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# The Relationship Between Teacher Certification and Perceptions of Adapted Physical Education Program Practices in Metropolitan Atlanta Public Elementary Schools

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER CERTIFICATION AND  
PERCEPTIONS OF ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM PRACTICES  
IN METROPOLITAN ATLANTA PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

by

KEVIN PATRICK STEWART

(Under the Direction of Kymberly Harris)

ABSTRACT

In Georgia, there is no separate endorsement or required specialized teacher certification for adapted physical educators. Because of this absence, the resulting span of personnel teaching adapted physical education (APE) in the state ranges widely in terms of certification areas. Educational administrators would benefit from knowing if any perceived differences exist between APE programs led by teachers with specialized APE certification and those led by general education PE teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between APE teacher certification and school personnel perceptions of APE program practices.

Index Words: Adapted physical education, IDEA 2004, Program evaluation

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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2010

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## DEDICATION

In recognition of the people who made this dream possible, I hereby dedicate this dissertation to my family, Krista and Addison Stewart. You represent my wife, my daughter, and beyond those, my inspiration. Krista, thank you for sacrificing and giving so much of yourself to make this achievement possible. Addison, may you understand the importance of a solid education, a strong work ethic, perseverance, and a supportive family. I love both you with all my heart.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Physical education programs for students with disabilities, termed adapted physical education (APE), allow students with a wide range of disabilities (medical, orthopedic, neurological, etc.) to participate in modified versions of physical education activities (Block, 2006). Effective APE ensures all students with disabilities have an opportunity to develop the fundamental motor skills and physical fitness necessary for a lifetime of participation in active leisure time pursuits, exercise, recreation, and sport (Tripp, Piletic, & Babcock, 2003). The unique needs of the individual student determine the extent of APE service delivery by providing a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. This provision is mandated by the most recent revisions in Public Law 108-446, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA, 2004). Therefore, APE represents a continuum of placement options and services, ranging from inclusive physical education (PE) classes with various levels of support to self-contained PE settings with instructional modifications. Program practices refer to the components of APE programs and encompass a wide range of program aspects such as facilities, instruction, assessment, and placement. Since APE can be implemented in a wide variety of instructional practices, school districts have numerous factors to consider when implementing such programming, including the professional preparation of teachers providing APE services (Decker & Jansma, 1991).

The majority of states fail to clearly define which educators are eligible to provide APE services to students with disabilities (Kelly & Obrusnikova, 2007). While some school districts employ an APE specialist who has an undergraduate or graduate degree

in APE, or who minored in APE, other schools may rely on a general education PE teacher to deliver appropriate APE services and make accommodations for students with disabilities. The latter practice is commonplace in most school districts, as only 14 states currently require a separate APE endorsement or teacher certification to deliver APE instruction (Davis, 2009). Consequently, both the Adapted Physical Activity Council (APAC) and the National Consortium for Physical Education and Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPERID) encourage any state that does not currently require an APE credential or endorsement to develop comprehensive standards and training programs (AAPAR, 2008). Such measures aim to ensure that APE for students with disabilities be delivered by a qualified APE professional (Adapted Physical Education National Standards, 2009a).

To achieve this goal, in 1991 NCPERID created the Adapted Physical Education National Standards (APENS) that outline the minimum competencies that APE educators should possess to provide appropriate services to students with disabilities (Tripp et al., 2003). In 1994, responding to the lack of uniform certification standards for APE teachers, NCPERID created a four-pronged certification process that standardized the criteria necessary to obtain status as a Certified Adapted Physical Educator (CAPE). Included in the criteria is an exam covering APENS that measures knowledge of the specialized content unique for PE service delivery to students with disabilities (APENS, 2009b). Theoretically, the acquisition of the CAPE certification by teachers results in more effective APE service delivery and stronger APE programs (Martinez & Pederson, 2008). The impact on student performance is significant since research has shown a positive correlation between teacher certification and student achievement (Darling-

Hammond, 1999; Brownell, Ross, Colon, & McCallum, 2005; Phillips, 2008). However, school personnel perceptions of program practices in APE programs led by teachers who have the CAPE certification have yet to be determined. This knowledge deficit necessitates the comparison of school personnel perceptions of APE programs that employ CAPEs and those that employ general education PE teachers to provide APE services.

Although physical education is not currently defined as a “core academic subject” under regulations of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2001), the IDEA 2004 legislation mandates that physical education, specially designed if necessary, be available to all infants, children, and youth with disabilities from birth to 21 years of age (Tripp et al., 2003). However, this provision is among the few components of legislation that apply specifically to APE. Thus, Tripp and Zhu (2005) state that the most serious concern today for APE programs is the absence of state and local administrative guidance pertaining to the adherence of federal legislation. Unfortunately, there is no universally-accepted method for evaluating APE programs. Therefore, the degree to which school personnel perceive APE programs to be compliant with federal legislation remains in question.

#### Statement of the Problem

Opportunities for students with disabilities are expanding through ongoing legislation. IDEA 2004 reiterates that students are to participate in the general PE curriculum to the fullest extent possible in settings that are designed to meet the students’ unique needs (IDEA, 2004). Educators certified in various areas are modifying PE services for students with disabilities. Thus, a need for research assessing the efficacy of

specialized APE teacher certification exists to determine if there is a need for state education agencies to indeed define who is qualified to provide APE service delivery. Additionally, since physical education is not classified as a core subject by NCLB, APE programs generally operate with little of the evaluation accountability to which other educational areas are subject. Despite a number of studies conducted in the broad area of PE program evaluation, there is a lack of current research conducted specifically on APE program practices. Since the reauthorization of IDEA 2004, there have been no published studies assessing the perceived degree of legislation compliance for APE programs in the United States.

#### Purpose of the Study

In absence of state guidelines for APE teacher certification in Georgia, individuals certified in various areas provide APE services to students with disabilities within the state. Furthermore, school personnel perception of the compliance of APE program practices with the stipulations of IDEA 2004 remains to be investigated. To date, no such program evaluation has been performed on APE programs in Georgia, specifically in metropolitan Atlanta public elementary schools. This lack of information on APE programming represents a significant gap in the literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between APE teacher certification and school personnel perceptions of APE program practices.

#### Research Questions

The researcher will investigate the following overarching question in this study:  
Do school personnel perceptions of APE program practices differ for elementary self-

contained programs taught by Certified Adapted Physical Educators and those taught by general education PE teachers?

In addition, the researcher will investigate the following subquestions:

1. What do school personnel perceive as strengths and weaknesses of elementary self-contained APE programs taught by CAPEs and those taught by general education PE teachers?
2. In regards to compliance with IDEA 2004, do school personnel perceptions of APE program practices differ for elementary self-contained programs taught by CAPEs and those taught by general education PE teachers?
3. What placement options are reported to be available at elementary schools where the self-contained APE program is perceived as strongly compliant with IDEA 2004?
4. What service delivery models are reported as being implemented at elementary schools where the self-contained APE program is perceived as strongly compliant with IDEA 2004?

### Significance

The study will be beneficial in several ways. First, the researcher will utilize a questionnaire that will be of practical use to APE program administrators in evaluating self-contained APE programs. The results of the study will provide baseline data that can serve as a catalyst for improvement of APE service delivery within the participating school districts.

No research has been conducted on APE evaluation since the adoption of IDEA 2004. Also, the effect of professional preparation on APE program practices in light of these new provisions remains to be investigated. Therefore, the professional significance

of this study will be a contribution to the knowledge base in these areas. The study will fill a void in the research since no published studies have been performed specifically on APE program practices in Georgia public elementary schools.

Likewise, the study is potentially significant in terms of policy. For certain students with disabilities, the self-contained APE placement option represents the least restrictive environment. Therefore, assessing the perceived efficacy of such APE programs evaluates their compliance with federal legislation policy. Additionally, the survey addresses the mandates of IDEA 2004 and results may indicate whether school personnel perceive school districts to be following the stipulations of the legislation.

#### Rationale

For the Georgia school districts employing CAPEs, the study will provide feedback on school personnel perceptions of their respective APE program practices. The results will allow districts to evaluate the school personnel perceptions and offer empirical data to base improvements of their existing APE programs, if necessary. Also, other school districts not employing CAPEs can emulate any areas of strength that may be potentially identified by the participating APE programs of the study. Consequently, the findings of the study will benefit the participating school districts as well as other school districts since the APE programs of all schools fall into one of the two categories of teacher certification.

#### Limitations

1. There is a lack of extensive research in the evaluation of APE programs.
2. The cooperation of the participants is a potential limitation of the study because of the legal ramifications that come with failure to strictly adhere to federal policy.

In analyzing the compliance to the mandates of legislation, the hesitation of participants to openly assess their APE programs may compromise responses to the survey.

#### Delimitations

1. The study is delimited to the four public school districts in the state of Georgia that employ a CAPE. Given the implication of the NCLB legislation, the participants of the study are confined to public schools only. The participating districts all employ a CAPE to teach in their APE programs, which provides congruence to the districts targeted in the study.
2. Only school administrators, PE teachers, and APE teachers will complete the survey. While similar researchers have administered the SAPEN instrument to classroom teachers, the researcher of this study will not include this group as participants because they are responsible for neither self-contained APE service delivery nor its assessment.

#### Definitions

1. Adapted Physical Education (APE): the art and science of developing, implementing, and monitoring a carefully designed physical education instructional program for a learner with a disability, based on a comprehensive assessment, to give the learner the skills necessary for a lifetime of rich leisure, recreation and sport experiences to enhance physical fitness and wellness (Auxter, Pyfer, & Huettig, 2005)
2. APE specialist: an individual with specific training in APE beyond the undergraduate level and who has been assigned by the district to provide APE services to students with disabilities (Block, 2006)

3. Consultation: a voluntary process in which one professional assists another to address a problem concerning a third party (Friend & Cook, 2000).
4. Inclusion: the philosophy of supporting the educational needs of students with disabilities in general education classrooms, including general physical education (Block, 2006)
5. Inclusive PE: providing all students with disabilities the opportunity to participate in regular PE with their peers, with supplementary aides and support services as needed to take full advantage of the goals of motor skill acquisition, fitness, knowledge of movement, and psycho-social well-being, toward the outcome of preparing all students for an active lifestyle appropriate to their abilities and interests (Reid, 2003)
6. Individualized Education Plan (IEP): a written statement, developed and implemented in accordance with federal regulations, that must be prepared for any child with a disability who is served in public education (Seaman, DePauw, Morton, & Omoto, 2003)
7. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): Physical education (PE) instruction in the LRE refers to adapting or modifying the PE curriculum and/or instruction to address the individualized abilities of each child in order to maximize the extent appropriate that students with disabilities be educated with their non-disabled peers (Sherrill, 2004)
8. Physical Education (PE): the development of physical and motor fitness, fundamentals motor skills and patterns, and skills in aquatics, dance, & individual and group games and sports (Seaman et al., 2003)
9. Program Evaluation: determining the overall effectiveness of a program (or service) on the performance of a group of students (Seaman et al., 2003)



10. Self-Contained: special education placement setting where students with disabilities spend most or all of the school day separated from their nondisabled peers (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2009)

11. Support: any person who provides assistance to a student with a disability in general physical education (Block, 2006)

### Summary

In this study, the researcher proposes to evaluate school personnel perceptions of self-contained APE program practices in metropolitan Atlanta public elementary schools. By administering the questionnaire to educators at schools that employ APE teachers with different professional preparation, the results will provide insight to the relationship between APE teacher certification and school personnel perceptions of APE program practices. The data will also identify areas of strength and weakness in APE programs. Additionally, the research will provide feedback on the degree to which school personnel perceive existing APE programs to be compliant with the mandates of the IDEA 2004 legislation. Finally, the study will identify the placement options available and service delivery models used at schools perceived to be strongly compliant with IDEA 2004. Without such research, APE programs in the state of Georgia may continue to operate with minimal accountability, potentially compromising long-range program planning and growth.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

“Adapted physical education is a service, not a setting” (Tripp, Piletic, & Babcock, 2004, p. 6). This statement embodies the dilemma in which state and school district agencies find themselves. Program evaluation of the assorted variations of APE is difficult because APE is a service that exists in a multitude of forms (Decker & Jansma, 1991). By law, school systems are required to offer students with disabilities a continuum of placement options, including self-contained APE, partial integration in general education PE, and full inclusion (Lieberman, Lytle, & Columna, 2008). According to Bouffard (1997), “the evaluation of our services and programs to special populations has been neglected for many years” (p. 71). This occurs despite the existence of many models to assist school administrators in evaluating other educational programs (Cramer & Iverson, 1999; Kulinna, Zhu, Kuntzleman, & DeJong, 2002; Ross, Barkaoui, & Scott, 2007; Thornton, Shepperson, & Canavero, 2007).

While APE programs have now been in operation for decades, perceptions of their compliance with federal legislation are not well documented. IDEA 2004 requires that all students with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and direct PE service, specifically designed if necessary, and that this service be provided by highly qualified personnel (IDEA, 2004). Although IDEA 2004 outlined certain criteria to ensure quality PE service delivery to students with disabilities, the mandates largely depended upon state certification requirements and local school agencies to implement the intent of the law.

Only a minority of school districts have actually embraced the intent of IDEA 2004 in addressing the PE needs of students with disabilities. In fact, most states have defaulted to local school districts to define who is qualified to provide APE services (Auxter, Pyfer, & Huettig, 2005).

### Legislative Requirements

For over three decades, federal legislation has shaped the physical education practices for students with disabilities in public schools (Tripp & Zhu, 2005). Yet the educational reform traces its roots much earlier to the landmark court case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). The ruling stated that schools could not segregate by race and, as a result, individuals who championed for rights of students with disabilities began to argue that schools should not be able to segregate by the disability of an individual (Moses & Daniel, 2006). Thus, the court decision for *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) was the impetus for subsequent federal legislation involving individuals with disabilities. Among the first such laws that provided educational rights for individuals with disabilities was Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973). Specifically, the legislation requires that sport and athletic programs, offered in facilities that receive federal funds, must provide equal opportunities for comparable participation for individuals with disabilities (Auxter, Pyfer, & Huettig, 2005). Section 504 also addressed program accessibility in educational settings in creating the concept of reasonable accommodations that required schools to provide adaptations to programs or facilities to allow an individual with a disability to participate. In terms of PE, legislative implications included modifying existing school structures and allowing for gymnasium accessibility to individuals with disabilities (Block, 2006).

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA), or Public Law 94-142 (1975), further expanded opportunities for children with disabilities in public education. EHA included a zero-reject principle that guaranteed the right to a free, appropriate public education, including physical education, for all children with disabilities from ages 3 to 21 (Block, 2006). The law also introduced the concept of least restrictive environment (LRE) requiring students with disabilities be placed in the most developmentally appropriate and integrated settings to the maximum extent appropriate. Another significant component of EHA was the introduction of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) that created a unique educational plan to meet the needs of each student with a disability. The legislation also specifically required that PE services, specially designed if necessary, be part of this IEP educational plan for students with disabilities. Finally, EHA defined physical education as a direct educational service. This, in turn, guaranteed all students with disabilities the right to physical education.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1986 was reauthorized as Public Law 99-457 with the addition of mandatory PE for children with disabilities ages 3 to 5. In 1990, EHA was revised to become Public Law 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1990). The legislation expanded public school special education services, including specially designed PE, to account for all children with disabilities from birth to age 21. Another law enacted in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), furthered “expanded civil right protections for individuals with disabilities in the public and private sectors” (Auxter, Pyfer, & Huettig, 2005, p. 15). The legislation ensured that all entities provide for reasonable accommodations in granting full access to physical activity facilities. In addition to public schools, community

recreation facilities were required to be accessible to individuals with disabilities (ADA, 1993).

The reauthorization of IDEA (1997), or Public Law 105-17, included numerous mandates pertaining to PE. Among those was the provision of alternative assessments for students with disabilities who are unable to participate in the traditional district or state assessment format. Consequently, physical educators in certain areas became required to assess the physical fitness of certain students with disabilities in a manner separate from the students without disabilities. IDEA 1997 also broadened the scope of least restrictive environment (LRE) by requiring the IEPs of students with disabilities who were not placed into inclusive PE classes to include an explanation of extent to which the student will not participate in regular class (NASDSE, 1997). Hence, the legislation was the genesis for the continuum of placement options that provide the LRE in physical education (Conatser & Summar, 2004). These include, but are not limited to, full inclusion of a student with a disability into a general education PE class, partial integration into a general PE class given educational supports (i.e. paraprofessional, APE coteacher), and self-contained APE settings (Lieberman et al., 2008). Finally, the legislation strengthened the role that parents of students with disabilities play in the process of PE placement for their child by requiring regular parental participation in the IEP process (Houston-Wilson & Lieberman, 1999).

