to day instruction. Baglieri and Knopf (2004) argued inclusion cannot work effectively without teachers who understand, embrace, and adopt teaching strategies that incorporate differentiated instruction for all students. They found that teachers must design a curriculum for the students based on "...where they (the students) are…using methods through which each individual may learn as deeply as possible... understanding cultivation of teacher-student learning relationships is essential and takes time to develop" (p. 527).

Vaughn and Schumm (1995) also emphasized the importance for teachers to address the individual needs of students in the inclusive classroom. They also stressed the importance for teachers to continually monitor the progress of all students in the classroom to ensure mastery learning. Brazil, Ford, and Voltz (2001) cautioned against a one size fits all instructional approach. These researchers created a guide for inclusive education and cited utilization of effective instructional practices as a critical element of inclusion highlighting the use of direct instruction, paired with constructivist and cooperative learning models.

Administrative Support and Vision

The importance of supportive and visionary school leadership in the inclusive classroom cannot be understated. The one common theme that emerges throughout the literature as a critical factor in the implementation of inclusion is the need for visionary school leaders who broadly understand and support inclusive education (Goor & Schwenn, 1997; Villa & Thousand, 2003; Praisner, 2003; Burnstein et al., 2004; Cook,

Semmel, & Gerber, 1999). Goor and Schwenn (1997) referred to educational leadership as the number one variable affecting educational practice today. These scholars believe educational leaders who display negative attitudes towards special needs children often isolated these same children in the school building. School leaders also make decisions on a daily basis that affect the nature of the learning environment and the key components of the curriculum (e.g., concepts, teaching-learning situations, etc.). Goor and Schwenn indicated that school leaders should believe that inclusion can be effective if the model is to succeed.

Administrators' Attitudes

C. L. Praisner (2003) recognized the significance of the principal's attitude towards inclusion practices. Praisner examined the relationship between elementary principals' attitudes towards inclusion along with several other variables including their attitudes towards specific disability categories, experience with disabled students, and the level of the principals' special education training. She surveyed 408 elementary school principals in Pennsylvania using a combination of instruments to measure each of the aforementioned variables. Praisner found that principals' attitudes directly affected their beliefs "that least restrictive placements were most appropriate for students with disabilities" (p. 141). Furthermore, her research revealed that principals displayed a tendency to feel less favorable regarding inclusion placements for students with severe cognitive or emotional disabilities. Conversely, a principal's positive experience with students with disabilities contributed to a principal's supportive attitude towards inclusion. Lastly, the levels of training received by principals through professional

development and formal coursework "were related to a more positive attitude towards inclusion" (p. 142).

Additional research in the area of principals' attitudes towards inclusion has revealed that principals do not always embrace inclusion. Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) surveyed Illinois principals' attitudes towards inclusion. One hundred fifteen schools were randomly selected out of a possible 3,879. Barnett and Monda-Amaya developed a four part instrument designed to reveal demographic information, leadership style, definitions of inclusion, and various statements related to the principals' attitudes, perceptions and levels of inclusion implementation in their schools. The study revealed that only 30% of the principals surveyed believed that school leaders can reshape a school's culture to embrace effective inclusion. This study also found that principals often feel their teachers lack the knowledge in the areas of collaboration/co-teaching and effective instructional strategies (e.g., cooperative learning).

The principal's perception that inclusion is a burden or barrier might impact the instructional experience of the included child. Burnstein et al. (2004) revealed in their qualitative study of inclusion implementation that leadership was the first of five key factors when a school district begins to implement inclusive practices. In this study, in two Southern California school districts, 90 general educators, special educators, and principals referenced the importance of principals who provided both vision and support to the staff during the initial implementation of inclusion in the district. Principals also described that they had to assume a hands on approach to working with the teaching staff to effectively implement inclusion in their schools. Teachers reported that the principal helped to create a vision and support for the change to the inclusion model. Collaboration

between general and special education teachers (through training and planning time) was also found to be essential. This study also revealed that commitment to inclusion implementation from the administrators at the district and building level along with the teachers is very important to the successful implementation of inclusion.

Cook et al. (1999) studied the attitudes of teachers and principals towards the inclusion of children with milder disabilities. These researchers surveyed 49 principals and 64 special education teachers about their attitudes toward inclusion, allocation of resources and overall perception of success with inclusion models. Their findings revealed that principals are generally supportive and hold positive attitudes about including students with mild disabilities in the general setting. However, the same study revealed that the principals feel the teachers do not have the appropriate training needed to effectively meet the instructional needs in the often diverse, inclusive setting. Cook et al. also found principals and special education teachers disagreed on achievement outcomes for inclusion. Principals tended to view the outcomes of inclusion in a more positive light than the general and special education teachers.

Brotherson, Sheriff, Milburn, and Schertz (2001) conducted a qualitative study to investigate the needs and issues that elementary school principals experience in the inclusive setting. Sixty-one elementary principals from Iowa participated in 13 focus groups. Brotherson et al. revealed that principals recognized the importance of their role to change and grow while implementing and supporting inclusion. Furthermore, principals revealed the need for administrative training to support their own lack of knowledge of inclusion practices. While Brotherson et al. emphasized the importance of the school leader as the change agent in the early childhood inclusion setting, their study

also revealed that principals did not necessarily view themselves as part of the solution for the inclusion process. This finding was significant because the principals interviewed did not articulate specific ways they could take the lead role to improve the inclusion efforts in their schools. Most of the principals' comments were focused on how others could better support inclusion in their schools (e.g., the need for more money, better trained teachers, and more professional learning).

On the other hand, Caron and McLaughlin (2002) discovered in their study of inclusive schools that principals promoted an atmosphere of shared decision making which often included teacher leaders who emerged as key change agents. Walther-Thomas (1997) also found that teachers indicated the principal's support of inclusion was critical for several reasons. First, the teachers in this study described the principals as cheerleaders and advocates. The teachers in this study also recognized the importance that leaders from both the school and district level play in both the moral and financial support of inclusive initiatives. Despite the concerns regarding caseloads, scheduling, and lack of planning, Walther-Thomas revealed that teachers are motivated by building and district leaders who support and believe in the inclusion vision.

Educational Leadership Theory

The educational literature related to leadership theory and practice highlights the importance of educational leaders who are more focused on the new roles and work of principals and the interactional qualities required of leadership (Smylie & Hart, 1999). Smylie and Hart in their analysis of leadership determined that educational leaders must recognize, acknowledge, and understand the interactional role that the principal plays in developing balance in a school's social structure. Principals need to balance the daily

management of the school (e.g., schedules, duties, organization) with the human and social capital of their staff and other stakeholders in order to ensure a healthy learning environment. The new work of the principal reaches far beyond the traditional role of a building manager who historically worked in a separated office. To the contrary, the new role of the principal "…has emerged as organizations have begun to implement collaborative decision making processes as the culture…has shifted to accommodate…new organizational vision" (Guzman, 1994, p. 4).

Administrative Vision

The literature highlights the need for educational leaders who possess a vision for new initiatives. Villa and Thousand (2003) outlined five main practices that directly impact the effectiveness of inclusive education for students with disabilities. While describing their first effective practice, Villa and Thousand explained educators must find a connection with best practices in order to meet the needs of the diverse inclusive classroom. They also stressed the importance of having a school leader who can communicate those best practices to the teachers and parents. The second practice, visionary leadership, stressed the importance of educational leadership with both vision and practice. This vision and support from the educational leaders also exists in the third practice, the redefined roles of educators within the inclusive schools. Again, Villa and Thousand expounded on the need for educational leaders to shape and define the new roles of teachers and students in the inclusive classroom. Furthermore, they described collaboration, the fourth practice, as the key variable in the implementation of inclusion. Lastly, adult support was hailed as another critical best practice. Villa and Thousand explained that principals and central office leaders should develop inclusive models that

contain a component of support for teachers as they attempt to meet complex student needs. The adult support can originate from the principal who promotes professional team relationships and training for all staff.

Leadership Needs

There is no simple solution for creating visionary leaders who can implement inclusion in their school districts. Goor et al. (1997) highlighted the need for better preparation of educational leaders through professional development and other training programs to increase the knowledge of educational leaders in the area of special education. Their research found that principals and other educational leaders are not often trained to understand the diverse needs of special education children.

Educational leaders' attitudes and experiences will also set the climate for school culture. Baglieri and Knopf (2004) emphasized the need for creating a school culture that is caring and reflects the needs of all learners. Consequently, at the heart of every school or district's culture are educational leaders who influence the direction of school improvement initiatives that impact the learning opportunities of all children. Before implementing inclusion models in a school district, educational leaders must find common ground when both financing and planning for curricular and instructional practices. Monk and Plecki (1999) in their contribution to the *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration* argue

> … an increasing conflict between regular and special education that displays itself in part as a competition for scarce dollars, but is mostly due to dramatic philosophical, pedagogical, and legal differences between the two groups (p. 501).

The Principal's Role

The educational literature suggests, however, that principals do not always embrace or are not adequately prepared for their new role in the inclusive schools (Whitworth, 1999; Morgan & Demchak, 1996):

> Administrators often view inclusion through a restructuring lens
> with its focus on changing how schools are organized
> rather than on the beliefs, values, and principles underlying current structures
> (Doyle, 2001, p. 1).

Doyle found in her study of administrators' perceptions of inclusion that most principals focused on the structural or managerial side of the inclusion model. She also discovered that most of the 19 principals in her study were concerned about structured issues like schedules and a lack of central office support rather than on the creation of a new culture that supported the inclusion of students with disabilities within their schools. Part of the structural perception, Doyle determined, was based on the belief that the principals in her study believed that they had little or no control over the implementation of inclusion in their schools. Most of the principals in this study, believed that the central office special education administrators had the final voice in determining the implementation of inclusion in their schools. On the other hand, Doyle concluded that the principals in her study were satisfied in their isolated and structured role in the implementation of inclusion. Very few of the principals in the Doyle study spoke of the need to change the culture of their schools to embrace the inclusion model although most of the principals supported the model without reservation.

The trend toward a more inclusive education for students with disabilities has dramatically altered the principal's responsibility for ensuring the appropriate education of students with disabilities within the school setting. Therefore, the new role of the

building principal has evolved from that of a managerial role to one of an instructional, supportive, and visionary leader of the special education programs in the school. The new work of the building principal in the inclusive school must involve the development of a common vision and support for students with disabilities in the inclusion setting (Whitworth, 1999).

Sindelar, Shearer, Yendol-Hoppey, and Liebert (2006) found that changes in building leadership can negatively impact the practice. Sindelar et al. conducted a long term qualitative study of one middle school in Florida. While the initial research found that teachers were supportive of inclusion, several factors negatively impacted the sustainability of the practice. The school had three principals during the four year study. While the first change of leadership did not appear to change the course of the inclusion initiative, the last principal appeared to be less focused on the inclusion initiative and more committed to other school reform initiatives.

The Special Education Director's Experience

One of the first empirical studies in the area of special education administration occurred in 1993. Arick and Krug (1993) conducted a nationwide survey of special education directors related to personnel, policy, and issues related to mainstreaming. Their findings revealed that over one third of the special education directors had no appreciable experience in teaching special education, with most directors indicating a need for training in the area of general and special education collaboration. Specific training deficits were also uncovered in the areas of development of grants, information systems for program management, and specific strategies for collaboration. Arick and Krug also found that a majority of the special education directors they surveyed indicated

the need for district-wide (a) training of regular classroom staff to collaborate with special education teachers, (b) training for regular classroom staff to gain a more positive perception of mainstreamed special education students, and (c) education of general education students about the needs of students with disabilities.

Crockett (2002), a researcher and special education administrator, expressed the need for administrative preparation programs to incorporate set standards for both general and special education administrators as they complete educational leadership programs. Based on her examination of the educational literature, Crockett highlighted the importance of educational leadership preparation programs that incorporate both the legal foundation as well as the knowledge of the needs of students based on their disability. She echoed the concerns of other educational researchers (Whitworth, 1999; Morgan & Demchak, 1996) that principals do not have adequate preparation in the area of special education.

The Special Education Director's Preparation

Conversely, Wigle and Wilcox (2002) found that special education directors did possess sufficient levels of knowledge related to inclusion. In this study, the researchers surveyed 240 general administrators, special education teachers and special education directors, respectively, regarding their competencies on 35 skills identified by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) as necessary for working with special needs children. The special education directors reported high levels of competency in most of the other CEC skill areas including assessment, program development, communication, advocacy, use of instructional technology and behavior management. Wigle and Wilcox found that general educators and special educators were lacking in some of those same

skill areas. Therefore, the researchers revealed the need to bring everyone to the same level through professional learning in the CEC competency areas.

Crockett (2002) outlined a new conceptual framework for educational leadership preparation programs that would incorporate five essential administrative skills needed to supervise inclusive programs. Crockett explained that all educational leadership programs should incorporate the following five core principles that were often a part of special education leadership preparation: (1) ethical practice, including legal training, to ensure access to the general curriculum; (2) individual consideration to address the needs of each student; (3) equity in the implementation of programs and policies; (4) effective programs for special needs students that are based on research; and (5) building partnerships with all stakeholders to ensure collaboration amongst parents, educators, administrators. Crockett described these principles as the "star model" due to the five aforementioned components that she placed in a star diagram.

Valesky and Hirth (1992) surveyed the state directors of special education to investigate the knowledge requirements for principals and special education directors, particularly in the area of special education law. Valesky and Hirth explained that school administrators often bear the primary educational responsibility for students with disabilities. However, these researchers found that special education directors often had a greater understanding of the legal requirements of the special education law, by virtue of their experience and training. Valesky and Hirth also discovered that most states only required one general law course, rather than a special education law course in their general administrator preparation programs. Nevertheless, most state directors indicated

that they provided professional learning opportunities for general education administrators in the area of special education law.

The Special Education Director's Role Interaction with Principals

Doyle (2001) discovered that regular education administrators reported that they were not supported by the central office special education administrators. Doyle's study also revealed that principals felt no control over mandates from the central office special education administration. Several of the principals in this qualitative study indicated they did not clearly understand their role in the inclusion implementation process. Principals in this study expressed the need for greater collaboration, training, and communication prior to inclusion implementation.

Valesky and Hirth (1992) described the roles of the special education director and principal in separate terms. Special education directors were viewed as the legal experts and responsible for adherence to the legal requirements of IDEA. On the other hand, Valesky and Hirth, described the role of the principal as the instructional leader who is directly responsible for providing the educational services required by the law. Cruzeiro and Morgan (2006) described the principal's role with special education as multifaceted and highlighted the importance of principals who initiate collaboration between all regular and special education professionals while developing an understanding of their own roles as special education leaders within the school building.

Crockett, Neely, and Brown (as cited in Crockett, 2002) surveyed both general and special education leaders to examine which of the five components of the star model were essential for the supervision of special education programs. Crockett et al. discovered that both general and special education administrators expressed a common

desire for professional preparation in the following areas: (1) moral/ethical/legal aspects of leadership; (2) instructional leadership for meeting the individual needs of students; (3) organizational leadership related to program development; and (4) and the need for collaborative leadership.

The Special Education Director's Experiences and Roles

Greta Stanfield (2006) presented a first hand account of the special education director's role with the implementation of inclusion for the Mason County School District in Kentucky at the 17th Annual International CASE conference. Stanfield outlined 10 steps that she used to implement inclusion programs in Mason County, Kentucky. The steps were as follows: (a) gather internal information, (b) look for successful options, (c) find those staff members who were willing to make the change, (d) educate the stakeholders, (e) collect feedback from staff, (f) make the change, (g) develop an action plan, (h) schedule, (i) implement professional development, and (j) monitor and evaluate. Stanfield stressed the importance of making the change to an inclusive environment. She explained that the shift towards inclusion in her district involved sharing her vision with the district leadership staff. Stanfield also assumed an active role with each of the ten steps and worked collaboratively with district level leadership and school principals to assist with the implementation of inclusion in her school district. Stanfield's personal experiences with inclusion implementation reflect many of the core principles of Crockett's star model (Crockett, 2002).

Stanfield (2006) indicated that scheduling for collaboration between general and special education teachers and professional development were critical components of the change to inclusive education in her school district. Based on her experience with

inclusion implementation, she explained that special education directors should support all stakeholders, during implementation, through professional learning, consensus building, assistance with scheduling, human and physical resource support, and the overall development of a culture of collaboration.

The Special Education Director's Roles

Although the principal's role is often central to the implementation of inclusion at the building level (Jacobson-Stevenson, Jacobson, & Hilton, 2006) the special education director also has a vested interest due to the least restrictive environment mandates of *IDEA 2004* and new accountability created as a result of *NCLB*. However, there is limited empirical research that explores the actual role of the special education director.

Jones and Wilkerson (1975) first discussed the preparation programs for special education directors in the 1970s. At that time, the role of the special education director was described in terms that set it apart from the role of the general administrator. Jones and Wilkerson described the role of the special education director using managerial terminology. The special education director was historically an individual who had classroom training as a special education teacher who was moved into the role of director. Nevertheless, even in 1975 there were calls for the leadership preparation of special education directors to mirror or parallel that of their general education counter parts.

Although there is limited empirical research regarding the roles of the special education director during inclusion implementation, Chalfant and Van Dusen (2007) described the two main responsibilities that directors now face in light of the changes in the services provided to students with disabilities in the school setting. According to these

scholars, special education directors must guide and oversee the development of educational programs that meet the needs of the students with disabilities. The educational programs must, however, meet federal and state guidelines. The second responsibility of the special education director involves the shaping of new policies and creating a vision for special education programs.

Chalfant and Van Dusen (2007) outlined five important competencies that all special education directors should attain in order to meet the demands of the profession. Those competencies are: (1) knowledge of teaching methods that are evidence based; (2) knowledge of the legal and policy requirements related to special education; (3) the ability to collaborate and communicate with all stakeholders (e.g. parents, community, school faculty); (4) knowledge of meeting the needs of a diverse student population; and (5) the ability to use technology to analyze data for program planning.

While there is limited empirical research specifically in the area of the role of the special education director, one of the leading researchers in the field of inclusion and special education, Dr. Jacqueline Thousand, indicated that the research in the area of inclusion and administrative roles was not specific "…to special education directors…but we of course 'know' that the vision is greatly influenced by special education directors…" (J. S. Thousand, personal communication, June 26, 2006).

The review of the educational literature possibly suggests two global roles for the special education director with inclusion implementation. The first possible role of the special education director is district-centered (Jones & Wilkerson, 1975; Chalfant & Van Dusen, 2007). At the district level, the special education director has the responsibility to regulate policy (Arick & Krug, 1993; Doyle, 2001) and ensure district adherence to the

state and federal regulations (Chalfant & Van Dusen, 2007; Crockett, 2002; O'Hara, 2005; Valesky & Hirth, 1992) related to special education programming and inclusion implementation. Also at the district level, the special education director can provide a vision for inclusion programming (Chalfant & Van Dusen, 2007; Crockett, 2002) and develop plans for inclusion implementation on a system-wide basis (Stanfield, 2006). The second role of the special education director involves support of the principal at the school level. Special education directors often provide additional human resources (Stanfield, 2006), arrange professional learning opportunities (Crockett, 2002; Stanfield, 2006) and support to the building principal and staff through collaboration activities between general and special education programs (Arick & Krug, 1993; Chalfant & Van Dusen, 2007; Crockett, 2002). While these two roles appear to emerge from a review of literature, further investigation is still needed to determine the actual roles of Georgia's special education directors with the implementation of inclusion.

Summary

Education for students with disabilities has changed substantially over the years and inclusion is becoming more commonplace both nationally and in Georgia. Recent statistics reveal that over 50% of students with disabilities are now educated in the regular classroom for a majority of their instructional day both nationally and in Georgia. These statistics reflect the impact of the legislative and educational movements over the last three decades.

Landmark court decisions and action by Congress in the early and mid 1970s required the education community to provide very basic levels of services for students with disabilities who were once excluded or denied a public education. However, the end

result of *EHA* was unequal education programs that separated students with disabilities from their typical peers in the public school setting. The first inclusion movement occurred in the 1980s through the REI initiative which was designed to educate disabled students in the general classroom by regular education teachers. There were also many efforts made to mainstream students with disabilities into the regular education setting often without any additional support for the regular education teacher.