Public Law 107-110, known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2001), included mandates for evidence-based instruction, stronger accountability in results, expanded parental options, and increased local control of educational programs by states and school districts. Although NCLB did not categorize PE as a core subject, the

legislation does pertain to PE in certain ways. Namely, the creation of the term “highly qualified” in NCLB mandated each state develop criteria that teachers must meet to demonstrate competence in the subjects for which they are the primary instructor (NCLB, 2001). Therefore, the certification requirements of individuals responsible for physical education service delivery became more stringent and similar to any other curriculum area. An emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research, termed evidence-based instruction, was another dictate required by NCLB. For students with disabilities, the Individual Education Plan (IEP) provides documentation of instructional strategies to be implemented that will be grounded in scientific-based research. Therefore, it is essential that an individual’s IEP not only includes PE as part of the educational plan but also involves a highly qualified physical educator in the creation of the plan (Winnick, 2005).

The most recent reauthorization of IDEA (2004), or Public Law 108-446, occurred with the act being renamed as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Included in the legislation was a new definition of core academic subjects, added requirements for special education teachers to become highly qualified, and specifications on alternative assessment for students with disabilities (Russo, Osborne, & Borreca, 2005). Another tenet of IDEA 2004 was the stipulation that the determination of eligibility for special education services for students with disabilities must be the result of a nondiscriminatory evaluation. Schools must initiate this assessment in PE through a screening program that uses appropriate motor evaluations conducted by specially trained physical educators (IDEA, 2004). Furthermore, educators must establish goals for the performance of students with disabilities as a requirement of

IDEA 2004. In relation to PE, the development of alternate assessments as well as the insertion of performance goals and indicators pertaining to motor performance in the Individual Education Programs (IEPs) of students accomplishes this directive (Conatser & Summar, 2004).

### APE Program Practices

#### *APE Description*

The field of adapted physical education has been recognized for over 30 years (Auxter, Pyfer, & Huettig, 2005). However, the definitions for APE still vary. APE has been described as a diversified program of physical education having the same goals and objectives as general physical education, but modified when necessary to meet the unique need of each individual (Dunn & Leitschuh, 2006). Alternately, a position statement on PE for individuals with disabilities by the Adapted Physical Activity Council (Tripp, Piletic, & Babcock, 2003) defined APE as:

“PE that is personalized and specially designed to address the individual needs of infants, children, and youth who have disabling conditions that require modifications to the general program of PE in order to benefit from instruction“  
(p. 1).

Winnick (2005) defines APE as “an individualized program of physical and motor fitness, fundamentals motor skills and patterns, and skills in aquatics, dance, and individual and group games and sports designed to meet the unique needs of individuals” (p. 4). Finally, according to Block (2006), physical education programs for students with disabilities, termed APE, allow students with a wide range of disabilities (medical,

orthopedic, neurological, etc.) to participate in modified versions of physical education activities.

### *Placement Options*

Despite the varying definitions of APE, federal legislation mandates that school districts offer a continuum of services for providing PE instruction to students with disabilities (Seaman et al., 2003). IDEA 1997 broadened the scope of LRE with recommendations for a continuum of placement options (Conatser & Summar, 2004). Therefore, schools and school districts must provide any service and setting that meets the unique needs of a child. For instance, the APE program in Cherokee County, Georgia delineates the continuum of services for providing PE instruction to students with disabilities with the following placement options, the last three of which are considered APE (Cherokee County Schools, 2009):

- General PE setting/ without special education supports
- General PE setting/ with accommodations and/or special education IEP goals and objectives
- General PE setting/ with paraprofessional or peer support
- Separate small group class setting
- Separate small group class setting with paraprofessional
- One-to-one setting between student and instructor

Conversely, as included on the Individual Education Plan (IEP), the state of Georgia lists the following PE placement options for students with disabilities:

1. General Education PE with Special Education Support (regular class equal to or > than 80%)



2. General Education PE with Collaboration
3. Pullout PE (regular class from 40-79%)
4. Special Education Separate Class PE (regular class < than 40%)

However, because few school districts have made a commitment to APE within the curriculum, the strategy for delivering PE services to students with disabilities varies dramatically (Auxter, Pyfer, & Huettig, 2005). For example, in a national survey of teachers by Kelly and Gansneder (1998), 55% of teachers indicated APE was the only available placement option while 29% of teachers responded general education PE was the only available placement option. The study concluded:

“While evidence of a placement continuum was available in a few schools, clearly, misconceptions regarding the concept of a placement continuum were present, or problems prevented operationalizing this concept for physical education in many schools sampled” (p. 148).

#### *Service Delivery Models*

As mandated by federal legislation, APE teachers provide a continuum of support in physical education ranging from direct services to consultative services. However, Tripp and Zhu (2005) assert that only a minority of states and school districts have firm policies for assessment of students with disabilities in PE and the subsequent use of those results for service delivery. Because the impetus to devise APE guidelines falls upon state and school district agencies, the models of APE service delivery vary by location. For instance, in the San Francisco Unified School district, direct services, collaboration, and consultation comprise the service delivery continuum (Auxter, Pyfer, & Huettig, 2005). Conversely, as included on the Individual Education Plan (IEP), the state of

Georgia list the following service delivery models for the PE instruction of student with disabilities:

1. Direct Services
2. Co-Teaching (the APE teacher provides services to students with disabilities in the general education classroom for 100% of the time)
3. Collaboration (the APE teacher provides services to students with disabilities in the general education classroom for 50% of the time)
4. Consultation (the APE teacher provides guidance, resources, and knowledge to the general education teacher who is solely responsible for the instruction of students with disabilities)

Research on the service delivery models and the various roles of APE teachers is substantial. A case study by Vogler, Koranda, and Romance (2000) explored the effectiveness of the co-teaching service delivery model. An APE specialist provided a direct, one-on-one instruction to a student with a disability in an inclusive PE class over an 18-week case study. Results demonstrated that the student successfully progressed toward his IEP objectives and that a trained APE specialist can successfully integrate students with disabilities in inclusive PE classes. Therefore, utilizing an adapted physical educator “as a full-time, daily resource is a highly effective educational practice” (Vogler et al., 2000, p. 326).

Similarly, studies have provided support for the collaborative model of PE service delivery for students with disabilities. For preschoolers with developmental delays, Murata (2009) supported collaborative teaching between preschool teachers, adapted physical educators, physical therapists, and occupational therapists. The collaborative

approach facilitated skill development by providing input from team members in their respective areas of expertise. Moreover, research by Lavay, Lytle, Robinson, and Huettig (2003) supported the inclusion of both collaboration and consultation skills in the preservice training of APE teachers. The study listed teaming, adult-to-adult communication, and facilitation skills among the objectives needed to be taught to future APE educators.

Heikinaro-Johansson, Sherrill, French, and Huuhka (1995) analyzed the effectiveness of a consultant model used in a comparison of intensive versus limited consultative support by an APE specialist to two elementary general education PE teachers in Finland. The study demonstrated the success of the consulting model and indicated that intensive support was much more effective than limited support. Block and Conatser (1999) also examined the role of APE teacher as consultant. Among the issues highlighted were the common roles and major barriers of APE consultants. Additionally, Block, Brodeur, and Brady (2001) ranked consulting as becoming one of the most critical duties for APE teachers. In other research, APE consultants reported that large caseloads were barriers to the provision of services to students with disabilities (Huettig & Roth, 2002). Finally, Auxter, Pyfer, and Huettig (2005) cite roadblocks for APE consultants to serve learners with disabilities consistently in public schools, among them a lack of criteria for APE student eligibility.

### *State Requirements*

Clearly, the foremost challenge in determining an appropriate adapted physical education is that each state and, to a greater degree, each school district has alternative definitions (Cantu & Buswell, 2003). An absence of individual state APE standards and

guidelines can result in discretionary school district policies concerning APE programs (Skogstad, 2009). For example, the California Department of Education (2004) lists the four PE placement options for students with disabilities within the state as general PE, modified PE, specially designed PE, and APE. Conversely, the continuum of services offered by the Georgia Department of Education (2009) includes:

1. Regular PE with no special education support
2. Mainstream PE with modifications
3. Full-time APE with no mainstreaming

The Georgia Department of Education (2009) rules for special education state:

“It is the policy of the State Board of Education that students with disabilities have the right to be educated with their non-disabled peers, in a regular classroom alongside their regular peers to the maximum extent appropriate, including receiving their special education and Related Services, aids and supports in the regular classroom to the maximum extent appropriate... This right extends to non-academic programs and services.”

In a national survey of APE teachers, Kelly and Gansneder (1998) estimated that 3-5% of the school population would have disabilities requiring APE. Yet in absence of specific federally established APE placement guidelines, the eligibility criteria for APE remain inconsistent from school district to school district and state to state (Auxter, Pyfer, & Huettig, 2005). Many school districts use normative assessment scores to guide the PE placement of students with disabilities (Seaman et al., 2003). Lieberman et al. (2008) claim that many states use psychomotor test performance of below the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile or 1.5 or 2 standard deviations below the mean as criteria for placement of students with

disabilities into APE. The Georgia Department of Education (2009) uses the following general guidelines to determine whether a student with a disability is eligible for adapted physical education:

- Performance below 30<sup>th</sup> percentile
- Developmental delay of two or more years
- Social/emotional and/or physical capabilities such that goals set for the general PE class are not appropriate for the special education student

### *Self-Contained Placement*

Increasingly, students with disabilities are being included in general education programs (Block, 2006). According to statistics from the U.S. Department of Education (2005a), around 96% of students with disabilities are educated in general education schools, with nearly half of those spending the majority of school hours in general education classrooms. While the number of students with disabilities included in general PE classes has increased in many schools (Block, 2006), the self-contained PE setting remains an option along the continuum of LRE options because it provides the specially designed instruction that meets the unique needs of certain students with disabilities. Versions of self-contained PE for students with disabilities include separate small class settings with various levels of support (peer tutor, paraprofessional, etc.) as well as occasional one-to-one instruction between the student and instructor (Lieberman et al., 2008).

### *Perceptions of APE Programs*

Research on the perceptions of various aspects of APE programs is substantial. In an effort to improve the APE services, Sayers (1999) surveyed parents' perceptions of an

infant and toddler APE model. Although the researcher received generally positive feedback from parents indicating increased feelings of empowerment, Sayers noted the need for better communication between involved groups. Similarly, Boswell (2003) compared the perceptions of general and APE educators toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in general PE. Results indicated no significant difference in perceptions between both groups as educators of each placement agreed that inclusive APE was mutually beneficial for all eligible students.

Kim (2001) compared parent and teacher perceptions of the performance of elementary school students with autism in general education PE classes and APE classes. Results indicated that while the students were perceived to have benefited socially from the general education PE classes, the APE classes more effectively developed the students' physical and motor skills. The study also revealed that students spent more time on-task during the APE classes rather than the general education PE classes. Another study analyzed the perceptions of parents of children with Prader-Willi syndrome (Fidler, Lawson, & Hodapp, 2003). Results indicated a desire by the parents for increases in APE services. Additionally, research by Dillon (2005) on elementary PE teachers' perceptions of their teacher education programs identified discrepancies between which APE competencies were emphasized and which should be emphasized in the programs. Overall perceptions indicated that APE teachers did not feel adequately prepared to meet the PE instructional needs of students with disabilities.

Furthermore, Berends (2006) studied the perceptions of parents and Certified Adapted Physical Educators (CAPEs) on the factors essential for quality PE programs for home-schooled children with autism. Results indicated that parents rated low student-

teacher ratio and one-to-one instruction as the most important factors while CAPEs prioritized the routine and amount of structure in the learning environment as the most important components. However, both groups placed a high level of importance on the existence of PE in the home-school education of students with autism. Finally, Palla-Kane (2007) examined APE teachers' perceptions toward diversity issues in a study of California APE specialists. Findings identified the diverse range of cultures, languages, and socio-economic statuses as foremost among the numerous challenges facing APE teachers in working with parents of students with disabilities.

### Program Evaluation

The success of an educational program does not rely solely on the implementation of standards and assessments (Gandal & Vranek, 2001). To best serve students, any educational program should have a means to monitor its effects (Allen, 2002). The purpose of program evaluation is multi-faceted: identifying program strengths and weaknesses, providing direction for making necessary improvements, and offering feedback for reevaluating district goals (Winnick, 2005). Also, a monitoring system creates opportunities for long-term strategic planning (Allen, 2002). All of these facets of program evaluation factor into the decisions about which program variables to maintain and which ones to change (Sherrill, 2004).

Numerous models exist to assist school administrators in evaluating other educational programs. Cramer and Iverson (1999) developed an evaluation plan for school health programs in Nebraska. The comprehensive evaluation plan measured program impact indicators and used community input to create an instrument used for statewide health program evaluation. Additionally, Ross et al. (2007) studied program

evaluations that considered the cost of educational programs. Findings supported the validity of these cost studies in judging the worth of educational programs. Finally, research by Thornton et al. (2007) advocated a systems approach to program evaluation that conveys feedback throughout the school system to improve the organization as a whole.

Specific to program evaluation in physical education, Kulinna et al. (2002) evaluated the implementation of a statewide PE curriculum. The multi-phase study required 92 elementary PE teachers to attend an inservice over the statewide curriculum and complete a content index. Furthermore, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) emphasized the importance for schools to conduct assessments of their own PE programs in evaluating strengths and weaknesses (NASPE, 2003). NASPE also created a 15-item instrument by which school personnel could assess the quality of their physical education programs. Despite encouragement by the federal government for states to standardize their PE programs, no federal law requires state education boards to follow through on PE program evaluation (Borland, 2002). However, since NASPE first developed national standards for physical education in 1995, many state departments of education have complied and now possess tools to evaluate their own PE programs (James, Griffin, & France, 2005). For example, South Carolina's department of education enacted statewide assessment policies for its school PE programs in 2005 (Rink & Mitchell, 2003). Indiana, New York, and Massachusetts are among the many states that have developed comprehensive PE standards as well (James et al., 2005). Furthermore, the state of Georgia recently passed House Bill 229, the State Health and Physical Education Act, which will require all school districts to



conduct annual fitness assessments and to comply with state PE instruction requirements. The Act goes into effect in the 2011-2012 school year and provides for the monitoring of reported results by the Georgia Board of Education (Student Health and Physical Education Act – House Bill 229, 2009).

Conversely, Tripp and Zhu (2005) assert that only a minority of states have substantial policies for the assessment of students with disabilities in PE. Fewer states utilize the assessment results in PE program planning, service delivery, and the evaluation of program effectiveness. Nonetheless, efforts have been made by various researchers to develop objective means by which to evaluate PE programs. In promoting a model used by Michigan school districts for ongoing PE program improvement, Allen (2002) emphasized the use of data obtained from student assessment to monitor PE programs. The researcher also identified core tenets of program effectiveness in discussing the use of assessment to evaluate PE programs. Finally, Kim (2009) supported objective measurement of student physical activity levels to gauge the efficacy of PE programming. Unfortunately, there is no universally-accepted method for assessing physical activity (Reid, 2003).

In response to the lack of objective means by which to assess PE programs, studies evaluating the perceptions of PE programs have been undertaken. Perry (2007) utilized a web-based survey consisting of 21 questions to determine the degree to which Virginia school districts were perceived by PE teachers to be compliant with state mandates and NASPE recommendations. Results indicated that school districts varied in terms of compliance and implementation of the regulations and should perform their own PE program evaluations to gauge program quality. Additionally, a study by Asola (2009)

of Alabama PE programs highlighted the disparities between PE teachers' practice and the national and state PE policies. Using a 20-item instrument called the Physical Education in Alabama Survey (PEAS), the study identified larger than suggested PE class sizes at elementary schools among the areas of non-compliance and called for improved PE teacher education and more stringent policy enforcement by state PE administrators.