The shift towards inclusive education began in the 1990s as educators began to realize that students with disabilities could experience success in the regular education setting. However, in 1997, the reauthorization of *IDEA* served as a significant turning point for inclusion when Congress added specific language to the law requiring schools to provide disabled students with greater access to the general curriculum with adequate supports and services.

In 2001, Congress reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), commonly referred to as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). Through this reauthorization, Congress made its intent clear that students with disabilities would be afforded the same quality of education as their typical peers and that educators would be held accountable for their educational progress. The subsequent reauthorization of *IDEA* in *2004* only affirmed the desire of Congress to ensure students with disabilities receive equal and appropriate learning opportunities and included language in support of the accountability provisions set forth in *NCLB*. Although there is no language in the federal law that requires inclusion services, *IDEA* 1997 and 2004 clarified the intent for school districts to provide access to the general education curriculum. Subsequent federal and

state mandates made it clear that inclusion services were one viable avenue to ensure appropriate access.

Despite the fact that there is a wealth of research in the area of inclusion and the factors that make it most successful, more research is needed in the field in regard to the role of the special education director. Most of the research in the field of inclusion centers on the importance of the roles and collaboration between general and special education teachers. The educational literature also contains substantial information describing the impact of teachers' professional learning, preparation and attitudes on the practice of inclusion. However, at the leadership level, most of the educational research in the area of inclusive education only investigates the principal's role with the implementation and supervision of inclusion.

The research and literature that exists related to the special education director's role suggests two major roles, the first from a district perspective and the second that is at the school level. In Georgia, the special education director is charged with the responsibility of supervising all educational programs for students with disabilities and ensuring that all students are served in their least restrictive environment. However, the roles of Georgia's special education directors are unclear in regards to their actual role during inclusion implementation.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

Over the last ten years, the educational community has begun to embrace the use of inclusive education, a practice that now extends far beyond the level of special education services in the 1970s. Students with disabilities who were once underserved or educated in separate facilities are now receiving at least a portion of their education in the general classroom with additional support. As outlined in Chapter II, researchers have found many common elements that contribute to the successful implementation of inclusion and have also highlighted the importance of the principal's involvement in the process (Burnstein et al., 2004; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999; Goor & Schwenn, 1997; Praisner, 2003; Villa & Thousand, 2003). While the role of the principal is viewed as especially critical in the educational literature (Whitworth, 1999), there is limited research of the special education director's role with the implementation of inclusion. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to fill the gap in the educational literature by investigating the roles of Georgia's special education directors' in the implementation of inclusion.

Chapter III outlines the methodology of the study, including the instrumentation and research procedures. The instrumentation section contains an item analysis of each survey question. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the data analysis procedures.

Research Questions

This researcher examined the roles of Georgia's special education directors in the implementation of inclusion programs.

The researcher answered the following questions related to Georgia's special education directors' roles with inclusion implementation:

1. What is Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at the school district level?
2. What is Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at the school building level?
3. Is there a difference in the level of role involvement based on educationally related work experiences?
4. Is there a difference in the level of role involvement based on system demographics?

Population/Participants

The population in the study included all of Georgia's special education directors (n=180), a number that excludes the researcher who is a special education director. Sampling procedures were not required for this study since the entire population was available for participation in the study. Ms. Marlene Bryar, the State Director of Exceptional Students, provided the researcher with the names and mailing labels for all of the special education directors in the State.

Research Design

The researcher conducted a mixed methods study consisting of the administration of a survey instrument and the use of a focus group to answer the research questions. According to De vaus (2002), quantitative research is often criticized as "sterile" but

offers researchers a way to gather and report numerical data while qualitative research is considered a better method to gather more in depth first hand information from the research participants. A mixed methods methodology allowed the researcher to conduct a thorough examination of the special directors' roles from both a quantitative and more personal qualitative standpoint (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

According to Passmore, Dobbie, Parchman and Tysinger (2002), surveys are one of the most common tools researchers use to acquire data. While surveys can have limitations, this researcher carefully followed the guidelines for survey development described by Passmore et al. and Robert Frary (1996). The researcher also conducted a focus group consisting of 3 of the 6 special education directors from the researcher's local Middle Georgia RESA area. Focus group research is qualitative in nature and solicits information from participants when researchers "…want to know what people really think and feel" (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 7).

Instrumentation

Research into the special education director's role with inclusion implementation is limited. A thorough search of the literature did not yield a survey instrument that the researcher could utilize for this study. Therefore, the researcher developed a survey instrument designed to measure the roles of Georgia's special education directors with the implementation of inclusion. The format of the survey instrument, a double columned response design, was similar to the one created by Mattingly (2003) in his investigation of Georgia's superintendents' practices for evaluation of principals. The researcher utilized Mattingly's double columned survey design due to its ease of use for the

participants. The double columned design allowed participants to respond to both district and school level role involvement without a need to repeat the questions.

The validity of a survey instrument is paramount. Therefore, the survey questions in this instrument were based on the review of the literature related to inclusion practices, educational leadership, special education and the limited research of the special education director's role with inclusion implementation. The researcher also consulted with two experts, both former special education directors with inclusion implementation experience. The researcher clarified survey questions based on the feedback from these two experts.

The focus group questions were designed to answer the four research questions. The researcher developed eight focus group questions based on a guide developed by Krueger and Casey (2000), experts in the area of focus group research.

The Survey Instrument

Passmore et al. (2002) explained that Likert scales are often used in surveys to solicit information about a construct. The survey instrument used in this study consisted of two major parts (see Appendix B). Part I of the instrument was a Likert-scaled section designed to obtain information about the special education directors' level of role involvement with inclusion implementation at both the district and school levels.

The instrument contained 26 statements that were divided into the following 8 categories: vision; legal/ethical; communication; planning/implementation; budget/resources; professional learning; curriculum/instructional support; and evaluation of programs. Each of the 8 categories and 26 statements were developed based on the review of the literature related to the roles of the special education director during

inclusion implementation. Table 1 contains the supportive research documentation for each statement.

Participants responded to each statement using the Likert scale. Part I of the survey utilized an interval scale with numerical weights. Participants chose from the following: (1) no involvement; (2) little involvement; (3) some involvement; (4) high involvement; and (5) extensive involvement. The researcher designed questions to measure the director's role at the district and school level during the implementation of inclusion. Higher responses on the Likert scale indicated higher levels of involvement at the district and school level. Part II of the survey instrument contained general demographics and questions related to the experiences of Georgia's special education directors. In Part II of the survey, directors were asked to respond to questions related to the director's gender, years of experience as a special education director, and years of previous experience as a special education teacher, general education teacher, principal and other administrative experience. Directors also were asked to indicate the number of students with disabilities (SWD) in their districts, choosing one of five following population ranges created by the State DOE: 3000+ SWD, 1000-2999 SWD, 500-999 SWD, 250-499 SWD, Less than 250 SWD.

Directors were also asked to provide the percentage of students with disabilities (SWD) ages six and above who were educated in the general education setting more than 80% of the day, Indicator 9 in the State DOE performance plan. The researcher wanted to

Table 1

Item Analysis of the Survey Instrument

Item	*Researcher(s)*
Part I	
1-3	Villa & Thousand (2003); Wigle & Wilcox (2002)
4-6	Chalfant & Van Dusen (2007); Crockett (2002); Valesky & Hirth (1992); Wigle & Wilcox (2002)
7-9	Chalfant & Van Dusen (2007); Crockett (2002); Wigle & Wilcox (2002)
10-13	Chalfant & Van Dusen (2007); Crockett (2002); Valesky & Hirth (1992); Wigle & Wilcox (2002)
14-16	Crockett (2002); Wigle & Wilcox (2002)
17-19	Arick & Krug (1993); Crockett (2002); Wigle & Wilcox (2002)
20-23	Chalfant & Van Dusen (2007); Wigle & Wilcox (2002)
24-26	Crockett (2002); Wigle & Wilcox (2002)
Part II	
1	General demographic question
2	Arick & Krug, (1993)
3	Arick & Krug (1993)
4	O'Hara (2005)
5	O'Hara (2005)

determine if there was a relationship between the percentage of SWD served in the LRE and the role of Georgia's special education directors.

Procedures

The researcher forwarded a copy of the survey instrument, a cover letter outlining the purpose of the study to the participants, and the other required documentation to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Georgia Southern University for approval. After

approval was obtained by the IRB, the researcher conducted a pilot study of the instrument with the six directors in the researcher's RESA area.

Pilot of the survey instrument. The researcher conducted a pilot study of the survey instrument with the six special education directors in the researcher's local Middle Georgia RESA area. The researcher mailed the pilot instrument to the six directors along with a cover letter containing the informed consent letter (see Appendix E). The researcher also emailed each Middle Georgia special education director as a reminder. In addition, the researcher telephoned several of the special education directors as an additional reminder approximately one week after the pilot instruments were distributed.

All six of the special education directors in the Middle Georgia RESA area participated in the pilot survey. However, the researcher discovered that one director did not complete the column for school level involvement on Part I of the instrument. The researcher contacted that director who subsequently completed the section. This omission prompted the researcher to bold the word, both, in the directions section of Part I of the survey instrument in an effort to prompt respondents to complete both the district and school level columns. Also, the researcher moved the answer line for question 5 in Part II survey to the space directly after the question mark, since several of the pilot participants wrote the answer to the question in several different places on the original instrument. The researcher informed the Georgia Southern University IRB by telephone of the changes made to the survey instrument prior to the statewide distribution. All changes to the survey instrument were minor, and the IRB contact verbally agreed to the changes.

Further information obtained from the statistical analysis of the pilot survey results revealed a high level of reliability. The researcher utilized a statistical analysis of internal reliability, Cronbach's coefficient alpha, for questions in Part I of the survey instrument that yielded a high level of consistency, an alpha coefficient of .896, for district level questions and a coefficient of .930 for the school level questions. Therefore, the researcher determined that there was no need to revise the content of the questions on Part I of the survey. Lastly, telephone and personal conversations with several of the pilot participants revealed their comfort with the format and questions contained in the pilot instrument. The six directors from the researcher's regional education service area (RESA) participated in the pilot of the survey instrument and did not complete the final survey instrument.

Survey distribution. After the pilot was completed and minor revisions were made to the survey instrument, the researcher mailed one copy of the cover letter and survey instrument to the remaining 174 special education directors in Georgia. Ms. Marlene Bryar, State Special Education Director, provided the researcher with the names and mailing address labels for all of the special education directors in the State. The researcher did not personally identify any specific director or county in the reporting of the data.

The first mailing contained a survey instrument, a cover letter outlining informed consent, and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope with the researcher's home address. After a two week period, the researcher conducted a second mailing to the same 174 special education directors in the state. The second mailing contained a second cover letter, another survey instrument and a self-addressed stamped envelope. In the second

cover letter, participants were asked to disregard the second survey instrument if they had responded to the first survey mailing (see Appendix D).

According to calculations obtained from The Survey System (www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm), the researcher needed to obtain a response rate of 68% (n=121) to obtain a confidence level of 95% with a confidence interval of $\pm$ 5. De vaus (2002) indicated that the size of the population is not relevant as long as the appropriate size of the responding sample is determined by the researcher. One hundred eleven (n=111) surveys were returned for a response rate of 64%.

Focus group. After the preliminary survey data were collected and analyzed, the researcher developed topic questions for the focus group based on the research questions. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), focus groups are more natural than one-on-one interviews and often yield results with high face validity. Focus groups also cause interaction between the participants which often results in discovering information that is not easily discovered in surveys alone (Glesne, 2006). The researcher developed eight questions based on a guide developed by Krueger and Casey (2000), experts in the area of focus group research. The questions were designed to solicit additional information related to the roles of Georgia's special education directors in the implementation of inclusion (see Appendix F).

The focus group included three special education directors from the researcher's local RESA area. The researcher selected this group of directors due to their accessibility and convenience. All six special education directors from the Middle Georgia RESA area were invited to participate in the session. However, three of the participants were unable to attend the session due to prior commitments or scheduling conflicts.

Nevertheless, of the three focus group participants, one represented a district of less than 250 students with disabilities (SWD), one represented a district of 500-599 SWD, and one director represented a large school district with over 3000 SWD. The researcher, a director in a district with 500-999 SWD served as the moderator of the session. The special education directors in the researcher's RESA meet on a monthly basis at the RESA headquarters at Macon State College. However, the researcher conducted the focus group at the researcher's local school district on June 7, 2007. The focus group session lasted one hour.

The researcher solicited assistance from a local graduate student to electronically record and transcribe the focus group session. The researcher and the graduate student, an expert in inclusion implementation, reviewed all transcripts. The researcher identified themes that emerged from the participants' responses. Focus group results were reported in an a priori manner to answer the research questions.

Data Analysis

The researcher utilized the Statistical Package for Social Sciences 13.0 (SPSS) (2005) to analyze responses to the survey instrument. Part I consisted of questions designed to solicit Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at both the district and school levels. Participants responded to 26 statements in 8 major categories. The 8 categories were: vision, legal/ethical, communication, planning/implementation, budget/resources, professional learning, curriculum/instructional support, and evaluation of programs.

Participants were asked to rate their level of role involvement at both the district and school level for each of the 26 items within the 8 categories on a Likert scale from

1-5. Higher responses on each of the 26 items revealed higher levels of involvement for each of the eight major categories. Part II of the instrument contained questions designed to measure general demographic information related to the experiences of Georgia's special education directors.

A mean and standard deviation was calculated for each of the 26 responses on both the district and school level statements in Part I of the survey instrument. In addition, the researcher used a one-way ANOVA to uncover possible relationships between their current and previous work experiences, select demographic factors (e.g. number of students with disabilities (SWD) in the system, and percentage of SWD served in the regular classroom for more than 80% of the day) and the level of role involvement of the special education directors at both the district and school levels. The researcher also conducted a post hoc Scheffe` test to determine additional levels of significance between the means of the various groups.

The researcher analyzed the notes and the transcription from the focus group session to group responses. The responses of the focus group participants were combined with the data from the survey instrument in an effort to answer the research questions in an a priori manner.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of Georgia's special education directors with the implementation of inclusion. All 180 special education directors had the opportunity to participate in the study. Six directors in the researcher's local RESA area participated in the pilot study of the instrument. The researcher mailed the survey instrument to 174 special education directors.

The survey instrument consisted of two major parts. Part I of the survey measured Georgia's special education directors' level of involvement with inclusion implementation at both the district and school level for eight major categories. Part II of the instrument solicited general information related to the special education directors' experiences and select demographic factors with inclusion implementation.

The researcher also conducted a focus group with three of the six special education directors in the researcher's local RESA area. Chapter IV includes a report of the data in both table and narrative formats and a detailed analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 4

REPORT OF THE DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the roles of Georgia's special education directors in the implementation of inclusion. Although inclusion is a timely topic in public education due to the increased use of the model to assist in meeting the mandates of *IDEA 2004 and NCLB,* the educational research is limited in the special education director's role in the process. Therefore, the researcher designed a mixed methods study consisting of the distribution of a survey instrument and the use of a focus group in an attempt to learn more about the roles of Georgia's special education directors with inclusion implementation.

Chapter IV includes the research questions along with a description of the research design. This chapter also contains a discussion of the findings from the pilot of the survey instrument and a demographic profile of the survey respondents, or participants, in this study. The researcher reports the various findings from the survey instrument in both table and narrative format, along with data obtained from the focus group, using the research questions as headers for each section.

Research Questions

The researcher examined the roles of Georgia's special education directors in the implementation of inclusion programs and answered the following questions:

1. What is Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at the school district level?

2. What is Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at the school building level?
3. Is there a difference in the level of role involvement based on educationally related work experiences?
4. Is there a difference in the level of role involvement based on system demographics?

Procedures

The researcher conducted a pilot study of the instrument with a convenience sample of the six special education directors who work in the researcher's RESA area once the prospectus was approved and the proposal was evaluated by the IRB. The six directors who participated in the pilot study of the instrument represented districts that were small, medium and large in size related to the number of students with disabilities served in the district. The researcher only made slight revisions to the instrument directions and survey format based on the pilot study. The researcher also used the results of the pilot survey to measure the reliability of the instrument. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .896 was obtained for the district questions and a coefficient of .930 was obtained for the school questions in Part I of the instrument.

After completion of the pilot study, the researcher mailed a copy of the survey instrument to the remaining 174 special education directors in the State of Georgia. The researcher used the mailing labels provided by the State Department of Education (DOE). The first mailing contained a survey instrument, a cover letter outlining informed consent, and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope with the researcher's home address. After a two week period, the researcher conducted a second mailing to the same 174 special education directors in the state. The second mailing contained a second cover

letter, another survey instrument and a self-addressed stamped envelope. In the second cover letter, participants were asked to disregard the second survey instrument if they had responded to the first survey mailing (see Appendix D).

Survey Response Rate

The response rate for both survey distributions was 64% (n=111). A response rate of 68% was needed to obtain statistically sound results. Therefore, the results of the study should be interpreted with caution due to the lower than anticipated response rate. The researcher elected not to use seven of the surveys since there were a significant lack of responses to survey items or missing demographic data, namely questions four and five in Part II of the survey instrument. The researcher deemed that the LRE and number of SWD information were important variables to consider in the subsequent statistical analysis. Furthermore, several respondents did not complete both columns in Part I of the survey instrument, despite the revisions made to the directions that resulted from a similar omission by one director in the pilot study. Since the researcher elected not to code the surveys to check response rates by county, the researcher had no method to contact the participants for clarification when surveys were incomplete. In addition, not all respondents answered the questions related to previous work experiences in Part II of the survey. However, the researcher elected to analyze the responses in this section in an effort to answer the third research question to determine if any relationships existed between previous work experiences and the directors' current roles during inclusion implementation.

Demographic Data for the Population

Table 2 gives a detailed breakdown of the demographic data contained in Part II. One hundred and eleven (n=111) special education directors responded to the survey. The researcher only analyzed 104 of the surveys since seven of the surveys were incomplete. Eleven (10.6%) of the survey respondents were male, and 93 (89.4%) of the respondents were female. The previous work experiences varied for the respondents. Thirty-nine (37.5%) of the respondents had 0 to 5 years of experience as a special education director. Sixty-five (62.5%) of the special education directors responding to the survey had 6 or more years of experience.

Of the 99 directors who responded to the question related to years of previous experience as a special education teacher, 97% of the special education directors reported having some previous experience in this area. A fewer number of respondents (n=48) answered the question related to years of experience as a general education teacher. However, of the 48 respondents, 81.4% indicated some previous general education teaching experience.

Only 37 special education directors responded to the question regarding the years of experience as a principal. Of those respondents, more than half (n=51.4%) reported no previous experience as a principal. However, a greater number of special education directors reported having some experience in some other field of administration. Of the 72 special education directors who responded to this question, 84.7% reported some previous experience in another administration field.

Table 2

Demographics of Survey Participants

Title	Category	Frequency	%
Gender			
	Male	11	10.6
	Female	93	89.4
Years of Experience as a Special Education Director			
	0-5 years	39	37.5
	6-10 years	21	20.2
	11-15 years	6	5.8
	16+years	38	36.5
Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher			
	NA	3	3.0
	0-5 years	19	19.2
	6-10 years	33	33.3
	11-15 years	17	17.2
	16+ years	27	27.3
Years of Experience as a General Education Teacher			
	NA	9	18.8
	0-5 years	25	52.1
	6-10 years	9	18.8
	11-15 years	2	4.2
	16+ years	3	6.3
Years of Experience as a Principal			
	NA	19	51.4
	0-5 years	14	37.8
	6-10 years	2	5.4
	11-15 years	1	2.7
	16+ years	1	2.7

Table 2 (Continued)

Demographics of Survey Participants

Title	Category	Frequency	%
Years of Experience in Other Administration			
	NA	11	15.3
	0-5 years	34	47.2
	6-10 years	12	16.7
	11-15 years	8	11.1
	16+ years	7	9.7
Number of Students with Disabilities			
	3000+	5	4.8
	1000-2999	24	23.1
	500-999	27	26.0
	250-499	33	31.7
	<250	15	14.4

Note: Responses were limited in general education, principal, and other administration.

Information from Part II of the survey also yielded important information regarding the system demographics of the respondents. A majority of the special education directors responding to the survey instrument were from systems with fewer than 999 students with disabilities (SWD). Only five directors were from the largest sized systems with 3000+ SWD. Additional data were obtained revealing the percentage of students with disabilities served in the general education classroom more than 80% of the day, or LRE data. LRE percentages ranged from 4% to 99% with a mean LRE of 62.05%, median LRE of 61.50%, and mode of 60.0%.