#### *APE Program Evaluation*

While there is considerable research on the evaluation of PE programs, APE programs have rarely been involved in the process of program evaluation. Akuffo and Hodge (2008) recommend that the school district level "require APE supervisors to conduct needs assessments at periodic intervals to determine APE teachers' needs with the intent of supporting and enhancing their work" (p. 265). Indeed, any APE program evaluation conducted is generally specific to the local school or school district since a limited number of PE supervisors are certified for APE program evaluation (Sherrill, 2004). Standard 12 of APENS, the recommended content that qualified APE teachers know to carry out their jobs, demonstrates the emphasis placed on APE program evaluation by a national organization, NCPERID. The standard, entitled Student and Program Evaluation, encompasses the evaluation of the complete spectrum of educational services for students with disabilities (APENS, 2009b). Finally, Hodge and Akuffo (2007) stressed communication among principals, district administrators, and APE teachers over the job-related issues of the APE teacher.

APENS also identifies the components most essential to providing effective APE (Davis, 2009). The position paper of the American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation (AAPAR, 2009) defines effective APE as ensuring all students with

disabilities an opportunity to develop the fundamental motor skills and physical fitness necessary for a lifetime of participation in active leisure time pursuits, exercise, recreation, and sport (Tripp et al., 2003). In studying the components of effective APE programs, a survey by Downing and Rebollo (1999) investigated the perspectives of parents of elementary students with disabilities. The results found that class size, program support, physical and communicative skills, and motivation were perceived to be crucial elements of an effective inclusive APE program.

However, instruments designed specifically to evaluate APE programs are limited (Sherrill, 2004). Megginson (1982) created the Survey of Adapted Physical Education Needs (SAPEN) to assess the opinions of various professionals associated with APE programs. In an attempt to improve APE service delivery, the instrument identified perceived areas of strength and weakness in APE programs. Similarly, Jansma and French (1994) developed a profile of special physical education quality program indicators for the evaluation of APE programs. The 23-item checklist focuses on aspects involving the least restrictive environment of students with disabilities and provides a guide to monitor the quality of APE services. Additionally, rating scales have been developed recently for the purpose of identifying effective APE programs. In 2004, the California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (CAHPERD) created a self-review guide to assist school districts in determining APE program areas of need and to outline future program modifications. The series of 56 questions assesses compliance with federal and state guidelines as well as identifies programming or compliance issues (CAHPERD, 2004). Finally, Winnick (2005) devised the Rating Scale for Adapted Physical Education to aide school personnel in improving

their APE programs. The scale consists of a series of 58 components relative to APE and encompasses seven main areas of educational programming. Both scales include items that address the APE program components of curriculum, personnel, facilities, and the IEP process.

### *SAPEN*

SAPEN represented an innovative tool to identify and prioritize the special education needs of school districts by evaluating the perceptions of individuals close to APE classes (teachers, parents, school administrators, and district-level personnel) concerning the status of the APE programs in their schools (Jansma & French, 1994). Developed for use in program evaluation, SAPEN was field tested by Sherrill and Megginson (1984) in a study to determine the effectiveness of a cooperative planning model for APE programs in Texas. The instrument, intended for local school district use, assessed and prioritized the APE needs by surveying 37 administrators, 48 PE teachers, 55 special educators, 43 students with disabilities, and 12 parents. Researchers concluded that the development of SAPEN, used in conjunction with two other instruments, resulted in a school district planning model that met 12 of 13 predetermined criteria.

Other research has utilized the SAPEN instrument for studying APE since its initial use. In studying the APE programs of Arkansas schools, Oakley (1984) used SAPEN to identify discrepancies between program conditions that existed at the time and those that should have ideally existed. After surveying 8 physical and special educators, 61 special education supervisors, and 16 university PE department heads, the researcher

concluded that existing APE conditions in Arkansas were not congruent with desired program conditions.

Additionally, SAPEN has been used in research worldwide. Heikinaro-Johansson and Sherrill (1994) used a Finnish-modified version of SAPEN in developing a model to guide school district-level assessment for APE planning of integration and inclusion. Results indicated that teacher attitude was the most significant barrier hindering PE integration. The study also concluded that the survey instrument was useful in developing a model to guide assessment for PE planning at the school district level. Hence, the SAPEN instrument has been used for evaluating APE programs (Jansma & French, 1994).

#### Teacher Certification

The definitions for APE teachers vary widely. The Colorado State Department of Education (1997) defines adapted physical educators as “educationally trained professionals who can assess individual students and develop, adapt, and implement specialized education programs to meet their needs” (p. 7). According to Sherrill (2004), APE teachers conduct diversified programs of developmental activities, games, sports and rhythms suited to the needs, interests, capacities, and limitations of students with disabilities who may not safely or successfully engage in unrestricted participation in the vigorous activities of the general PE program or a modified program in a regular class. Finally, the definition of an APE teacher is, as defined by Auxter, Pyfer, and Huettig (2005), “a physical educator with highly specialized training in the assessment and evaluation of motor competency and implementation of programs in physical fitness, play, leisure, recreation, sport, and wellness” (p. 6).

With the alignment of NCLB and the most recent reauthorization of IDEA in 2004, requirements exist that specifically impact PE for students with disabilities. Namely, because of provisions in IDEA (2004), physical education must be provided to students with disabilities because it is considered a direct service. Other services such as physical therapy and occupational therapy are considered related services, but often mistakenly replace APE in schedules of students with disabilities (Martinez & Pederson, 2008). Because PE is a federally mandated component of special education services, the APE teacher is a direct service provider, not a related service provider (Block, 2006).

However, the majority of states have neither a certification nor an endorsement for adapted physical educators and, therefore, a qualified professional is defined by individual school districts (Cantu & Buswell, 2003). The absence of a universal definition for who is qualified to provide APE services has serious repercussions for the profession, according to Kelly and Gansneder (1998). Most importantly, the quality of APE service delivery to individuals with disabilities has suffered because the definition of who was “qualified” to provide the PE services became the responsibility of individual states and their respective certification departments (Auxter, Pyfer, & Huettig, 2005). Additionally, the individual in charge of adapting physical education for students with disabilities may or may not be trained in adapting physical activities (Cantu & Buswell, 2003). Levin (2002) conducted research on the perceived level of competence that APE teachers had toward PE service delivery for young children with disabilities. According to the study, the APE teachers reported inadequate training in servicing this population with disabilities. Similarly, an experienced group of high school general education PE

teachers identified lack of preparation as a major concern in teaching students with disabilities (Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, LaMaster, & O’Sullivan, 2004).

The concept of qualified educators correlates with another component of recent legislation - the NCLB mandate for a “highly qualified” teacher workforce. “Highly qualified” educators are trained, fully certified, and able to demonstrate content knowledge of each subject for which they are the primary instructor (United States Department of Education, 2005b). In response to federal legislation, the Association of Physical Activity Council (APAC) and NCPERID identified the following minimum requirements for all APE professionals to be deemed “highly qualified.”

- Criteria 1: Bachelor’s degree in physical education teacher education and state license to teach PE
- Criteria 2: Twelve semester hours specifically addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities with a minimum of 9 semester hours specific to the area of APE
- Criteria 3: Minimum of 150 hours of practicum experience in physical education for students with disabilities
- Criteria 4: Professional preparation programs based on the Adapted Physical Education National Standards (APENS)

The four specific criteria additionally categorize educators as CAPEs or Certified Adapted Physical Educators (AAPAR, 2008). Since CAPE certification requires comprehensive knowledge of the standards deemed necessary to effectively deliver APE services, these individuals theoretically possess the necessary skills and knowledge to practice APE at the highest level of professionalism (Martinez & Pederson, 2008).

The implications for certification exist because research has demonstrated benefits for employing properly certified personnel. First, quantitative analysis by Darling-Hammond (1999) indicated that teacher certification strongly correlated with student achievement. In a 50-state policy survey, states with the highest percentages of certified teachers were shown to have the highest National Assessment of Educational Progress scores. Similarly, in a review of literature on special education teacher preparation, Brownell, Ross, Colon, and McCallum (2005) concluded, “positive correlations exist between teacher certification status and student achievement” (p. 242). Next, in a study supporting advanced certification, Phillips (2008) compared student competence between National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) and non-NBCTs. Results indicated that NBCTs were scored higher than non-NBCTs on all performance indicators as well as on the final measure of student competency. Finally, although research by Wetherbee, Nordrum, and Giles (2008) comparing credentialed physical therapists and non-credentialed therapists failed to show a difference in the number of perceived effective teaching behaviors between groups, the results of the study did suggest that a positive correlation did exist between the number of years of experience and effective teaching behaviors.

Additionally, studies regarding teacher certification have been completed in the field of physical education. Davis, Burgeson, Brener, McManus, and Wechsler (2005) concluded, in a nationwide study of school districts, that PE teachers who met the criteria for teacher qualifications in physical education were more likely to use effective PE practices. Comparing integrated and segregated PE environments, Kim (2001) found that parents perceived most general education PE teachers to be deficient in training and



knowledge of teaching students with autism. Additionally, research by Reid (2003) identified differences between general physical educators and APE specialists according to their competencies in program planning. Results indicated that general physical educators could benefit from the expertise of an APE specialist. Finally, a study by Obrusniknova (2008) analyzed the implications for specialized certification areas in APE. Additional APE course work was found to be among the significant predictors of positive teacher beliefs about students with disabilities.

### *Georgia Requirements*

In Georgia, there is not currently a separate APE endorsement or APE teacher certification for physical educators. Because of this absence, the span of teacher preparation for individuals teaching APE ranges widely in terms of certification areas. Among those providing APE service delivery are CAPEs, general education PE teachers, and teachers certified in other academic areas since, by definition, a general education teacher does not need to be certified in PE to provide APE service delivery in the state (Martinez & Pederson, 2008).

“Students with disabilities typically receive their PE instruction in a variety of settings and from professionals with varied levels of experience and training, which presents more challenges. Consequently, the quality of the PE instruction provided to students with disabilities varies widely from teacher to teacher, school to school, district to district, and state to state” (Ryan, 2007).

Since NCLB requires increased local control of educational decisions, the impetus to create teacher certification standards falls to the individual states (United States Department of Education, 2002). However, only 14 states have established endorsements

or certifications for APE teachers (Davis, 2009). Thus, one category of teachers providing APE services to students with disabilities in Georgia includes those certified solely in the area of PE. While these individuals are considered general education physical educators who provide APE service, they may not have completed an introductory course in PE for special populations (Davis et al., 2005). Another category of teachers providing APE services in Georgia includes those individuals who have obtained specialized APE teacher preparation. This group distinguishes themselves as a Certified Adapted Physical Educator (CAPE) upon completion of the corresponding requirements.

### *CAPEs*

To ensure that qualified professionals delivered APE for students with disabilities, NCPERID created in 1991 the Adapted Physical Education National Standards (APENS) that outline the minimum competencies that APE educators should possess to provide appropriate services to students with disabilities (Tripp et al., 2003). Developed to guide curriculum content in training APE specialists, APENS encompasses 15 broad standards involving the roles, responsibilities, and perceived professional needs of practicing APE teachers. According to Seaman et al., (2003), the purpose of APENS was to make certain that qualified physical educators provided the instruction for students with disabilities. The creation of an exam covering APENS developed a uniform means of certifying that a PE teacher possesses the necessary skills and knowledge to practice APE (Davis, 2009). Klesius and Bowers (2001) state that passing the APENS examination is the highest standard that can be achieved by an APE educator. Passing the APENS exam can lead to nationally recognized qualifications in APE as well (Winnick, 2005). Currently, the

departments of education in Alabama, Alaska, Louisiana, and New Jersey grant physical educators NBCT status upon successful completion of the APENS exam. Furthermore, the intention of NCPERID was for states to adopt APENS as a framework for state-approved certification to identify APE specialists ‘qualified’ to provide PE services to students with disabilities (APENS, 2009a).

Consequently, in 1994, NCPERID included APENS-based professional preparation programs as part of the four-pronged process that standardized the criteria necessary to obtain status as a CAPE. Thus, APENS both defines the qualifications for APE professionals and outlines the knowledge and skills required for the CAPE certification exam. By definition, CAPEs “possess the requisite skills essential to implement specialized programming” for students with disabilities (Martinez & Pederson, 2008, p. 28). Indeed, Lisboa (2000) stated that CAPEs are in a unique position to identify the best practices for educating students with disabilities in PE settings because of their training and professional attainment. In a comprehensive study of the entire CAPE population, the researcher identified the best practices in PE for children with autistic behaviors. Of the 268 total CAPEs nationwide, results from 216 of them (over 80%) indicated that the best PE practices, as deemed by researchers and textbooks, were used by CAPEs always or most of the time for improving PE service delivery (Lisboa, 2000). Currently, there are ten CAPEs in the state of Georgia and eight of those individuals presently teach APE in public schools within the state (Davis, 2009).

### Summary

At this point, research on APE program evaluation is outdated and no studies identified by the researcher have examined school personnel perceptions of APE program

practices. Additionally, research has yet to explore the potential differences in APE program practices that exist between CAPEs and general education PE teachers. The creation of APENS and the accompanying exam by NCPERID provide school district administrators with a means to identify who is qualified to provide appropriate APE services to students with disabilities (Martinez & Pederson, 2008). However, research has yet to examine the relationship between APE teacher certification and school personnel perceptions of APE program practices. Since the areas of certification for individuals providing APE services vary greatly in Georgia, comparing APE programs in metropolitan Atlanta public elementary schools that employ a CAPE with those that employ a general-education PE teacher potentially addresses a current gap of research. Moreover, assessing school personnel perception of APE program compliance with IDEA 2004 fills an additional void in the literature.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Since physical education is not deemed a core subject by NCLB, APE programs generally operate with little of the accountability to which other educational programs are subject. For instance, in absence of state guidelines for APE teacher certification in Georgia, individuals certified in various areas provide APE services to students with disabilities. With teacher preparation programs available specific to APE, a need for research assessing the efficacy of specialized APE teacher certification existed. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between APE teacher certification and school personnel perceptions of APE program practices.

#### Research Questions

The researcher investigated the following overarching question in this study: Do school personnel perceptions of APE program practices differ for elementary self-contained programs taught by Certified Adapted Physical Educators and those taught by general education PE teachers?

In addition, the researcher investigated the following subquestions:

1. What do school personnel perceive as strengths and weaknesses of elementary self-contained APE programs taught by CAPEs and those taught by general education PE teachers?
2. In regards to compliance with IDEA 2004, do school personnel perceptions of APE program practices differ for elementary self-contained programs taught by CAPEs and those taught by general education PE teachers?

3. What placement options are reported to be available at elementary schools where the self-contained APE program is perceived as strongly compliant with IDEA 2004?
4. What service delivery models are reported as being implemented at elementary schools where the self-contained APE program is perceived as strongly compliant with IDEA 2004?

## Method

### *Research Design*

The proposed study used a quantitative method for research. The researcher chose the quantitative research method because the study measured school personnel perceptions of APE program practices. The study also measured perceived compliance with federal legislation through the responses to a questionnaire. According to Creswell (2003), an advantage of the quantitative method is that “objective data result from empirical observations and measures” (p. 153). To determine the differences in school personnel perceptions of APE program practices, the study quantified the differences between self-contained APE programs led by CAPEs and those programs led by general education PE teachers. Therefore, quantitative research best provided the statistical feedback needed to determine significant differences in perceptions.

The study had a descriptive subdesign and utilized a mixed-mode survey as both hard copy and electronic questionnaires were distributed. Mixed-mode surveys can improve data quality by increasing response rates (Dillman, Smythe, & Christian, 2009). The survey design for the study provided for the collection of objective data from the participants. This data allowed the researcher to identify existing differences in the school personnel perceptions of self-contained APE program practices in schools

employing CAPEs and general education PE teachers. The feedback from the surveys was vital since valid and reliable scores on instruments can result in meaningful data analysis (Creswell, 2003).

Additionally, a survey design provides a numeric description of population trends through the study of a sample (Creswell, 2003). One purpose of survey research is to generalize from a sample to a population (Babbie, 2001). While the researcher took a census of all CAPEs teaching in Georgia at the time, there were an additional number of CAPEs teaching across the United States. Finally, in presenting research guidelines for survey methodology, Porretta, Kozub, and Lisboa (2000) note, “survey research is especially appropriate for describing status quo of what Sherrill and O’Connor (1999) term the discipline and profession of adapted physical activity” (p. 286).