Findings

The researcher designed Part I of the survey instrument to obtain information regarding the level of the special education directors' role involvement at both the district and school levels with inclusion implementation. Respondents were asked to rate their level of involvement on 26 statements in 8 major categories. The major categories were: vision; legal/ethical; communication; planning/implementation; budget/resources; professional learning; curriculum/instructional support; and evaluation of programs. Each of the 8 categories and 26 statements were based on the review of the educational literature related to the roles of the special education director during inclusion implementation. Directors responded to each of the 26 statements using a five point Likert- scale. Participants chose from the following: (1) no involvement; (2) little involvement; (3) some involvement; (4) high involvement; and (5) extensive involvement. Table 4 reports means and standard deviations for each of the 26 statements at both the district and school levels.

Role Involvement at District and School Levels

Initial analyses focused on the level of role involvement of Georgia's special education directors at the district and school levels. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated for each survey item by category and for the mean response within each category. These findings are discussed separately below by district and school levels.

Discussion

The researcher answered the following questions related to Georgia's special education directors' roles with inclusion implementation at the district and school levels:

Directors' District Level Role

Question 1: What is Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at the school district level?

The researcher used descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations to analyze the responses in Part I of the survey to determine the special education directors' level of role involvement at both the district and school levels. As the data in Tables 3 and 4 reveal, Georgia's special education directors reported high levels (as defined by the rating of 4 on the Likert scale) of role involvement at the district level in 7 of the 8 categories on Part I of the survey when calculating the mean scores for each.

The highest levels of district involvement were in the areas of vision, legal/ethical, and budget/resources. In the area of vision, directors reported the highest level of involvement with the development of and communication of vision to administrators at the district level and slightly lower levels of communication of their inclusion vision to other stakeholders.

The researcher also analyzed the focus group data to determine themes relative to the directors' roles at the district levels. One focus group participant spoke of the importance of the special education director's vision. This respondent, a director in a system of over 3000+ students with disabilities explained:

> I don't get in the schools and see the kids much. I have staff to do that for me….I have to impart the vision and belief and the enthusiasm to a set of people that carry that on at the school level.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Responses to Part I: Role Involvement District Level

	District	
	Mean	SD
Vision		
1. Possess vision	4.76	.451
2. Communicate vision administrators	4.73	.487
3. Communicate vision stakeholders	4.40	.676
Legal/Ethical		
4. Interpret law/polices	4.66	.617
5. Provide inclusion services	4.66	.568
6. Demonstrate ethical practice	4.89	.339
Communication		
7. Implement communication procedures	4.17	.769
8. Assist with stakeholder partnerships	4.07	.839
9. Communicate with all stakeholders	4.19	.789
Planning/Implementation		
10. Gather information	4.55	.621
11. Implement programs	4.41	.663
12. Assist with scheduling	3.88	1.312
13. Develop collaborative programs	4.17	1.028
Budget/Resources		
14. Develop instructional supply budgets	4.75	.635
15. Fund inclusion instructional staff	4.52	.881
16. Ensure resource equity	4.72	.630
Professional Learning (PL)		
17. Collaboration of reg. and sped. teachers	4.47	.750
18. Provide PL to reg. classroom teachers	4.08	.992
19. Provide PL related to student needs	4.44	.786

Table 3 (Continued)

Means and Standard Deviations for Responses to Part I: Role Involvement District Level

	District	
	Mean	SD
Curriculum/Instructional Support		
20. Access to Ga. Performance Standards	4.71	.552
21. Ensure teaching strategies	4.22	.750
22. Ensure individual needs are met	4.38	.713
23. Provide assistive technology	4.41	.745
Evaluation of Programs		
24. Conduct ongoing evaluations	3.87	.966
25. Collect staff feedback	3.98	1.014
26. Monitor inclusion programs	3.92	.904

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Categories Part I: Role Involvement by District

Category	District Mean	SD
Vision	4.63	.538
Legal/Ethical	4.74	.508
Communication	4.14	.799
Planning/Implementation	4.25	.906
Budget/Resources	4.66	.715
Professional Learning	4.33	.843
Curriculum/Instructional Support	4.43	.690
Evaluation of Programs	3.92	.961

Note: 2 = little involvement; 3 = some involvement; 4 = high involvement.

In the legal/ethical category, Georgia's directors reported highest levels of involvement in the area of ethical practice (M=4.89; SD=.339). The focus group participants, however, never referenced their legal or ethical roles while describing their roles with inclusion implementation. On the contrary, directors in the focus group spoke of their roles during inclusion implementation as supporters and encouragers in the process.

In the category of budget/resources, directors reported the highest level of involvement with the development of instructional supply budgets. Overall, Georgia's special education directors also reported high levels of involvement at the district level with budgeting on the survey instrument (M = 4.66; SD = .715).

Georgia's special education directors reported relatively high levels of involvement in most of the other 8 categories. In the area of communication, directors reported the highest levels of communication with all stakeholders. In the category of planning/implementation, Georgia's directors revealed higher levels of involvement with the gathering of information for inclusion program development. On the other hand, scheduling was the lowest area of involvement. In the categories of professional learning and curriculum/instructional support, directors reported high levels of involvement. The highest level of involvement in the area of professional learning was in the support of collaboration between regular and special education teachers. In the curriculum category, access to the Georgia Performance Standards was the highest area.

The lowest area of district level involvement was revealed in the category of evaluation of programs. Directors reported consistent levels of "some involvement" with

the evaluation and monitoring of inclusion programs. The focus group participants also did not report role involvement in the area of program evaluation.

Directors' School Level Role

Question 2: What is Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at the school building level?

The results of the survey instrument revealed that Georgia's special education directors reported some to high levels of involvement (as reflected on the Likert scale) with inclusion implementation at the school level (see Tables 5 and 6). However, respondents reported the highest level of school involvement (M = 4.79; SD=.533) with question 6 in Part I of the survey, "I demonstrate a high standard of ethical practice." Directors also rated other areas in the legal/ethical category as areas of high school level involvement.

In the area of vision, Georgia's directors reported the lowest level of involvement (e.g., some involvement) with the communication of vision to stakeholders at the school level. However, the highest area in the vision category was in the communication of their vision to the school level administrators. Overall, Georgia's directors reported some involvement with communication of inclusion programs at the school level. The lowest levels of involvement were in the areas of stakeholder communication and the development of stakeholder partnerships at the school level. On the other hand, directors in the focus group discussed the importance of educating stakeholders, namely parents, teachers and principals regarding inclusion implementation, particularly when there is a negative response to the practice.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for Responses to Part I: School Role Involvement

	School	
	Mean	SD
Vision		
1. Possess vision	4.07	.851
2. Communicate vision administrators	4.44	.798
3. Communicate vision stakeholders	3.86	.960
Legal/Ethical		
4. Interpret law/polices	4.31	.956
5. Provide inclusion services	4.21	.821
6. Demonstrate ethical practice	4.79	.533
Communication		
7. Implement communication procedures	3.58	.975
8. Assist with stakeholder partnerships	3.51	.995
9. Communicate with all stakeholders	3.53	1.042
Planning/Implementation		
10. Gather information	3.96	.913
11. Implement programs	3.82	.932
12. Assist with scheduling	3.41	1.319
13. Develop collaborative programs	3.72	1.083
Budget/Resources		
14. Develop instructional supply budgets	3.89	1.284
15. Fund inclusion instructional staff	3.97	1.218
16. Ensure resource equity	4.02	1.231
Professional Learning (PL)		
17. Collaboration of reg. and sped. teachers	3.95	.979
18. Provide PL to reg. classroom teachers	3.63	1.071
19. Provide PL related to student needs	3.95	.989

Table 5 (Continued)

Means and Standard Deviations for Responses to Part I: School Role Involvement

	School	
	Mean	SD
Curriculum/Instructional Support		
20. Access to Ga. Performance Standards	4.27	.819
21. Ensure teaching strategies	3.76	.995
22. Ensure individual needs are met	3.89	.896
23. Provide assistive technology	3.98	.912
Evaluation of Programs		
24. Conduct ongoing evaluations	3.46	1.083
25. Collect staff feedback	3.63	1.057
26. Monitor inclusion programs	3.52	.989

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Categories Part I: Role Involvement by School Level

Category	School Mean	SD
Vision	4.12	.869
Legal/Ethical	4.44	.770
Communication	3.36	1.004
Planning/Implementation	3.73	1.062
Budget/Resources	3.96	1.244
Professional Learning	3.84	1.013
Curriculum/Instructional Support	3.98	.905
Evaluation of Programs	3.54	1.043

Note: 2 = little involvement; 3 = some involvement; 4 = high involvement.

In the category of planning/implementation, directors reported the highest level of involvement with gathering information for program development; whereas, directors revealed the lowest level of school level involvement with scheduling. However, focus group participants reported high levels of assistance with scheduling at the school level and assistance with the gathering of information for inclusion program development.

In the area of budget/resources, Georgia's special education directors reported some to high levels of involvement. The lowest level of involvement was in the development of instructional supply budgets. Higher levels were reported in the areas of the provision of instructional staff and resource equity. One director from the focus group also described the role of budgeting from the school level perspective:

> In our system, we look at data (by school). Specifically, (we) looked at how many (full time equivalent) FTE supportive instruction units after the October count. I wanted to see who was actually doing what we told them we needed to do. That gave me a very clear picture, a distribution chart from zero to 30 odd FTEs and had made changes, hired and moved (staff), to put (inclusion) in place.

In the professional learning category, Georgia's directors reported the lowest level of involvement with the provision of professional learning to regular education teachers. Other statements in this area were rated in the some involvement range. However, all 3 focus group participants spoke of the provision of professional learning to the school level. Two of the three focus group directors reported providing professional learning through workshops that they personally developed and delivered to staff. Two directors also reported contracting with outside consultants to provide professional learning to staff at the school level.

The lowest level of school involvement was in the category of evaluation of programs. The evaluation category contained the following three questions: (1) I conduct ongoing evaluations of inclusion programs; (2) I collect feedback from staff; and (3) I regularly monitor inclusion programs. The lowest area of program evaluation was revealed in the monitoring of inclusion programs.

Additional Findings from the Focus Group

The participants in the focus group session described their roles with inclusion implementation from more of a school level perspective. When the researcher posed a question to the directors regarding their present role with inclusion implementation, directors in the focus group described their roles from the following perspective: (1) educating principals, parents and teachers about the merits of inclusion; (2) providing professional learning support for inclusion at the school level either by the director or through a consultant; (3) providing moral support to teachers and staff at the school level; (4) building support from the building principals; and (5) securing funding or analyzing the data to secure appropriate human resources for the school.

The overarching theme that emerged from the focus group was the special education director's role in securing some level of support from the building principal in order to make inclusion implementation successful. Several special education directors spoke of the need to educate building principals. One director remarked:

> I had to build support among key principals. And I haven't done a good enough job of that. In a principals' meeting, when a principal says something negative, I got to have a principal across the room speak up and say, "Well, my experience (with inclusion) has been this is the greatest thing that has happened for kids with disabilities."

Other directors in the focus group also noted the importance of principal support for inclusion implementation. One director explained, “Some of the schools, I am in there and the principals are seeking me out. Then other schools are trying to close me out.”

One director spoke of her frustration when changes in building administration occurred. This director explained that it was difficult to implement inclusion when there was principal turnover in her district. She found that one principal’s enthusiasm for inclusion would be followed by another who was not as concerned. Another director indicated the importance of recognizing that principals are at different developmental levels with inclusion based on their knowledge and experiences and echoed the need for directors to realize these different levels during inclusion implementation.

In regards to professional learning support, one director spoke of the special education teachers’ resistance to implementation. This director explained that the special education teachers viewed inclusion negatively because the teachers were accustomed to self-contained and resource service delivery models. This same special education director indicated that her own personal teaching experiences as a special education self-contained and inclusion teacher helped her to provide professional learning to school staff. This special education director’s previous teaching experiences gave more credibility to the professional learning support.

Directors in the focus group also spoke to the importance of supporting teachers and staff at the school level. While some of this support came from professional learning, additional inclusion staff was also described as a means to provide support for inclusion at the school level. One director explained that it was also vital to have the support of the school superintendent during inclusion implementation. The support from the principal,

this director explained, helped during the times that principals were resistant to inclusion. Also support from the superintendent is crucial during times when extra human resource support is needed for implementation.

Work Experience and Role Involvement

Question 3: Is there a difference in the level of role involvement based on educationally related work experiences?

The researcher used an ANOVA to determine if any relationships existed between educationally related work experiences of Georgia's special education directors and their roles during inclusion implementation. Directors answered questions related to: (a) gender, (b) total years of experience as a special education director, (c) previous years of experience as a special education teacher, (d) previous years of experience as a general education teacher, (e) previous experience as a principal, and (f) previous experience in other administration.

Years of Experience as a Special Education Director

The researcher used a one way ANOVA statistical test to determine if a relationship existed between the level of role involvement and years of experience as a special education director. Years of experience were grouped into four categories: 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years. Means and standard deviations for involvement at the district and school levels were calculated for each item based on the years of experience category. Table H1 (See Appendix H) presents the descriptive statistics along with the resulting F-value for each ANOVA test. If a significant difference was found among the years of experience category means, then Scheffe` post hoc tests were performed to

pinpoint the specific differences among these categories. All results are presented and discussed by the 8 survey categories.

No significant differences were found in the level of role involvement of special education directors at the district level based on years of experience as a director. However, significant differences were found in item means for the level of role involvement at the school level. In the area of vision, directors with 11-15 years of experience displayed the highest level of involvement with communication of their vision ($M = 4.67$; $SD = .516$). Special education directors with 0-5 years of experience displayed the second highest level of involvement ($M = 4.03$; $SD = .903$). Special education directors with 16+ years revealed the lowest level of involvement at the school level ($M = 3.66$; $SD = .994$). However, a post hoc analysis revealed that only the highest (11-15 years) and the lowest (16+ years) means were significantly different from one another.

In the category of legal/ethical, there were no significant differences in role involvement at either the district or school level with directors reporting consistently high levels of involvement. In the category of communication, the ANOVA results were not significant. Directors reported some to high levels of involvement in the area of communication at the district level. However, communication was lower at the school level.

Analyses revealed two significant differences based on the years of experience as a special education director for two school level items in the planning and implementation category, assistance with scheduling and developing collaborative programs. Directors with 11-15 years reported the highest levels of involvement with

scheduling at the school level. However, a post hoc analysis revealed that only the directors with 0-5 years and 6-10 years means were statistically significant, with directors with 0-5 years reporting significantly higher levels of involvement with scheduling than those with 6-10 years of director's experience. On the item related to the development of collaborative programs, directors with 11-15 years experience reported the highest level of role involvement. Nevertheless, the post hoc analysis revealed again that only directors with 0-5 years and 6-10 year means were statistically different. Directors with 0-5 years of special education director experience again reported the higher levels of involvement with the development of collaborative programs than those with 6-10 years of experience as a special education director.

The ANOVA did not uncover any significant differences in the means in the budget/resource or planning categories for years of experience as a special education director. Overall, directors reported high levels of district involvement in budgeting and resource management at the district level. Directors reported some involvement in the area of school level budgeting. This pattern continued in the category of professional learning. Directors reported high levels of involvement with professional learning at the district level with no significant difference at the school level.

Analyses uncovered significant differences based on the years of experience for three school level involvement items in the curriculum/instructional category. Directors with 11-15 years of experience reported significantly higher levels of school level involvement with provision of the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) to students in the inclusion setting than directors with 6-10 years of experience. A post hoc analysis did not reveal any additional significant differences based on experience. Georgia's directors

with 11-15 years of experience reported significantly higher levels of evidence based teaching strategies were in place than those directors with 6-10 years of experience. Again, a post hoc analysis did not reveal additional areas of significance. Directors with 11-15 years of experience revealed significantly higher levels of the assurance that the individual needs of the special education students were met at the school building level than directors with 6-10 years of experience. However, a Scheffe` post hoc analysis did not uncover any further differences between the mean years of experience as a special education director and their level of involvement with curriculum/instructional support during inclusion implementation.

Georgia's special education directors with 11-15 years of experience (M = 4.33; SD = .816) revealed higher levels of involvement with evaluation of programs at the school level than directors with 16+ years of experience (M = 3.08; SD = 1.038). A post hoc analysis revealed the only significant difference existed, however, between directors with 0-5 (M = 3.82; SD = .997) and 16+ years of experience. The special education directors with 6-10 years of experience reported significantly lower levels of involvement with the collection of feedback from staff during inclusion implementation; whereas, directors with 11-15 years reported the highest levels of involvement in this area of program evaluation. A post hoc analysis did not reveal any additional areas of significance.

Special Education Teaching Experience

The researcher used a one way ANOVA statistical test to determine if a relationship existed between the level of role involvement and previous years of experience as a special education teacher. Years of experience were grouped into five

categories: NA, 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years. Means and standard deviations for involvement at the district and school levels were calculated for each item based on the years of experience category. Table H2 (See Appendix) presents the descriptive statistics along with the resulting F-value for each ANOVA test. If a significant difference was found among the years of experience category means, then the researcher applied Scheffe` post hoc tests to pinpoint the specific differences among these categories. All results are presented and discussed by the eight survey categories.

Ninety-nine of the special education directors responded to the question regarding previous experience as a special education teacher. No significant differences were found in the level of role involvement at the school level for the eight categories based on the previous years of special education teaching experience. One significant relationship, however, was found in the district level provision of professional learning for collaboration between special and regular education teachers. Directors with 0-5 years of previous special education teaching experience reported the highest levels of involvement with this item (M = 4.79; SD = .419). Directors with NA years of special education teaching experience reported the lowest levels of involvement (M = 3.33; SD = .577). A post hoc test revealed that special education directors with 0-5 years of previous teaching experience displayed significantly higher levels of involvement with professional learning in the area of collaboration than those directors that reported no (NA) prior special education teaching experience.

Two of the directors from the focus group referred to how their previous special education teaching experiences helped them. One, a former inclusion teacher, indicated that her past experience as a co-teacher in an inclusion model made her more credible to

staff when providing professional learning. The other, a director with experience in both the special and general classroom, indicated that her experiences in both aspects of instruction made her better understand the individual needs of all children in the classroom. This director also spoke of her recent experiences as a substitute on days when her district is in need. This director indicated that it was important for her to be involved at the classroom level, even as a substitute. There were no significant differences found in the level of role involvement based on the previous special education teaching experience and any of the other 7 major categories on Part I of the survey.

General Education Teaching Experience

The researcher used a one way ANOVA statistical test to determine if a relationship existed between the level of role involvement and previous years of experience as a general education teacher. Years of experience were originally grouped into five categories: NA, 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years. However, due to the low number of responses to this item (n = 48), the researcher recoded the categories in the following manner: NA, 0-5, 6-10, 11+ years. Means and standard deviations for involvement at the district and school levels were calculated for each item based on the years of previous experience as a general education teacher category. Table H3 (see Appendix) presents the descriptive statistics along with the resulting F-value for each ANOVA test. If a significant difference was found among the years of experience category means, then the researcher applied Scheffe` post hoc tests to pinpoint the specific differences among these categories. All results are presented and discussed by the eight survey categories.

Forty-eight (n=48) of the special education directors responded to this question. Significant differences were found in groups based on years of general education teaching experience means for the level of role involvement in the school level categories of vision, legal/ethical, planning/implementation and professional learning based on the directors' previous years of regular education teaching experience.

In the category of vision, directors with 11+ years of general education teaching experience reported significantly higher levels of involvement with the communication of their inclusion vision to the school level stakeholders than directors reporting no (NA) experience as a general education teacher. A post hoc analysis did not reveal any additional areas of significance between the means.

In the category of legal/ethical, directors with no (NA) previous general education teaching experience (M = 5.00; SD = .000) reported extensive levels of ethical practice at the school level. Directors with 6-10 years of previous general education teaching experience reported lower, but a high level of involvement in the same category (M = 4.33; SD = .866). A post hoc analysis revealed that the highest (NA) and lowest (6-10 years) means were significantly different. Further, directors with 0-5 years (M = 4.92; SD = .227) and 6-10 years also reported significantly different roles based on previous years of experience as a general education teacher.

In the area of communication, directors reporting the most experience (11+) as a general education teacher reported significantly higher levels of communication with stakeholders at the school level (M = 4.20; SD = .837) than directors reporting no (NA) experience (M = 2.67; SD = 1.500). A post hoc analysis did not reveal additional areas of significance.

In the category of planning/implementation, directors with the 11+ years of general education teaching experience reported extensive levels of role involvement with scheduling of inclusion classes at both the district (M = 5.00; SD = .000) and school levels (M = 5.00; SD = .000). Again, directors reporting no (NA) previous general education teaching experience reported the lowest levels of involvement with scheduling at both the district (M = 3.33; SD = 1.803) and school levels (M = 3.00; SD = 2.000). A Scheffe` post hoc analysis did not uncover any additional areas of significance.

In the professional learning category, an ANOVA uncovered one significant difference in the provision of school level professional learning to regular education teachers based on the previous years of general teaching experience. Directors with 11+ years of previous general education teaching experience reported significantly higher (M = 4.60; SD = .548) levels of role involvement on this item than those with no (NA) experience (M = 2.89; SD = 1.054). A post hoc analysis did not reveal additional areas of significance.

There were no other areas of significance in the three categories of budget/resources, curriculum/instructional support, and evaluation of programs based on the ANOVA.

Principal and Other Administration Experience

The researcher used a one way ANOVA statistical test to determine if a relationship existed between the level of role involvement and previous years of experience as a principal. Years of principal experience were originally grouped into five categories: NA, 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16+ years. However, due to the low number of responses to this item, the researcher recoded the categories in the following manner:

NA, 0-5, 6+ years. Means and standard deviations for involvement at the district and school levels were calculated for each item based on the years of previous experience as a principal category. Table H4 (see Appendix) presents the descriptive statistics along with the resulting F-value for each ANOVA test. If a significant difference was found among the years of experience category means, then the researcher applied Scheffe` post hoc tests to pinpoint the specific differences among these categories. All results are presented and discussed by the eight survey categories. Only 37 directors responded to the question of previous years of experience as a principal. No significant differences were found in the level of role involvement of special education directors at the district or school level in the following categories: vision, legal/ethical, communication, planning/implementation, budget resources, curriculum/instructional support, and evaluation of programs. An ANOVA revealed two areas of significance in the category of professional learning between the previous years of principal experience and the special education directors' level of role involvement at the school level on two items. Special education directors with 0-5 years of previous principal experience reported significantly higher levels of involvement with collaboration training between regular and special education teachers (M = 4.57; SD = .646). Of those responding, special education directors with no previous principal experience reported significantly lower levels of involvement with professional learning on the collaboration of special and regular education teachers (M =3.68; SD = 1.003) as revealed by a post hoc analysis.

Further analyses exposed similar differences between the previous years of experience as a principal and Georgia's special education directors' provision of professional learning to regular education teachers at the school level. A Scheffe` post

hoc analysis revealed that directors with 0-5 years previous principal experience reported significantly higher levels of role involvement with professional learning for regular education teachers (M = 4.36; SD = .842) than directors who reported no (NA) prior experience as a principal (M = 3.26; SD = 1.098).

In the area of other administration experience, no significant differences were found between other previous administrative experiences and the level of role involvement of special education directors at either the district or school level across all eight categories. Georgia's special education directors reported some to high levels of involvement in all 8 categories despite their years of previous administrative experience.

None of the directors in the focus group reported previous experience as a building principal. However, two of the directors in the focus group discussed the relationship of their other previous administrative experiences to their present roles as special education directors. One director reported several previous experiences in other school districts. Another director in the focus group was a special education coordinator in a 3000+ school district before assuming her present position as director in a smaller system. Both of these special education directors described their previous administrative roles as learning opportunities, having worked in systems where inclusion implementation was further advanced than in the present systems they now direct. These same directors also discussed how their previous experiences helped to build their vision and focus in their current position.

Role Involvement and System Demographics

Question 4: Is there a difference in the level of role involvement based on system demographics?

The respondents completed questions 4 and 5 on Part II of the survey instrument revealing two system demographics: (a) the number of students with disabilities (SWD) in the school system using one of the five size categories created by the State DOE: 3000+, 1000-2999, 500-999, 250-499, and less than 250; and (2) the percentage of students with disabilities ages 6 and above who are served in environment 1, a State DOE classification in which students are served in the general education setting 80% or more of the school day, also referred to as the least restrictive environment (LRE) data. The LRE percentage is the measure the State DOE uses to determine compliance with performance indicator #9. The researcher eliminated surveys in which these sections were not completed since the researcher deemed these two demographic areas were important in answering research question 4.

Number of Students with Disabilities in the School District

The researcher used a one way ANOVA statistical test to determine if a relationship existed between the level of role involvement and the number of students with disabilities (SWD) in the school system, also referred to as system size. The number of SWD was grouped into five categories by the State Department: 3000+, 1000-2999, 500-999, 250-499, and less than 250 SWD. Means and standard deviations for involvement at the district and school levels were calculated for each item based on the number of SWD category. Table H5 (see Appendix) presents the descriptive statistics along with the resulting F-value for each ANOVA test. If a significant difference was found among the years of experience category means, then the researcher applied Scheffe` post hoc tests to pinpoint the specific differences among these categories. All results are presented and discussed by the eight survey categories. The analyses revealed

14 significant areas in 5 of the 8 categories. Two of the 14 statements of significance were in the area of district level implementation of inclusion and 12 were in the area of school level implementation.

In the category of vision, special education directors from systems of less than 250 SWD reported significantly higher levels of vision (M = 4.53; SD = .640) and communication of their inclusion vision (M = 4.67; SD = .488) to all administrators than directors from districts with the most SWD (3000+) (M = 3.40; SD = 1.140) (M= 3.60; SD = .894). A post hoc analysis did not reveal any additional significant differences between the levels of vision involvement means based on the number of SWD in the district.

Further, in the category of planning/implementation, special education directors from districts with fewer than 250 SWD revealed significantly higher levels of school level involvement with inclusion planning in the areas of gathering information (M = 4.27; SD = .884), assistance with scheduling (M = 3.93; SD = 1.163), and the development of collaborative general and special education programs (M = 4.00; SD = 1.069) than directors from systems with the largest numbers of SWD (3000+) (M = 2.60; SD = .548) (M = 1.80; SD = 1.304) (M = 2.40; SD = .894). However, a post hoc analysis uncovered significant differences between the means in the area of gathering information for school level inclusion program development between the following size groups: 3000+ and 500-999 SWD; 3000+ and 250-499 SWD; and 3000+ and 250< SWD. Directors with fewer SWD reported significantly higher levels of role involvement with gathering information than those directors from the largest systems of 3000+ students.

A post hoc analysis revealed a significant difference for scheduling assistance occurred between directors from school systems with 3000+ SWD and directors from systems with fewer than 250 SWD. There were no additional significant differences between the means in the area of the school level development of collaborative programs and the roles of special education directors based on the number of SWD in the school system.

In the category of budget/resources, Georgia's special education directors also revealed high levels of involvement at both the district and school levels. A post hoc analysis revealed that directors with 250-499 SWD reported significantly higher means with the level of district level involvement in the development of budgets for instructional supplies (M = 4.94; SD = .242) than directors from systems with 3000+ SWD (M = 4.00; SD = 1.732). A post hoc analysis also revealed significant differences between directors from systems with 3000+ SWD and systems with 250-499 SWD and fewer than 250 SWD with the provision of supplies at the school level. Again, directors from the systems with fewer SWD reported significantly higher mean levels of role involvement with the provision of supplies at the school level than directors from the largest size systems (3000+). While the post hoc analysis did not reveal any significant differences in the roles of special education directors and the funding of inclusion staff from the district level, directors from systems of 1000-2999 SWD reported high levels of mean role involvement with securing funding for inclusion instructional staff at the school level than directors from the largest systems (3000+). Additionally, directors from systems with 250-499 SWD also revealed significantly higher levels of involvement with school level staffing than directors from 3000+ systems.

The ANOVA also uncovered significant differences with the directors' roles with ensuring the equity of resources for inclusion programs at the district level and school levels. Directors from large systems reported higher mean levels of involvement with this budget area at the district level. However, directors from systems with 250-499 SWD reported significantly higher levels of role involvement with equity assurance at the district level than directors from systems with 3000+ SWD. This trend continued at the school level with the assurance of equitable resources. A post hoc analysis revealed significant differences in school level means with the provision of equitable resources between directors from 3000+ SWD and 250-499 SWD and between directors from 3000+ and systems with 250< SWD. Special education directors from districts of 250-499 reported the highest levels of role involvement with the assurance of equitable resources.

In the category of curriculum/instructional support, special education directors from systems with 250 or fewer SWD reported the highest levels of school involvement with curriculum and instructional support in the areas of access to the Georgia Performance Standards (M = 4.53; SD = .743) at the school level than directors from systems with 3000+ SWD (M = 3.00; SD= 1.225). The researcher conducted a post hoc analysis and found that significant differences also existed between directors from 3000+SWD and those from 500-999, 250-499, and 250< SWD in the school level access to the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). Directors from the smaller sized systems reported the higher levels of involvement with GPS implementation than those from the largest districts with 3000+ SWD. Analyses also revealed that significant differences based on the number of SWD and the directors' level of assurance that the individual

needs of all learners are met at the school level. A post hoc analysis determined significant differences existed between directors from systems of 3000+SWD and 250-499SWD and those from systems with 250< SWD with meeting the individual needs of the special learners at the school level during inclusion implementation. Again, directors from the smaller sized systems reported the highest level of involvement with the assurance of meeting the needs of students at the school level.

In the category of evaluation of programs, directors from the districts with the smallest numbers of SWD (250-499 SWD) reported significantly higher levels of involvement in the evaluation of inclusion programs through the collection of feedback from staff (M = 3.91; SD = .947) than directors from the largest districts with 3000+ SWD (M= 2.60; SD = .548). Directors from systems with less than 250 SWD also reported the highest level of school level involvement with the regular monitoring of inclusion programs (M = 4.00; SD = .926) than directors from the largest sized system of 3000+ SWD (M= 2.60; SD= .548). No significant differences were found in the directors' level of role involvement in the other three categories, legal/ethical, communication, and professional learning and the number of SWD in the school system.

The directors in the focus group did indicate some difference in their role involvement with inclusion implementation based on system size, or the number of SWD in the school district. One focus group participant of a district with 3000+ SWD was once a special education director in a school district with less than 250 SWD. He described the differences in his role based on system size:

> When I was at (a smaller district), I did the training and built capacity and taught co-teaching methods. Here (in a larger district), I promote it, and cheerlead it, and brought in experts and consultants to do the teaching.

This same special education director described his present role with inclusion implementation as more of a district level one now that he is the director of the largest size school district. Another focus group participant, a special education director from a medium sized school district of 500-999 SWD, described her present role as hands on in comparison to the role of the special education director she worked for in the larger school system of 3000+ from which she had gained most of her administrative experience.

Percentage of Students with Disabilities Served in the General Classroom (LRE)

Lastly, the researcher conducted an ANOVA on the LRE data to determine if any significant relationships existed between the percentage of students served in the general classroom in the school district and the special education director's level of involvement at both the district and school levels. The researcher wanted to determine if there was a relationship in percentage of students with disabilities (SWD) served in the general classroom a majority of the school day and the roles of the director. There was one area of significance revealed in the analysis of the survey data in the area of curriculum/instructional support, in the area of assurance that the individual needs of SWD are met in the classroom at the school level. However, Georgia's special education directors reported a wide range of students served in the LRE. Due to the wide range, a range extending from 4% to 99%, the researcher could not determine a conclusive relationship between number of students served in LRE and the roles of the special education director based on the ANOVA.

Summary

This study was designed to determine the roles of Georgia's special education directors in the implementation of inclusion. The researcher conducted a pilot survey with six of the directors in the Middle Georgia RESA area and surveyed the remaining 174 special education directors across the state. In addition, the researcher used one focus group session with 3 of the 6 Middle Georgia RESA special education directors in an effort to gather more in-depth, firsthand responses regarding the directors' roles with inclusion implementation. One hundred and eleven directors responded to the survey instrument, although only 104 surveys were analyzed due to incomplete responses on seven of the surveys.

Chapter IV contained a description of all of the findings and a general analysis of the data from the survey instrument and the focus group based on the four research questions. Overall, Georgia's special education directors reported "high" levels of district involvement with inclusion implementation. In the areas of district level support in the category of evaluation of programs, directors reported "some" involvement. "Some" to "high" levels of support were also reported at the school level of involvement across all eight survey categories.

The researcher also investigated the relationship between Georgia's special education previous work experiences and their roles with inclusion implementation. There appeared to be an inconsistent relationship between the roles of Georgia's special education directors in several survey categories based on their experience as special education directors. Directors with 6-10 years and 16+ years of special education director work experience appeared less involved in inclusion implementation at the school level

than directors with 0-5 and 11-15 years of experience in the categories uncovered by the ANOVA.

Ninety seven percent of Georgia's special education directors reported previous experiences as special education teachers. One area of significance was discovered in the provision of professional learning for collaboration for special and regular education teachers based on the years of previous special education teaching experience. Directors with 0-5 years of previous special education teaching experience reported significantly higher levels of collaboration than those reporting no (NA) previous special education teaching experience.

Only forty eight of the special education directors responded to the question of previous general education teaching experience; therefore, the researcher elected to recode the survey responses due to the lack of response to this question. Significant differences were discovered between the group means in the categories of vision, legal ethical, planning/implementation and professional learning based on previous general education teaching experiences. Within those categories, special education directors with 11+ years of general education teaching experience reported significantly higher levels of role involvement with communication of school level vision, communication with stakeholders, scheduling of inclusion classes (both district and school level), and the provision of school level professional learning to regular education teachers. Directors reporting NA or no previous general education teaching experience reported significantly lower levels of role involvement in the aforementioned areas.

The researcher also recoded responses for the category of previous principal experiences based on the limited number of respondents (n = 37). There were two areas

of significance uncovered in the category of school level involvement in the area of collaboration training for special and regular education teachers and the provision of professional learning for regular education teachers based on the ANOVA. Directors reporting 0-5 years of previous principal experience reported significantly higher levels of role involvement in collaboration and regular education professional learning than those directors reporting NA or no previous principal experience. On the question of other previous administration experiences, there were no significant differences in the mean levels of role involvement at either the district or school level across any of the eight major survey categories based on the ANOVA.

The researcher also investigated the relationship between two system level demographics and the roles of Georgia's special education directors. The first demographic investigated was the number of students with disabilities (SWD) in the school district. The researcher discovered a possible relationship between the number of SWD in a school district and the mean role involvement of directors in 5 of the 8 major categories, mainly in the area of school level inclusion involvement. In the categories of vision, planning/implementation, budget/resources, curriculum/instructional support, and evaluation of programs, the ANOVA revealed that directors from systems with fewer numbers of SWD, namely those with 499 or fewer SWD reported significantly higher mean levels of role involvement in inclusion implementation on 14 of the survey questions than directors from systems with larger numbers of SWD, namely 3000+ SWD. The second system level demographic analyzed was the percentage of SWD served in the general classroom 80% or more of the school day, or the LRE percentage used by the state DOE to measure Indicator 9. Due to the wide range of responses (4% to 99% of

SWD served in the general classroom), the researcher could not determine if a specific relationship existed between the roles of Georgia's directors based on the LRE system demographic.

The data from the focus group were reported in an a priori manner to support and contradict the findings of the survey research. After analyzing the responses of the focus group, the researcher determined that the three focus group participants described their roles with inclusion implementation from a school level perspective. The participants from the focus group also spoke of the importance of the principal's support and their own support of professional learning initiatives at the school level. However, due to the limited scope of the focus group (e.g., one session) and small number of focus group participants, the focus group data should be interpreted with caution.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Since the inception of the *Education for All Handicapped Act* (EHA), students with disabilities have been afforded some form of education in the general school setting. Prior to 1975, students with disabilities (SWD) were often not provided a public education. Even after the advent of EHA, students with disabilities were educated in special education programs that were removed from the general curriculum.

Since the 1970s, most school districts employed special education directors to supervise the provision of education services for SWD to insure adherence to legal guidelines. As a result, special education directors often held leadership roles that were in isolation from their general education leadership counterparts. Nevertheless, as the service delivery models began to expand for SWD in the 1980s and 1990s with support for mainstreaming and later inclusion initiatives, the role of the special education director began to expand.

Inclusion of students with disabilities in the general classroom is a relevant topic in the field of public education, especially with the advent of *IDEA 2004 and NCLB*, two major pieces of legislation that mandate greater accountability for the education of students with disabilities. While the educational literature contains information related to the role of the principal, the literature is generally void of any empirical research that investigates the role of the special education director with the implementation of inclusion. The limited literature that does exist, however, suggests that special education directors possess both district and school level roles.

In Georgia, since the passage of *IDEA* and *NCLB*, the state DOE has placed a greater emphasis on the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general classroom (O'Hara, 2005). Several recent studies and the limited research on the role of the director suggest that the special education director often has a dual role with inclusion implementation, one at the district level and a role at the school level. This dual role is supported by evidence from the limited literature that suggests directors have a district role that is more centered on policy development and program management. Whereas, the school level role is one of a provider of resources and support to the principal and school as inclusion initiatives are implemented.

In the present study, the researcher gathered information regarding the roles of Georgia's special education directors' with the implementation of inclusion. The researcher conducted a mixed methods study consisting of a survey instrument and use of a focus group session. The survey instrument consisted of two parts. Part I was designed to measure the special education directors' level of role involvement at both the district and school levels. Part I consisted of 26 statements divided into 8 major categories, each supported by the existing educational research. Participants rated their level of involvement on each of the 26 statements at both the school and district level on a 5 point Likert-scale.

Part II of the instrument consisted of demographic and other questions related to the previous educationally related work experience of the special education directors. Part II also contained two questions soliciting information regarding the participants' school system size relative to the number of students with disabilities (SWD) served and the

percentage of SWD served in the regular classroom more than 80% of the school day, also referred to as LRE data.

In an effort to increase the reliability of the survey, six special education directors in the researcher's Middle Georgia RESA area participated in a pilot of the survey instrument. Results from the pilot study indicated high levels of reliability on Part I of the survey instrument. Furthermore, the same six special education directors were invited to participate in a focus group session.

Surveys were distributed to 174 of Georgia's special education directors. The researcher obtained a response rate of 64% (n=111). However, seven surveys were unusable due to a significant numbers of omitted responses by the participants. Six special education directors from the researchers RESA area participated in the pilot of the survey instrument, and 3 of the 6 participated in a focus group session at the completion of the study. The purpose of the focus group session was to solicit qualitative feedback regarding the roles of Georgia's directors with inclusion implementation.

The researcher used SPSS 13.0 software to analyze the responses for the survey instrument. Frequencies, means, standard deviations, and an analysis of the variance (ANOVA) were calculated to interpret the survey data. The focus group session data were analyzed by the researcher through a review of the transcription. Responses were coded by question and respondent. The researcher identified common themes and utilized specific comments from participants that were reported in an a priori manner.

Research Questions

The researcher used the results from the survey data along with information gathered from the focus group to respond to the following research questions:

1. What is Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at the school district level?
2. What is Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at the school building level?
3. Is there a difference in the level of role involvement based on educationally related work experiences?
4. Is there a difference in the level of role involvement based on system demographics?

Discussion of Research Findings

The purpose of the study was to investigate the roles of Georgia's special education directors with the implementation of inclusion. Results of this study should not be generalized beyond the roles of Georgia's special education directors. The researcher calculated means and standard deviations to compare the overall level of role involvement at both the district and school levels based on the responses to Part I of the survey instrument. Role involvement was also evaluated based on themes from the focus group session.

Demographic data were also collected in Part II of the instrument that included the directors' gender, previous educationally related work experiences, number of students with disabilities in the system, and the percentage of students with disabilities educated in the general classroom 80% or more of the school day. Demographic data from Part II of the survey were compared to responses from Part I of the survey instrument. The researcher used an ANOVA to determine statistically relevant

relationships between the aforementioned variables and the roles of the special education director at both the district and school levels.