### *Participants*

The first group of participants in the study was school personnel involved with the self-contained APE programs that employed a CAPE to deliver APE services. There were a total of eight CAPEs in Georgia who provided APE service delivery at 32 different elementary schools spanning four school districts in the metropolitan Atlanta area. The school personnel included the school principal, the assistant principal of instruction or Instructional Support Teacher, the PE teachers, and the CAPE. As a result, there were a total of 148 potential responses from this group of participants.

The second group of participants was school personnel involved with the self-contained APE programs that employed a general education PE teacher to deliver APE services. The school personnel included the school principal, the assistant principal of instruction or Instructional Support Teacher, the PE teachers, and the APE teacher who

was certified in general education PE. These individuals were employed at schools within the same school districts that employed a CAPE. There were a total of 65 elementary schools in the four school districts that fell into this category which resulted in 390 potential responses from this group of participants.

APE teachers and school administrators were included as participants of the study since they, along with the director of the APE program, were “responsible for meeting federal, state, and local mandates regarding the provision of a quality PE program for all students with disabilities who need a specially designed program” (Auxter, Pyfer, & Huettig, 2005, p. 229). Additionally, some elementary schools either employed multiple PE teachers or did not specify an assistant principal of instruction. In those cases, questionnaires were sent to each individual listed on the school websites in those positions.

Consequently, the overall sample for the study consisted of 538 potential responses. This size was appropriate based on previous studies involving CAPEs as well as literature on the recommended sample sizes for given population sizes (Cohen, 1988; Lipsey, 1990; Lisboa, 2000). Additional research has supported using appropriate sample sizes in studies involving the field of adapted physical activity (Sherrill & O’Connor, 1999; Sutlive & Ulrich, 1998). According to Zhang, deLisle, and Chen (2006), large sample sizes in adapted physical activity research include studies that had 40 or more participants.

### *Instrumentation*

A questionnaire, based on the Survey of Adapted Physical Education Needs (SAPEN) validated by Heikinaro-Johansson and Sherrill (1994), was developed by the



researcher and utilized in this study (see Appendix A). The developer of SAPEN granted the researcher written permission (see Appendix C) to use parts of the original survey. The researcher chose this instrument because SAPEN identified perceived areas of strength and weakness in APE programs by assessing the opinions of various professionals associated with APE programs. To update the instrument for the requirements in IDEA 2004, new questions were written using the Tailored Design Method (Dillman et al., 2009) as a guide for survey development. The revised questionnaire consisted of 22 Likert-scale items, eleven of which reflected the mandates of IDEA 2004. A five-point bipolar rating scale was used with choices ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Dillman et al. (2009) suggest that five or seven response choices are the optimal number for bipolar scales. An additional response choice of Don't Know was placed at the end of the scale, in accordance with the Tailored Design Method (Dillman et al., 2009).

The questionnaire was divided into the following three sections: professional preparation and facilities (PPF), instruction and programming (IP), and assessment, placement, and IEP process (API). An open-ended text box was provided at the end of the third section (API) to allow participants the opportunity to explain their responses from that section which fell into either the Disagree or Strongly Disagree ratings. Additionally, a checklist of two items (see Appendix B) assessing student placement options and APE service delivery models accompanied the questionnaire. The participating APE teachers completed a hard copy version of the questionnaire because they assessed each of the elementary schools where they provided APE services. The remaining participants (school administrators and PE teachers) completed an electronic

version of the questionnaire since they were only assessing single elementary schools. The only difference between the two versions of the questionnaire was the additional columns on the hard copy questionnaire so that the APE teachers could assess the various schools to which they provided APE services.

A four-person focus group with expertise in the field of APE established the content validity of the instrument. Two group members had expertise in APE teacher preparation programs and the remaining two members were knowledgeable in special education law and APENS. The focus group completed an evaluation form with a 5-point Likert-scale to rate each questionnaire item on three components: item relevance, appropriate placement in the survey, and whether the item addressed a legislative mandate. In terms of item relevance and appropriate placement, the mean rating for each questionnaire item was above 3.25 (see Appendix D). In rating whether the item addressed a legislative mandate, only item #6 (mean rating of 2.5) received a mean rating below 3 and was subsequently removed from the subset of questions used in assessing legislative compliance. The focus group also identified any directions or questions that were unclear and provided suggestions to improve the questionnaire. Minor changes in wording were made to eleven questionnaire items based on feedback from the focus group. Consequently, the focus group affirmed the content validity of the questionnaire.

The researcher established the reliability of the instrument using a test-retest procedure in a pilot study of elementary school personnel and APE teachers who were not CAPE-certified. Permission was granted to conduct the pilot study in two Georgia school systems with educators who were not participating in the actual study (see Appendices J and K). Participants were provided with an informed consent form (see

Appendix M) and then asked to complete the electronic questionnaire twice, at the beginning and at the end of a two-week period. Of the 48 individuals asked to participate in the pilot study, the researcher received completed electronic responses twice from 26 participants, representing a 54% return rate. Participants consisted of five school principals, six assistant principals, ten PE teachers, and five APE teachers.

In analyzing the test-retest reliability for each item on the questionnaire, the Pearson's correlation coefficients were found to be considerably high. The reliability calculations using Pearson's correlation coefficient show acceptable retest stability for each item on the questionnaire as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

*Pearson's Correlation Scores for Questionnaire Items*

<u>Item #</u>	<u>Correlation</u>
1	.619
2	.860
3	.685
4	.755
5	.725
6	.666
7	.697
8	.880
9	.809
10	.693
11	.694
12	.871
13	.737
14	.904
15	.619
16	.734
17	.909
18	.646
19	.689
20	.740
21	.527
<u>22</u>	<u>.748</u>

*Note.* All coefficients significant at the .01 level

### *Data Collection*

Permission to conduct research was granted at the district level by the four metropolitan Atlanta school districts that employed CAPEs (see Appendices E, F, G, H, and I). Of the 111 elementary schools having self-contained APE classes, permission was granted at the school level by 97 schools. After obtaining permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Georgia Southern University (see Appendix L), the researcher used the Tailored Design Method (TDM) for conducting online surveys (Dillman et al., 2009). Since school email addresses are part of public domain, the researcher obtained them for the participants of the selected metropolitan Atlanta elementary schools.

The participants first received a prenotice email (see Appendix N) describing the study and notifying them of the upcoming survey. One week later, the participants received an email with an introductory cover letter (see Appendix O) inviting them to participate in the study that included an electronic link to the questionnaire. After one more week, the researcher sent an email thanking those who had already participated and reminding the others that they could still participate (see Appendix P). The last email also contained a replacement link to the questionnaire for the participants, in accordance with the TDM procedure for online surveys. For the data collection from the APE teachers of the four participating school districts, the researcher met in person with each group separately to distribute the hard copies of the questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were gathered and returned to the researcher by the lead individual of each group.

### Summary

In chapter 3, the researcher presented the study design and methodology for the proposed research. The objective of the researcher was to examine the relationship between APE teacher certification and school personnel perceptions of APE program practices. The researcher used a self-developed questionnaire that was designed from SAPEN and also included a two-item checklist identifying reported student placement options and APE service delivery models. Additionally, the researcher conducted a pilot study with school personnel in two Georgia school districts that did not employ CAPEs to teach their self-contained APE classes. Based on the suggestions of these school personnel, the researcher made corrections and finalized the questionnaire. The research questions were addressed through the collection of descriptive information obtained from metropolitan Atlanta elementary school personnel with the use of both hard copy and electronic questionnaires.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

In this study, the researcher examined elementary school personnel perceptions of APE program practices. Since individuals who provide APE services to students with disabilities are certified in various areas, there was a need to determine whether the certification area of APE teachers affected elementary school personnel perceptions of APE program practices. Therefore, this study addressed the following overarching research question: Do school personnel perceptions of APE program practices differ for elementary self-contained programs taught by Certified Adapted Physical Educators and those taught by general education PE teachers? In addition, the researcher investigated the following subquestions:

1. What do school personnel perceive as strengths and weaknesses of elementary self-contained APE programs taught by CAPEs and those taught by general education PE teachers?
2. In regards to compliance with IDEA 2004, do school personnel perceptions of APE program practices differ for elementary self-contained programs taught by CAPEs and those taught by general education PE teachers?
3. What placement options are reported to be available at elementary schools where the self-contained APE program is perceived as strongly compliant with IDEA 2004?
4. What service delivery models are reported as being implemented at elementary schools where the self-contained APE program is perceived as strongly compliant with IDEA 2004?

### Instrumentation

Data were collected from a 22-item questionnaire developed by the researcher. A four-person focus group with expertise in the field of APE established the content validity of the instrument. Two group members had expertise in APE teacher preparation programs and the remaining two members were knowledgeable in special education law and APENS. The reliability of the scores from the instrument was established using a test-retest procedure in a pilot study of elementary school personnel. In the subsequent research study, participants rated each questionnaire item using a 5-point Likert-scale that also contained a Don't Know response option. Additionally, a checklist of two items assessing student placement options and APE service delivery models accompanied the survey.

### Participants

The first group of participants in the study was personnel at schools that employed a CAPE to deliver self-contained APE services. There were a total of 148 potential responses from this group of participants. Of the 148 potential responses to the study, 82 completed questionnaires were received for a response rate of 55%. The responding group was composed of 13 principals, 11 assistant principals, 26 general PE teachers, and 8 CAPE-certified APE teachers who rated the 32 different schools for which they provided APE services.

The second group of participants was personnel at schools that employed a general education PE teacher to deliver self-contained APE services. There were a total of 390 potential responses from this group of participants. Of the 390 potential responses to the study, 212 completed questionnaires were received for a response rate of 54%.

The responding group was composed of 31 principals, 39 assistant principals, 66 general PE teachers, and 24 non-CAPE-certified APE teachers who rated the 76 different schools for which they provided APE services.

Therefore, the overall sample for the study consisted of 538 potential responses. After one week, 219 completed questionnaires had been received out of 538 total responses which indicated a response rate at this time of 41%. Included in the initial responses were the hard copy questionnaires gathered from the APE teachers in three of the participating counties. After an email reminder and a second week, an additional 75 completed questionnaires had been received, resulting in a total response rate of 55% (294/538). Included in these numbers were the hard copy questionnaires gathered from the APE teachers in the last participating county. The overall responding group was composed of 44 principals, 50 assistant principals, 92 general PE teachers, and 32 APE teachers who rated the 108 different schools for which they provided APE services.

#### Data Analysis

The researcher calculated mean scores and standard deviations for the ratings of each questionnaire item. The questionnaire item ratings were based on a 5-point scale with the following coding scale:

Strongly Agree: 5   Agree: 4   Somewhat Agree: 3   Disagree: 2   Strongly Disagree: 1

An additional Don't Know response was also available on each item but was not included in calculating mean scores. The frequency of these responses is shown in Table 4.1.

To address the overarching research question, the Mann-Whitney U test and t-test examined responses of each item for differences between ratings of schools employing



CAPEs and schools employing general education PE teachers. Using an alpha level of .03, the researcher determined differences in questionnaire item ratings based on the results from both of the statistical tests. The alpha level was selected to maximize the number of questionnaire items that indicated significant differences while simultaneously controlling for Type I error. Table 4.1 shows the p-values for each questionnaire item as determined by the Mann-Whitney U test and the t-test.

Subquestion one was addressed by ranking the questionnaire items according to their mean ratings for each group of participants. To address subquestion two with regards to perceived legislative compliance, the Mann-Whitney U test and the t-test examined responses for the eleven questionnaire items pertaining to IDEA 2004. The eleven items are boldface in Table 4.1.

Finally, the following scale was used to categorize the mean of the responses for the eleven questionnaire items assessing perceptions of compliance with IDEA 2004:

$x > 4.5$ : Strong Compliance

$3.5 < x \leq 4.5$ : Compliance

$2.5 < x \leq 3.5$ : Neutral

$1.5 < x \leq 2.5$ : Non-Compliance

$x \leq 1.5$ : Strong Non-Compliance

The scale categorized questionnaire items using the midpoints of the 5-point scale as a criterion. For instance, an item receiving only Strongly Agree and Agree responses would fall into the Strong Compliance category if a majority of the responses were Strongly Agree. APE programs with mean responses that fell into the Strong Compliance category were deemed as APE programs that school personnel perceived to be the most

compliant with IDEA 2004. Only the questionnaires of these school personnel were used to address subquestions three and four. Their responses to the checklist (Appendix B) that pertained to the reported APE placement options and service delivery models were tabulated. Simple frequency statistics were presented for the both groups of participants (schools employing CAPEs and general education PE teachers). Additionally, statistics concerning the number of sample members who did and did not complete the questionnaire were included in the data of the study.

Table 4.1

*Table of Results*

Questionnaire Item	CAPE				Non-CAPE				U	t	df
	m	sd	n	dk	m	sd	n	dk			
1) Teachers know federal guidelines of APE for SWD	4.64	.63	76	6	4.41	.74	183	22	.009*	.018*	257
<b>2) HQ teacher provides PE instruction to SWD</b>	4.71	.72	78	4	4.53	.66	193	13	.005*	.049	269
3) APE teacher maintains communication with parents	4.10	1.09	54	18	4.03	1.09	154	52	.613	.685	206
4) PE teacher has regular access to APE consultants	4.09	1.03	80	2	4.17	.93	189	17	.672	.533	267
<b>5) Sufficient number of HQ APE teachers</b>	4.35	.92	80	2	4.04	1.06	196	9	.014*	.023*	274
6) Comparable PE facilities allocated for SWD	3.83	1.19	81	0	3.94	1.04	204	1	.663	.441	283
<b>7) Accessible PE facilities provided for SWD</b>	4.38	.91	79	2	4.35	.84	200	6	.460	.793	277
<b>8) APE services available for SWD</b>	4.59	.82	79	1	4.57	.62	200	3	.170	.826	277
<b>9) Equal weekly PE instruction received by SWD</b>	3.79	1.32	74	8	4.00	1.21	185	17	.181	.220	257
10) APE program develops many aspects of SWD	4.53	.71	75	7	4.24	.78	177	25	.003*	.006*	250
11) Self-contained APE class sizes are reasonable	4.52	.68	76	5	4.39	.89	189	13	.394	.253	263
12) Motor skills developed by APE programs	4.41	.65	79	2	4.31	.77	187	16	.458	.313	264
13) Evaluative criteria for APE service delivery exists	3.88	.94	61	21	3.53	1.07	152	51	.041	.027*	211
14) Regular evaluation of APE service delivery occurs	3.95	.97	62	20	3.60	1.20	147	54	.064	.043	207
15) School-based adapted sports programs for SWD	4.71	.54	76	6	3.76	1.36	177	25	.000*	.000*	251
<b>16) PE inclusion of SWD to fullest extent possible</b>	4.54	.90	80	0	4.48	.78	201	1	.254	.578	279
<b>17) Screening process for the identification of SWD</b>	4.30	.87	72	8	4.29	.92	190	12	.887	.937	260
<b>18) Continuum of PE placements provided to SWD</b>	4.30	1.05	81	0	4.35	.85	193	9	.688	.680	272
19) Self-contained APE eligibility standards for SWD	4.59	.63	70	11	4.29	.94	180	22	.030*	.015*	248
<b>20) Address PE placement at annual IEP meetings</b>	4.54	.67	71	8	4.55	.68	186	14	.968	.916	255
<b>21) PE standards and goals included in IEPs</b>	4.49	.80	73	8	4.49	.73	184	16	.744	1.000	255
<b>22) Determine LRE in review of SWD motor needs</b>	4.59	.64	75	6	4.48	.64	184	18	.122	.211	257

\*p &lt; .03

Note. HQ=highly qualified; SWD = students with disabilities; dk= don't know responses; U= Mann-Whitney U test results; t=t-test results. Boldface denotes item pertaining to IDEA 2004.

In addressing the overarching research question, at least one statistical test (Mann-Whitney U or t-test) indicated the mean ratings by CAPE school personnel were significantly higher than the mean ratings by non-CAPE school personnel for 7 of the 22 questionnaire items. For 5 of the 22 questionnaire items, both statistical tests indicated the mean ratings by CAPE school personnel were significantly higher than the mean ratings by non-CAPE school personnel. The five items were:

- #1: Persons who teach self-contained APE at the school are knowledgeable about federal and state legislation, policies, and guidelines regarding APE for students with disabilities.
- #5: The school utilizes a sufficient number of personnel who are highly qualified in adapted physical education to provide APE services.
- #10: The APE program systemically develops the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of students with disabilities.
- #15: School-based adapted sports programs (e.g. intramurals, Special Olympics) are offered to students with disabilities.
- #19: The school has specific eligibility standards for placement of students into self-contained APE.

The Mann-Whitney U test indicated the mean rating by CAPE school personnel was significantly higher than the mean rating by non-CAPE school personnel for Item #2:

- #2: Students with disabilities, whose unique needs require the specially designed instruction of a self-contained APE program, receive instruction from an educator who is highly qualified in APE.

Conversely, t-tests indicated the mean rating by CAPE school personnel was significantly higher than the mean rating by non-CAPE school personnel for Item #13:

#13: School district administrators possess evaluative criteria to guide in monitoring the quality of APE service delivery.

The researcher also computed the frequency of Don't Know responses for each questionnaire item. Of the 82 responses from the CAPE school participant group, there were four items with 10% or more Don't Know responses (Items #3, 13, 14, 19). The items pertained to teacher evaluation and student placement rather than compliance with IDEA 2004. Of the 212 responses from the non-CAPE school participant group, there were seven items with 10% or more Don't Know responses (Items #1, 3, 10, 13, 14, 15, 19). Similarly, the items pertained to professional preparation, teacher evaluation, and student placement rather than IDEA 2004 compliance.

Subquestion one was addressed by ranking the questionnaire items according to the mean ratings for each participant group. The results are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

*Questionnaire Items Ranked by Mean Ratings*

CAPE schools		Non-CAPE schools	
Item	m	Item	m
<b>2</b>	<b>4.71</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4.57</b>
15	4.71	<b>20</b>	<b>4.55</b>
1	4.64	<b>2</b>	<b>4.53</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>4.59</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4.49</b>
19	4.59	<b>16</b>	<b>4.48</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>4.59</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4.48</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>4.54</b>	1	4.41
<b>20</b>	<b>4.54</b>	11	4.39
10	4.53	<b>7</b>	<b>4.35</b>
11	4.52	<b>18</b>	<b>4.35</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>4.49</b>	12	4.31

*Note.* Boldface denotes item pertaining to IDEA 2004.

Table 4.2 cont.

*Questionnaire Items Ranked by Mean Ratings*

CAPE schools		Non-CAPE schools	
Item	m	Item	m
12	4.41	<b>17</b>	<b>4.29</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>4.38</b>	19	4.29
<b>5</b>	<b>4.35</b>	10	4.24
<b>17</b>	<b>4.30</b>	4	4.17
<b>18</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.04</b>
3	4.10	3	4.03
4	4.09	<b>9</b>	<b>4.00</b>
14	3.95	6	3.94
13	3.88	15	3.76
6	3.83	14	3.60
<b>9</b>	<b>3.79</b>	13	3.53

*Note.* Boldface denotes item pertaining to IDEA 2004.

In ranking questionnaire items by their mean ratings to address subquestion one, five questionnaire items (Items #1, 2, 8, 16, 22) were rated among the top seven items by both participant groups. Of these five questionnaire items, four addressed compliance with IDEA 2004 while Item #1 addressed the APE knowledge level. For the non-CAPE school participants, the six highest-rated items (Items #8, 20, 2, 21, 16, 22) all pertained to IDEA 2004 compliance. Conversely, ratings for five questionnaire items (Items #3, 6, 9, 13, 14) were among the bottom seven item ratings for both participant groups. Only one of these items (Item #9) addressed compliance with IDEA 2004 while the other items pertained to communication with parents, facilities, and teacher evaluation. Finally, the questionnaire item that dealt with school-based adapted sports programs (Item #15) had the second highest mean rating for CAPE school participants but the third lowest mean rating for non-CAPE school participants.

In addressing subquestion two, there was no significant difference in mean ratings between the two participant groups for nine of the eleven questionnaire items that

concerned IDEA 2004 compliance. However, both statistical tests indicated the mean rating by CAPE school personnel were significantly higher than mean rating by non-CAPE school personnel for only Item #5:

#5: The school utilizes a sufficient number of personnel who are highly qualified in adapted physical education to provide APE services.

Furthermore, the Mann-Whitney U test alone indicated the mean rating by CAPE school personnel was significantly higher than the mean rating by non-CAPE school personnel for Item #2:

#2: Students with disabilities, whose unique needs require the specially designed instruction of a self-contained APE program, receive instruction from an educator who is highly qualified in APE.

APE programs with a cumulative mean rating above 4.5 for the eleven items concerning IDEA 2004 were deemed as APE programs that school personnel perceived to be in strong compliance with the federal legislation. Of the 82 questionnaire respondents at schools employing a CAPE, 48 participants (59%) perceived their APE programs to be in the Strong Compliance category based on their cumulative mean rating for the eleven selected items. Of the 212 questionnaire respondents at schools employing a general education PE teacher, 88 participants (42%) perceived their APE programs to be in the Strong Compliance category. Therefore, a greater percentage of school personnel at CAPE schools perceived their APE programs to be in the Strong Compliance category than school personnel at non-CAPE schools. A breakdown of participant responses is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

*Degree of Perceived Compliance*

Categories	CAPE schools		Non-CAPE schools	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly Compliance	48	59%	88	42%
Compliance	26	32%	105	49%
Neutral	6	7%	14	7%
Non-Compliance	2	2%	5	2%
Strongly Non-Compliance	0	0%	0	0%

*Note.* CAPE schools n=82, non-CAPE schools n=212.

Using only the responses from participants who perceived their APE program to be in the Strong Compliance category, the responses to the checklist that pertained to the reported APE placement options and service delivery models were tabulated to address subquestions three and four. Strong similarities were found between CAPE and non-CAPE schools where the APE programs were perceived to be strongly compliant with IDEA 2004. Participants of both groups ranked the existence of the placement options in the same order. General education PE with special education support (regular class  $\geq$  80%) and special education separate class PE (regular class  $<$  40%) were listed as the most prevalent placement options existing in both types of schools. Conversely, participants of both groups listed general education PE with collaboration and pullout PE placement (regular class from 40-79%) as the least prevalent placement options in their schools.

In addressing subquestion four, the rankings for service delivery models followed a similar pattern with participants of both groups ranking their existence in identical order. Direct services and consultation (APE teacher providing guidance, resources, and knowledge to the general education teacher who is solely responsible for the instruction of students with disabilities) were the most prevalent service delivery models in



existence. Conversely, collaboration (APE teacher providing services to students with disabilities in the general education classroom for 50% of the time) and co-teaching (APE teacher providing services to students with disabilities in the general education classroom for 100% of the time) were the least prevalent existing service delivery models. Simple frequency statistics were presented for the both groups of participants and are shown in Tables 4.4 and 4.5.

Table 4.4

*Placement Options at Strongly Compliant Schools*

Option	CAPE schools		Non-CAPE schools	
	n	%	n	%
General Ed PE with Special Ed Support	39	81%	71	81%
General Education PE with Collaboration	20	42%	49	56%
Pullout PE	10	21%	36	41%
Special Education Separate Class PE	39	81%	60	68%

*Note.* CAPE schools n=48, non-CAPE schools n=88.

Table 4.5

*Service Delivery Models at Strongly Compliant Schools*

Model	CAPE schools		Non-CAPE schools	
	n	%	n	%
Direct Services	37	77%	75	85%
Co-Teaching	12	25%	19	22%
Collaboration	13	27%	25	28%
Consultation	18	38%	44	50%

*Note.* CAPE schools n=48, non-CAPE schools n=88.

Finally, the researcher examined the responses for the open-ended questions in section 3 (assessment, placement, and IEP process) of the questionnaire for similarities and identified four common themes within these answers:

1. PE and APE teachers are rarely included in IEP meetings or consulted with regarding the delivery of PE services for students with disabilities.

2. The large caseloads for APE teachers limit their opportunities to collaborate and assist in inclusive PE settings.
3. Poor screening processes for APE exist in some elementary schools.
4. Proper placement of students with disabilities into APE classes does not always occur. Among the reasons given for not serving students with APE include scheduling convenience and a deficit of appropriate social skills by the students.

### Summary

Through the results of this study, the researcher determined the existence of differences in school personnel perceptions of self-contained APE program practices. The results of statistical tests (Mann-Whitney U and t-test) answered the overarching research question and subquestion two by indicating the mean ratings by CAPE school personnel were significantly higher than mean ratings by non-CAPE school personnel for certain questionnaire items. Additionally, in answering subquestion one, the ranking of questionnaire items by mean rating in Table 4.2 indicated the strengths and weaknesses of self-contained APE programs taught by CAPEs and those taught by general education PE teachers. Finally, the identification in Tables 4.4 and 4.5 of the placement options and service delivery models available at schools where self-contained APE programs were perceived as strongly compliant with IDEA 2004 answered subquestions three and four. The researcher also analyzed the results of the survey by using descriptive statistics, such as tabulating the Don't Know responses, since an objective of the study was to summarize the data collected from a questionnaire administered to metropolitan Atlanta elementary school personnel. The results were explained through text and tabular format.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Summary

With an increasing emphasis on accountability in education, school programs of all types are facing more scrutiny. Although physical education is not classified as a core subject by NCLB legislation, various facets of APE programming (IEP process, child find, least restrictive environment) must comply with legislative mandates. Additionally, state education agencies are charged with regulating all aspects of PE programming, including APE teacher certification requirements. As such, APE teachers currently find themselves justifying not only the presence of their APE programs but also the existence of their own jobs. With education budget cuts threatening the job security of APE teachers, these individuals must validate their positions by demonstrating indispensable skills and knowledge in the APE field. One such way that may help an APE teacher prove their value is to demonstrate that advanced APE certification results in more effective APE service delivery.

Therefore, the potential impact of advanced certification for individuals providing APE services warranted further study. Consequently, the purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between APE teacher certification and school personnel perceptions of APE program practices. Because of a lack of objective data available to evaluate the effectiveness of APE programs (i.e. standardized test scores), an assessment of the perceptions of the educators closest to the APE programs offered the most useful form of program evaluation. The researcher selected the Georgia school districts that employed CAPEs to provide APE services to students with disabilities since the

certification is a nationwide designation available in the field of APE. The CAPE designation is significant because it denotes individuals who possess the necessary skills and knowledge to practice APE at the highest level of professionalism, as determined by NCPERID.

Furthermore, the researcher used a questionnaire in collecting data to determine school personnel perceptions of APE program practices. The method enabled the researcher to analyze the data and identify statistical differences between the participant groups in various areas of APE programming. As the questionnaire required that school personnel rate numerous APE program practices, the participants provided insight into their perceptions of APE programming and the perceived effectiveness of these programs for students with disabilities. The results of this study provide educational leaders with information about how the certification of APE teachers potentially impacts different APE program aspects, including legislation compliance, classroom instruction, and the IEP process.

The overarching research question was: Do school personnel perceptions of APE program practices differ for elementary self-contained programs taught by Certified Adapted Physical Educators and those taught by general education PE teachers? In addition, the researcher investigated the following subquestions:

1. What do school personnel perceive as strengths and weaknesses of elementary self-contained APE programs taught by CAPEs and those taught by general education PE teachers?

2. In regards to compliance with IDEA 2004, do school personnel perceptions of APE program practices differ for elementary self-contained programs taught by CAPEs and those taught by general education PE teachers?
3. What placement options are reported to be available at elementary schools where the self-contained APE program is perceived as strongly compliant with IDEA 2004?
4. What service delivery models are reported as being implemented at elementary schools where the self-contained APE program is perceived as strongly compliant with IDEA 2004?

The research questions were selected to gauge current practice in elementary school APE programs. The overarching research question and the first subquestion explored the potential differences in APE programs according to teacher certification. If a relationship existed between a participant group and higher ratings of APE program practices, then advanced APE teacher certification could possibly play a role in the difference of perceptions. The other subquestions were used to gauge the perceived legislative compliance of APE programs and to identify the program characteristics of those programs viewed as strongly compliant. These questions were designed to provide information for APE program administrators on the current perceptions of school personnel on facets of APE programming. The remainder of this chapter includes the discussion of findings, implications, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

### Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between APE teacher certification and school personnel perceptions of APE program practices

since research supports advanced APE teacher certification. In a comprehensive study of the entire CAPE population, Lisboa (2000) found the best pedagogical practices in PE for children with autism were used by CAPEs always or most of the time. Furthermore, Lisboa (2000) stated that CAPEs are in a unique position to identify the best practices for educating students with disabilities in PE settings because of their training and professional attainment. Research by Dillon (2005) on the perceptions of elementary PE teachers indicated that APE teachers without advanced certification did not feel adequately prepared to meet the PE instructional needs of students with disabilities. Finally, Obrusniknova (2008) found additional APE course work to be among the significant predictors of positive teacher beliefs about students with disabilities. Although limited, previous research supports advanced certification for APE teachers. This study extends existing research by focusing on the certification of APE teachers. Similar to previous research, results from this study offer support of advanced APE teacher certification for a limited number of APE program practices.

By analyzing the questionnaire results, the researcher was able to determine perceived differences between APE programs led by a CAPE and a general education PE teacher. For 7 of the 22 questionnaire items, at least one statistical test (Mann-Whitney U or t-test) indicated the mean ratings by CAPE school personnel were significantly higher than the mean ratings by non-CAPE school personnel. Therefore, for those items, the participants of the CAPE school group rated the degree to which the described APE program practice occurred in their school significantly higher than participants of the non-CAPE school group rated the degree of occurrence. Three of the seven items with significant differences in mean ratings (Items #1, 2, 5) concern the certification and

knowledge level of the person teaching self-contained APE. CAPE school personnel perceive CAPEs to be highly qualified to provide APE service at a significantly greater rate than non-CAPE school personnel perceive their APE teachers to be highly qualified. This occurs despite the absence of a formal definition in Georgia for a highly qualified APE teacher. Personnel at CAPE schools believe their APE teachers are highly qualified even though they do not know the actual definition of that term. School personnel may essentially be considering CAPEs to be the *highest* qualified individuals to provide APE service because of their awareness of the extensive preparation of the CAPE. Indeed, Klesius and Bowers (2001) state that passing the APENS examination is the highest standard that can be achieved by an APE educator. Conversely, the researcher did not find the mean ratings by non-CAPE school personnel to be significantly higher than the mean ratings by CAPE school personnel for any of the 22 questionnaire items. Thus, school personnel perceptions on the program practices of self-contained APE programs led by a general education PE teacher were not as high as for those APE programs led by a CAPE. Consequently, non-CAPE school personnel did not rate the degree to which any of the APE program practices occurred in their school significantly higher than CAPE school personnel rated the degree of occurrence.

The preparation process undertaken by CAPEs, including an exam over the 15 APENS standards, results in an increased awareness of the competencies necessary to provide appropriate PE services to students with disabilities. One of the APENS standards addresses the overall philosophy of APE. Since Item #10 assesses perceptions of the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of APE, all parts of the APE philosophy, the researcher believes that CAPEs may extend the scope of their APE

programs beyond the physical progress of students with disabilities to include these aspects of APE programming. The greater emphasis on APE philosophy by CAPEs may be a result of their previous exposure to the philosophy and explains why the mean ratings by CAPE school personnel were significantly higher than the mean ratings by non-CAPE school personnel for Item #10. This finding corroborates the research by Kim (2001) who found that elementary school APE service delivery more effectively developed the students' physical and motor skills, both parts of the APE programming philosophy, than general education PE classes.

Another APENS standard involves student assessment and evaluation; both elements of the child find process and the required provision of appropriate PE services for students with disabilities. Given their increased knowledge of the APENS standards through extensive coursework, CAPEs may have utilized student test data appropriately and created objective criteria for APE eligibility of students with disabilities. For instance, the Georgia Department of Education (2009) uses student performance below the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile as a general guideline to determine APE eligibility. In order to apply this criterion, an APE teacher must assess the PE performance of students with disabilities to gauge where they fall on the continuum of scores. Consequently, CAPEs may have established a more effective screening process for the identification of students for APE services at their schools based on their advanced professional preparation.

Schools employing a general education PE teacher to provide APE services may not be effectively utilizing student assessment to determine student eligibility for APE services since they do not have similar training. Since questionnaire Item #19 addresses eligibility standards for self-contained APE, the similarity between the APENS standard



and the questionnaire item may explain the reason for significantly higher mean ratings by CAPE school personnel than non-CAPE school personnel for Item #19. The finding is consistent with the assertion by Tripp and Zhu (2005) that very few school districts use the assessment data of students with disabilities to guide APE service delivery. In the absence of tangible APE eligibility standards, incorrect PE placement for students with disabilities may minimize the effectiveness of PE service delivery.

By ranking APE program practices according to their mean ratings to address subquestion one, results of the study indicate that questionnaire items pertaining to IDEA 2004 received higher mean ratings from both participant groups than other items. The researcher believes school personnel were more likely to rate items pertaining to the stipulations of IDEA 2004 higher than other items in an effort to portray the APE programs at their school in a more positive light. The potential ramifications of non-compliance with federal legislation may have altered participant responses for the IDEA 2004 items causing participants to rate the items higher in order to shed a more favorable light on the APE program at their school. Additionally, with much recent emphasis placed on school accountability, participants were more apt to be familiar with the tenants of IDEA 2004 such as least restrictive environment, child find, and IEP. For instance, the provision of the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities, a key concept in IDEA 2004, is prevalent in Items #8 (APE services available to SWD), #16 (PE inclusion to fullest extent possible for SWD), and #22 (determination of LRE in annual review of SWD). The positive ratings of these questions may indicate the participants' increased knowledge of the well-publicized legislative mandates of IDEA 2004 and NCLB. This increased knowledge may have influenced the participants to rate the items

pertaining to legislation higher because of the awareness of the dire consequences for legislative non-compliance by schools.

Two of the questionnaire items (Items #13, 14) with low mean ratings by both participant groups respectively addressed the existence of evaluative criteria for APE service delivery and the regular use of such criteria. The low ratings indicate that participants disagreed with the statement that APE teacher evaluative criteria existed and was used regularly by school district administrators. As indicated in limited research, administrative evaluation of APE programs occurs very infrequently at all school levels. Also, a limited number of PE supervisors are certified for APE program evaluation (Sherrill, 2004). Therefore, the low mean ratings by both participant groups for these items are predictable and confirm the recommendations by NCPERID (2009) and Akuffo and Hodge (2008) that school districts require APE supervisors to conduct periodic evaluations of APE programs. APE programs within the same school district that vary in terms of the effectiveness of service delivery, student placement, and teacher preparation are among the consequences of an absence of standardized evaluative criteria and infrequent APE program evaluation. Furthermore, the status quo for APE instruction and teacher performance becomes acceptable and APE programming deficiencies are not addressed without periodic evaluation by APE program administrators.

Questionnaire items #6 and #9 also resulted in low mean ratings by both participant groups. The items assessed whether the allocation of PE facilities and instructional time was the same for students with and without disabilities. The low ratings for both items indicate that the majority of school personnel did not agree there was equity between groups of students in the use of PE facilities or the amount of PE

time provided. However, the answers were inconclusive because it could not be determined whether respondents felt that students with disabilities were being provided with better or worse PE facilities or whether they perceived that students with disabilities were receiving more or less PE instruction than students without disabilities. The answer to this question cannot be determined as the results for Items #6 and #9 only indicate that both participant groups perceived inequities existed between student groups for the two APE program practices and not where the inequities were.

The open-ended comments provided after Section 3 of the questionnaire offered insight into the low ratings about regular communication with parents for Item #3. One common theme among respondents indicated that both PE and APE teachers are rarely consulted with or included in IEP meetings regarding PE placement for students with disabilities. The lack of participation in student placement decisions by PE teachers, both general education PE and APE, further exacerbates the infrequency of parental communication and represents a glaring administrative oversight. Since the attendance of parents of students with disabilities is required at annual IEP meetings, the failure to include a PE teacher in the meeting negates a prime opportunity for parental communication. Often times, the yearly IEP meeting is the only opportunity for parents to meet with the PE teacher and discuss the PE programming of their child. The prospective dialogue between involved groups about the continuum of placement options available to students with disabilities is critical. As a result, the common theme of the open-ended comments is consistent with the findings of Sayers (1999) and Downing and Rebollo (1999) who both noted the need for improved communication within APE program participants.

Finally, the questionnaire item that addressed school-based adapted sports programs (Item #15) had the second highest mean rating for CAPE school participants but the third lowest mean rating for non-CAPE school participants. A high rating denotes that the participant perceived to some extent that school-based adapted sports programs existed in their school while a low rating denotes the participant did not perceive to a great extent the same programs existed. A possible explanation for the discrepancy in mean ratings is that many of the CAPEs involved in the study served in Special Olympic leadership roles for their respective school districts. With leaders present in their buildings, CAPE schools were more likely to publicize, generate exposure for, and even serve as the host of Special Olympic games than non-CAPE schools. As such, this may have led the respondents to agree more favorably to Item #15 at CAPE schools rather than non-CAPE schools.

Therefore, the mean ratings for Item #15 were significantly higher for personnel at CAPE schools than personnel at non-CAPE schools. This finding was not surprising given the amount of attention given to the school-based adapted sports programs at CAPE schools. On the contrary, the lower ratings by personnel at non-CAPE schools may indicate limited participation by their students with disabilities in such programs. The adapted sports program of a school can range from no intramural offerings to the athletes only attending area Special Olympic games once a year to hosting local Special Olympic games that occur during each season of the school year. The findings of this study indicate that adapted sports programs are provided inconsistently at non-CAPE schools.

In addressing subquestion two which concerned IDEA 2004 compliance, only Items #2 and #5 of the possible eleven questionnaire items that dealt with IDEA compliance indicated a significant difference between the two participant groups. The Mann-Whitney U test alone indicated a significant difference for Item #2 (a highly qualified teacher provides PE instruction to SWD). Both statistical tests indicated a significant difference for Item #5 (the school uses a sufficient number of highly qualified APE teachers). Each difference denoted that the mean ratings by CAPE school personnel were significantly higher than the mean ratings by non-CAPE school personnel. The common theme of Items #2 and #5 is the concept of the highly qualified designation for APE teachers. As discussed previously, personnel at CAPE schools may have perceived CAPEs to be highly qualified by virtue of having obtained the highest level of certification in the field of APE. These individuals providing APE instruction are known to be CAPE certified by the school personnel with whom they work closely since the designation is listed on their name badges as well as on their customized email signatures. Thus, the mean rating for Item #2 is significantly higher for CAPE school personnel than non-CAPE school personnel.

Since Item #5 addresses the practice of a school utilizing a sufficient number of highly qualified APE teachers, personnel at a CAPE school may believe that a single highly qualified APE teacher is able to accommodate a large caseload. The participants may think the CAPE can handle the complete population of students with disabilities at any one elementary school without the realization that the individual serves more than one school. As found in previous analysis, the potential ramifications of non-compliance with IDEA 2004 may have altered participant responses for these items since federal

legislation mandates a highly qualified work force. As such, the respondents may have ranked the Items #2 and #5 higher because they were attempting to portray the APE program at their school in the most positive light possible.

Conversely, the researcher did not find the mean ratings by non-CAPE school personnel to be significantly higher than the mean ratings by CAPE school personnel for any of the 11 questionnaire items dealing with IDEA 2004 compliance. Thus, perceptions of self-contained APE programs led by a general education PE teacher were not as high as for those APE programs led by a CAPE in regards to legislative compliance. The researcher believes the finding indicates the likelihood for respondents, regardless of APE teacher certification, to answer in a manner that would least likely jeopardize their school in terms of noncompliance with legislation.

Additionally, the researcher computed the frequency of Don't Know responses for each questionnaire item. This was done to address the lack of knowledge that the researcher believed existed by school administrators and PE teachers for certain components of APE programming. In the CAPE school participant group, the four items with 10% or more Don't Know responses (Items #3, 13, 14, 19) addressed teacher evaluation and student placement. The researcher believes that the absence of administrative guidance for APE programs and a lack of uniform APE standards contributed to the limited awareness that school personnel have in these areas of APE programming. In the non-CAPE school participant group, the seven items with 10% or more Don't Know responses (Items #1, 3, 10, 13, 14, 15, 19) concerned professional preparation, teacher evaluation, and student placement. Again, the researcher believes the large number of such responses for these program components is attributed to the

void in APE administrative leadership. Moreover, personnel at non-CAPE schools are less likely to be familiar with the APE highly qualified guidelines, APE philosophy, and adapted sports programs that Items #1, #10, and #15 address because the professional preparation of the general education PE teacher providing APE services, unlike that of a CAPE, likely did not emphasize on those APE program practices. Finally, none of the items with a large number of Don't Know responses from either participant group dealt with IDEA 2004 compliance. Because respondents answered the majority of IDEA 2004 items without using the Don't Know response, the researcher believes school personnel at the participating schools to be familiar with the stipulations of the IDEA 2004 federal legislation.

Three of the items with the most Don't Know responses from both participant groups were Item #3 (APE teacher maintaining communication with parents of SWD), #13 (the existence of evaluative criteria for APE service delivery), and #14 (the regular use of such criteria). These items were also in the subset of five questionnaire items that were rated among the bottom seven items by both participant groups. The large number of Don't Know responses and low ratings indicated that participants were either least familiar with those APE program practices or perceived that they did not occur to a great degree in their schools. This finding depicts both a lack of knowledge by school personnel for parent communication and teacher evaluation as well as a perceived limited existence of the APE program practices. Each of the other four items that received 20 or more Don't Know responses in the non-CAPE group (Items # 1, 10, 15, 19) were questionnaire items whose mean ratings for the CAPE schools were significantly higher than for the non-CAPE schools. This finding seems logical since CAPes, as discussed

previously, receive in-depth training on the APE program practices described in these questionnaire items (APE program philosophy, adapted sports programs, and APE student eligibility standards). Therefore, non-CAPE school personnel may be less aware of these program practices than CAPE school personnel since the advanced professional preparation of CAPEs may manifest itself in the visibility of these APE program areas.

Overall, school personnel at CAPE schools (59%) perceived a greater percentage of APE programs to be in the Strong Compliance category than APE programs at non-CAPE schools (42%). This result correlates with the previous finding that the mean ratings by CAPE school personnel were significantly higher on at least one statistical test than the mean ratings by non-CAPE school personnel for 7 of the 22 APE program practices. Both findings indicate that some degree of difference in school personnel perceptions exists in relation to the certification of the APE teacher. More specifically, the findings of this study indicate that the personnel perceptions of APE program practices at CAPE schools are generally more favorable than the personnel perceptions of APE program practices at non-CAPE schools.

To address subquestion three regarding the PE placement options available for students with disabilities, similarities were found between CAPE and non-CAPE schools where the APE programs were perceived to be strongly compliant with IDEA 2004. Participants of both groups ranked the presence of the placement options in the same order: general education PE with special education support, special education separate class PE, pullout PE, and general education PE with collaboration. The results depict a perception that a continuum of placement options exists which does not support previous research. In a national survey of teachers by Kelly and Gansneder (1998), 55% of



teachers indicated self-contained APE was the only available placement option while 29% of teachers responded general education PE was the only available placement option.

In this study, school personnel seemed to recognize that students with disabilities are being provided with a wider range of PE placement options. This awareness may be the result of increased communication between general PE and APE teachers in attempting to provide the least restrictive PE environment possible. Alternately, the finding may indicate that the respondents were more aware of the PE placement options for other additional reasons. First, awareness may have increased since the state of Georgia lists the four placement options on the standard IEP form for every student with a disability who requires such an educational plan. Second, increased administrative emphasis on the continuum of PE placement options may be responsible for the increased participant familiarity with the options. Program administrators operating under budget constraints must consider the efficient use of teacher workforce in assigning teaching responsibilities. In Georgia, where there is no separate endorsement or specialized APE teacher certification, educational leaders maintain some degree of flexibility in designing APE schedules. Therefore, the two general education PE placement options (with special education support and with collaboration) are more appealing since the district does not need to pay a full-time APE specialist for those options.

In addressing subquestion four, the rankings for service delivery models followed a similar pattern with participants of both groups ranking the presence of service delivery models in the same order: direct services, consultation, collaboration and co-teaching. The findings indicate that APE teachers of both certification groups were reported to

provide PE services to students with disabilities in a number of ways beyond traditional direct service. This means that, overall, most schools serve students with disabilities in a similar manner with regards to APE service delivery. Since educational leaders must provide the least restrictive environment to each student, all models of APE service delivery must be available because the physical condition and unique needs of a student with disability can change at any moment. Consequently, the researcher believes that there is no distinct difference between the perceptions of personnel at CAPE and non-CAPE schools in terms of the PE placement options and service delivery models of APE programs perceived to be strongly compliant with IDEA 2004.

### Conclusions

The researcher drew the following conclusions from the findings of the study:

1. School personnel perceptions differ for self-contained APE programs taught by Certified Adapted Physical Educators and those taught by general education PE teachers for a number of facets of APE programming. Included are the program practices of APE teacher certification and knowledge, APE program philosophy, APE eligibility standards, APE teacher evaluation, and school-based adapted sports programs.
2. School personnel perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of self-contained APE programs do not differ significantly for programs taught by CAPEs and those taught by general education PE teachers.
3. School personnel perceptions pertaining to IDEA 2004 compliance do not differ significantly for self-contained APE programs taught by CAPEs and those taught by general education PE teachers.

4. Regardless of the APE teacher certification level, the reported placement options and service delivery models of APE programs perceived to be strongly compliant with IDEA 2004 are very similar.
5. A lack of knowledge exists by school administrators and PE teachers for certain components of APE programs, including professional preparation, parent communication, teacher evaluation, and student placement.

Based upon a thorough review of the available literature and the findings of this study, the following should be considered: If school personnel perceive APE programs led by CAPEs to rate higher for various APE program practices, then school district administrators should encourage current APE teachers to add the CAPE certification. Since exposing teachers to the best pedagogical practices is among the responsibilities of school administrators, then professional learning needs to familiarize APE teachers with the APENS standards. In fact, staff development for APE teachers should provide a mechanism to complete the four-pronged CAPE process. However, with fewer individuals providing APE services to a greater number of students in many places, the limited number of full-time APE teachers challenges the viability of this professional learning effort for individual school districts. For example, it would not be fiscally prudent to have a school district with two full-time itinerant APE teachers initiate the CAPE certification process. Therefore, multi-district initiatives would need to be formed with regards to certifying more teachers as CAPEs, possibly under the supervision of the state education agency. With a single entity directing APE statewide rather than an assortment of district administrators, a uniform set of comprehensive standards and

training programs could be developed to guide overall APE programming and monitor the quality of APE service delivery in all schools.

Moreover, if school personnel perceive APE programs led by CAPEs to be more compliant with federal legislation, then school district administrators should strongly consider hiring these individuals when APE positions become open in the future. However, the availability of CAPE-certified individuals is contingent upon broadening the scope of professional preparation currently given to prospective APE teachers by most colleges and universities. Therefore, the interdependence of groups involved with APE teacher certification demonstrates the importance for collaboration among APE program administrators, leaders of college prep programs, and researchers.

Finally, stronger efforts need to be made toward raising the awareness of certain aspects of APE programming for elementary school personnel. The alarming number of Don't Know responses in the areas of teacher evaluation and student placement indicates that school personnel are uncertain whether APE program administrators perform regular evaluations and whether APE eligibility standards and evaluative criteria even exist. Each of the issues relates directly to educational leadership since they all pertain to operational components of APE programming. The findings also indicate that these program practices need to be given priority by APE program administrators in future improvement efforts of APE service delivery.

### Implications

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between APE teacher certification and school personnel perceptions of APE program practices. The researcher believed that APE program administrators would be particularly interested in the results

of this study because the findings could provide insight in at least three ways. First, the results offer a form of overall APE program evaluation for the participating metropolitan Atlanta elementary school districts. As such, these results allow school administrators to reflect on their own APE programs and determine the fidelity of the results to the PE programs available to students with disabilities at their school.

Next, the study results could guide future professional development opportunities for current APE teachers. Particular attention should be paid to the APE program practices that were found in this study to receive particularly low ratings. Among the components were the evaluation of APE service delivery, regular communication with parents, and the equitable allocation of PE facilities and instructional time between students with and without disabilities.

Finally, the results of the study could alter the hiring practices of APE program administrators given the perceived differences found between APE programs led by CAPEs and general education PE teachers. Since data revealed certain APE program practices for which school personnel perceptions were significantly higher in CAPE-led programs than in APE programs led by a general education PE teacher, APE program administrators should be aware of the relationship between APE teacher certification and APE program practices. This awareness will potentially lead educational leaders to place a premium on advanced APE teacher certification because of the gained knowledge of the specialized content unique for PE service delivery to students with disabilities.

The results would also be useful to NCPERID since the study involved CAPE-certification, a process that the organization created. The data would support the objective of the organization by highlighting the benefits of obtaining CAPE certification.

Other organizations (APAC, AAPAR, NASPE, Special Olympics) would be interested in the results of the study since they all involve improving physical fitness opportunities for persons with disabilities. Additionally, the organizations improve professional practice by offering resources to APE teachers and advocating research that positively affects students with disabilities; both of which fall under the scope of educational leadership.

Lastly, the researcher felt the results would be beneficial to current APE teachers, including those certified in general education PE and other areas. With the growing interest in teacher accountability and program evaluation, APE educators desire any means by which to advance their pedagogical practices and improve the chance for a favorable evaluation of their teaching performance. As accountability measures increase throughout all academic areas, educators will want to know as much information as possible on any impending assessment of their programs and service delivery. Therefore, educational leaders should be proactive in developing evaluative criteria APE to monitor APE service delivery and offer staff development to APE teachers in advance of the evaluation implementation.

#### Dissemination

The researcher will have the study electronically published in the Henderson Library at Georgia Southern University for study and research purposes.

The researcher plans to present the results of this study to the APE teachers and district level administrators of the participating metropolitan Atlanta school districts. The researcher also plans to share the results of this study to the national physical education organizations of NCPERID, APAC, AAPAR, and NASPE.

## Recommendations

After a thorough literature review and an examination of the data yielded from this study, the researcher recommends that the following be considered with the intent of aiding school administrators in improving APE service delivery in public elementary schools:

1. The design and implementation of professional development to address the weaker areas of IEP input, APE eligibility standards, and other IDEA compliance issues.
2. The design and implementation of standardized evaluative criteria to monitor APE service delivery.
3. The replication of this study in Georgia school districts outside of metropolitan Atlanta and comparing the findings to those of this study.
4. The replication of this study in other states, including one of the fourteen states that require specialized APE teacher certification.
5. The replication of this study in public middle and high schools in Georgia.
6. Analysis of the rating differences among participant groups (APE teachers, PE teachers, administrators).
7. The norming and validating of questionnaire subscales to avoid the multiplicity of t-tests.

## Concluding Thoughts

With the failure of NCLB to designate physical education as a core subject, the discipline of PE in American education has suffered tremendously. “Unfortunately, many state education agency personnel, school board members, school district

administrators, and parents have yet to understand the importance of PE in the lives of all students, including those with disabilities” (Auxter, Pyfer, & Huettig, 2005, p. 12). In spite of the challenges, national educational leaders must continue to develop uniform regulations and a standardized framework for effective APE programming for students with disabilities whose unique needs require it. Simultaneously, local APE program administrators must support, foster, and nurture the existing APE program models to provide appropriate physical education for students with disabilities.

The lack of knowledge among educational leaders of components of APE programming was the impetus for the study. Additionally, the research sought to broaden the literature base regarding APE teacher certification. The intended impact of the study for educational leaders was a greater understanding of the implications of APE teacher certification and how advanced APE certification could potentially improve APE service delivery. With this research, the researcher raises overall awareness for adapted physical education, identifies current perceived weaknesses in APE service delivery, and advocates for advanced teacher certification in APE. Ultimately, it is the hope that these efforts will be the genesis for improvements in APE programming.



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**Appendix A**

Perceptions of Adapted Physical Education Program Practices Questionnaire

The following questionnaire deals with the adapted physical education (APE) program in your school. The results of the questionnaire will be kept confidential. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation.

Please circle the response that best reflects your observation that each of the practices described occurs in your school:

**Strongly Agree** (80% certainty)      **Agree** (60-79% certainty)      **Somewhat Agree**      **Disagree**      **Strongly Disagree**      **Don't Know**

Definitions:

*Self-contained* – special education placement setting that only contains students with disabilities

*Highly qualified* - teachers meet state-mandated criteria demonstrating competence in the subject(s) that they are the primary instructor

*Inclusive PE* – physical education classes that integrate students both with and without disabilities

*Least restrictive environment (LRE)* - to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with students without disabilities

**Please identify your position:** Principal \_\_\_\_ Asst. Principal or I.S.T. \_\_\_\_ Lead PE Teacher \_\_\_\_ Adapted PE Teacher \_\_\_\_

**Section 1: PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION & FACILITIES**

1) Persons who teach self-contained APE at the school are knowledgeable about federal and state legislation, policies, and guidelines regarding APE for students with disabilities.	<b>S</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>DK</b>
2) Students with disabilities, whose unique needs require the specially designed instruction of a self-contained APE program, receive instruction from an educator who is highly qualified in APE.	<b>S</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>DK</b>
3) APE teachers seek cooperation from and maintain communication with parents of students with disabilities on at least a quarterly basis.	<b>S</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>DK</b>
4) Physical education teachers of inclusive PE classes have regular periodic access to APE consultants and resources.	<b>S</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>DK</b>
5) The school utilizes a sufficient number of personnel who are highly qualified in adapted physical education to provide APE services.	<b>S</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>DK</b>
6) Comparable facilities are allocated for instruction in physical education for students with and without disabilities.	<b>S</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>DK</b>
7) Facilities that provide physical education services are accessible to students with disabilities in accordance with federal law.	<b>S</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>DK</b>

### Section 2: INSTRUCTION & PROGRAMMING

8) APE services, specially designed if necessary, are made available for all students with disabilities who are unable to participate in general PE.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
9) Students with disabilities receive the same number of minutes of physical education instruction each week as students without disabilities.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
10) The APE program systemically develops the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of students with disabilities.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
11) The class sizes of self-contained APE classes are reasonable and appropriate to ensure safe, effective instruction.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
12) For students with disabilities, the APE program develops competency in the fundamental motor skills and physical fitness necessary for lifetime participation in recreational activities.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
13) School district administrators possess evaluative criteria to guide in monitoring the quality of APE service delivery.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
14) Regular periodic evaluation of APE service delivery occurs by school district administrators.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
15) School-based adapted sports programs (e.g. intramurals, Special Olympics) are offered to students with disabilities.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK

### Section 3: ASSESSMENT, PLACEMENT, & IEP PROCESS

16) Students with disabilities are included in physical education classes with students without disabilities to the fullest extent possible.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
17) The school has an effective screening process for the identification of students with disabilities that require specialized supports due to motor and physical limitations.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
18) The school is able to provide for a continuum of placements, including self-contained APE, partial integration in mainstream PE, and full inclusion.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
19) The school has specific eligibility standards for placement of students into self-contained APE.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
20) Appropriate physical education placement is addressed by school personnel and parents at annual IEP meetings.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
21) IEPs include the present level of motor and physical performance, specific physical education services to be provided, and measurable goals and objectives required to progress for the near future.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK
22) The motor and physical needs of students with disabilities are reviewed annually to determine if the least restrictive environment (LRE) is being provided.	S	A	SA	D	SD	DK

**If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree for any items in Section 3, please briefly explain:**

**Appendix B**

## School Profile Questionnaire

*Check any of the following placement options that exist in the **physical education** program for students with disabilities at your school:*

\_\_\_\_\_ **General Education PE with Special Education Support** (regular class equal to or > than 80%)

\_\_\_\_\_ **General Education PE with Collaboration**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Pullout PE** (regular class from 40-79%)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Special Education Separate Class PE** (regular class < than 40%)

*Check any of the following service delivery models that the Adapted P.E. teacher at your school performs:*

\_\_\_\_\_ **Direct Services**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Co-Teaching** (the APE teacher provides services to students with disabilities in the general education classroom for 100% of the time)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Collaboration** (the APE teacher provides services to students with disabilities in the general education classroom for 50% of the time)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Consultation** (the APE teacher provides guidance, resources, and knowledge to the general education teacher who is solely responsible for the instruction of students with disabilities)

**Appendix C**

## Permission Letter From Claudine Sherrill

***International Federation of Adapted Physical Activity***  
[www.ifapa.biz](http://www.ifapa.biz)

To: Kevin Stewart, Doctoral Candidate, Georgia Southern University

Fr: Claudine Sherrill, Professor Emerita, Texas Woman's University at Denton: Past President of the International Federation of Adapted Physical Activity

Date: April 28, 2010

Re: My permission for you to include whatever is needed as an Appendix in your Dissertation

Dear Kevin:

With great pleasure, I give my permission one more time for you to use the Survey of Adapted Physical Education Needs (SAPEN), appropriately cited and adapted as needed, in your Doctoral research. This permission includes my consent for you to insert this letter, copies of the original SAPEN, your adaptations, and your final revised survey instrument in your dissertation.

It is always an honor to have one's work cited and updated to increase the adapted physical activity knowledge base. To that end, I hope you will pursue publication in a high quality professional journal.

Now that you are graduating, I hope also to see you at National and International APA organizations. I think you have the potential for outstanding leadership. Please note that the IFAPA membership dues include a subscription to Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly (APAQ) and an international APA Newsletter. We have great tax deductible conferences every 2 years also. Our next one is in New Zealand.

Please stay in touch.

Best wishes,  
Claudine Sherrill



## Appendix D

### Focus Group Evaluation Mean Ratings

To help assess the perceptions of school practices in adapted physical education (APE) programs, this survey contains a series of statements describing characteristics of APE programs. Please give your feedback on content relevance for each practice based upon your professional judgment. Your task is to carefully read the survey items and indicate the degree to which you feel each characteristic answers the following questions:

- Does this item represent a relevant characteristic of APE programs?
- Is this item placed in the appropriate section of the survey?
- Does this item address a legislative mandate (e.g. IDEA 2004, NCLB, ADA)?

Using the following 1-5 scoring system, please rate the degree to which each described practice answers the respective questions:

**5** = Strongly Agree  
Disagree  
(80% certainty)

**4** = Agree  
(60-79% certainty)

**3** = Neutral

**2** = Disagree

**1** = Strongly Disagree

Additional space is given to add comments or make suggestions for reorganization, rewriting of questions, etc. For any item receiving a rating of 3 or below, please provide feedback on how to reword the item to make it more reflective of the legislation.

#### Definitions

*Self-contained* – special education placement setting which contains only students with disabilities

*Highly qualified* - teachers meet state-mandated criteria demonstrating competence in the subject(s) that they are the primary instructor

*Inclusive P.E.* – physical education classes that integrate students both with and without disabilities

#### **Section 1: PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION & FACILITIES**

	<b>Item Relevance?</b>	<b>Appropriate Section?</b>	<b>Legislative Mandate?</b>
1) Persons who teach self-contained APE at the school are knowledgeable about federal and state legislation, policies, and guidelines regarding APE for students with disabilities. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.5</b>
2) Students with disabilities who need a self-contained APE program receive instruction from an educator who is highly qualified in adapted physical education. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.75</b>
3) APE teachers seek cooperation from and maintain communication with parents of students with disabilities. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.25</b>

4) Physical education teachers of inclusive PE classes have access to APE consultants and resources. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
5) The school district employs a sufficient number of personnel who are highly qualified in adapted physical education to provide APE services. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>3.75</b>
6) Comparable facilities and equipment are allocated for instruction in physical education for students with and without disabilities. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>2.5</b>
7) Facilities that provide physical education services to students with disabilities are accessible in accordance with federal law. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.5</b>

## Section 2: INSTRUCTION & PROGRAMMING

	Item Relevance?	Appropriate Section?	Legislative Mandate?
8) APE services, specially designed if necessary, are made available for all students with disabilities that are unable to participate in regular PE. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.75</b>
9) Students with disabilities receive the same number of minutes of physical education/motor development instruction each week as students without disabilities. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>3.75</b>
10) The APE program systemically develops the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of students with disabilities. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3.5</b>
11) The class sizes of self-contained APE classes are reasonable and appropriate to ensure safe, effective instruction. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>3</b>
12) For students with disabilities, the APE program develops competency in the fundamental motor skills and physical fitness necessary for lifetime participation in recreational activities. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>3.25</b>
13) School administrators are provided with evaluative criteria to guide in monitoring the quality of APE service delivery. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>3</b>

14) Regular periodic evaluation of the teaching performance in APE programs occurs by school administrators. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>3</b>
15) School-based adapted sports programs (e.g. intramurals, Special Olympics) are offered to students with disabilities. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>3.7</b>

### Section 3: ASSESSMENT, PLACEMENT, & IEP PROCESS

	Item Relevance?	Appropriate Section?	Legislative Mandate?
16) Students with disabilities are included in physical education classes with students without disabilities to the fullest extent possible. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.75</b>
17) The school has an effective screening program for the identification of students with disabilities that require specialized supports due to motor and physical problems. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.25</b>
18) The school is able to provide for a continuum of placements, including self-contained APE, partial integration in mainstream PE, and full inclusion. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.75</b>
19) The school has specific eligibility standards for placement of students into self-contained APE. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.25</b>
20) Appropriate physical education placement is agreed upon by school personnel and parents at the initial IEP meeting. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.75</b>
21) IEPs include the present level of motor and physical performance, specific physical education services to be provided, and measurable goals required to progress toward regular PE placement. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.25</b>
22) Using appropriate assessment tools, students' motor and physical needs are reviewed annually to determine if self-contained APE is required. <i>Suggestions:</i>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.25</b>

**Appendix E**

## Letter Requesting District Permission



GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY  
*University System of Georgia*  
**College of Education**  
**Department of Teaching and Learning**

Kevin Stewart  
228 Deer Ridge Trail  
Dahlonega, GA 30533

October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Dear Fellow Educator,

I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University whose dissertation research studies various aspects of adapted physical education (APE) classes in metropolitan Atlanta public elementary schools. I am attempting to gather information by conducting a brief, 22-item online survey. The study examines the relationship between teacher certification levels and the perceptions of APE school practices and legislative compliance. As an influential educator at the district level, I would greatly appreciate your support and consideration of my study.

The purpose of this letter is to request the help of your district in gathering data for this study. Participation is purely optional as there will be no penalty for individuals, schools, or districts that withdraw or fail to participate in the research. The study will assess the perceptions of school administrators, APE teachers, and general education PE teachers. If permission is granted for the study to include participants in your district, the electronic survey will be sent via school email in January 2010. Completion of the survey will be considered permission to use the information provided for the study. Please be aware that responses will not be identifiable or reported for individuals, schools, or districts and only segregated by the certification level of the APE teachers.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please email me at [kstewart@lumpkin.k12.ga.us](mailto:kstewart@lumpkin.k12.ga.us) or call me at (404) 644-1427. If you have any other additional concerns about participant rights in the study, please contact my professor, Dr. Kymberly Harris at (912) 478-5041.

Again, please take a moment to consider this request. The results of the study will aid in the continued development and improvement of adapted physical education service delivery throughout Georgia and beyond. Allow me to thank you in advance for your potential cooperation and willingness to offer the participation of your district in this study.

Sincerely,

Kevin Stewart, Ed.D. Candidate  
Georgia Southern University

Appendix F

Cherokee County Letter of Cooperation

1

Cherokee County School System

Request for Permission to Conduct Data Collection Activities within the System

Name Kevin Stewart

School \_\_\_\_\_

College/University Supervising Activities Georgia Southern University

Degree in Process Ed. D.

Date of Request 10/19/09

Requested Date(s) for Data Collection January 2010

Supervisor's Name Dr. Kymberly Harris Phone/Email Number 912) 478-5041

Include with this request:

- A letter from your supervising professor on college or university letterhead indicating support for your research and his/her confirmation of data collection validity.
- A brief summary of the issues being researched and the type of data collection you are requesting to conduct. (On the reverse side of this form).
- Method of data collection assessment (On the reverse side of this form), # of respondents, etc.
- Copy of interview questions, surveys, etc. that will be used. If student data is used, a notarized "Release of Educational Records for Research Purposes Confidentiality Statement" will be required.

I, Kevin Stewart do hereby submit to **not** hold the Cherokee County School System liable for any findings, or commentary involved in this research. I understand that without the express written permission of the Cherokee County Board of Education, I am not authorized to conduct any data collection involving system employees or students and/or any other information that is protected by Federal or State Law. **Furthermore, a copy of all findings and data collection instruments will be made available to the Cherokee County Board of Education. All research is to be sent to the Office of Assessment upon completion of the project.**

Signature Kevin Stewart Date 10/19/09

Signature of Principal (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form to the Office Assessment, Attention: Dr. Susan Padgett-Harrison, Director, Office of Assessment, Central Office, Building B.

Staff Use Only

Dr. Susan K. Padgett-Harrison  
Office of Assessment

\*  Permission given  Permission denied

Conditions of Permission: \_\_\_\_\_

Denied due to: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 2/2005

\* Ball Ground ES, Johnston ES, Liberty, Woodstock, Rascomb, Carmel, Hasty, Wixom, Flat, Mountain Road, Little River, Chapman, Holly Springs

## Cobb County Letter of Cooperation



**COBB COUNTY**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 1088  
Marietta, GA 30061  
Telephone: (770) 426-3300  
[www.cobbk12.org](http://www.cobbk12.org)

March 16, 2010

Mr. Kevin Stewart  
228 Deer Ridge Trail  
Dahlonega, GA 30533

Dear Mr. Stewart:

Your research project has been approved. Listed below are the schools where approval to conduct the research is complete. Please work with the school administrator to schedule administration of instruments or conduct interviews.

Austell Intermediate School  
Austell Primary School  
Baker Elementary School  
Bells Ferry Elementary School  
Big Shanty Elementary School  
Birney Elementary School  
Blackwell Elementary School  
Brown Elementary School  
Brumby Elementary School  
Bryant Intermediate School  
Bryant Primary School  
Chalker Elementary School  
Cheatham Hill Elementary School  
Clay Elementary School  
Compton Elementary School  
Dowell Elementary School  
Due West Elementary School  
Eastvalley Elementary School  
Fair Oaks Elementary School  
Frey Elementary School  
Harmony Leland Elementary School  
Hayes Elementary School  
Keheley Elementary School

King Springs Elementary School  
LaBelle Elementary School  
Lewis Elementary School  
Mount Bethel Elementary School  
Mountain View Elementary School  
Murdock Elementary School  
Nickajack Elementary School  
Norton Park Elementary School  
Pickett's Mill Elementary School  
Pitner Elementary School  
Powder Springs Elementary School  
Riverside Primary School  
Russell Elementary School  
Sanders Intermediate School  
Sanders Primary School  
Sedalia Park Elementary School  
Shallowford Falls Elementary School  
Sope Creek Elementary School  
Still Elementary School  
Timber Ridge Elementary School  
Varner Elementary School  
Vaughan Elementary School

Should modifications or changes in research procedures become necessary during the research project, changes must be submitted in writing to the Office of Accountability and Research prior to implementation. At the conclusion of your research project, you are expected to submit a copy of your results to this office. Results cannot reference the Cobb County School District or any District schools or departments.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Lynnda Crowder-Eagle, *Chair* • Holli Cash, *Vice Chair*

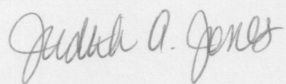
John Crooks, D.Min. • John Abraham, Ph.D. • David Morgan • David Banks • Alison Bartlett

SUPERINTENDENT

Fred Sanderson

Research files are not considered complete until results are received. If you have any questions regarding the process, contact our office at 770-426-3407.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith A. Jones".

Dr. Judith A. Jones  
Chief Accountability and Research Officer



## Fulton County Letter of Cooperation



**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
 Linda P. Bryant, *President*  
 Linda Schultz, *Vice President*  
 Julia C. Bernath • Gail Dean  
 Catherine Maddox • Katie Reeves  
 Ashley Widener  
 Cindy Loe, Ph.D., *Superintendent*

March 4, 2010

Kevin Stewart  
 228 Deer Ridge Trail  
 Dahlonega, Georgia 30533

Dear Mr. Stewart:

Your request to conduct the research study **The Relationship Between Teacher Certification and Perceptions of Adapted Physical Education Program Practices** in Fulton County Schools has been reviewed. We are pleased to inform you that you have been granted permission for this study at Alpharetta, Campbell, Esther Jackson, Heritage, Holmes, Ison Springs, Lake Windward, Mimosa, Mount Olive, New Prospect, Sweet Apple and Woodland Elementary. Approval means that a school may choose to participate in this study; however, it is not mandatory that they do so, as the choice remains a local option.

**No identification of Fulton County Schools (students' names, teachers' names, etc.) is to be included in your findings. Also, all confidentiality of records must be maintained.** Once this study is complete, please send to me at the address below a copy/summary of the completed study. If I can provide additional information, please contact me at **(404) 763-5600 ext 143.**

Sincerely,

Niveen Vosler  
 Program Evaluation Analyst

ce

cc Indicated Principals

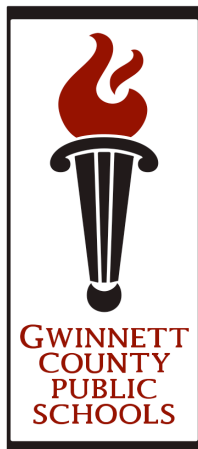
ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

554 Parkway Drive, Hapeville, Georgia 30354 • 404-763-5600, ext. 143 • [www.fultonschools.org](http://www.fultonschools.org)



## Appendix I

## Gwinnett County Letter of Cooperation


**GWINNETT COUNTY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Dr. Mary Kay Murphy**  
Chairman  
District III

**Dr. Robert McClure**  
Vice Chairman  
District IV

**Carole Boyce**  
District I

**Louise Radloff**  
District V

**Daniel D. Seckinger**  
District II

**J. Alvin Wilbanks**  
CEO/Superintendent

**THE MISSION OF  
GWINNETT COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
*is to pursue excellence  
in academic knowledge,  
skills, and behavior  
for each student,  
resulting in measured  
improvement against  
local, national, and  
world-class standards.*

437 Old Peachtree Road, NW  
Suwanee, GA 30024-2978  
678-301-6000  
www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us

It is the policy of Gwinnett County Public Schools  
not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex,  
religion, national origin, age, or disability in any  
employment practice, educational program, or  
any other program, activity, or service.

February 8, 2010

Kevin Stewart  
228 Deer Ridge Trail  
Dahlonega, GA 30533

**Re: Proposal ID 2010-28**

Dear Mr. Stewart:

Your proposal to conduct a study entitled "Relationship Between Teacher Certification and Perceptions of Adapted Physical Educational School Practices in Metro Atlanta Elementary Schools" (File Number 2010-28) has received the support of Dr. John Green, Area Superintendent. With his support, and that of the schools' principals, you are approved to collect data at the following schools that are under Dr. Green's supervision:

Alcova Elementary School, Cedar Hill Elementary School, Cooper Elementary School, Dacula Elementary School, Duncan Creek Elementary School, Dyer Elementary School, Fort Daniel Elementary School, Freeman's Mill Elementary School, Harbins Elementary School, Harmony Elementary School, Ivy Creek Elementary School, Lawrenceville Elementary School, Level Creek Elementary School, Lovin Elementary School, Mulberry Elementary School, Patrick Elementary School, Puckett's Mill Elementary School, Riverside Elementary School, Simonton Elementary School, Sugar Hill Elementary School, Suwanee Elementary School, Sycamore Elementary School, White Oak Elementary School, Winn Holt Elementary School, and Woodward Mill Elementary School.

The Research Committee's review produced the following notes:

- Investigation of the effects of specialized certification may be of considerable value to schools, districts, and state policy makers.
- The proposed methodology for investigating the effects of certification, however, is weak. The researcher's assumption that differences in perceptions of the IDEA compliance would be "evidence ... for the state of Georgia to explore requiring more advanced certification for teachers of adapted physical education" is untenable.
- School administrators do not evaluate APE personnel who come to the school once a week to provide services. Therefore they would not be able to provide valid information on the performance of these individuals.

Thank you for your interest in Gwinnett County Public Schools. I look forward to hearing about the results of your work.

Sincerely,

Colin A. Martin, Executive Director  
Research and Evaluation

Kevin Stewart, [kstewart@lumpkin.k12.ga.us](mailto:kstewart@lumpkin.k12.ga.us)  
Dr. Kimberley Harris, [kharris@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:kharris@georgiasouthern.edu)

## Lumpkin County Letter of Cooperation



Superintendent  
Dewey W. Moye

Assistant Superintendents  
J. Allen Seabolt  
Susan Proctor  
Dr. Will Rumbaugh


February 5, 2010

Mr. Kevin Stewart  
228 Deer Ridge Trail  
Dahlonega, GA 30533

Dear Mr. Stewart,

Your request to conduct research in the elementary schools of the Lumpkin County School System has been approved. You may now contact the individual schools about their participation in the study.

Sincerely,

  
Dewey Moye, Superintendent  
Lumpkin County Schools

## Lumpkin County Schools

56 Indian Drive

Dahlonega, Georgia 30533

Phone: (706) 864-3611

Fax: (706) 864-3755

(706) 864-5965

Board of Education Members  
Bobby Self, Chairman  
Claude Gilstrap, V. Chairman  
Mike Pierce  
Dr. Brandon Reynolds  
Dr. Susan Sockwell

## Appendix K

## Oconee County Letter of Cooperation



Dr. John A. Jackson, Superintendent

**Oconee County Schools**

34 School Street, P.O. Box 146  
Watkinsville, GA 30677  
(706) 769-5130  
Fax (706) 769-3500

David Weeks, Chair  
Mack Guest, Post 2  
Kim Argo, Post 3  
Mike Hunter, Post 4  
Tom Breedlove, Post 5

February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Mr. Kevin Stewart  
228 Deer Ridge Trail  
Dahlonega, Georgia 30533

Dear Mr. Stewart,

Your request to conduct research in the elementary schools of Oconee County Schools has been administratively approved. You may now contact the individual schools about their participation in the study. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Lynda Hale  
Assistant Superintendent Curriculum and Instruction



Accredited by Southern Association of Colleges & Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement  
(SACS CASI)

## IRB Approval Letter

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs <b>Institutional Review Board (IRB)</b>		
Phone: 912-478-0843		Veazey Hall 2021 P.O. Box 8005 Statesboro, GA 30460
Fax: 912-478-0719	IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	

**To:** Kevin Stewart  
228 Deer Ridge Trail  
Dahlonega, GA 30533

**cc:** Charles E. Patterson  
Associate Vice President for Research

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

**Date:** February 11, 2010

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

---

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: **H10189**, and titled "**The Relationship between Teacher Certification and Perceptions of Adapted Physical Education (APE) Program Practices in Metropolitan Atlanta Public Elementary Schools**", it appears that your research involves activities that do not require approval by the Institutional Review Board according to federal guidelines.

According to the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46, your research protocol is determined to be exempt under the following exemption category(s):

Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (I) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (II) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

*Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that your research is exempt from IRB approval. **You may proceed with the proposed research.***

Sincerely,

Eleanor Haynes  
Compliance Officer

## Appendix M

## Informed Consent for Pilot Study



COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT

Dear fellow educator,

I am inviting you to participate in a pilot study for a research project that will examine the relationship between teacher certification and school personnel perceptions of adapted physical education (APE) program practices. If you agree to participate, you will complete a short online questionnaire twice with two weeks in between trials.

The results of this research project will be used to identify whether teacher certification affects school personnel perceptions of APE practices. Through your participation, I hope to understand more about the possible benefits for advanced certification for APE teachers. I hope that the results of the questionnaire will be useful for elementary school personnel and school district administrators. Additionally, I hope to share my results through my dissertation and by sending you an executive summary of my findings.

I do not know of any risks to you if you decide to participate in this survey, and I assure that your responses will not be identified with you personally, your school, or school district. If you do not feel comfortable submitting your questionnaire to me online, you may also print it off and mail it back to me at the address listed below.

The questionnaire should take between five and ten minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this questionnaire and submit it. However, your participation is strictly voluntary, and your choice to participate or decline participation will not affect your standing in any way.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, you may contact me at 404-644-1427. If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, please direct them to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-478-0843. The Georgia Southern University IRB and the participating school districts have approved this project.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Title of Project: The Relationship between Teacher Certification and Perceptions of APE Program Practices in Metropolitan Atlanta Public Elementary Schools  
Principal Investigator: Kevin Stewart, 228 Deer Ridge Trail, Dahlonega, Georgia 30533, [kstewart@lumpkin.k12.ga.us](mailto:kstewart@lumpkin.k12.ga.us)  
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kymberly Harris, P.O. Box 8134 Statesboro, GA 30460-8134, (912) 478-5041, [kharris@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:kharris@georgiasouthern.edu)

## Appendix N

## Pre-notice Email



COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT

Dear fellow educator,

Next week, I will be inviting you to participate in a research project that will examine the relationship between teacher certification and school personnel perceptions of adapted physical education (APE) program practices. If you agree to participate, you will complete a short online questionnaire.

The results of this research project will be used to identify whether teacher certification affects school personnel perceptions of APE practices. Through your participation, I hope to understand more about the possible benefits for advanced certification for APE teachers. I hope that the results of the questionnaire will be useful for elementary school personnel and school district administrators. Additionally, I hope to share my results through my dissertation and by sending you an executive summary of my findings.

I do not know of any risks to you if you decide to participate in this survey, and I assure that your responses will not be identified with you personally, your school, or school district. If you do not feel comfortable submitting your questionnaire to me online, you may also print it off and mail it back to me at the address listed below.

The questionnaire should take between five and ten minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this questionnaire and submit it. However, your participation is strictly voluntary, and your choice to participate or decline participation will not affect your standing in any way.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, you may contact me at 404-644-1427. If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, please direct them to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-478-0843. The Georgia Southern University IRB and the participating school districts have approved this project. Your participation will be beneficial to the APE community.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Title of Project: The Relationship between Teacher Certification and Perceptions of APE Program Practices in Metropolitan Atlanta Public Elementary Schools

Principal Investigator: Kevin Stewart, 228 Deer Ridge Trail, Dahlonega, Georgia 30533,  
kstewart@lumpkin.k12.ga.us

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kymberly Harris, P.O. Box 8134 Statesboro, GA 30460-8134,  
(912) 478-5041, kharris@georgiasouthern.edu

## Appendix O

## Introductory Cover Letter



COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT

Dear Fellow Educator,

I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University, pursuing an Ed. D. in Educational Leadership. As a critical part of my doctoral dissertation work, I am conducting a survey on the perceptions of elementary personnel toward adapted physical education (APE) program practices. Your support and consideration of my research would be greatly appreciated since the study only involves a limited number of participants. If you agree to participate, please click on the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JBWQCGW>

The questionnaire should take between five and ten minutes to complete. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and your choice to participate or decline will not affect your standing in any way.

There will be no penalty for individuals, schools, or districts that withdraw or fail to participate in the research. Please be aware that responses will not be identifiable or reported for individuals, schools, or districts.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please email me at [kstewart@lumpkin.k12.ga.us](mailto:kstewart@lumpkin.k12.ga.us) or call me at (404) 644-1427. If you have any other additional concerns about participant rights in the study, please contact my professor, Dr. Kymberly Harris at (912) 478-5041.

Thank you in advance for your kind assistance.

Kevin Stewart, Ed.D. Candidate  
Georgia Southern University



COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT

Dear fellow educator,

I would like to thank you for sharing your valuable time in completing the questionnaire that I sent last week. The results will be a vital part of completing my dissertation on elementary school Adapted PE programs. Words cannot express the gratitude that I feel toward those of you who took the time out of your schedule to assist me in completing this goal.

If you were unable to complete the questionnaire last week, please take the time to complete it before **Monday, April 5th**. Your support and consideration of my research would be greatly appreciated since the study involves only a limited number of participants.

If you had problems with the link or had any questions about the process, please let me know. To access the survey, please click on the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JHCKL6Z>

Once again, your participation is voluntary, but greatly appreciated. Thank you for your kind assistance.

Kevin Stewart, Ed.D. Candidate  
Georgia Southern University