One hundred and four (n=104) special education directors' surveys were analyzed by the researcher. Eleven of the survey respondents were male (10.6%), and 93 (89.4%) were female. A majority of the special education directors (62.5%) had six or more years of experience as a special education director. Thirty-nine directors (37.5%) had 0-5 years of experience. Most of the special education directors had some previous special education teaching experience; a limited number of respondents had general education teaching backgrounds. Eighteen directors indicated previous principal experiences; whereas, sixty one reported previous experiences in some other administrative field. Results from the focus group were reported in an a priori manner, along with each of the major research questions.

Role Involvement at the District Level

Question 1. What is Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at the school district level?

The results from Part I of the survey instrument revealed that Georgia's special education directors reported their roles with inclusion implementation from a district level perspective. Overall, respondents indicated high levels of district involvement on all 26 statements in the eight categories for district level of involvement, suggesting high levels of inclusion involvement with each of the 26 statements. The findings of the present study support the literature regarding the traditionally district centralized role of special education directors. The review of the literature suggested that the role of the special education director has historically been regarded as a district level one (Jones &

Wilkerson, 1975). At the district level, the special education director has regulated policy (Arick & Krug, 1993; Doyle, 2001) and ensured the district's adherence to state and federal regulations (Chalfant & Van Dusen, 2007; Crockett, 2002; O'Hara, 2005; Valesky & Hirth, 1992) with regard to special education programming and inclusion implementation. The educational literature also suggested that the special education director provided a vision for inclusion programming (Chalfant & Van Dusen, 2007; Crockett, 2002) and assisted in the development of plans for inclusion implementation on a system-wide basis (Stanfield, 2006) at the district level.

Georgia's special education directors revealed high levels of vision at the district level ($M = 4.63$; $SD = .538$) (see Table 4). This finding supports the personal communication the researcher received from Dr. J. S. Thousand (J. S. Thousand, personal communication, June 26, 2006). Dr. Thousand attributes a large part of the vision for inclusion implementation to the special education director. The vision of special education was an area discussed by one of the special education directors from the focus group. On the other hand, much of the educational literature highlights the role of the principal's vision and support with inclusion (Goor & Schwenn, 1997; Villa & Thousand, 2003; Praisner, 2003; Burnstein et al., 2004; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999). The findings from the present study suggest that the vision of the special education director is an important aspect of their role with inclusion implementation.

Results from the survey instrument also suggest that special education directors possess the highest level of district involvement with legal support and ethics than any of the other eight categories on the survey. These same findings support the research of Arik and Krug (2003) and Doyle (2001) who found that the special education director was

often viewed as the policy expert and charged with the responsibility of adherence to state and federal laws and regulations. The research findings from the present study also confirm the work of Crockett (2002). Crockett's star model hailed the importance of ethical practice and legal training in preparation programs for special education directors and other administrators supervising inclusion programs. The findings from the present study reveal that Georgia's special education directors reported the high levels of legal/ethical role involvement at the district level.

However, the findings from the focus group did not support the traditional role of the special education director as the legal expert. When the researcher posed the question, "What is your role with inclusion in your present school district," no focus group participants referred to their role during inclusion implementation from the legal or ethical perspective. Themes that emerged from the focus group revealed that the special education directors viewed themselves more as encouragers and supporters of inclusion implementation rather than legal experts. One director specifically described her role as a "…support for teachers, parents and principals." These findings do not support the work of Valesky and Hirth (1992) who described special education directors as the legal experts for the school district. Nevertheless, the differences in the responses of the focus group and the survey respondents may be due, in part, to the small number of directors participating in the focus group.

Georgia's special education directors reported high levels of involvement at the district level with budgeting (M = 4.66; SD = .715). However, focus group data supported budget involvement that was more school-based in nature. Directors in the focus group spoke of working with principals to determine staff needs and other supports

to improve inclusion efforts. Again, the differences in the responses of those surveyed and the focus group may be due to the small number of special education directors in the focus group. Georgia's special education directors also reported high levels of involvement in 7 of the 8 categories. The lowest area of district involvement was in the category of evaluation of programs (M = 3.92; SD = .961).

Role Involvement at the School Level

Question 2. What is Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement at the school building level?

Overall, results from Part I of the survey support the existing educational literature, indicating that Georgia's special education directors report "some" to "high" levels of involvement with inclusion implementation at the school level. Six of the means for the eight categories indicated some involvement (means 3 or higher). The areas of high level school involvement (means of 4 or higher) were in the vision and legal/ethical categories.

The findings from this study support the educational literature which suggests a second role for special education directors in addition to the district role that involves the support of the principal at the school level. Georgia's directors reported high levels of school level support in the provision of instructional staff and resource equity. The educational literature revealed that special education directors often provide human resources (Stanfield, 2006).

However, findings from this study did not support prior literature findings regarding the role of Georgia's special education directors with regards to professional learning support at the school level and support of the building principal and staff through

collaboration activities between general and special education programs (Arick & Krug, 1993; Chalfant & Van Dusen, 2007; Crockett, 2002). Findings from the survey revealed that Georgia's directors reported lower levels of professional learning support to regular education teachers at the school level. The findings from the survey do not support the educational literature that suggests that special education directors have a more extensive role at the school level in arranging professional learning opportunities (Crockett, 2002; Stanfield, 2006). On the other hand, the participants from the focus group session often referred to their role with inclusion implementation from a school level perspective. The focus group participants spoke of assisting principals with the analysis of inclusion data to enhance staffing, assistance with scheduling, and direct professional learning support to teachers and administrators for effective inclusion practices. Another overarching theme from the focus group was the directors' desire to obtain the support of the building principals with inclusion implementation initiatives.

The focus groups' suggestion of the importance of the principal's role with inclusion implementation supports the educational literature that highlights the need for visionary school leaders who broadly understand and support inclusive education (Goor & Schwenn, 1997; Villa & Thousand, 2003; Praisner, 2003; Burnstein et al., 2004; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999). One director from the focus group described inclusion implementation as a developmental process while describing the importance of the special education directors realizing that different schools and principals are at different points along the inclusion implementation continuum.

Also supportive of the findings of Brotherson, Sheriff, Milburn, and Schertz (2001), the three directors in the focus group discussed the provision of support to the

principal at the school level. All three discussed providing professional learning support and two of the three discussed supporting the personnel needs of their schools. None of the directors in the focus group discussed instructional resource support (e.g. supplies, textbooks, etc). Brotherson et al. reported that principals recognized the importance of their roles to change and grow while implementing and supporting inclusion while these same principals indicated the need for administrative training to support their own lack of knowledge of inclusion practices.

One director in the focus group described the importance of district level support from the superintendent with inclusion implementation when principals are hesitant or resistant. This director explained that it helps to have support from the superintendent when principals were resistant to inclusion initiatives. Lastly, one special education director described her frustration when working with principals who are new to her system after inclusion initiatives have been established under previous building level leadership. This director's concerns support the research of Sindelar, Shearer, Yendol-Hoppy, and Liebert (2006) who found that principal turnover had a negative impact on the sustainability of inclusion efforts at the school level.

Role Involvement and Work Experience

Question 3. Is there a difference in the level of role involvement based on educationally related work experiences?

Years of experience as a special education director. The ANOVA of the relationship between the years of experience as a special education director and Georgia's special education directors' level of role involvement was unclear (see Table H1). Directors with 11-15 years of experience as a special education director reported high

levels of involvement on the eight significant school level implementation statements. Most significantly, these directors' responses revealed high levels of planning/implementation, curriculum/instructional support, and evaluation of programs. Special education directors with 0-5 years experience reported high levels of involvement on the same eight school level involvement statements. This finding suggests that new directors are equally prepared to provide higher levels of school level support in the eight aforementioned areas.

Special education directors with 16+ years of experience (n=38) revealed the lowest levels of involvement for most of these same areas with the exception of the assurance that the individual needs of the special learners were being met at the school level. This finding suggests that veteran special education directors (16+ years) are less likely to be as involved with the eight school level statements. Nevertheless, Georgia's special education directors with 6-10 years of experience reported the lowest level of involvement in six of the eight areas of significance. Of the eight areas of significance uncovered in this portion of the study, including gathering internal information (planning), the development of an action plan (implementation), and monitoring and evaluating programs, most centered on the steps that Stanfield (2006) presented at the 17th Annual International CASE conference. The findings from the present study suggest that special education directors with 16+ years of experience in the field do not display the same level of role involvement as directors who are new to the field (0-5) or those who have 11-15 years of experience.

Special education teaching experience. The findings from this study support the research (Jones and Wilkerson, 1975) that reveals most special education directors have

some special education teaching experience. However, there only appears to be a relationship between prior special education teaching experience and provision of professional learning by Georgia's special education directors from the district level in the area of collaboration (see Table H2). The statement rated significant on the Part I of the survey was: I provide professional learning on the collaboration of special and regular education teachers. Directors with prior special education teaching experience reported the highest levels of involvement with collaboration; whereas, directors reporting no previous special education teaching experience reported the lowest level or some involvement (M = 3.33; SD = .577).

One director in the focus group, however, discussed the hurdle of bringing special education teachers on board with inclusion implementation:

> There was some resistance from my special ed. teachers, not the regular ed. teachers, because they wanted to keep their (students), their (students); but they are not going to be able to do that.

On the other hand, the same special education director described how her previous experience as a special education co-teacher has helped her to gain respect from her present staff as she began inclusion implementation at the elementary school level.

All three participants of the focus group session spoke to their role in the provision of professional learning in the area of collaboration at the school level. Two of the special education directors in the focus group indicated that they had personally provided co-teaching professional learning. One director indicated that professional learning was provided by a consultant. One focus group participant indicated that her experience as a special education co-teacher in an inclusion classroom helps to validate the training she provides to staff in her current role as a special education director.

Although collaboration was the only significant finding at the district level, the findings from the study support the educational research that is very clear regarding the importance of this component of inclusion (Villa and Thousand, 2003). Caron and McLaughlin (2002) also determined that collaboration between regular and general education teachers emerged as a key variable for student success. Two of the five themes that emerged from their study involved collaboration. Caron et al. research revealed that principals allowed for collaborative planning and that there were different variations of collaboration (e.g. planning face to face, email, voicemail). Caron and McLaughlin also found that the principals created a collaborative culture in all of the schools by supporting collaboration through direct participation in planning meetings. Recent research in the area of inclusion also supported the importance of teacher collaboration (Jacobson-Stevenson, Jacobson, & Hilton, 2006) in the inclusive classroom. In the Jacobson-Stevenson et al. study, 70.2% of the principals expressed that knowledge of collaborative teaching strategies was second only to managing students in the LRE as the greatest professional learning need.

General education teaching experience. The educational literature does not contain information related to the roles of the special education director and prior general education teaching experience. Nevertheless, the researcher in the present study was interested in determining if there was a relationship between previous general education teaching experience and the role of Georgia's special education directors with the implementation of inclusion.

The results from the survey and data from the focus group revealed a relationship between previous general education teaching experience and the directors' roles with

inclusion implementation at the school level. Several areas were determined as significant based on an ANOVA. Directors with 11+ years of general education teaching experience reported significantly higher levels of communication of their vision (and higher levels of overall communication) to the school level stakeholders. Georgia's special education directors with 11+ years of general education teaching experience also reported significantly higher levels of involvement with inclusion scheduling at both the district and school level than directors with no previous general teaching experience.

Directors reporting no experience in the general classroom also reported little involvement with professional learning for regular classroom teachers (M =2.89; 1.054) (see Table H3). On the other hand, directors with 11+ years of prior general education teaching experience revealed a M=4.60; SD = .548 on the same statement. This finding suggests that prior experience as a general education teacher is beneficial to special education directors as they provide professional learning, a key component of inclusion implementation, to regular classroom teachers. The educational literature revealed that professional learning is a critical area of inclusion support (Vaughn & Schumm, 1995; Burstein et al., 2004). Daane, Beirne-Smith, and Latham (2001) discovered that general education administrators and teachers reported a lack of knowledge and training to effectively implement inclusion. One of the participants in the focus group was an experienced general classroom teacher and spoke to her general teaching experience as an asset with inclusion implementation in the area of professional learning:

> With those experiences (general and special education) tied together with working with special needs students, it helped me to really just be able to paint a picture to demonstrate to them to see how this will work.

Principal and other administration experience. Only 37 directors responded to the question related to previous principal experience. The researcher conducted an ANOVA to determine if there was a relationship between previous experience as a principal and the roles of Georgia's special education directors (see Table H4). The results of the ANOVA uncovered two significant areas in the category of professional learning: (1) school level collaboration of regular and special education teachers and (2) the provision of professional learning to regular classroom teachers at the school level. Directors who reported no previous experience (NA) as a principal reported significantly lower levels of collaboration and professional learning support as compared to principals with 0-5 years of previous principal experience.

The findings from the present study suggest that there is a positive relationship between a director's previous principal experiences and the role of Georgia's directors with the support of collaboration training at the school level. This finding is significant as the educational research suggests that collaboration is an important aspect of inclusion implementation. The educational literature consistently supports the need for collaboration in the inclusive school. Villa and Thousand (2003) reported that collaboration between regular and general education teachers was a key variable for student success. These researchers discussed the changing roles of teachers and concluded that collaboration was the only variable that was a predictor of positive attitudes towards inclusion practice. Also Jacobson-Stevenson, Jacobson, and Hilton (2006) reported that principal knowledge of collaborative teaching strategies was second only to managing students in the LRE as the greatest professional learning need according to the findings.

The findings in this that study suggest there is a positive relationship between previous principal experience and school level roles with professional learning support. In the earlier section of this study related to the previous general education teaching experiences, the findings suggested that previous general education teaching experience positively impacted the provision of school level professional learning to regular education teachers, an essential element in inclusion programs (Vaughn & Schumm, 1995; Daane, Beirne-Smith, & Latham, 2001; Burstein et al., 2004).

While there were no significant findings in the area of prior administrative experience and role involvement based on the analysis of Part I of the survey, two of the directors in the focus group spoke about the positive relationship between their previous, other administrative experiences and their current role as a special education director implementing inclusion. These directors reported that their previous experiences as coordinators, working with visionary and progressive directors with inclusion implementation, helped to prepare them for their present role as a special education director. It is noteworthy, however, that both of these directors had experience as coordinators in other special education areas and no experience as a principal.

Role Involvement and System Demographics

Question 4. Is there a difference in the level of role involvement based on system demographics?

Number of students with disabilities (SWD) in the school system. The findings from this study suggested that the number of SWD, or system size, has a significant relationship with the level of role involvement of Georgia's special education directors during inclusion implementation across the eight categories examined. Consistently,

directors from systems with fewer numbers of SWD reported the highest levels of role involvement.

The researcher conducted an ANOVA to determine if any relationship existed between the system size, number of SWD in the school system, and the special education director's level of role involvement at both the district and school levels. A review of the means revealed that Georgia's special education directors reported high levels of overall district involvement for all statements related to their involvement with inclusion implementation (see Tables 3 and 4). However, the ANOVA revealed significant differences in 14 of the statements, 12 at the school level and two at the district level (see Table H5).

While the educational research does not contain information on the impact of the school system size (or number of SWD served) and the roles of special education directors with inclusion implementation, the findings from this study revealed that Georgia's special education directors from systems with 499 or fewer students reported high levels of school involvement on eight of the 12 school statements listed in Table H5.

School level vision was one area of significance revealed by the ANOVA and an area discussed extensively in the educational literature. The findings from this study suggested that directors from small school districts with fewer than 250 SWD have a greater role in the development of vision at the school level. This finding is significant since the educational research expounds on the need for vision with inclusion implementation. Visionary school level leadership is the one common theme that emerged throughout the review of the educational literature as a critical factor in the implementation of inclusion (Goor & Schwenn, 1997; Villa & Thousand, 2003; Praisner,

2003; Burnstein et al., 2004; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999). However, the educational literature related to school level vision was based on principal vision and not the vision of the special education director. In the present study, special education directors from smaller systems reported the highest levels of vision involvement, more than directors from larger districts. However, only one of the directors from the focus group spoke directly to the importance of the vision of the special education director. This director, from the largest size school district, was recently a director for several years in the smallest size school system.

The trend for higher levels of school level involvement from Georgia's special education directors from systems with fewer numbers of SWD continued. The school level planning and involvement category was also a significant area. Directors from systems with 999 or fewer SWD revealed the highest levels of involvement in most of the areas in this category. These findings support Stanfield (2006) who indicated the need for special education directors to play a vital role in the planning and implementation phases of inclusion. Also, Chaflant and Van Duesen (2007) spoke of instructional program development as a primary role of the special education director. Lastly, special education directors from the largest sized district (3000+ SWD) reported no involvement with school level scheduling and little involvement with the development of collaborative general and special education programs. The findings from this study suggest that directors from the larger districts are more limited with their school level of involvement with planning/implementation.

In the area of budget and resources, special education directors from all systems consistently reported high levels of involvement from the district level with the provision

of instructional supplies and the insurance of equitable resources for inclusion programs. On the other hand, special education directors from systems with 499 or fewer SWD reported the highest levels of school involvement with the provision of instructional supplies, funding for instructional staff, and the assurance of equitable inclusion programs. Directors from the largest systems, 3000+ SWD, reported little involvement with all three statements related to budget/resources at the school level. These findings suggest that directors from smaller systems (with 499 or fewer SWD) play a more direct role with budget and resources, an area the research finds principals value. Brotherson, Sheriff, Milburn, and Schertz (2001) discovered in their study that principals were particularly concerned about how others could support their budget and resource needs from inclusion services. Resource support was deemed as a critical factor as principals began to implement inclusion because principals viewed this level of support from special education directors as a key factor in inclusion implementation.

In the area of curriculum and instructional support, directors from the largest systems reported involvement with the access of students with disabilities to the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) and to the assurance that the individual needs of special learners are being met at the school level. Again, directors from the smaller sized systems, particularly directors from systems with fewer than 250 SWD, reported the highest level of school involvement with curriculum and instructional support. The findings from the present study, in part, contradict the research of Valesky and Hirth (1992) who found that principals often possessed the responsibility for the curriculum and instructional needs of students at the school level while special education directors were more or less policy advisors and legal experts for the district. Instead, Georgia's

special education directors from smaller sized school districts report high levels of curriculum and instruction involvement related to the educational needs of the included student.

In the area of program evaluation, directors from small systems revealed some to high levels of school involvement with implementation. Directors from the largest sized systems (3000+) reported little involvement with program evaluation. Overall, the means for all areas in the evaluation of programs categories were lower than in the other categories.

Percentage of Students with Disabilities in the General Classroom (LRE). The researcher analyzed the LRE data of the reporting school districts in an effort to determine if the percentage of actual students with disabilities served in the general classroom had any significance on the roles of Georgia's special education directors at the school or district levels. The LRE percentage is the number the State DOE uses to measure compliance for performance Indicator 9 (O'Hara, 2005). An ANOVA only determined one area of significance in the assurance that the needs of individual learners were being met at the school level, curriculum/instructional support. This finding, however, is to be viewed with caution. Georgia's special education directors reported a wide range of SWD, from 4% to 99%, served in the general classroom at least 80% or more of the school day. The mean LRE score was 62.05% for the 104 respondents.

Conclusions

The results from the analysis of the results from the survey instrument and the focus group lead to the following conclusions regarding the roles of Georgia's special education directors with the implementation of inclusion:

1. Special education directors report the high levels of involvement with inclusion implementation at the district level across seven of the eight categories on the survey instrument while focus group participants spoke of their roles from a school level perspective.
2. There appears to be a positive relationship between a director's previous special education teaching experience and the provision of collaboration training, a key component of inclusion implementation.
3. There appears to be a positive relationship between a director's previous general education teaching experience and the provision of school level vision, stakeholder communication, assistance with scheduling, and the delivery of professional learning to regular classroom teachers.
4. There appears to be a relationship between a director's previous principal experience and the provision of professional learning in the area of collaboration and professional learning to regular education teachers.
5. Special education directors from school districts with smaller numbers of students with disabilities report higher levels of school level involvement with inclusion implementation on 12 of the school level statements.
6. Focus group participants spoke of the importance of the principals' support and role with inclusion implementation.

Implications

The researcher investigated the roles of Georgia's special education directors with the implementation of inclusion. Inclusion is one avenue educational leaders have utilized in an attempt to teach students with disabilities in the general classroom in an effort to

increase their performance in school. While the research clearly outlines the roles of principals and teachers with inclusion, there were significant gaps in the educational literature regarding the roles of special education directors with inclusion implementation. With an increased emphasis on the inclusion of students with disabilities in Georgia, as evidenced by the State DOE's focus on Indicator 9, increasing the percentage of students with disabilities served in the general classroom with support, it is imperative for Georgia's special education directors to reflect, understand, and redefine their roles in the inclusion implementation process.

As a result of this study, the following implications emerge. Although Georgia's special education directors report high levels of involvement with inclusion implementation at the district level, directors should find ways to involve themselves more with the school level inclusion implementation, despite the size of the system. Without minimizing their role at the district level, actual inclusion implementation with students occurs at the school level. The findings from this study also highlight the need for Georgia's special education directors to obtain professional development in the areas of evaluation of inclusion programs, communication of inclusion implementation, and the provision of professional learning, particularly at the school level. Although program evaluation is a newer aspect of inclusion implementation in the educational literature, program evaluation cannot be overlooked as a means to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation process. Also, veteran special education directors, those with 16+ years of experience, and those with 6-10 years of experience need professional learning in the area of inclusion implementation at the school level.

The findings of this study revealed that Georgia's special education directors, particularly from systems with fewer numbers of students with disabilities, report a more active role with school level inclusion implementation. Principals may need professional learning to better understand the special education director's school level roles with inclusion implementation, particularly in areas other than legal/ethical support, traditional roles for the director. Also, both general and special education teachers could possibly benefit from recognizing the importance of the special education director's role with inclusion implementation, especially in the areas of school level professional learning and collaboration support, two areas that significantly impact the success of inclusion.

There is one major implication related to State policy. Since there is no official job description for the position of special education director, the Georgia State DOE needs to provide a job description and define the expectations for the role of the special education director as it relates to meeting the expectations of performance Indicator 9. Also, the Georgia Council for Administrators of Special Education (G-CASE) could use the findings from this study to support the professional learning of new and veteran special education directors in the area of school level support during inclusion implementation. Additionally, educational leadership programs in Georgia should use the findings of this study to prepare and/or educate future educational administrators, specifically special education administrators and principals, with their role involvement with inclusion implementation. Lastly, superintendents might want to consider general education teaching experience and/or previous experience as a principal when selecting special education directors since there appears to be a relationship to those previous work experiences and professional learning in the area of collaboration, a critical component of

inclusion implementation. Superintendents may also use the results of this study to assist them in the performance evaluation of current special education directors as they implement inclusion.

Dissemination

Georgia's special education directors and other educational leaders, namely principals, would benefit from the findings of this study. Therefore, the researcher intends to submit a proposal to the Georgia Association of Education Leaders (GAEL) to present the findings from this study at a future winter or summer conference. Furthermore, the researcher intends to submit a proposal to share the results of this study with the Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education (G-CASE) during a breakout session during the annual fall conference. Also, the researcher intends to develop a presentation for the Georgia Special Education New Directors' Academy, a program the researcher currently assists with on a regular basis. The researcher also intends to share the results of this study with the State DOE and the State Director of special education in an effort to improve the expectations for the development of inclusion programs in the State.

Recommendations

The researcher offers the following recommendations as a result of this study:

1. Further study is needed in the area of the roles of Georgia's special education directors with inclusion implementation, principally in the role interaction between the director and the principal in light of the findings from the focus group.

2. Further study might be needed to investigate the impact of previous general education teaching and principal experience on the school level implementation role of special education directors.
3. Additional focus group research could expand the scope of this study to further the research in the roles of Georgia's special education directors with inclusion implementation.
4. Since Georgia's special education directors reported high levels of vision involvement at both the district and school levels, additional research may uncover the impact of their vision on inclusion implementation as much of the current research only highlights the impact of the principal's vision.
5. Since this study was limited to the special education directors in Georgia, a national survey of special education directors might better determine the actual roles of special education directors at that level during inclusion implementation.
6. The national CASE organization could use the findings of this study to promote further research of the role of special education directors with inclusion implementation.

Concluding Thoughts

The purpose of this study was to investigate the roles of Georgia's special education directors with the implementation of inclusion. One hundred and four special education directors participated in the survey portion of the study and six special education directors in the researcher's RESA area participated in the pilot of the survey instrument. Three of the six special education directors in the Middle Georgia RESA area

also participated in the focus group session which was designed to solicit more in-depth qualitative information regarding the roles of Georgia's special education directors. The researcher intended to use the results of this study to fill the gap in the educational literature regarding the roles of special education directors with inclusion implementation.

The findings of this study generally support the limited research which outlined the role of the special education director from the historically, district level perspective. However, the findings of this study also revealed that directors, particularly those from smaller systems and with general education experience (as teachers or principals), report a higher level of role involvement at the school level with inclusion implementation in several areas. Overall, Georgia's special education directors, particularly those from smaller systems with students with disabilities, appeared to serve a greater school level role with inclusion implementation. Additional findings from the focus group session revealed the importance of the principal's support of the inclusion process and the willingness of special education directors to support principals with professional learning, fiscal and moral support.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GEORGIA'S PERFORMANCE GOALS AND INDICATORS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

GEORGIA'S PERFORMANCE GOALS AND INDICATORS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I. Improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

1. Decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who drop out of school.
2. Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who earn a regular high school diploma.
3. Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who transition to employment or post-secondary education.
4. Increase the percentage of transition aged students with disabilities who have coordinated and measurable IEP goals and transition services that will lead to attainment of post-secondary goals.

II. Improve services for young children (ages 3 – 5) with disabilities.

5. Increase the percentage of young children referred by parents, or other agencies prior to age three who are determined eligible and have an IEP implemented by the third birthday.
6. Increase the percentage of time young children with disabilities spend in natural environments with typically developing peers.
7. Increase the percentage of young children with disabilities who show improved positive social/emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behaviors.

III. Improve the provision of a free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities.

8. Increase the percentage of students who are evaluated and determined eligible for special education within 60 days.
9. Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who receive their instruction in the general education setting with appropriate supports and accommodations.
10. Increase the performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments when given appropriate accommodations.
11. Decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who are removed from their school or placements for disciplinary reasons.
12. Decrease the disproportionate representation of students with disabilities due to inappropriate policies, procedures, and practices.
13. Increase the percentage of parents of children receiving special education services who report that schools encouraged parent involvement to improve results for students with disabilities.

IV. Improve compliance with state and federal laws and regulations

14. All identified noncompliance will be corrected as soon as possible, but no later than one year from identification.
15. Dispute resolution procedures and requirements are followed within any applicable timelines. Includes formal complaints, mediation, due process hearings, and resolution sessions.
16. Reports are submitted in a timely manner.

APPENDIX B

SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I: *Role Involvement*

The following section contains statements related to the potential roles of special education directors with inclusion implementation. Read each statement in the center column and circle **one** answer in **both** columns for **each** of the 26 statements that reflects your level of involvement at the both the District and School levels.

1=No Involvement 2= Little Involvement 3=Some Involvement 4=High Involvement 5=Extensive Involvement

Level of Involvement at the District Level	SURVEY OF GEORGIA'S SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS' ROLES WITH INCLUSION IMPLEMENTATION	Level of Involvement at the School Level
	VISION	
1 2 3 4 5	1. I possess a vision for inclusion implementation.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	2. I communicate my vision to all administrators.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	3. I communicate my vision for inclusion to all stakeholders.	1 2 3 4 5
	LEGAL/ETHICAL	
1 2 3 4 5	4. I interpret case law, federal, state and local policies related to education in the least restrictive environment.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	5. I ensure the provision of appropriate inclusion services.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	6. I demonstrate a high standard of ethical practice.	1 2 3 4 5
	COMMUNICATION	
1 2 3 4 5	7. I implement a variety of procedures to communicate to all stakeholders.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	8. I assist with building partnerships among all stakeholders.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	9. I communicate with all stakeholders.	1 2 3 4 5

1=No Involvement 2= Little Involvement 3=Some Involvement
4=High Involvement 5=Extensive Involvement

Level of Involvement at the District Level	PLANNING/IMPLEMENTATION	Level of Involvement at the School Level
1 2 3 4 5	10. I assist with gathering information for inclusion program development.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	11. I implement inclusion programs that respond to individual student needs.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	12. I assist with the scheduling of inclusion classes.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	13. I develop collaborative general and special education inclusion programs.	1 2 3 4 5
	BUDGET/RESOURCES	
1 2 3 4 5	14. I develop budgets that provide instructional supplies for inclusion programs.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	15. I secure funding for additional inclusion instructional staff.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	16. I ensure equity of resources for inclusion programs.	1 2 3 4 5
	PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	
1 2 3 4 5	17. I provide professional learning on the collaboration of special and regular education teachers.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	18. I provide professional learning to regular classroom teachers.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	19. I provide professional learning related to the educational needs of students with disabilities.	1 2 3 4 5
	CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	
1 2 3 4 5	20. I ensure that students with disabilities have access to the Georgia Performance Standards.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	21. I ensure that evidence based teaching strategies are in place.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	22. I ensure the individual needs of special learners are being met.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	23. I provide assistive technology support to inclusion programs.	1 2 3 4 5
	EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS	
1 2 3 4 5	24. I conduct ongoing evaluations of inclusion programs.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	25. I collect feedback from staff.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	26. I regularly monitor inclusion programs.	1 2 3 4 5

Part II. ***Experiences***

Please complete questions #1- #4 by checking the appropriate line:

1. My gender is: _____Male _____ Female

2. My total years of experience as a special education director are:
_____ 0- 5 years _____ 6-10 years _____ 11-15 years _____16+years

3. I have previous years of experience as…

special education teacher: ___NA___0-5yrs___6-10yrs___11-15yrs___16+
general education teacher:___NA___0-5yrs___6-10yrs___11-15yrs___16+
principal: ___NA___0-5yrs___6-10yrs___11-15yrs___16+
other administration: ___NA___0-5yrs___6-10yrs___11-15yrs___16+

NA= Not applicable

4. I have the following number of **students with disabilities** in my school district:
_____3000+ _____1000-2999 _____ 500-999 _____250-499 _____Less than 250

5. What is the percentage of students with disabilities **(ages 6 and above)** who are served in Environment 1, the general education setting 80% or more of their instructional day? _____%

Please use the data from your most recent Department of Education LRE report indicating the percentage of students with disabilities ages 6 and above who are served in **Environment 1 in your school district.**

APPENDIX C

FIRST LETTER TO GEORGIA'S SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS

FIRST LETTER TO GEORGIA'S SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS

Dear Fellow Special Education Director:

RE: Georgia Special Education Directors' Roles in the Implementation of Inclusion

My name is Mike Newton, and I am the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and Director of Special Education in Jones County Georgia. I am also a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University completing the dissertation requirements for my Ed D in Educational Leadership, a process that should conclude in the summer of 2007. I would like to take this opportunity to request that you participate in a survey that is designed to examine the roles of Georgia's special education directors with the implementation of inclusion.

As you know, inclusion is a timely topic in public education. This study is particularly significant as I attempt to gather information related to your roles as special education directors in the inclusion process, an area not well researched in the educational literature. Your participation in this research will include the completion of a survey instrument. A small group of six special education directors from the Middle Georgia RESA area will also participate in a focus group after data from the survey responses are analyzed and coded.

I intend to use the information from the survey for two purposes. First, the information obtained from you will allow me to complete the research process required for my dissertation in Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. Second, I intend to share the results of this study with you and other educational leaders across the state at conferences in the near future. The results of this study will prove helpful as we continue to expand the inclusion initiatives across this great state. Please note that Marlene Bryar, State Director of Exceptional Students, has endorsed the study.

Your participation in this survey is strictly voluntary and should not pose any risk or discomfort to you. If you choose to participate, I do request that you attempt to answer all questions in the survey. Once you complete the survey, you may return the survey to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that I provided for you. Your prompt response is greatly appreciated and your responses will be confidential according to applicable Georgia laws. I will not share any information that would identify any participant individually or any director who chooses not to participate in this study.

If you should have any additional questions related the purpose of the study or need any clarification of survey questions, please contact me at (478) 986-4509 or at (706) 468-9428. You can also reach me by email at mnewton@jones.k12.ga.us. You may also contact my chairperson, Dr. Charles Reavis at (912) 681-5719.

Also, you may contact the Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 486-7758 or at oversight@georgiasouthern.edu if you have any questions related to your rights as a participant in research. Thank you for taking the time to participate in the study. I appreciate your support and look forward to sharing the results of the study as we all work to improve educational services for students with disabilities in Georgia.

Sincerely,

Mike Newton, Ed. S.

APPENDIX D

SECOND LETTER TO GEORGIA'S SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS

SECOND LETTER TO GEORGIA'S SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS

Dear Fellow Special Education Director:

Several weeks ago, you received an invitation to participate in my study entitled "Georgia Special Education Directors' Roles in the Implementation of Inclusion." Please let this letter serve as a second invitation for you to participate in this research study. If you have already returned the survey, please disregard this letter.

As you may recall, my name is Mike Newton, and I am the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and Director of Special Education in Jones County Georgia. I am also a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University completing the dissertation requirements for my Ed D in Educational Leadership, a process that should conclude in the summer of 2007. I would like to request again that you participate in a survey that is designed to examine the roles of Georgia's special education directors with the implementation of inclusion.

This study is particularly significant as I attempt to gather information related to your roles as special education directors in the inclusion process, an area not well researched in the educational literature. Your participation in this research will include the completion of a survey instrument. A small group of six special education directors from the Middle Georgia RESA area will also participate in a focus group after data from the survey responses are analyzed and coded.

I intend to use the information from the survey for two purposes. First, the information obtained from you will allow me to complete the research process required for my dissertation in Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. Second, I intend to share the results of this study with you and other educational leaders across the state at conferences in the near future. The results of this study will prove helpful as we continue to expand the inclusion initiatives across this great state. Please note that Marlene Bryar, State Director of Exceptional Students, has endorsed the study.

Your participation in this survey is strictly voluntary and should not pose any risk or discomfort to you. If you choose to participate, I do request that you attempt to answer all questions in the survey. Once you complete the survey, you may return the survey to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that I provided for you. Your prompt response is greatly appreciated and your responses will be confidential according to applicable Georgia laws. I will not share any information that would identify any participant individually or any director who chooses not to participate in this study.

If you should have any additional questions related the purpose of the study or need any clarification of survey questions, please contact me at (478) 986-4509 or at (706) 468-9428. You can also reach me by email at mnewton@jones.k12.ga.us. You

may also contact my chairperson, Dr. Charles Reavis at (912) 681-5719. Also, you may contact the Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 486-7758 or at oversight@georgiasouthern.edu if you have any questions related to your rights as a participant in research.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the study. I appreciate your support and look forward to sharing the results of the study as we all work to improve educational services for students with disabilities in Georgia.

Sincerely,

Mike Newton, Ed. S.

APPENDIX E

LETTER TO GEORGIA'S SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS PARTICIPATING IN THE PILOT AND FOCUS GROUP

LETTER TO GEORGIA'S SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS PARTICIPATING IN THE PILOT AND FOCUS GROUP

Dear Middle Georgia RESA Special Education Director:

RE: Georgia Special Education Directors' Roles in the Implementation of Inclusion

My name is Mike Newton, and I am the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and Director of Special Education in Jones County Georgia. I am also a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University completing the dissertation requirements for my Ed D in Educational Leadership, a process that should conclude in the summer of 2007. I would like to take this opportunity to request that you participate in a pilot survey and focus group that is designed to examine the roles of Georgia's special education directors with the implementation of inclusion.

As you know, inclusion is a timely topic in public education. This pilot survey is particularly significant as I attempt to gather information related to your roles as special education directors in the inclusion process, an area not well researched in the educational literature. Your participation in this pilot will include the completion of a survey instrument. After the completion of the pilot, I will revise the survey instrument based on your written comments and scoring of the survey instrument. Then, I will distribute the survey instrument to the remaining special education directors in Georgia. Once distributed and returned, I will analyze the survey data and use the results to develop questions for a focus group at the completion of the study.

I would like to also invite you to participate in a focus group after data from the survey responses from all of the directors in the state are analyzed and coded. I will conduct the focus group at one of our RESA special education director's meetings in the spring 2007. The focus group session will be recorded by audio tape and the tape will be transcribed. The tape and related documents will be destroyed in August 2007 at the completion of the study. Ms. Jolynn Aubry, my coordinator, will assist me with the focus group transcription and coding of data. Ms. Aubry is an administrator and teacher with over ten years of experience teaching in the inclusion setting.

As explained above, the remaining special education directors in Georgia will participate in the survey portion of this study after the completion of the pilot. I intend to use the information from the survey for two purposes. First, the information obtained from you will allow me to complete the research process required for my dissertation in Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. Second, I intend to share the results of this study with you and other educational leaders across the state at conferences in the near future. The results of this study will prove helpful as we continue to expand the inclusion initiatives across this great state. Please note that Marlene Bryar, State Director of Exceptional Students, has endorsed the study. Your participation in this pilot survey and focus group is strictly voluntary and should not pose any risk or discomfort to you.

If you choose to participate, I do request that you attempt to answer all questions in the survey. Once you complete the pilot survey, you may return the survey to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that I provided for you. Your prompt response is greatly appreciated and your responses will be confidential according to applicable Georgia laws. I will not share any information that would identify any participant individually or any director who chooses not to participate in this study. If you should have any additional questions related the purpose of the study or need any clarification of survey questions, please contact me at (478) 986-4509 or at (706) 468-9428. You can also reach me by email at mnewton@jones.k12.ga.us. You may also contact my chairperson, Dr. Charles Reavis at (912) 681-5719. Also, you may contact the Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 486-7758 or at oversight@georgiasouthern.edu if you have any questions related to your rights as a participant in research.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the pilot study. I will make contact with each of you to schedule the exact date of the focus group in the late spring 2007. I appreciate your support and look forward to sharing the results of the study as we all work to improve educational services for students with disabilities in Georgia.
Sincerely,

Mike Newton, Ed. S.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.
Title of Project: Georgia Special Education Directors' Roles in the Implementation of Inclusion

Principal Investigator: Mike Newton
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Faculty Advisor: Dr. Charles Reavis
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careavis@georgiasouthern.edu

_____ _____
Participant Signature Date

I, the undersigned verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

_____ _____
Investigator Signature Date

APPENDIX F

QUESTIONS FOR THE MIDDLE GEORGIA SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS' FOCUS GROUP

QUESTIONS FOR THE MIDDLE GEORGIA SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS' FOCUS GROUP

1. Describe your first experiences with inclusion implementation? (e.g. were you prepared, what changes were needed?)
2. What is your role with inclusion implementation in your present school district? If you are a new director, what steps did you take to begin (or continue) inclusion implementation?
3. Using the survey as a guide, describe your involvement with inclusion implementation at the School and District levels?
4. How have your educationally related work experiences (e.g. experiences as a teacher, principal, other administration) impacted your role during inclusion implementation?
5. Does the size of your school system impact your present level of role involvement with inclusion implementation? At the District Level…School level? Please explain.
6. Indicator 9 (increasing the number of students in the LRE) is a mandatory goal for all school systems in Georgia. How do you feel about your system's ability to meet this indicator? How can you assure adherence to this indicator?
7. If you had the opportunity to enact policy or assist with the training of new directors with inclusion implementation, what suggestions would you make?
8. Is there any topic that we overlooked regarding your role with inclusion implementation?

APPENDIX G

SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH RELATED TO THE STUDY OF INCLUSION

Table G1

Synthesis of Research Related to the Study of Inclusion

Study	**Participants**	**Independent Variables**	**Dependent Variables**	**Design/Analysis**	**Outcomes**
Valesky, T. C., & Hirth, M. A., (1992)	57 State Directors of Special Education	Endorsement programs, required special ed law classes	Knowledge base of school administrators	Frequencies and percentages	Most states do not require reg. ed. admin. to have legal training Most states offer spec. ed admin endorsements 75% of the states offer special ed related in service for principals
Arick, J. R., & Krug, D. A., (1993)	2900 randomly sampled special education directors across the United States	Special education directors' perceptions on policy and personnel	Personnel needs, preparation programs, training needs, administrative policies	Quantitative study Chi-Square analysis ANOVA	One third of special education directors had no experience teaching special education

Study	Participants	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Design/Analysis	Outcomes
Barnett, C., & Monda-Amaya, L. (1998).	115 randomly selected principals from Illinois	The principals' definitions and perceptions of inclusion	Principals' attitudes toward and knowledge of inclusion	Quantitative ANOVA Open ended responses were coded	30% of the principals believed they could reshape the school's culture Principals feel teachers lack knowledge and instructional strategies for inclusion
Cook, B.G., Semmel, M.I., & Gerber, M. M. (1999)	49 principals 64 special education teachers	Principal and teacher attitudes toward inclusion	Allocation of resources for inclusion Overall perception of success with inclusion models	Quantitative: survey	Principals and special education teachers disagreed on achievement outcomes for inclusion (principals were more positive).

Study	Participants	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Design/Analysis	Outcomes
Brotherson, M. J., Sheriff, G., Milburn, P., & Schertz, M. (2001).	61 elementary principals from Iowa	Principal perceptions of challenges with inclusion models Principal perceptions of leadership qualities in an effective inclusion setting	What are the needs and issues of inclusive programs?	Qualitative study: 13 Focus groups: Two parts Survey of principals	Principals acknowledged the need for professional growth in the area of inclusion Principals did not view themselves as part of the solution for improving inclusion
Daane, C. J., Beirne-Smith, M., & Latham, D. (2001).	324 general education teachers, 15 administrators; and 42 special education teachers	Attitudes of administrators, general and special education teachers toward inclusion.	Are there any differences in the attitudes or problems that need to be addressed between the groups?	Quantitative & Qualitative: Survey and semi-structured interviews with four individuals from each group	Agreed on collaboration but acknowledged problems with personalities, planning time and scheduling of the SPED teacher.

Study	Participants	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Design/Analysis	Outcomes
Doyle, L. H., (2001)	19 administrators from a large metro area	How do administrators perceive inclusion?	What processes and policies are needed to re-culture schools for inclusion?	Qualitative: Responses to open-ended interview questions	Principals were more concerned with the structural elements of inclusion (schedules, resources, etc) not the cultural issues.
Caron, E. A., & McLaughlin, M. J. (2002).	Four elementary and two middles schools Sites: Colorado, Nebraska and Kentucky 12 special ed teachers and 17 general educators 25 participated in focus groups	Collaboration	Outcomes for all students	Qualitative case studies of 6 schools Embedded case study design -document reviews, site visits, interviews, focus groups and observations	Themes emerged: collaborative planning , shared leadership, shared decision making, cohesive expectations for all students and collaborative culture

Study	Participants	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Design/Analysis	Outcomes
Wigle, S.E., & Wilcox, D. J., (2002)	240 general administrators. special education teachers, and special education directors	Self-perceptions of the 35 CEC skills	Competencies on CEC-identified skills	Survey of the CEC skills: Chi-square analysis	Special education directors scored high in perception of most of the CEC skills Both general and special education teachers rated their own skills lower
Praisner, C. L. (2003).	408 elementary school principals from Pennsylvania	Principals' personal characteristics, training and experience Perceptions of placements of students with different types of disabilities	Attitudes toward inclusion	Quantitative Survey	Most principals were positive about inclusion Attitude scales were neutral…leaning towards positive Principals were less open to inclusion for autistic and severe behavioral SWD

Study	Participants	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Design/Analysis	Outcomes
Burstein, N., Sears, S., Wilcoxen, A., Cabello, B., & Spagna, M. (2004).	University and two school districts in Southern California Nine schools: five elementary and one middle school from one district Two elementary and one middle school from another district	Five factors important: leadership, teacher commitment, professional development, planning time and classroom support	What changes occurred? How satisfied were the stakeholders with the changes?	Qualitative study: interviews with teachers, administrators and parents	Teachers and administrators indicated professional learning was critical Collaboration between general and special ed teachers was essential Support from central admin
Keefe, E. B., & Moore, V. (2004)	Study of one high school in the southwestern US Interviews of 8 general ed and 8 special ed teachers	Purpose: to help teachers with the implementation of inclusion as it becomes a more common practice in education	Beliefs about inclusion and roles	Qualitative study Interviews: coded for themes	Collaboration: communication between teachers; time for planning Roles of the teachers: general ed teacher was responsible for instruction teachers did not feel prepared

Study	Participants	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Design/Analysis	Outcomes
Jacobson-Stevenson, R., Jacobson, J., & Hilton, A., (2006)	150 Illinois middle and high school principals	Principal's training and experience	Skills principals need to supervise special education in their buildings	Use of frequencies and percentages	Principals with training and experience in special ed assume a greater role with special ed programming Principals with training refer fewer students to special ed There was no difference in staff collaboration based on principal training

Study	Participants	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Design/Analysis	Outcomes
Sindelar, P. T., Shearer, D. K., Yendol-Hoppey, & D., Liebert, T. W., (2006)	95 teachers 16 administrators	Qualitative	Sustainability of inclusion	Qualitative	Sustainability based on: leadership change, teacher turnover, policy changes Major issue that impedes inclusion is admin turnover

APPENDIX H

ANOVA TABLES

Table H1

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Director and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Director								
	0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Vision									
1. Possess vision									
District Level	4.77	4.27	4.67	.483	4.83	.408	4.79	.474	.404
School Level	4.21	.864	3.76	.625	3.83	.983	4.13	.906	1.488
2. Communicate vision administrators									
District Level	4.72	.510	4.67	.483	4.67	.516	4.79	.474	.342
School Level	4.49	.790	4.19	.750	4.67	.516	4.50	.862	.960
3. Communication vision stakeholders									
District Level	4.41	.637	4.48	.512	4.50	.837	4.34	.781	.222
School Level	4.03	.903	3.67	.966	4.67	.516	3.66	.994	2.784*

Table H1 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Director and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Director								
	0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Legal/Ethical									
4. Interpret law/policies									
District Level	4.62	.673	4.62	.740	5.00	.000	4.68	.525	.718
School Level	4.23	.986	4.29	.902	4.67	.516	4.38	1.021	.379
5. Provide inclusion services									
District Level	4.67	.478	4.67	.577	4.67	.816	4.66	.627	.002
School Level	4.36	.668	4.00	.837	4.67	.816	4.11	.924	1.750
6. Demonstrate ethical practice									
District Level	4.87	.409	4.90	.301	4.83	.408	4.92	.273	.203
School Level	4.82	.451	4.80	.410	4.83	.408	4.76	.683	.101

Table H1 (Continued)

Mean, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Director and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Director								
	0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Communication									
7. Implement communication procedures									
District Level	4.10	.821	4.33	.658	4.33	.816	4.13	.777	.530
School Level	3.58	.948	3.57	.978	4.00	.894	3.53	1.033	.402
8. Assist with stakeholder partnerships									
District Level	4.10	.788	4.10	.768	4.33	.816	3.97	.944	.382
School Level	3.49	.854	3.52	1.123	4.17	.753	3.42	1.081	.980
9. Communicate with all stakeholders									
District Level	4.21	.767	4.24	.700	4.33	.816	4.13	.875	.162
School Level	3.54	.854	3.29	1.102	4.33	.816	3.53	1.179	1.601

Table H1 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Director and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Director								
	0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Planning/Implementation									
10. Gather information									
District Level	4.62	.590	4.62	.498	4.33	.816	4.47	.687	.658
School Level	4.05	.759	3.86	.910	4.33	.816	3.87	1.070	.674
11. Implement programs									
District Level	4.49	.601	4.33	.730	4.50	.837	4.37	.675	.349
School Level	3.90	.852	3.48	.981	4.33	.816	3.84	.973	1.688
12. Assist with scheduling									
District Level	4.28	.916	3.43	1.469	3.83	1.602	3.71	1.450	2.351
School Level	3.85	1.089	2.81	1.167	4.00	1.265	3.21	1.473	3.858**
13. Develop collaborative programs									
District Level	4.21	.864	3.86	1.276	4.33	.816	4.29	1.063	.881
School Level	4.00	.918	3.14	1.195	4.17	1.169	3.68	1.068	3.436*

Table H1 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Director and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Director								
	0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Budget/Resources									
14. Develop instructional supply budgets									
District Level	4.85	.432	4.86	.478	4.83	.408	4.58	.858	1.472
School Level	3.87	1.218	3.81	1.289	4.83	.408	3.82	1.411	1.157
15. Fund inclusion instructional staff									
District Level	4.62	.815	4.57	.676	4.50	.837	4.39	1.054	.426
School Level	4.05	1.191	3.76	1.179	4.33	.816	3.95	1.335	.437
16. Ensure resource equity									
District Level	4.77	.485	4.81	.512	4.67	.516	4.63	.819	.477
School Level	4.08	1.222	3.67	1.278	4.50	.548	4.08	1.282	.937

Table H1 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Director and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Director								
	0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Professional Learning (PL)									
17. Collaboration of regular and special ed. teachers									
District Level	4.51	.756	4.33	.658	4.50	.548	4.50	.830	.292
School Level	4.10	.940	3.57	.811	4.50	.548	3.92	1.100	2.066
18. Provide PL to regular classroom teachers									
District Level	4.18	1.023	3.95	.865	4.00	1.265	4.05	1.012	.263
School Level	3.92	1.036	3.33	.865	4.00	1.265	3.45	1.132	2.191
19. Provide PL related to student needs									
District Level	4.28	.887	4.62	.590	4.83	.408	4.45	.795	1.406
School Level	3.97	.932	3.86	.727	4.83	.408	3.84	1.175	1.861

Table H1 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Director and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Director								
	0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Curriculum/Instructional Support									
20. Access to Ga. Performance Standards									
District Level	4.67	.621	4.62	.590	4.67	.816	4.82	.393	.743
School Level	4.36	.628	3.86	.964	4.83	.408	4.32	.884	3.116*
21. Ensure teaching strategies									
District Level	4.31	.731	4.05	.805	4.50	.548	4.18	.766	.852
School Level	3.92	.900	3.33	1.197	4.50	.548	3.70	.939	2.944*
22. Ensure individual needs are met									
District Level	4.36	.668	4.24	.700	4.50	.837	4.45	.760	.449
School Level	3.97	.843	3.43	1.028	4.50	.548	3.97	.833	3.201*
23. Provide assistive technology									
District Level	4.41	.637	4.48	.680	4.33	.816	4.39	.887	.079
School Level	4.05	.804	3.90	.768	4.33	.816	3.89	1.100	.536

Table H1 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Director and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Director								
	0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Evaluation of Programs									
24. Conduct ongoing evaluations									
District Level	4.00	.946	3.81	.873	4.33	.816	3.68	1.042	1.198
School Level	3.82	.997	3.19	1.078	4.33	.816	3.08	1.038	5.277**
25. Collect staff feedback									
District Level	4.15	.812	3.95	1.024	4.33	.816	3.76	1.195	1.216
School Level	3.95	.857	3.24	1.136	4.33	.816	3.41	1.117	3.891*
26. Monitor inclusion programs									
District Level	4.08	.807	3.90	.768	4.17	.753	3.73	1.071	1.091
School Level	3.69	.893	3.19	1.167	4.00	.632	3.46	.989	1.726

*p<.05 **p<.01

Table H2

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher										
	NA (n=3)		0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Vision											
1. Possess vision											
District Level	4.33	.577	4.79	.419	4.76	.435	4.82	.393	4.74	.526	.771
School Level	4.00	.000	3.95	.970	3.91	.879	4.18	.883	4.26	.764	.782
2. Communicate vision administrators											
District Level	4.67	.577	4.68	.582	4.64	.489	4.76	.562	4.81	.396	.539
School Level	4.67	.577	4.21	.918	4.39	.704	4.53	.800	4.63	.742	.966
3. Communication vision stakeholders											
District Level	4.33	.577	4.16	.898	4.52	.566	4.35	.786	4.44	.577	.883
School Level	4.33	.577	3.63	1.116	3.88	.992	3.94	.827	3.93	.917	.510

Table H2 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher										
	NA (n=3)		0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Legal/Ethical											
4. Interpret law/policies											
District Level	4.67	.577	4.79	.419	4.76	.435	4.65	.786	4.41	.797	1.516
School Level	4.33	.577	4.21	.918	4.52	.712	4.18	1.185	4.22	.974	.620
5. Provide inclusion services											
District Level	4.67	.577	4.74	.562	4.52	.566	4.76	.437	4.70	.669	.782
School Level	4.00	1.000	4.21	.787	4.00	.901	4.41	.795	4.37	.742	1.099
6. Demonstrate ethical practice											
District Level	5.00	.000	4.89	.315	4.88	.331	4.76	.562	4.96	.192	.936
School Level	4.67	.577	4.72	.575	4.82	.584	4.76	.562	4.92	.272	.542

Table H2 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher										
	NA (n=3)		0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Communication											
7. Implement communication procedures											
District Level	4.33	.577	4.05	.780	4.09	.805	4.24	.831	4.22	.751	.267
School Level	4.00	1.000	3.24	1.017	3.70	.918	3.53	.874	3.50	1.105	.428
8. Assist with stakeholder partnerships											
District Level	4.33	.577	4.00	.667	3.97	.984	4.18	.951	4.07	.730	.273
School Level	4.00	1.000	3.42	1.216	3.52	1.034	3.53	1.007	3.41	.844	.265
9. Communicate with all stakeholders											
District Level	4.33	.577	4.21	.787	4.21	.781	4.00	.791	4.22	.847	.282
School Level	4.00	1.000	3.74	1.147	3.48	1.064	3.42	1.033	3.48	1.014	.672

Table H2 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher										
	NA (n=3)		0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Planning/Implementation											
10. Gather information											
District Level	4.33	.577	4.58	.692	4.39	.659	4.76	.437	4.59	.636	1.145
School Level	4.33	.577	3.74	.991	3.85	.906	4.18	.951	4.11	.892	.937
11. Implement programs											
District Level	4.33	1.155	4.16	.668	4.30	.585	4.65	.606	4.52	.700	1.642
School Level	4.00	1.000	3.63	1.065	3.67	.890	4.00	1.000	3.93	.874	.661
12. Assist with scheduling											
District Level	3.00	2.000	3.84	1.573	4.15	1.064	4.06	1.249	3.63	1.363	1.013
School Level	3.00	2.000	3.47	1.577	3.39	1.273	3.65	.996	3.33	1.359	.235
13. Develop collaborative programs											
District Level	3.33	1.155	4.42	1.017	4.24	.936	3.82	1.237	4.19	1.001	1.296
School Level	3.33	2.082	3.89	1.197	3.88	.992	3.47	1.068	3.67	1.038	.621

Table H2 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher										
	NA (n=3)		0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Budget/Resources											
14. Develop instructional supply budgets											
District Level	5.00	.000	4.84	.375	4.79	.545	4.59	.712	4.67	.877	.593
School Level	5.00	.000	4.16	.898	3.94	1.273	3.82	1.468	3.81	1.178	.839
15. Fund inclusion instructional staff											
District Level	5.00	.000	4.74	.562	4.48	.755	4.47	.874	4.44	1.050	.652
School Level	5.00	.000	4.00	1.054	3.94	1.171	4.00	1.225	3.96	1.255	.576
16. Ensure resource equity											
District Level	5.00	.000	4.84	.375	4.67	.540	4.59	.712	4.70	.869	.533
School Level	5.00	.000	4.11	1.049	3.91	1.182	4.00	1.369	4.11	1.188	.638

Table H2 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher										
	NA (n=3)		0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Professional Learning (PL)											
17. Collaboration of reg. and sped. teachers											
District Level	3.33	.577	4.79	.419	4.52	.566	4.47	.874	4.41	.844	3.107**
School Level	4.00	1.000	4.16	.898	4.03	.883	3.82	1.074	3.96	.980	.296
18. Provide PL to reg. classroom teachers											
District Level	3.33	.577	4.05	1.079	4.00	.968	4.41	.712	4.11	1.086	.984
School Level	3.67	1.155	3.47	1.020	3.67	1.164	3.82	1.074	3.74	.944	.279
19. Provide PL related to student needs											
District Level	4.00	1.000	4.74	.452	4.52	.619	4.29	.686	4.30	1.031	1.487
School Level	3.67	.577	3.95	1.026	4.06	.998	3.76	.903	4.07	.874	.433

Table H2 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher										
	NA (n=3)		0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Curriculum/Instructional Support											
20. Access to Ga. Performance Standards											
District Level	4.67	.577	4.74	.653	4.64	.489	4.53	.800	4.89	.320	1.314
School Level	4.00	1.000	4.37	.895	4.09	.879	4.24	.903	4.50	.648	1.026
21. Ensure teaching strategies											
District Level	4.33	.577	4.53	.772	4.18	.635	4.24	.752	4.11	.801	1.007
School Level	4.00	1.000	4.32	1.057	3.70	.951	3.65	.931	3.50	.949	2.165
22. Ensure individual needs are met											
District Level	4.67	.577	4.37	.684	4.36	.742	4.41	.618	4.30	.823	.204
School Level	4.33	1.155	4.05	1.079	3.85	.939	3.76	.752	3.77	.815	.523
23. Provide assistive technology											
District Level	4.00	.000	4.74	.452	4.30	.684	4.35	.786	4.41	.844	1.481
School Level	4.00	.000	4.17	1.043	3.94	.788	4.00	.866	4.00	.849	.205

Table H2 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Special Education Teacher										
	NA (n=3)		0-5 (n=39)		6-10 (n=21)		11-15 (n=6)		16+ (n=38)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Evaluation of Programs											
24. Conduct ongoing evaluations											
District Level	3.67	1.155	3.89	.937	4.06	.864	4.06	1.029	3.52	1.051	1.409
School Level	3.33	1.528	3.89	1.100	3.45	1.148	3.59	1.004	3.12	.993	1.487
25. Collect staff feedback											
District Level	4.00	1.000	4.16	1.015	4.06	.864	4.06	1.029	3.78	1.086	.507
School Level	4.00	1.000	3.63	1.212	3.76	1.032	3.65	1.057	3.46	.948	.379
26. Monitor inclusion programs											
District Level	4.00	1.000	3.95	.911	4.09	.818	3.88	.928	3.67	1.000	.824
School Level	3.67	1.528	3.63	1.116	3.52	.870	3.53	1.068	3.335	1.018	.256

*p<.05 **p<.01

Table H3

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a General Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Regular Education Teacher								
	NA (n=9)		0-5 (n=25)		6-10 (n=9)		11+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Vision									
1. Possess vision									
District Level	4.56	.527	4.84	.374	4.78	.441	5.00	.000	1.600
School Level	3.67	1.118	4.12	.781	4.11	1.054	4.60	.548	1.241
2. Communicate vision administrators									
District Level	4.67	.500	4.80	.408	4.89	.333	4.60	.894	.567
School Level	4.22	1.202	4.72	.542	4.22	1.093	4.80	.447	1.502
3. Communication vision stakeholders									
District Level	4.22	.667	4.56	.507	4.56	.726	4.60	.894	.738
School Level	3.22	1.202	4.04	.790	3.78	.972	4.60	.894	2.836*

Table H3 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a General Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Regular Education Teacher								
	NA (n=9)		0-5 (n=25)		6-10 (n=9)		11+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Legal/Ethical									
4. Interpret law/policies									
District Level	4.89	.333	4.68	.690	4.67	.707	5.00	.000	.603
School Level	4.67	.707	4.44	.768	4.11	1.269	4.80	.447	.952
5. Provide inclusion services									
District Level	4.78	.441	4.72	.542	4.89	.333	4.80	.447	.278
School Level	4.22	.667	4.36	.757	4.00	.866	4.80	.447	1.336
6. Demonstrate ethical practice									
District Level	5.00	.000	4.96	.200	4.78	.667	4.80	.447	.969
School Level	5.00	.000	4.92	.227	4.33	.866	4.80	.447	4.537**

Table H3 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a General Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Regular Education Teacher								
	NA (n=9)		0-5 (n=25)		6-10 (n=9)		11+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Communication									
7. Implement communication procedures									
District Level	4.00	.707	4.24	.723	4.33	.707	4.40	.894	.444
School Level	3.00	1.195	3.60	1.041	4.00	.866	4.20	.837	1.936
8. Assist with stakeholder partnerships									
District Level	3.67	1.225	4.24	.723	4.22	.667	4.40	.894	1.248
School Level	2.67	1.414	3.52	1.085	3.44	.726	4.20	.837	2.405
9. Communicate with all stakeholders									
District Level	4.00	.866	4.44	.583	4.44	.726	4.20	.837	1.028
School Level	2.67	1.500	3.68	.988	3.78	.833	4.20	.837	2.950*

Table H3 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a General Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Regular Education Teacher								
	NA (n=9)		0-5 (n=25)		6-10 (n=9)		11+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Planning/Implementation									
10. Gather information									
District Level	4.56	.527	4.80	.408	4.44	.726	4.60	.548	1.288
School Level	3.78	1.394	4.28	.792	3.67	.866	4.60	.548	1.817
11. Implement programs									
District Level	4.44	.527	4.52	.653	4.67	.707	4.80	.447	.468
School Level	3.56	1.333	3.72	.980	4.00	.707	4.60	.548	1.452
12. Assist with scheduling									
District Level	3.33	1.803	4.28	.891	3.67	1.414	5.00	.000	2.829*
School Level	3.00	2.000	3.24	1.091	3.56	1.333	5.00	.000	2.948*
13. Develop collaborative programs									
District Level	3.56	1.810	4.48	.653	4.00	1.323	4.40	.548	1.766
School Level	3.11	1.764	3.80	.816	3.56	1.236	4.60	.548	2.054

Table H3 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a General Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Regular Education Teacher								
	NA (n=9)		0-5 (n=25)		6-10 (n=9)		11+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Budget/Resources									
14. Develop instructional supply budgets									
District Level	4.89	.333	4.92	.400	4.67	.500	5.00	.000	1.136
School Level	4.00	1.225	4.32	.988	3.89	1.167	5.00	.000	1.479
15. Fund inclusion instructional staff									
District Level	4.67	.707	4.68	.748	4.33	.707	5.00	.000	1.053
School Level	4.11	1.167	4.28	.980	3.78	1.202	5.00	.000	1.611
16. Ensure resource equity									
District Level	4.67	.500	4.96	.200	4.67	.707	5.00	.000	2.148
School Level	3.89	1.167	4.40	.913	4.33	1.000	5.00	.000	1.543

Table H3 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a General Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Regular Education Teacher								
	NA (n=9)		0-5 (n=25)		6-10 (n=9)		11+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Professional Learning (PL)									
17. Collaboration of reg. and sped. teachers									
District Level	4.78	.441	4.48	.653	4.33	1.000	4.40	.894	.641
School Level	3.67	.866	3.92	.909	4.00	1.000	4.80	.447	1.837
18. Provide PL to reg. classroom teachers									
District Level	3.44	1.130	4.28	.891	4.11	1.054	4.20	.837	1.689
School Level	2.89	1.054	3.80	1.000	3.67	.866	4.60	.548	3.740*
19. Provide PL related to student needs									
District Level	4.78	.441	4.56	.651	4.44	.726	4.40	.894	.517
School Level	3.89	1.054	4.04	.935	3.67	1.000	4.20	.837	.457

Table H3 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a General Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Regular Education Teacher								
	NA (n=9)		0-5 (n=25)		6-10 (n=9)		11+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Curriculum/Instructional Support									
20. Access to Ga. Performance Standards									
District Level	4.89	.333	4.84	.374	4.67	.707	5.00	.000	.743
School Level	3.78	1.202	4.42	.654	4.00	.866	4.80	.447	2.414
21. Ensure teaching strategies									
District Level	4.00	1.118	4.48	.586	4.11	.782	4.60	.548	1.409
School Level	3.44	1.333	4.00	.933	3.78	.833	4.40	.548	1.221
22. Ensure individual needs are met									
District Level	4.67	.707	4.60	.577	4.33	.707	4.40	.894	.547
School Level	3.89	1.269	4.04	.908	4.00	.866	4.40	.894	.303
23. Provide assistive technology									
District Level	4.44	.726	4.52	.653	4.22	.667	4.60	.548	.533
School Level	3.89	.928	4.17	.868	3.88	.835	4.40	.548	.626

Table H3 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a General Education Teacher and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience as a Regular Education Teacher								
	NA (n=9)		0-5 (n=25)		6-10 (n=9)		11+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Evaluation of Programs									
24. Conduct ongoing evaluations									
District Level	3.56	1.130	4.04	.935	3.78	1.093	4.20	1.304	.657
School Level	3.11	1.269	3.58	1.100	3.78	1.093	4.20	1.304	1.065
25. Collect staff feedback									
District Level	3.78	1.202	4.28	.936	4.00	1.118	4.20	.447	.627
School Level	3.56	1.424	3.88	.947	3.67	1.225	4.20	.447	.470
26. Monitor inclusion programs									
District Level	3.67	.866	4.25	.737	3.67	1.118	4.00	1.225	1.454
School Level	3.00	1.225	3.79	.977	3.56	1.014	3.80	1.095	1.324

*p<.05 **p<.01

Table H4

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Principal and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience						
	NA (n=19)		0-5 (n=14)		6+ (n=4)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Vision							
1. Possess vision							
District Level	4.68	.478	4.93	.267	5.00	.000	2.168
School Level	4.11	.937	4.07	.829	4.50	.577	.401
2. Communicate vision administrators							
District Level	4.79	.419	4.79	.426	5.00	.000	.495
School Level	4.53	.905	4.57	.646	4.50	1.000	.017
3. Communicate vision stakeholders							
District Level	4.42	.607	4.57	.514	4.50	.577	.281
School Level	3.79	.976	3.93	1.207	3.50	.577	.270

Table H4 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Principal and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience						
	NA (n=19)		0-5 (n=14)		6+ (n=4)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Legal/Ethical							
4. Interpret law/policies							
District Level	4.68	.749	4.71	.611	5.00	.000	.380
School Level	4.53	.841	4.29	.914	4.50	.577	.337
5. Provide inclusion services							
District Level	4.84	.375	4.71	.469	5.00	.000	.923
School Level	4.21	.787	4.64	.497	4.75	.500	2.202
6. Demonstrate ethical practice							
District Level	4.89	.459	5.00	.000	5.00	.000	.938
School Level	4.84	.501	5.00	.000	4.75	.500	.401

Table H4 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Principal and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience						
	NA (n=19)		0-5 (n=14)		6+ (n=4)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Communication							
7. Implement communication procedures							
District Level	4.11	.658	4.14	.864	4.50	.577	.481
School Level	3.44	1.042	3.57	1.089	3.50	1.000	.057
8. Assist with stakeholder partnerships							
District Level	3.95	.970	4.07	.829	4.50	.577	.643
School Level	3.26	1.240	3.29	.825	3.75	.957	.353
9. Communicate with all stakeholders							
District Level	4.21	.713	4.50	.760	4.50	.577	.746
School Level	3.42	1.387	3.36	.929	3.75	1.258	.163

Table H4 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Principal and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience						
	NA (n=19)		0-5 (n=14)		6+ (n=4)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Planning/Implementation							
10. Gather information							
District Level	4.58	.507	4.79	4.26	4.50	1.000	.755
School Level	4.05	1.079	4.29	.726	4.50	.577	.514
11. Implement programs							
District Level	4.63	.597	4.43	.514	4.75	.500	.772
School Level	3.68	1.157	3.93	.730	4.75	.500	2.024
12. Assist with scheduling							
District Level	3.47	1.541	4.29	.914	4.75	.500	2.632
School Level	3.05	1.580	3.86	1.027	4.50	.577	2.730
13. Develop collaborative programs							
District Level	4.00	1.414	4.00	.877	4.75	.500	.730
School Level	3.42	1.346	3.93	.917	4.50	.577	1.807

Table H4 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Principal and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience						
	NA (n=19)		0-5 (n=14)		6+ (n=4)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Budget/Resources							
14. Develop instructional supply budgets							
District Level	4.84	.501	4.93	2.67	4.75	.500	.327
School Level	4.21	1.084	4.36	.929	4.50	.577	.182
15. Fund inclusion instructional staff							
District Level	4.68	.582	4.50	.941	4.75	.500	.322
School Level	4.32	.885	4.29	1.139	4.50	.577	.077
16. Ensure resource equity							
District Level	4.84	.375	4.71	.611	5.00	.000	.673
School Level	4.32	.946	4.36	.929	4.75	.500	.383

Table H4 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Principal and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience						
	NA (n=19)		0-5 (n=14)		6+ (n=4)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Professional Learning							
17. Collaboration of reg. and sped. teachers							
District Level	4.42	.838	4.43	.756	4.75	.500	.310
School Level	3.68	1.003	4.57	.646	4.25	.500	4.531*
18. Provide PL to reg. classroom teachers							
District Level	3.79	1.032	4.21	.893	4.25	1.500	.813
School Level	3.26	1.098	4.36	.842	4.00	.816	5.122*
19. Provide PL related to student needs							
District Level	4.47	.697	4.21	.802	4.75	.500	1.024
School Level	3.79	.976	4.14	.770	3.75	1.258	.651

Table H4 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Principal and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience						
	NA (n=19)		0-5 (n=14)		6+ (n=4)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Curriculum/Instructional Support							
20. Access to Ga. Performance Standards							
District Level	4.79	.535	4.93	.267	4.75	.500	.474
School Level	4.11	1.079	4.57	.514	4.25	.500	1.159
21. Ensure teaching strategies							
District Level	4.26	.933	4.00	.784	4.75	.500	1.277
School Level	3.83	1.200	3.50	1.019	4.25	.957	.810
22. Ensure individual needs are met							
District Level	4.58	.692	4.14	.770	4.75	.500	1.974
School Level	3.89	1.183	3.71	.994	4.25	.957	.386
23. Provide assistive technology							
District Level	4.32	.749	4.21	.699	4.75	.500	.885
School Level	3.94	.873	4.00	.679	4.67	.577	1.110

Table H4 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Years of Experience as a Principal and Levels of Role Involvement

	Years of Experience						
	NA (n=19)		0-5 (n=14)		6+ (n=4)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Evaluation of Programs							
24. Conduct ongoing evaluations							
District Level	3.53	1.073	3.93	.829	4.25	.957	1.256
School Level	3.22	1.215	4.07	.829	4.00	.816	2.869
25. Collect staff feedback							
District Level	4.11	1.049	3.86	.949	4.50	1.000	.684
School Level	3.72	1.227	3.79	.975	3.50	1.291	.098
26. Monitor inclusion programs							
District Level	3.74	.806	4.00	.679	3.75	.957	.493
School Level	3.17	1.150	3.57	.852	3.50	1.000	.650

*p<.05 **p<.01

Table H5

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Number of Students with Disabilities (SWD) in the System and Levels of Role Involvement

	Number of SWD in the School District										
	<250 (n=15)		250-499 (n=33)		500-999 (n=27)		1000-2999 (n=24)		3000+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Vision											
1. Possess vision											
District Level	4.80	.414	4.79	.415	4.85	.362	4.67	.482	4.40	.894	1.414
School Level	4.53	.640	4.18	.683	4.11	.801	3.71	.999	3.40	1.140	3.426*
2. Communicate vision administrators											
District Level	4.67	.617	4.82	.392	4.85	.362	4.50	.590	4.80	.447	2.218
School Level	4.67	.488	4.58	.708	4.67	.679	4.04	.955	3.60	.894	4.501*
3. Communication vision stakeholders											
District Level	4.40	.737	4.45	.617	4.48	.700	4.21	.721	4.60	.548	.736
School Level	4.27	.704	3.88	.992	4.00	1.038	3.46	.932	3.60	.548	2.042

Table H5 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Number of Students with Disabilities (SWD) in the System and Levels of Role Involvement

	Number of SWD in the School District										
	<250 (n=15)		250-499 (n=33)		500-999 (n=27)		1000-2999 (n=24)		3000+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Legal/Ethical											
4. Interpret law/policies											
District Level	4.60	.828	4.76	.502	4.52	.753	4.75	.442	4.60	.548	.727
School Level	4.33	1.113	4.42	.792	4.11	1.121	4.50	.722	3.60	1.342	1.357
5. Provide inclusion services											
District Level	4.73	.594	4.58	.502	4.74	.526	4.75	.442	4.20	1.304	1.370
School Level	4.33	.900	4.24	.614	4.33	.784	4.13	.947	3.40	1.140	1.566
6. Demonstrate ethical practice											
District Level	4.80	.561	4.94	.242	4.81	.396	4.96	.204	5.00	.000	1.150
School Level	4.80	.561	4.85	.364	4.77	.514	4.83	.491	4.40	1.342	.799

Table H5 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Number of Students with Disabilities (SWD) in the System and Levels of Role Involvement

	Number of SWD in the School District										
	<250 (n=15)		250-499 (n=33)		500-999 (n=27)		1000-2999 (n=24)		3000+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Communication											
7. Implement communication procedures	3.80	.862	4.21	.740	4.19	.786	4.21	.721	4.80	.447	1.804
District Level	3.33	1.113	3.64	.962	3.70	.953	3.61	.988	3.20	.837	.561
School Level											
8. Assist with stakeholder partnerships											
District Level	4.00	.845	4.06	.827	4.07	.781	4.08	.974	4.20	.837	.056
School Level	3.60	1.298	3.55	.971	3.56	.847	3.38	1.056	3.40	.894	.175
9. Communicate with all stakeholders											
District Level	4.07	.704	4.18	.808	4.26	.813	4.25	.737	4.00	1.225	.244
School Level	3.67	1.047	3.58	1.032	3.78	.934	3.25	1.113	2.80	1.095	1.539

Table H5 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Number of Students with Disabilities (SWD) in the System and Levels of Role Involvement

	Number of SWD in the School District										
	<250 (n=15)		250-499 (n=33)		500-999 (n=27)		1000-2999 (n=24)		3000+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Planning/Implementation											
10. Gather information											
District Level	4.87	.352	4.58	.561	4.48	.753	4.46	.588	4.20	.837	1.637
School Level	4.27	.884	4.12	.740	4.07	.874	3.71	.999	2.60	.548	4.573**
11. Implement programs											
District Level	4.40	.828	4.52	.566	4.41	.694	4.38	.647	4.00	.707	.695
School Level	3.93	1.163	3.88	.857	3.89	.847	3.71	.955	3.20	1.095	.757
12. Assist with scheduling											
District Level	4.27	1.033	4.09	1.234	3.96	1.344	3.42	1.316	3.00	1.871	1.944
School Level	3.93	1.163	3.64	1.454	3.67	1.038	2.83	1.129	1.80	1.304	4.684**
13. Develop collaborative programs											
District Level	4.27	.961	4.15	.870	4.33	.877	4.13	1.296	3.40	1.517	.915
School Level	4.00	1.069	3.91	1.071	3.74	1.059	3.54	1.021	2.40	.894	2.687*

Table H5 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Number of Students with Disabilities (SWD) in the System and Levels of Role Involvement

	Number of SWD in the School District										
	<250 (n=15)		250-499 (n=33)		500-999 (n=27)		1000-2999 (n=24)		3000+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Budget/Resources											
14. Develop instructional supply budgets											
District Level	4.60	.737	4.94	.242	4.70	.609	4.79	.509	4.00	1.732	2.960*
School Level	4.33	1.175	4.33	1.021	3.74	1.228	3.54	1.382	2.20	1.304	4.725**
15. Fund inclusion instructional staff											
District Level	4.27	.884	4.58	.830	4.52	.935	4.71	.624	4.00	1.732	1.055
School Level	4.00	1.195	4.42	.969	3.67	1.301	3.96	1.197	2.60	1.342	3.447*
16. Ensure resource equity											
District Level	4.53	.743	4.85	.364	4.74	.594	4.79	.415	4.00	1.732	2.530*
School Level	4.13	1.246	4.36	1.055	3.89	1.251	4.00	1.142	2.20	1.304	3.878**

Table H5 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Number of Students with Disabilities (SWD) in the System and Levels of Role Involvement

	Number of SWD in the School District										
	<250 (n=15)		250-499 (n=33)		500-999 (n=27)		1000-2999 (n=24)		3000+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Professional Learning (PL)											
17. Collaboration of reg. and sped. teachers											
District Level	4.20	.941	4.42	.708	4.63	.565	4.58	.717	4.20	1.304	1.127
School Level	3.80	1.082	4.15	.755	3.96	1.091	3.88	1.116	3.40	.548	.863
18. Provide PL to reg. classroom teachers											
District Level	4.00	.926	3.94	1.029	4.41	.844	4.04	.999	3.60	1.517	1.238
School Level	3.73	1.033	3.76	.936	3.70	1.137	3.54	1.215	2.60	.548	1.402
19. Provide PL related to student needs											
District Level	4.53	.743	4.33	.924	4.52	.580	4.54	.721	4.00	1.225	.757
School Level	4.27	1.033	4.00	.866	3.85	1.099	3.92	1.060	3.40	.548	.861

Table H5 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Number of Students with Disabilities (SWD) in the System and Levels of Role Involvement

	Number of SWD in the School District										
	<250 (n=15)		250-499 (n=33)		500-999 (n=27)		1000-2999 (n=24)		3000+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Curriculum/Instructional Support											
20. Access to Ga. Performance Standards											
District Level	4.73	.594	4.76	.502	4.78	.506	4.67	.482	4.20	1.095	1.289
School Level	4.53	.743	4.39	.609	4.52	.643	3.91	.900	3.00	1.225	6.426**
21. Ensure teaching strategies											
District Level	4.27	.704	4.36	.653	4.15	.818	4.13	.797	4.00	1.000	.573
School Level	3.80	1.014	3.94	.933	3.93	.997	3.48	.994	2.80	.837	2.184
22. Ensure individual needs are met											
District Level	4.47	.640	4.55	.617	4.15	.770	4.46	.588	3.80	1.304	2.210
School Level	4.27	.961	4.15	.834	3.78	.751	3.65	.885	2.80	.837	4.196*
23. Provide assistive technology											
District Level	4.33	.724	4.42	.614	4.48	.753	4.46	.779	4.00	1.414	.498
School Level	4.07	.961	4.19	.644	3.89	1.121	3.87	.968	3.40	.548	1.111

Table H5 (Continued)

Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVA for Number of Students with Disabilities (SWD) in the System and Levels of Role Involvement

	Number of SWD in the School District										
	<250 (n=15)		250-499 (n=33)		500-999 (n=27)		1000-2999 (n=24)		3000+ (n=5)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F
Evaluation of Programs											
24. Conduct ongoing evaluations											
District Level	4.07	1.100	3.88	.992	3.93	.874	3.71	.859	3.60	1.517	.434
School Level	4.00	1.069	3.55	1.063	3.44	1.188	3.17	.937	2.60	.548	2.285
25. Collect staff feedback											
District Level	4.00	1.069	4.06	.933	4.11	.934	3.79	1.103	3.60	1.517	.539
School Level	3.87	1.060	3.91	.947	3.59	1.047	3.35	1.152	2.60	.548	2.508*
26. Monitor inclusion programs											
District Level	4.07	.799	4.06	.878	4.00	.832	3.63	.924	3.60	1.517	1.152
School Level	4.00	.926	3.73	.911	3.48	.935	3.17	1.072	2.60	.548	3.321*

*p<.05 **p<.01

APPENDIX I

VITA

VITA

Larry Michael Newton

EXPERIENCE

2006-present	Jones County Board of Education, Gray, Georgia Assistant Superintendent
2003-2006	Jones County Board of Education, Gray, Georgia Special Education / Student Services Director
2001-2003	Oak Hill Elementary School Covington, Georgia Principal
1996-2001	Jasper County Board of Education Monticello, Georgia Student Services Director
1994-1996	Jasper County Board of Education Monticello, Georgia Alternative School Teacher/Director
1991-1994	Oconee Psycho-educational Network Monticello, Georgia Special Education Teacher

EDUCATION- EARNED DEGREES

Ed. D. in Educational Leadership
Georgia Southern University
Statesboro, Georgia: 2007

Ed. S. in Educational Leadership
Georgia College & State University
Milledgeville, Georgia: 1999

M. Ed. in Special Education
Georgia College
Milledgeville, Georgia: 1993

B. A. in Psychology
Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia: 1989

A. A. in Liberal Arts
Oxford College of Emory University
Oxford, Georgia: 1987

APPENDIX J

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

Georgia Southern University
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-681-5465
Fax: 912-681-0719
Ovrsight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu
Administrative Annex
P.O. Box 8005
Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Larry Michael Newton
P.O. Box-487
Monticello, GA-31064

CC: Dr. Charles Reavis
P.O. Box-8013

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: April 17, 2007

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: **H07198**, and titled **"Georgia Special Education Directors' Roles in the Implementation of Inclusion"**, it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,

N. Scott Pierce
Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs