The Attitudes Of Public Elementary School Principals Toward Inclusive Education And Educational Strategies Related To Its Practice

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THE ATTITUDES OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TOWARD
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES
RELATED TO ITS PRACTICE

BY

FRANK J. INZANO

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Seton Hall University
1999
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The completion of this dissertation marks the final passage of a journey which I began five years ago. Undoubtedly, I would not have reached this stage in my quest were it not for the cooperation of several individuals both on a professional and personal level. It is only appropriate, therefore, that their contributions to the success of this project be gratefully acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

This doctoral dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my recently departed sister, Kathy. At the start of this endeavor several years ago it was she who enthusiastically offered her support in countless ways both on an emotional and practical level. Even during her terminal illness she was always interested in the progress of my studies and would exhort me to follow my dream. Her encouragement and faith in me throughout my lifetime have been and always will be a source of inspiration. Although she is not alive today to be with me and see this sojourn come to a successful end, I continue to feel her presence and am confident that somehow, somewhere "Sis" is joyfully sharing in this achievement.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Education reform has been sweeping the United States for the last twenty years and thus it was no surprise when, in 1990, President George Bush and the country's fifty governors issued national goals which the public schools were to achieve by the year 2000. If schools are going to reach these goals, they will need the combined efforts of students, parents, business leaders and educators, particularly the building principal.

According to Christopher T. Cross, Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement at the United States Department of Education, effective schools are generally led by a principal who has the ability to persuade faculty, parents, students and others to commit themselves to high academic goals and educational excellence (Deal & Peterson, 1990).

Today one of the areas of educational reform that by necessity requires the attention of the building principal is that of inclusion. In educational circles the term "inclusion" refers to the practice of placing students with disabilities in regular education classrooms in their neighborhood schools and providing them with the necessary support services that will enable them to learn (York, Doyle, & Kronberg, 1992).

When it comes to facilitating an inclusive environment in the school, a logical assumption would be that the attitude of the building principal toward inclusion is essential to increase the possibility of lasting success. Today, principals are being asked to assert
bold leadership in order to create inclusive schools and classrooms in which diversity is viewed as a strength and thus both accepted and celebrated. In such settings, differences, including the way students learn, are not only tolerated but are actually viewed as an asset. Whether such environments will emerge, where teaching methods are based on the recognition that we all learn and show what we learn in different ways, depends heavily on the creative imagination and skills of the principal (Videlock, Nay Schaff, & McGregor, 1996).

The current study on the attitudes of public elementary school principals toward inclusive education and educational strategies related to its practice will be presented in five chapters. Chapter I will incorporate background information, a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, limitations of the study, definitions of terms and significance of the study. Chapter II will present a review of related literature on the topic. Chapter III will describe the research design, the participants, the instrument development, the pilot study results, the data collection and an analysis of the data in the study. Chapter IV will report the findings of the study and Chapter V will offer a summary, conclusions and recommendations for further research.

Background Information

According to Gallagher (1994), prior to the inclusive school movement which advocated for students with disabilities to be educated in typical classroom settings, there seemed to have been an unwritten agreement between teachers and administrators in general and special education. Essentially, special educators agreed to take from regular educators those students who were academically and/or behaviorally challenged; in
exchange, general educators would support special educators and their requirements for additional resources, with the understanding that under no circumstances would special educators bring students with disabilities back into the regular classroom. It appears this agreement now has been ruptured by the new philosophy of the inclusive school movement, and neither the special educators nor the general educators are likely to be very comfortable with the new situation.

Statement of the Problem

As a result of the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) in 1975, currently known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), today parents and educators are witnessing an increasing number of school districts using special education support modes to assist students with disabilities achieve greater academic and social success in general education classrooms. The popularity of inclusive models of instruction is growing and this trend is likely to continue into the future (Cole & McLeskey, 1997). This movement is based on the philosophy that general and special education can work together in a unified system that makes room for all students, including those with disabilities, and accommodates both their talents and their needs. Not only parents, but advocacy groups and professional organizations, are calling upon school districts to serve students with disabilities in general education classes (Council for Exceptional Children, 1995; Learning Disabilities Association of America, 1993; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1994). In increasing numbers, federal courts are issuing decisions regarding the extent to which schools are required to include students in normalized settings (Power-de Fur & Orel, 1995). In
order for students with disabilities to be successfully included in schools today, school personnel must be open to innovative special education initiatives that encourage integrated general education classroom settings (Wilczenski, 1993).

In view of this trend toward more integration of regular and special education into a unified system, the principal, as the instructional leader and manager of the total education system, may find that he or she is being called upon to implement many of the objectives of what has become known as the Regular Education Initiative (REI) (Will, 1986) including creating an inclusive environment in the school. Payne and Murray (1974) asserted that since the principal is recognized as the key player in instituting change in the school, the principal is in a unique position to ensure the success of an inclusive program provided it has the principal’s backing. On the other hand, Goor and Schwenn (as cited in Goor, Schwenn, & Boyer, 1997) cautioned that negative attitudes based on the notion that students with disabilities will require an inordinate amount of the teacher’s attention thus depriving regular education students of adequate opportunities for learning or the belief that special needs students should be educated in special classes will only hamper the successful administration of special education classes in integrated settings. If the principal disapproves of educating students in the least restrictive environment, the chances of developing a successful inclusion program are significantly decreased. Payne and Murray went on to state that since the attitudes of principals toward inclusion are so critical to the success of any integration initiative, it is essential to understand those attitudes.

According to Leibfried (1984), many educators, including some administrators, view special education legislation in a negative light due to the burdensome demands that
federal mandates have now placed on them. In her view, such attitudes on the part of administrators must improve.

With exclusive educational practices rapidly falling into disfavor across the country, the professional programs which prepare school administrators for their future roles must be reexamined and, if necessary, adapted to assist those administrators meet the requirements of changing special education legislation. Truly inclusive school environments will require administrators with special qualifications and leadership abilities. A college program for preparing inclusion school leaders must not only address content knowledge but must also focus on specific skills which would include an examination of attitudes, values and innovative ways of behaving (Servatius, Fellows & Kelly, 1992).

According to Chance and Grady (1990), a school administrator’s first priority should be the creation and development of a vision for the school. Part of that vision should be a commitment to educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (Gameros, 1995).

If, as Davis (1980) reported in his study of principals' attitudes toward mainstreaming retarded pupils, that they tend to be less than optimistic about integrating students with more than simply mild disabilities, then school administrators may well be on a collision course with those proponents across the nation who are calling for a greater availability of inclusive education programs for special needs students. It is, therefore, important that we learn about principals' attitudes toward inclusive education particularly in an age when public schools are attempting more and more to infuse democratic ideals into their educational programs and to welcome diversity.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the attitudes of public elementary school principals in the state of New Jersey in regard to inclusive education and to three educational strategies related to its practice. In addition, the study will aim to determine whether there is a significant difference in attitudes toward inclusion among principals grouped according to years of experience as a school principal, as well as the school setting of the principal (i.e., urban, suburban or rural locations). As a result of the research, the author hopes to extend the current database on New Jersey school administrators' attitudes on included classrooms and to identify instructional strategies that these principals believe make for effective transitions from special education to regular education classrooms for students with disabilities.

Research Questions

The major research questions that are the focus of this study include the following:

1. Do the attitudes of New Jersey elementary school principals toward inclusive education differ with regard to years of experience as a principal?

2. Do the attitudes of New Jersey elementary school principals toward inclusive education differ with regard to the geographical location (i.e., urban, suburban or rural of the school)?

3. What percent of New Jersey elementary school principals agree that students with specific disabilities should be educated in general education classroom settings?
4. What percent of New Jersey elementary school principals believe certain educational strategies, if used in their schools, to be effective in inclusive classroom settings?

Limitations of the Study

The researcher acknowledges that there are several limitations to this study including the following:

1. This study is limited to the attitudes of randomly selected full-time public elementary school principals in the state of New Jersey and, therefore, should not be generalized to the entire population of the United States.

2. This study is limited to the degree of validity and reliability of the particular survey instrument used to ascertain the attitudes of public elementary school principals toward inclusion.

3. The study is limited in that it dealt with the attitudes of public elementary school principals toward inclusive education. As such, there is the acknowledgment that attitudes may be based upon personal and professional biases of the respondents as well as a lack of exposure to or limited professional training regarding students with disabilities.

4. The study is limited in that the responses of subjects to attitudinal surveys may be effected by the respondents' desire to give socially acceptable answers which may not necessarily reflect their actual attitudes toward the concept of inclusive education and related issues.

5. The study is limited to the respondents who completed and returned the
The study is limited to the statistical treatment used to answer each survey item.

Definitions of Terms

Clear terminology is essential to any serious investigation of the attitudes of school principals toward inclusive education. The following definitions of terms are applicable to this study:

1. **Attitude**: Noncognitive or affective traits indicating some degree of preference toward something (McMillan, 1992).

2. **Education of All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA)**: The former name of what is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

3. **Educational Strategies**: Techniques that are utilized by the regular and/or special education teacher that would enable a student with disabilities to experience success in a mainstream setting.

4. **Free Appropriate Public Education**: A term contained in the IDEA to describe special education and related services that:

   have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; meet the standards of the State educational agency; include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school education in the State involved; and are provided in conformity with the individualized education program. (Individuals with Disabilities Education...
5. **Inclusive Education**: "The practice of providing a child with disabilities with his or her education within the general education classroom, with the supports and accommodations needed by that student. This inclusion typically takes place at the student's neighborhood school" (National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, 1995, p. 3).

6. **Inclusive School Environment**: An educational setting that involves students' attendance in the same schools as siblings and neighbors, membership in general education classrooms with chronological age appropriate classmates, having individualized and relevant learning objectives, and being provided with the support necessary to learn (e.g., special education and related services) (York, 1994, p. 3).

7. **Individualized Educational Program (IEP)**: The mandated document developed by parents and school staff persons that describes the student's with disabilities current educational functioning, as well as specific long- and short-term educational objectives.

8. **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**: Formerly called the EAHCA or Public Law 94-142, the IDEA is a federal statute passed by Congress in 1975. This law guarantees students with disabilities the right to receive a public education in the least restrictive environment, thus providing a legislative basis for inclusion (Power-de Fur & Orelow, 1996).
9. **Least Restrictive Environment:** A provision contained in the IDEA that requires school institutions to ensure:

that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled; and that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1401, a., 18; 34 C.F.R. Sec. 300.550)

10. **Mainstreaming:** The practice of integrating students with mild disabilities in general education class placements on at least a part-time basis. The concept is based on the assumption that students must "earn" their opportunity through their ability to keep up with the work assigned by the teacher (Rogers, 1993).

11. **Mild Behavior Problem:** A repetitive and unremitting pattern of behavior in which rules or the basic rights of classmates are violated, resulting in relatively minor harm to others (e.g., teasing, lying, cursing, threatening and pushing, etc.).

12. **Moderate to Severe Behavior Problem:** A repetitive and unremitting pattern of behavior in which rules or the basic rights of classmates are violated, resulting in considerable harm to others (e.g., stealing, temper outbursts, hostility, property damage and physical violence, etc.).
13. **Regular Education Initiative (REI):** A phrase used by former Assistant Secretary of Education and Director of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, Madeline Will, (1986) to describe the educational movement which had as its focus the merging of special and general education into a unified, inclusive system.

14. **Scale:** "A series of gradations that describes something" (McMillan, 1992, p. 123).

Significance of the Study

The study is significant because the success of a school's inclusion efforts will hinge to a large extent on the building principal's attitude toward inclusive education. For almost twenty years, both parents and educators have stressed the importance of changing the current model of special education services in our nation's schools. In contrast to pull out models of instruction for students with disabilities, the new types of service delivery systems call for restructuring, merging general and special education, creating a unified educational system, forming collaborative relationships and developing shared responsibility.

If the majority of students with disabilities are to be educated in general education classrooms, as current trends seem to indicate (Stainback & Stainback, 1995), it is imperative that building principals develop attitudes toward inclusion that would facilitate the establishment of an inclusive school environment. Attitudes, according to McMillan (1992), are usually thought of as noncognitive or affective traits that indicate some degree of preference toward something. Preferences are important in education since they influence motivation and goals. Van Dover (1995) believed that part of the leadership
function of principals is to reinforce that which they hope will be continued and to redirect that which they hope to change. Given the tenor of the times, facilitating an inclusive school setting appears to be a logical and appropriate role for today's building principal. Thus, this study is devoted primarily to describing the attitudes of public school principals toward inclusive education and their perception of the effectiveness of certain educational strategies, commonly associated with this particular model of instruction.

The results of this study are expected to contribute to the existing body of literature in several ways. First, the study will provide an opportunity to ascertain the attitudes of New Jersey public elementary school principals toward inclusive education. Second, previous studies on the attitudes of principals toward inclusion have been relatively sparse (Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998) and thus the findings of this study will add to the growing body of research. Third, the results of the study will provide useful information to district administrators, teachers and parents as they establish inclusion programs or improve upon already existing ones. Fourth, this study is expected to add to the fund of information on how principals perceive the effectiveness of certain educational strategies, which are often utilized in inclusive education settings. Such information will be valuable to both regular education and special education classroom teachers who play a pivotal role in the implementation of successful inclusion programs.
CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature

This chapter reviews the literature pertaining to the topic of inclusive education, particularly as it relates to the attitudes of building principals towards inclusion. The review focuses on the following topics: (a) The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), (b) court decisions regarding inclusive education, (c) the Regular Education Initiative (REI), (d) the parallel systems of regular and special education, (e) barriers to school change, (f) school restructuring and (g) previous research on attitudes of school personnel and others towards inclusion.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The IDEA is a federal statute that was signed into law by Congress in 1975. Formerly called the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), the act was commonly referred to as Public Law 94-142. The act entitles a student with disabilities to a free and appropriate public education. Strange as it may seem, prior to this law over a million students with disabilities were refused admittance to public schools and of those students with disabilities who were admitted, many were provided with inadequate programs in very restricted settings (Yell, 1998). Because of its passage, students in the United States were guaranteed the right to be educated in as normal a setting as possible, "an achievement unparalleled anywhere in the world" (Lipsky & Gartner, 1998, p. 78).
The IDEA was an attempt to end the isolation of students with disabilities by placing them in regular education classrooms to the maximum degree appropriate. The law contains, among other things, language that identifies a state's responsibility for placing a student with disabilities in the least restrictive environment if the state wishes to share in federal funds that are part of the IDEA. For the student with mild to moderate disabilities, the least restrictive environment is often the regular education classroom in the neighborhood school, for at least part of the school day (Chalmers & Faliede, 1996). As Klare (1996) noted, one aspect of the least restrictive environment requirement is the assumption that a student with disabilities be placed in regular classrooms with students who do not have disabilities. The least restrictive environment requirement presumes that educational progress can be made in the proposed placement. Although the word inclusion, as Yell (1998) reminds us, is nowhere to be found in the federal statute, the concept of inclusion is equivalent to that of the least restrictive environment component of the law. Yell contends that while inclusion may not be mandated by the IDEA, the law does require that the school district's Individual Education Program (IEP) team, in determining the least restrictive environment for a student, give primary consideration to that student's individual needs.

Since the IDEA addresses the responsibility for teachers and administrators to ensure that students with disabilities receive their instruction in as normal a setting as appropriate, it follows that teachers and principals should be thoroughly familiar with the concept of least restrictive environment. The IDEA further stipulates that the state education agency must inform administrators to provide technical assistance and training to teachers so that they would feel confident in carrying out placements for students with
disabilities in the least restrictive setting. In the almost twenty five years since the passage of the EAHCA, the American public education system has had the responsibility of providing students with disabilities access to appropriate educational programs in the least restrictive environment. This entitlement illustrates what schools can do while at the same time points to what still needs to be done: to offer high quality educational outcomes for all students (Lipsky & Gartner, 1998).

To summarize, until the passage of the EAHCA, now known as the IDEA, students with disabilities were not given the same right as their nondisabled peers, namely, the right to a free and appropriate public education in as normal a setting as possible or in what is often referred to as the least restrictive environment. For most students with disabilities, the least restrictive environment is often the regular education classroom, in their neighborhood school. While the IDEA does not make mention of the word inclusion as such, the concept is included in the least restrictive environment element of the law.

Court Decisions Regarding Inclusive Education

The idea of educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment is a stark contrast with the long-standing practice of educating these students in classrooms and schools far removed from their non-disabled peers. While the federal mandate of least restrictive environment has been in effect since 1975, its implementation by public school administrators has been anything but consistent (Lipton, 1997). Because parents of students with disabilities and school districts have often disagreed over just what constitutes the least restrictive setting, many court cases have developed with some
of them finding their way to the U.S. Courts of Appeals. The decisions rendered in these cases have set the standards that other courts use in an attempt to resolve disputes involving the least restrictive environment aspect of the law. In light of this situation, the questions arise, what is the least restrictive environment requirement of the law and how does it pave the way for students with disabilities to be educated in general education classrooms? By investigating these questions and reviewing some of the more famous court decisions on this topic, the researcher will provide the reader with an understanding of how the courts have interpreted the concept of least restrictive environment.

Since the late 1980s, a series of famous court decisions involving the least restrictive environment issue within inclusive education has underscored the growing desire of parents of students with disabilities to have them educated in integrated classrooms. The early cases often focused on parental attempts to return their children with disabilities from segregated school settings to public school environments, even if it meant a special education classroom. Once on a public school campus, the student with disabilities would at least have the opportunity to mingle with peers who were not disabled in non-academic activities such as lunch, art and music. Early court cases resulted in inconsistent findings with some rulings favoring the "handicapped only" school placement, while other rulings held that the restrictive placement was a violation of the student's right to a more integrated placement (Lipton, 1997).

According to Katsiyannis, Conderman and Franks (1996), more recent court cases tend to support the concept of inclusion, concluding that school districts have the burden of documenting that a student with disabilities could not receive an appropriate education in a general education classroom prior to removal to a more restrictive setting. As a result,
these landmark decisions have provided a benchmark for schools in regard to their responsibility for addressing the educational needs of not some but all students, as well as in carrying out the least restrictive environment requirements of the IDEA (Guzman, N. & Schofield, R., 1995; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997).

In *Roncker v. Walter* (1983), the court for the first time addressed the issue of least restrictive environment. Here the parents of a severely retarded boy wanted him placed in a setting where he would have the opportunity to interact with students without disabilities. The school district, on the other hand, sought a more restricted placement in a school which had a program that included several services not available to the student in the public school placement which the parents sought.

Initially, the district court sided with the school district based on the student's lack of progress in the placement preferred by the parents. However, on a later appeal, the circuit court overturned the lower court's decision as it reasoned that the student's lack of progress was not clearly established since the district court had yet to determine whether the student could have been provided with supportive services which could have had a possible positive influence on his performance (Thomas & Rapport, 1998).

In *Daniel R.R. v. State Board of Education* (1989), the court developed a standard, often referred to as the Daniel R. R. test (Havey, 1998), for determining when removal to a special education classroom is warranted. According to the court, the school must first prove that it had taken steps to accommodate the student in a regular education setting with the use of supplementary aids and services and modifying the curriculum of the general education class. Next, the court stated that consideration must be given to whether a student with a disability would benefit from a regular educational program.
According to Yell (1998), benefit may be defined in either academic terms or social terms. Finally, school districts would have to consider how the presence of a student with disabilities impacted students without disabilities in the classroom. In the end, the court held that Daniel, a Down syndrome child, was not appropriately placed in a regular education classroom since the setting did not meet this student's unique needs and most of the teacher's time was devoted to him at the expense of his classmates. The appropriate least restrictive placement for him, according to the court, was within a segregated placement since it provided Daniel with educational benefit. Thus, in this Texas case which was decided by the Fifth Circuit Court, Daniel's parents were unsuccessful in their attempts to get him to remain in a regular classroom (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997). It can be seen, therefore, that in ruling for the school district, the court determined that the mainstream will not always be the most appropriate setting in which to provide an education for a student with disabilities (Haven, 1998).

In Greer v. Rome City School District (1991), the district proposed to place ten year old Chrissy Greer, a student with severe disabilities, in a self-contained classroom rather than in her neighborhood school. The Eleventh Circuit Court held that the school district failed to comply with the mainstreaming requirements of the IDEA by not considering the full continuum of supplementary aids and services potentially available to assist Chrissy. The district was further at fault by developing the student's IEP prior to the IEP meeting. In this instance the court held that the case turned on whether an appropriate education can be achieved in the regular education classroom with the use of supplementary aids and support services. In the view of Lipsky and Gartner (1997), the one issue more than any other with which school districts have had to contend, when
confronted with requests for inclusive placements, has been their willingness to provide such additional aids and services.

In this historic case, the court allowed for the consideration of the costs incurred in providing an appropriate education for a student with disabilities. In reaching its decision, the Eleventh Circuit Court held that the school district had a responsibility to balance the needs of students with disabilities with the needs of students who were not disabled in light of its financial resources and its obligations (Thomas & Rapport, 1998).

In ruling on the most appropriate setting for an eleven year old youngster with a severe cognitive disability, the Ninth Circuit Court in Sacramento City Unified School District v. Rachel H. (1994) weighed both the benefits and costs of the recommended placement in determining the least restrictive environment. In this case the court affirmed a four-part test which the district court had developed. Here the standard was similar to the Daniel R.R. v. State Board of Education case, mentioned earlier. The questions generated by the Ninth Circuit Court included the following:

1. What are the relative educational benefits available to the child in a regular education classroom as compared to a special education classroom?

2. What are the nonacademic benefits of interacting with peers who are not disabled?

3. How does the student's with disabilities presence in the classroom impact both the teacher and the classmates?

4. What would it cost to educate the student in the regular education classroom (Thomas & Rapport, 1998)?
Sage and Burrello (1994) contended that the court's ruling in this case, in comparison to the Daniel R. R. case, was seemingly reached on the basis of real differences in individuals circumstances, (i.e., on observations regarding the four questions noted above). In this case the circuit court held that it is the district that bears the burden of proof to show the advantages of the placements it was proposing and affirmed that the district had not done this (Havey, 1998).

In another least restrictive environment case, Oberti v. Board of Education of the Borough of Clementon School District (1993), the Third Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed the New Jersey school district's claim that Rafael, a Down Syndrome child with serious behavioral problems, could not be appropriately educated in a regular classroom setting. Supporting the findings of the district court, the higher court ruled that the Clementon School District failed to demonstrate that the student's needs could be met only in a more restrictive environment. This ruling was based on the court's interpretation that the district had an obligation to first exhaust the reasonable use of supplementary aids and services, which it had not done, in a regular education classroom before resorting to a special education classroom. In its ruling the Third Circuit Court declared that an inclusive education is a right and not a privilege granted to only a few (Sage & Burrello, 1994). This is not to say that the court gave carte blanche for inclusive programming. While it reiterated IDEA's preference for mainstreaming, it also acknowledged the need for a continuum of alternative placements (Havey, 1998).

Considering the increasing interest in the inclusion issue, an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court seems likely in the future, opined Sage and Burrello (1994). Although the
rural Clementon School District, which had already spent $214,000 in legal fees did not pursue such an appeal, another school district in a similar case might very well do so.

Another important least restrictive environment case is that of Mavis v. Sobol (1994) in which the parents of a fourteen year old mentally retarded student in New York sought a placement in an integrated classroom setting in spite of the school district's attempts to place the child in a segregated environment. Here the district court ruled that the school was in violation of the least restrictive environment standard and that it had failed to make any serious efforts to educate the child in the mainstream with the use of supplementary aids and services (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997).

In the last case to be reviewed in this section, Clyde K. v. Puyallup School District No. 3 (1994), the Ninth Circuit Court ruled that the segregated placement offered by the Washington state school district for a fifteen year old boy with Tourette Syndrome was, in fact, the least restrictive setting. The student's presence in the classroom had a significant adverse effect both on his teachers and classmates who were at the receiving end of his assaultive behaviors, verbal abuse and sexual harassment. As a result, the court held that, in its opinion, the student was not benefiting from his placement in a regular education setting since his aggressive behaviors precluded him from learning. In addition, the student was making limited social progress. Thus, the student was removed from a regular education setting and resource center classroom (Thomas & Rapport, 1998).

According to Yell (1988), the major least restrictive environment cases which the courts have considered, provide consistent principles which school districts must follow in order to guarantee students with disabilities the right to a free and appropriate, public education. The four major themes enunciated by Yell included the following:
1. **Individualization:** In determining the most appropriate placement for a student with disabilities, primary consideration must be given to that student's individual needs, both academic and social. Therefore, the IEP team must first determine what educational services a student needs and then decide where these services can be most appropriately delivered. If, however, a student's disruptive behavior in a particular classroom setting would have a significant negative impact upon the education of the other students present, or if the safety of the other students was compromised, or if the disruptive behavior required an inordinate amount of the teacher's attention, then a general education classroom setting would not be appropriate.

2. **Presumptive Right to an Integrated Education:** Since students with disabilities have a right to receive their education with students who are not disabled, a school district must first make use of supplementary aids and services in an attempt to maintain them in a general education setting before assigning them to a more restrictive placement. Supplementary aids and services might include a resource center classroom, instructional aides, behavior intervention plans, as well as assistive technology (e.g., computers and hearing/speaking devices). Even when a student is placed in a restrictive setting, the school district has a responsibility to provide as many opportunities as possible for the student with disabilities to be integrated with nondisabled peers, (e.g., lunch, assemblies, physical education, clubs and other extracurricular activities).

3. **Appropriateness:** In determining a student's special educational program, the IEP Team's decision must be guided by what constitutes an appropriate education for that particular student. Questions of what educational services are required must be answered before a determination of where those services are to be provided. The IDEA's
obvious preference for integrating students in general education classroom settings is a clear indication that when school districts can offer a student with disabilities an education in an integrated setting, and if the student's behavior will not have a significant negative impact upon the other students, inclusion is required.

4. Options: The IDEA requires school districts to choose from a continuum of options, from least restrictive to most restrictive, when deciding upon an appropriate educational placement for a student with disabilities. While the law does not require that all options be available within the boundaries of the district, it does mandate that the district be able to access the appropriate placement in order to meet the unique needs of the student. Small school districts, for example, might be obligated to engage in a contract for services with a larger district so that a student receives a free and appropriate, public education.

In addressing the issue of school districts' responses to requests for inclusion placements from parents and other advocates, Schnaiberg (1996) painted the following scenario:

Regardless of where educators stand philosophically on inclusion, many disability-rights advocates have made the link between inclusion and racial desegregation. And they warn that if schools don't move fast enough to better integrate their disabled children, the courts may step in to do the job for them. (p. 24)

The Regular Education Initiative

We have seen how federal legislation and the courts' interpretation of the law have assisted advocates in placing students with disabilities in general education settings
whenever appropriate. As a result of changing social attitudes, particularly that of normalization, a movement known as mainstreaming began to show itself in American schools in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The purpose of this movement was to foster the part-time integration of students who were mildly disabled into general education settings (Power de-Fur & Orelone, 1996).

The 1970s witnessed a growing concern on the part of parents of students with disabilities and some special education advocates regarding the lack of empirical data establishing the effectiveness of special education classes and the need to provide more normal school environments for students with disabilities. This anxiety paved the way for the widespread acceptance of the resource center concept. In such a model, students with special needs were educated in what were known as resource centers for part of the school day. For the remainder of the day, these students received their instruction in general education classes with their nondisabled peers. The resource center classroom, as compared to the self-contained classroom, was designed to allow more inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes and to provide these students with the opportunity to engage in mainstream school activities. Additional advantages of this model were that it encouraged special education teachers to consult with their general education colleagues and attached less stigma to students receiving special education (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995).

A decade later the resource center model came under attack by advocates of the Regular Education Initiative (REI). According to Fuchs & Fuchs (1994), proponents of the REI consisted of essentially two different groups: (a) the first group were advocates of students with learning disabilities, behavior disorders, and mild to moderate mental
retardation; (b) the second group were supporters of students with severe intellectual
disabilities. It was not long before REI followers were condemning both resource centers
and self-contained classrooms as "ineffective, stigmatizing and segregationist" (Kauffman
& Hallahan, 1995, p. 6). At times both REI groups would coordinate their activities in
their criticisms of special education. Fuchs and Fuchs noted that more often than not they
would call for a collaboration of special education and regular education although
eventually the more extreme elements in the two groups would push for the complete
dismantling of the special education system.

While most REI supporters did not advocate an end to special education, as others
had done, what they did suggest, however, was a different role for special educators:

We need to move special teachers [of students with disabilities] into
mainstream structures as co-teachers with general teaching staff where
both groups share in the instruction. The special education teachers can...
lead in such matters as child study, working with parents, and offering
individualized, highly intensive instruction to students who have not been
progressing well (Reynolds, 1989, p. 10).

Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) suggested that it seemed only logical that the REI goals
would be appealing to leaders of general education reform. The REI's avowed purpose of
strengthening regular education classrooms' teaching and learning processes by an infusion
of special education support services, with the effect of making such settings more
sensitive to student diversity, seemed to be congruent with reports from such prestigious
groups as the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, the National
Commission on Excellence in Education and the National Governors Association. As it turned out, general education demonstrated little, if any, interest in the REI. Such disinterest, according to Sapon-Shevin (1987), may be due to the fact that special education tended to be viewed nationally as a separate concern or because of general educators' greater interests in excellence, as compared to equity. Whatever the reason, at its most effective the REI was, in actuality, a special education initiative. While in the 1980s the REI concept focused on the instructional needs of students with mild and moderate disabilities, in the 1990s advocacy efforts have expanded this initiative to incorporate serving all students including those with severe and profound disabilities in general education classrooms in neighborhood schools (Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin, 1996). Such schools are often referred to as "heterogeneous" or "inclusionary" where students with disabilities are provided with all the necessary supports to enable them to sustain themselves in general education environments. The researchers also reported that they are a contrast to those schools that provide a continuum of placements for their disabled populations. As some schools began to experiment with this integration effort, a leading advocacy group, the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, saw fit to call for the education of students with severe disabilities in regular education environments (Stainback & Stainback, 1995).

Although the Federal regulations, as we have seen, have mandated that students with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment, at the same time, as reported by Hasazi, Johnston, Liggett and Schattman (1994), additional regulations required that school districts have available a continuum of placement options in order to provide an appropriate education for their students. Such options may include
instructional programs in regular classes, self-contained classes, special schools (both in
district and out of district), home instruction, hospitals and residential facilities. These
alternative placements allow the least restrictive environment to vary among students
along the continuum and enable school districts to provide these students with a free and
appropriate, public education based on their individual needs (Havey, 1998). Thus,
although the IDEA placed on school districts the responsibility of servicing students with
disabilities in general education settings whenever appropriate, it did not rule out the
possibility of districts considering a range of alternative placement options when education
in an integrated setting was not feasible.

In the last several years, the movement toward including in the mainstream
students with severe and even profound disabilities has become more intense (Stainback
& Stainback, 1995). A few years ago only a very small percentage of students with severe
disabilities were fully included in general education classrooms. Today, however, there
are more and more instances of students who are severely disabled taking their places in
regular classrooms next to their nondisabled peers.

Recent research on alternative service delivery models such as those suggested by
the REI has emerged yielding information on what is thought to be required of these
individuals implementing the new instructional systems. In a qualitative policy study,
Hasazi, Johnson, Ligget, & Schattman (1994) examined how the least restrictive
environment was implemented in six states and twelve local school districts. Their
research revealed that eight sites were relatively high users of segregated facilities for
educating special needs students, while the remaining ten were low users. In organizing
their findings, the authors identified six factors that interviewees rated as important in the
implementation of the least restrictive environment mandate. These included: (a) finance, (b) organization, (c) advocacy, (d) implementers, (e) knowledge and values (f) and state/local context. The researchers concluded that "how the leadership at each school site chose to look at least restrictive environment was critical to how or even whether, much would be accomplished beyond the status quo" (p. 506). Thus, if decision makers viewed the least restrictive environment mandate as a unification of the general education and special education systems, the result was a wide range of educational program options. On the other hand, if they did not view it as such, program options were limited.

The Parallel Systems of Regular and Special Education

The concept of special education services in the United States goes back over a hundred years as a means of addressing the educational needs of students with disabilities who were often thought of as "special". While special education is often regarded as a subsystem of regular education, it has become, in practice, a dual or parallel system to that of regular education (Stainback & Stainback, 1984). As special education has grown rapidly for the last several years, it has evolved into a second system, asserted Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg (1988), complete with its own teachers, administrators, programs and budgets. At the same time, it has taken on an independent and autonomous appearance which exhibits itself in its tendency for doing things unilaterally, even when some issues seem to be best addressed by collaboration with regular educators. Special education's inability to correct its own system, alleged Fuchs and Fuchs (1994), is due in part to its organizational, physical and psychological separateness from general education. Wang, Reynolds and Walberg stated that this formal separation that divides regular and
special education results in special education having its own administration, department, inservice trainings and policies and procedures.

Stainback & Stainback (1984) contended that maintaining a dual system of education does little to foster the values that are part and parcel of the movement today to educate students with disabilities in integrated settings. While admitting that there are indeed differences among students, these researchers asserted that educators should not use this as an excuse to continue to segregate students of different abilities. Rather, educators should address these differences through adaptations or modifications in the students' educational experiences.

If educators were to engage in careful planning, suggested Stainback and Stainback (1984), the educational needs of students with disabilities could be addressed within a unified system of education. In such a system, individual student differences would not be denied but rather would be recognized and accommodated. In their opinion, the time has come to refrain from establishing criteria for those students who either belong or do not belong in general education settings and instead to focus our attention on empowering the general education community with the resources required to meet the needs of all students.

The debate over the effectiveness of a separate special education system has continued into the 1990s as researchers held that in comparison to their nondisabled peers, students with disabilities were leaving schools with inadequate skills, had less of a chance of finding jobs, and were not prepared to be integrated into the community as adults (National Council on Disability, 1994). Indeed, in 1992 the National Association of School Boards of Education (NASBE) (as cited in Power-de Fur & Orelove, 1996)
lamented the fact that unfortunately special education had evolved into a separate educational system that is completely isolated from the general education system. The NASBE (1992) report, *Winners All: A Call for Inclusive Schools*, complained, "Rather than special education supporting the general education system, the two commonly function in separate orbits that may or may not be connected with actual student learning or the needs of the child as a whole" (p. 8).

For these reasons, the entire arena of special education that has developed since the passage of the EAHCA of 1975 is now a target for reform and restructuring.

Recognition grows that a meaningful connection with general education is necessary; that a "Lone Ranger" strategy for special education is self-defeating….Special education is not a Nantucket or Martha's Vineyard, but a town on the mainland, and its students and teachers are served better when its business is coordinated closely with mainland business (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994, p. 295).

The question to be asked is whether regular and special education can work together to benefit children? In the opinion of Brian McNulty, Director of Special Education in Colorado, the creation of two separate systems of education: one for typical students and one for students with disabilities, do not interact, for the most part, very well (as cited in Merrow, 1996).

Today as general and special education begin to move away from a parallel system model and merge into a more unified system model, teachers from both arenas are identifying mutual concerns and benefits. Both regular and special educators are sharing techniques and strategies while discovering that, collectively, they possess a broad base of
knowledge and skills that can serve the needs of all learners (York, Doyle, & Kronberg, 1992). This is not to say that establishing a unified system for both students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers in not without its challenges. As Roach (1995) indicated, most teachers who are in education today were prepared for and inducted into the dual system of regular and special education. As a result, the majority of teachers have worked in environments in which special education teachers were responsible for addressing the instructional needs of students with disabilities, while their colleagues in the regular education arena were responsible for the so-called "average" students. As Roach suggested, in order to successfully merge the two systems, both groups of teachers, those assigned to students with disabilities and those assigned to their nondisabled peers, must be provided with training in order to plan and share the successes and failures that accompany the movement towards inclusion.

**Barriers to School Change**

In a study that investigated placement practices for students with disabilities, McLeskey and Pachiano (1994) contended that, except for certain states such as Vermont, Oregon and Iowa, little progress overall has been made toward mainstreaming. In these states, almost all students with learning disabilities are served in regular classroom settings, with little reliance on separate class placements. Despite indications that mainstreaming students with disabilities is both possible and desirable, historical evidence suggests that simply posing a logical argument and providing effective models will not change educational practice. As a result, the parallel systems of regular and special
education tend to continue. If change is to occur, educators need to examine barriers to mainstreaming.

Thousand and Villa (1995a) when discussing barriers to change in schools, particularly as they relate to promoting more inclusive educational options for special needs students in regular class settings, cited the following reasons: (a) inadequate teacher preparation; (b) inappropriate organizational structure, policies and procedures; (c) lack of attention to the cultural aspects of schooling and (d) poor leadership.

**Inadequate Teacher Preparation**

A first barrier to school change is the inadequate teacher preparation programs where future teachers feel unprepared to engage in collaborative problem-solving with their peers and to work with students who have diverse needs. According to Thousand and Villa (1995a), college level programs have a major responsibility to their students aspiring to be teachers to prepare them to develop those skills that are needed to be responsive to different students' learning styles, rates and needs and to expect diversity, such as the inclusion of students with disabilities, in the general education classrooms where they will eventually be working.

Unfortunately, in many college training programs, future regular and special educators are professionally prepared in separate programs on both the undergraduate and graduate levels (e.g., regular education, special education, gifted and talented and English as a second language). In addition, they feel comfortable to work with only certain types of learners. Students exit these programs armed with different competencies, vocabularies, expectations and philosophies. Despite this situation, Videlock et al. (1997) claimed that "if one looks underneath the vocabulary to the pedagogical principles that
underlie innovative practices across disciplines, it is evident that there are common and
complimentary practices that, in combination, create educational environments that are
responsive to student diversity" (p. 17).

The inadequacies evidenced in many teacher preparation programs, opined
Thousand and Villa (1995a) result in maintaining the status quo in many of the nation's
schools with teachers working alone rather than collaboratively and students grouped by
categorical labels. Such restrictions prevent educators from developing new strategies to
meet the needs of today's increasingly diverse learners.

Outmoded Organizational Structures, Policies and Procedures

Anderson (1993) described the tendency of some educators to maintain the
organizational structure as it was originally designed. They fail to realize that the old
system is out of step with the realities of today's world and, as a result, new knowledge
about teaching, learning and organizational structures has not been incorporated into the
present system.

In their article on establishing collaboration in public schools, Villa, Thousand,
Malgieri and Nevin (1996) stated that ineffective organizational structures, policies and
procedures are a further set of reasons why schools find change so difficult and eventually
face the consequent problems schools have in meeting the requirements of the IDEA.
Public schools are often viewed as compartmentalized organizations that hinder rather
than facilitate the sharing of resources, ideas and actions. Moreover, not every school sets
out to reward personnel to plan, teach or share professional expertise as a team. Precious
little time is built into teachers' schedules that would allow such collaboration to take place
(Thousand & Villa, 1995a).
Resistance to School Cultures

A third factor contributing to the failure of school reform is the fear of losing the familiar tradition or culture of school. Deal and Peterson (1990) define culture as the "historically rooted socially transmitted set of deep patterns of thinking and ways of acting that give meaning to human experiences" (p. 8). For some individuals, such as, intractable teachers, when change is imminent they may sometimes prefer to dig in their heels and resist, at least initially. In light of this behavior, shifting from a compartmentalized to an inclusive school culture often requires change agents such as a principal to act with both patience and skill. In doing so he or she articulates the shared values, observes rituals and ceremonies and nurtures traditions that celebrate and extol inclusive practices (Thousand & Villa, 1995a).

Marginal Leaders

A final reason cited as a barrier to school change with regard to collaborative innovations, such as inclusion, is that many administrators are naïve and/or ineffective (Villa et al., 1996). Their naïveté revolves around the fact that some administrators fail to understand or else minimize just how complicated system change is or how long it will take. Villa and Thousand (1995) reported that it usually takes five to seven years for a change to filter through and become the norm in an organization.

Building principals are ineffective when they fail to link various change initiatives together (e.g., inclusive education, thematic and interdisciplinary curriculum, multi-aged grouping and multi-cultural education). They are also deficient when they are unable to demonstrate to their staffs how these initiatives support the overall mission of the school district, that is, full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living,
family support and economic and social self-sufficiency of all students of the community. In addition, leaders are marginal at best if they refuse to deal with the emotional issues that frequently are part and parcel of change initiatives or leave their posts before the change they championed takes hold (Villa et al., 1996).

School Restructuring and Inclusive Education

The purpose of this section is to investigate the current movement of restructuring of America's schools and its effect upon inclusive education. This will be accomplished by investigating various researchers' interpretations of the concept of school restructuring and the impact of school restructuring upon special education.

The call for educational reform of the American school system sounded over a decade and a half ago with the publication of A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Early reforms spoke to raising the bar for teacher certification, student achievement and student graduation. More recent reforms have focused on adapting the education structure itself in America's schools so as to meet the country's changing values as it approaches the new millennium (McLaughlin & Warren, 1992). Support for these initiatives at the federal, state and local levels sprung not only from the public at large but from the business community also as witnessed by the increasing numbers of school/business partnerships which have evolved in the last several years (Harris & Evans, 1994).

Taken as a whole, these series of education reforms that are occurring in our schools have been referred to as "restructuring" (McLaughlin & Warren, 1992). There is some uncertainty as to what exactly is school restructuring. Lewis (1989) viewed this
concept as a succession of education-related actions that call for higher expectations on
the part of both teachers and students. Sage and Burello (1994) also perceived school
restructuring not as a single categorical event but as being a multi-dimensional process
along a continuum. They posited that most educators argue that school restructuring
cannot come about through a simple initiative, but rather must be a number of activities
that address the needs of diverse learners. In their view, restructuring entails "integrating
the work of students with planning, goal setting, and evaluation of student learning;
involving internal and external audiences in clearly defined roles, relationships, and
governance structures; focusing on the actual functions of teaching and learning" (p. 13).

Harris and Evans (1994) opined that restructuring is:

both teacher centered and student centered; alters the way teachers teach
and students learn; is applicable to all students, including those at
risk of failure; affects both organization and curriculum; requires that
everyone within a school subscribes to a central vision; and is supported by
all segments of the community (p.8).

As a result of the report, A Nation at Risk, schools have been under increasing
pressure to demonstrate that the students they are turning out are equipped with the
necessary skills they will need in order to survive in the twenty-first century (Videlock, et
al., 1997). At the same time, there is the belief that the increasingly diverse population in
the schools and the workplace, which includes people with disabilities, requires that
persons be able to relate well with one another in various settings (Villa & Thousand,
1995a).
Some proponents of school restructuring contend that for schools to be centers of excellence what is needed is a completely new structure. This will necessitate abandoning the schools' traditional homogeneous grouping practices in classrooms and questioning the efficacy of some pull out programs for students with disabilities (Skrtic, Sailor, & Gill, 1996).

Lipsky and Gartner (1997) have claimed that even though various school restructuring efforts have been set into motion, overall the separate system known as special education has not been part of these ongoing activities. This is evident in such reform efforts as the new curriculum content standards, assessment programs on both the state and local levels and school choice programs. For example, although professional associations such as the National Committee on Science Education Standards have been funded by the United States Department of Education to develop national standards in the science area, most of these groups have not taken into account the needs of students with disabilities. In addition, the practice of involving students with disabilities in testing that measures educational outcomes is inconsistent from state to state. Lipsky and Gartner also pointed out that as evidence of this, a 1994 study conducted by the National Center for Educational Outcomes revealed that only 19 states throughout the nation were able to identify how many students took part in their standardized statewide assessments.

To exclude students with disabilities from assessment programs conveys two dangerous messages, asserted Lipsky and Gartner (1997), first, that the education of students with disabilities is of no great import and, secondly, that students with disabilities are incapable of achieving. On the other hand, by including students with disabilities in assessment programs we are in effect declaring that their instruction is the responsibility of
the educational system, that school administrators will be held accountable for the
education of students with disabilities, and indeed that such students, when provided with
the necessary supports and services in the classroom, will achieve.

A number of researchers, as we have seen, have questioned the efficacy of some
special education programs (Roach, 1995; Thousand & Villa, 1995b). They pointed to the
fact that many students with disabilities do not complete school and of those who do
graduate many are either unemployed or only marginally employed. Growing concern
over the post-secondary experiences of these students has prompted both educators and
advocates to investigate the educational programs of these students. The emphasis has
now shifted from procedures and process to achieving improved outcomes for students

As McLaughlin and Warren (1992) noted:

New models were proposed for providing special education services in
more collaborative ways with regular education. The discussions related to
restructuring special education by promoting more integration within
regular education schools and improving outcomes for students with
disabilities occurred simultaneously with discussions about restructuring
regular education. To some degree, the two movements are continuing in
parallel fashion, while in some places the two strands are rapidly
converging. The regular education community is setting the direction and
defining the outcomes for the restructuring movement, but there is
increasing attention to how special education and students with
disabilities will be included and integrated within the larger system. (p. 3)

In considering the parallels of the school restructuring movement and the inclusive education movement, Skrtic, Sailor, and Gill (1997) asserted that both, in principle, are attempts to replace the traditional bureaucratic structures of schools. From a structural perspective, both reforms seek the elimination of specialization and to place in its stead an adaptable system in which general education teachers collaborate with special education teachers and with their consumers to personalize instructional practices. In their opinion, both movements are a consumer-oriented and interdisciplinary form of professionalism for our schools.

Successful school districts, according to Roach (1995), view inclusion as part of the overall restructuring plan of the system and not simply as a special education initiative. In order to create a unified system that services students with disabilities in general education settings it is necessary that general and specialized services complement each other. This means that districts must rid themselves of separate policies for special education and general education, and instead address diverse populations within the central office divisions of curriculum and instruction, pupil personnel and professional development. Roach also contended that merging the two systems into one will mean that general education and special education teachers must interact with one another to learn, plan and share both the successes and failures of inclusion.

As the school restructuring movement takes hold in more and more schools, the inclusion of students with disabilities, as suggested by Falvey, Givner, and Kimm (1995), does not become a separate activity but rather occurs simultaneously. It is their contention that the characteristics of the school restructuring movement and the inclusive
education movement are one and the same where all students are the recipients of quality programs that meet their unique educational needs in the context of political and social justice.

In the 1990s the writings of Villa and Thousand, along with Stainback and Stainback, helped place the inclusion movement alongside that of general education reform (Stainback & Stainback, 1995). In addition, school restructuring for all learners was addressed in 1992 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development when it promulgated a resolution calling for:

the full inclusion of special programs through instructional environments that eliminate tracking and segregation, services that focus on the prevention of learning problems rather than after-the-fact labeling, minimal restrictive regulations, and flexible use of funding to promote success for all children (Stainback & Stainback, 1995, p. 23).

In summary, the hotly debated inclusion movement of the 1980s and 1990s has expanded far beyond the special education arena and has now become an integral part of the total school reform movement. In the current school restructuring climate, principals are finding themselves assuming greater and greater responsibility for the planning, scheduling, coordinating and evaluating of special education services in their buildings (Harris & Evans, 1994). This being the case, it is of paramount importance that principals become more and more knowledgeable about the many facets of special education especially as the numbers of students with disabilities in mainstreamed settings continue to increase (McLeskey, Henry & Hodges, 1998; Sage & Burello, 1994). Principals should become aware of the rights of these students as outlined in the IDEA so as to guarantee
their proper implementation and to reduce the possibility of districts being burdened with costly lawsuits due to their failure to provide a free and appropriate, public education (Valesky & Hirth, 1992). As schools restructure and new roles evolve for administrators, principal preparation programs must also restructure in order to prepare future principals with the necessary skills to function as intelligent, informed and empowered professionals especially with respect to their special needs populations (Harris & Evans, 1994).

Attitudes of School Personnel and Others Toward Inclusive Education

Even though a series of federal laws guarantees students with disabilities the right to be educated in general education classrooms, attitudinal barriers to the pupils' full integration remain. As Antonak and Larrivee (1995) declared, the complete integration of students with disabilities will become a reality only after education professionals change their attitudes toward inclusion.

At least as far back as the 1970s, there has been a small but growing body of research regarding the attitudes of school administrators, including building principals, toward the integration of students with disabilities into general education settings. Past research studies have uncovered considerable data regarding teachers' perspectives toward inclusion, however, there is less research on the perspectives of building principals (Downing, Eichinger, & Williams, 1997). The following section will contain a review of the research on attitudes toward inclusive education as it pertains to the current study. In addition to principals' attitudes, the attitudes of teachers, as well as, that of students will also be examined.
Payne and Murray (1974) investigated the attitudes of fifty urban and fifty suburban elementary school principals toward the integration of students with disabilities into regular education programs. In addition to determining the extent of willingness on the part of both groups of principals to place students with disabilities in regular classrooms, the researchers also sought to discover which categories of disability both groups of principals would be more willing to have in an integrated setting within their schools. The types of resources that the principals thought would be needed in order to successfully operate an integrated program and the kinds of teacher competencies that the principals felt were required for working with students with disabilities in a regular classroom were further areas of investigation in this study.

The following conclusions were reached as a result of Payne and Murray's (1974) investigation:

1. Suburban elementary school principals were more accepting of placing students with disabilities into regular education programs than were the urban principals.

2. In general, both groups of principals were in agreement regarding the categories of students with disabilities whom they felt could be placed in regular classrooms. In their view, students who were visually handicapped, hard of hearing, physically handicapped or learning disabled could be most easily integrated. However, suburban principals believed that students with emotional handicaps could be mainstreamed more easily than students functioning within the educable mentally retarded range, while their urban counterparts felt just the opposite.

3. Teacher and student support services were viewed as essential elements for the success of an integrated program. Not surprisingly, both urban and suburban
principals listed inservice training as the paramount need of regular education teachers who would have students with disabilities assigned to their classrooms.

4. Both groups of principals ranked required teacher competencies in the same general order. Teachers' knowledge of exceptionalities and teaching techniques was listed first and second respectively by both groups of participants.

Payne and Murray (1974) recommended further research to determine the specific factors that led the urban principals to be less willing to integrate students with disabilities into their schools as compared to their suburban counterparts.

In another study, Davis (1980) assessed the attitudes of 345 public school principals in the state of Maine regarding the mainstreaming of students with disabilities in regular school settings, according to type and level of handicapping condition. Davis was particularly concerned with determining the attitudes of those school administrators toward the successful integration into their buildings of students with mild, moderate and profound retardation. An analysis of the data revealed that the majority of principals tended to view the chances for successful mainstreaming of students with mental retardation as relatively poor as compared to students with other handicapping conditions such as mild to moderate learning disabilities, speech/language disabilities, vision impairments and auditory impairments. Moreover, of all the participants in this study, only 14.8% believed that the chances were excellent for a student with even mild retardation to undergo a successful mainstreaming experience.

Because knowledge of the nature and needs of students with disabilities is essential in order to determine appropriate educational programs for them, Cline (1981) evaluated principals' attitudes and knowledge about children with handicapping conditions.
The principals were all employed in a K through 12 school district of 92,000 students. The participants in the study were requested to first read behavioral descriptions of students with disabilities and then select an appropriate placement from a continuum of seven options. The placements ranged from least restrictive (inclusion in a regular classroom) to most restrictive (placement in a residential school).

Upon completion of his study, Cline (1981) made the following conclusions:

1. A principal's attitude toward or knowledge of students with disabilities does not appear to be correlated to the presence or lack of a special education class within the building.

2. The principals in this study demonstrated more positive attitudes toward students with severe handicapping conditions and mental retardation as compared to 35 experts in the field of special education.

3. Principals with less experience on the job (i.e., 10 or fewer years) appear to be more knowledgeable about students with disabilities than their colleagues who have 10 or more years of experience.

Conroy-Hof (1994) studied the perceptions of 300 elementary school principals in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and South Dakota regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classroom settings. In addition, the researcher investigated how the principals' perceptions differed with regard to certain demographic variables, including the size of the school district and the gender and age of the principal. The study further determined what factors contributed to the formation of the principals' perceptions.

At the end of her study, Conroy-Hof (1994) reached the following conclusions:
1. The higher the degree obtained by the principal, the more likely the principal would perceive inclusion as a positive step in educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.

2. The larger the school district, the greater the possibility of having specific strategies in place to implement inclusive education practices.

3. Gender, age and years of experience as a principal had little, if any, bearing on the principals' perceptions of inclusion.

4. The number of students with disabilities in a school was inconsequential with regard to the principal's perceptions of inclusion.

5. Attendance at professional conferences and inservices contributed to the principals' fund of information regarding inclusion as compared to the undertaking of college coursework.

More recently, Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) conducted a study that measured principals' knowledge and attitudes toward inclusion in the state of Illinois. While the researchers did not find a consensus among the principals regarding their definition of inclusion, the three descriptors that were chosen most often by principals to explain how they defined inclusion were supportive environment (56%), shared responsibility (48%) and cooperative (41%). In addition, the principals believed that their definition of inclusion would most frequently encompass students with a learning disability (97%) and students who were at risk for school failure (83%). At the opposite end of the spectrum, the principals in this study listed trainable mentally handicapped students (36%) and severely or profoundly handicapped students (20%) as those who would least fit their definition of inclusion.
In regard to teacher preparedness for inclusion in their buildings, the data in this study suggested that high school principals tended to be more optimistic than either elementary or junior high school principals. Collaboration, co-teaching and inservice activities were reported by the principals as being educational practices used most often in their inclusion programs, while multicultural education, peer and cross-age tutoring and social skills instruction were utilized least often. In addition, the principals believed that neither their teaching staffs were adequately prepared to implement inclusive strategies nor were their communities ready to put inclusion into practice. Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) concluded that, at least in Illinois, the majority of school principals are not yet comfortable with the inclusive model of instruction.

Since teachers are an integral factor in implementing inclusion programs, the attitudes they have towards this instructional model is of major consequence (ERIC, 1985). In a recent study, deBettencourt (1999) measured the attitudes that middle school general educators had toward the inclusion of students with mild disabilities into general education classrooms. Participants were requested to answer a six-item Likert scale that measured their attitudes toward mainstreaming. Such items as, "I support mainstreaming the disabled" and "I believe that mainstreaming has been successful in terms of improving the social skills and behaviors of the disabled" were included. Results from this study were as follows:

1. Over 60% of those teachers surveyed felt no strong commitment or did not support the concept of including students with disabilities in general education classrooms;
2. A majority of teachers, 54%, believed that mainstreaming benefited students with disabilities and 39% were of the opinion that it even benefited students who were not disabled; and

3. Fifty-six percent of the teachers either did not believe that including students with disabilities was profitable in terms of improving social or academic skills or did not feel strongly about this issue.

Such unsettling results led deBettencourt (1999) to opine that "in a time when over a fifth of general educators' classes consists of students with mild disabilities, one would hope that general educators would be more positive toward students with mild disabilities in their classrooms" (p. 33).

The less than positive attitudes of general education teachers toward inclusion which deBettencourt (1999) reported seem to be echoed in research conducted by Garvar-Pinhas and Schmelkin (1989). They reviewed several studies (Barngrover, 1971; Gickling & Theobald, 1975; Guerin & Szatlocky, 1974) which compared the attitudes of teachers and administrators toward mainstreaming special needs students. They reported that administrators who are further removed from the actual implementation of the mainstreaming program tend to evidence the most positive attitudes toward students with disabilities with regard to their inclusion in general classroom settings. Principals demonstrated the most positive attitudes, followed by teachers in special education classes, while teachers in general education classes tended to have the most negative attitudes.

These same researchers (Garvar-Pinhas & Schmelkin, 1989) conducted their own study on administrators' and teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming which resulted in a
corroboration of the above findings. Namely, general education classroom teachers had
the least positive attitudes toward integrating students with disabilities, followed by special
education teachers. On the other hand, principals demonstrated the most positive attitudes
toward these students with disabilities, reflecting their belief that integrating such students
in general education classes will not have an adverse effect either on themselves or their
nondisabled peers in terms of academic costs.

The studies of Biklen and Winzer (as cited in Antonak & Larivee, 1995) also
revealed that many educators have negative attitudes toward the placement of students
with disabilities in integrated settings. These findings are significant considering that
teachers' attitudes influence both their expectations of their students and how they interact
with them (ERIC, 1985). In turn, these same attitudes and behaviors have an impact on
the self-image and academic performance of students (Alexander & Strain, 1978).

Ferris (1996) measured the attitudes of 286 general education and special
education teachers at the secondary level regarding inclusion practices and strategies. The
researcher's two-fold study first compared the attitudes of general education and special
education teachers toward students with disabilities who were included in regular
education settings and the types of classroom management that occurred in these
environments. The second part of the study involved a comparison of the attitudes of
general education and special education teachers toward the frequency and effectiveness
of some twenty-two strategies often found in inclusive classrooms.

According to Ferris (1996), the general education teachers in the study who had
experience working with students with mild disabilities were willing to welcome such
students into their classrooms but believed they should be treated the same as their non-
disabled peers. Moreover, the general education teachers were uncertain with regard to any benefit accruing from the placement of students with disabilities in general education settings. Special education teachers, on the other hand, were more positively inclined toward integrating students with disabilities into regular classrooms and were in favor of providing accommodations for these students so as to ensure a successful educational experience for them.

Interestingly, the majority of both general education teachers and special education teachers were in agreement on the question of allowing students with severe learning and emotional/behavioral disabilities in general education classrooms. Both groups, 99% of general education teachers and 84% of special education teachers, believed that pupils with severe problems should not be included in general education settings. The amount of time needed to service such students and the negative impact upon the curriculum were cited by the general education teachers as factors underlying their concerns. The possibility of violence and disorder was also a major concern of teachers.

Most general education teachers in the study were uneasy at the prospect of teaching students with disabilities. Those teachers who had had some special education courses in their teacher preparation programs in college were more inclined to teach students with disabilities compared to those teachers who had had no such training. Given the opportunity, the majority of teachers would be in favor of participating in inservices and staff development programs geared for instructing students with disabilities.

The study further revealed that the sharing of a single classroom would be a major problem for some teachers. While special education teachers on the whole felt prepared to work in general education settings, general education teachers, on the other hand, were
significantly less willing to share their classroom and, if required to do so, they would want to be the teacher in charge. On this point Ferris (1996) opined "collaborative teaching can be a minefield of problems unless the concerns of both parties are taken into consideration with careful pre-inclusion planning "(p. 76).

With regard to the use of certain instructional strategies with students with disabilities in inclusive classroom settings, special education teachers were more in favor of their use and effectiveness than were their regular education counterparts. The major concerns of the general education teachers were in the area of grading with some teachers believing that all students should be expected to meet the same standards without accommodations in an inclusive classroom.

In terms of behavioral strategies, general education teachers tended to use them less frequently than special education teachers despite the fact that they found them to be effective. Ferris (1996) concluded that even though teachers are resistant to having students with behavior issues in their classrooms, they do not seem willing to make use of interventions that would probably deal best with such situations.

A comprehensive research synthesis of twenty-eight studies undertaken between 1958 and 1995, that investigated general education teachers' perceptions of including students with disabilities in their classrooms was conducted by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996). Of the 10,560 teachers who participated in these studies, about two-thirds of them supported the concept of inclusion, and a slight majority was willing to include students with disabilities in their own classrooms. In these studies support for inclusion tended to covary directly with the intensity of inclusion and the severity of the students' disabilities. Not surprisingly, teachers were more willing to include students with learning
disabilities as compared to students with more serious behavioral, intellectual or physical
disabilities. In addition, the more training teachers had in working with students with
disabilities, the more positive were their attitudes toward mainstreaming them.

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) further reported that while two-thirds of the
teachers surveyed supported the concept of inclusion, only one-third or less believed that
they had adequate time, skills, training or resources (both material and personal) necessary
for successful inclusion. The researchers concluded that the ultimate success of the
inclusion effort may well depend upon whether or not the persons who are expected to
carry out this initiative, the classroom teachers, receive the supports they believe are
necessary.

Although inclusive education, as we have seen, has been the subject of
controversy between some parents of students with disabilities and educators, the attitudes
of students with disabilities towards integration have been given less consideration
(Vaughn & Klingner, 1998). Yet, it is possible that some students may prefer to receive
their educational program in a setting other than the regular classroom. For this reason,
Vaughn and Klingner conducted an investigation of the findings of eight studies that
examined the perceptions of students with disabilities of their educational programs.

As a result of the over 442 special needs students who were either interviewed or
surveyed, the following findings emerged:

1. Most learning disabled students preferred receiving their special education
   programs in a resource room, rather than in the general education classroom;

2. Some secondary level students tended to feel they could perform
   satisfactorily in inclusive settings;
3. Reasons for students preferring the resource room over the mainstream classroom were one learned more in the resource room, the work was easier, more assistance was available to them in a resource room setting and the resource room provided a quieter atmosphere where they could concentrate better;

4. Making friends was easier to do in the general education classroom than in the resource room;

5. Most students realized that the special education teacher was available in the general education classroom to provide assistance to anyone who needed it not just special needs students; and

6. The majority of the students did not know who decided whether they would be educated in the mainstream or in the resource room.

Based on these findings, Vaughn and Klingner (1998) concluded that while many learning disabled students prefer to receive their instruction outside the general education classroom for at least part of the day, there remain some students who perceive an inclusive setting as the appropriate placement for addressing their academic and social needs. It would appear, therefore, that there is not one educational model that will meet the needs of all students with disabilities and thus the wisdom of having a continuum of placement options available. Surely, when it comes to making decisions about where students with disabilities will be educated, in addition to taking into account the views of parents and educators, the perceptions of those who will be most affected, the students themselves, should also be considered.
CHAPTER III

Methodology

The design of this study was developed to analyze quantitatively the attitudes of public elementary school principals in the state of New Jersey toward inclusive education. The author developed a written survey instrument, "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey" (Appendix A), similar to one conceived by Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998). This census survey questionnaire sought to ascertain the attitudes of elementary school principals toward the education of students with various disabilities in general education classrooms. It also sought to determine the extent to which the principals believed particular strategies to be effective in inclusive settings.

Chapter III will examine the study's research design, the participants, the instrument development, the pilot study results, the data collection and the data analysis employed in this project. The researcher used the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 4th ed., (American Psychological Association, 1994) as a guide for writing the dissertation.

Research Design

The research design used in this study was a mail-out questionnaire, the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey". In the opinion of Bell (1987), questionnaires are an effective method of collecting certain types of information quickly provided the
participants are sufficiently literate and as long as the researcher is sufficiently disciplined to include in the survey instrument only those items that have a direct bearing on the research questions under investigation. Cates (1985) maintained that the primary advantage of using a questionnaire as a survey tool is its ability to offer a reliably consistent presentation of items. An advantage of using a questionnaire through the mail to collect data is that it allows the researcher ready access to people who might be hard to reach in person or by phone. Additionally, a mailed survey permits the participants to take sufficient time to give thoughtful answers to the items under consideration (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996).

Following the advice of Rea and Parker (1997), the researcher produced the survey in a booklet style so as to ensure a professional appearance and to make the instrument more user-friendly for the respondents. The self-administered "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey" consisted of eighteen items arranged in three sections: I. Demographic Information, II. Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education and III. Educational Strategies in Inclusive Classroom Settings. Care was taken to ensure that the survey items were clearly worded in a manner that would be easily understood by the participants. Consideration was also paid to the format or layout of the survey. Items were presented in an uncluttered fashion as another way of encouraging the subjects to respond. In addition, the instrument itself was purposely kept as brief as possible, while still obtaining enough information to satisfactorily answer the research questions. As Fraenkel & Wallen (1996) asserted, a survey instrument that is excessively long discourages the participants from answering and returning it. Estimated time for completion of the survey in this study was eight to ten minutes.
In the first section, Demographic Information, principals responded to one question regarding their number of years experience as an elementary school principal.

The second section, Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education, sought to elicit from the respondents their attitudes toward the practice of inclusive education and toward having students with specific disabilities educated in an integrated setting. In this section the principals were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with several statements regarding inclusive education based on a five-point Likert style continuum of "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". An intermediate category, "undecided" was also an option for respondents. The researcher included this option since it was his belief that if it was not offered and if the respondent was truly undecided, the participant would be tempted to give an inaccurate response or even no response at all. McMillan (1992) noted that there are not always the same number of possible answers on a typical Likert scale, however, there is usually at least 4 options or as many as 11. In an authentic Likert scale, claimed McMillan, the statement under consideration includes a positive or negative direction and the respondent expresses agreement or disagreement with the statement. Anderson (1990) reported that Likert scales are an excellent means of procuring opinions and attitudes and a five-point model is very practical for most purposes in so far as it is easy to respond to and straightforward to analyze.

According to McMillan (1992), a frequently used method for ascertaining persons' attitudes is through the use of scaled items. McMillan defines a scale as "a series of gradations that describes something" (p. 123). As in the present study, scales are often used to describe attitudes as ranging from very negative to very positive. A typical model for a scaled item is following a question or statement with a scale of potential responses.
Respondents are requested to indicate their attitudes by checking the place on the scale that is most reflective of their beliefs about the statement.

The effectiveness of three educational strategies often found in integrated classroom settings was the focus of the survey's third section, Educational Strategies in Inclusive Classroom Settings. The principals were first asked if a particular strategy was used in their school. If the strategy was used in their school, the principals were then requested to rank the strategy on a five-point continuum from "not effective" to "extremely effective". Again, the intermediate category of "undecided" was offered as a possible response.

Participants

The participants in this study were 300 public elementary school principals in the state of New Jersey. The 300 principals were divided by community type into three categories: (a) 100 principals employed in urban school districts, (b) 100 principals employed in suburban school districts and (c) 100 principals employed in rural school districts. Community type designations were obtained from a New Jersey Department of Education statistical report (New Jersey Department of Education, 1998). A directory of all principals in the state was obtained from the website of the New Jersey Department of Education in January, 1999 to assist in the selection process of participants for the study. According to this directory, there were at the time 1,459 public elementary schools throughout the state to which a principal had been assigned. The sample size of 300 was based on Gay's (1996) suggestion that if the population size is about 1,500, 20% should be sampled. Bell (1987) contended that it is often a concern of researchers to decide upon
how many questionnaires should be distributed or interviews conducted. In her opinion, there are no set rules in this regard. Rather, it is more important for the researcher to obtain as representative a range of responses as possible, thus enabling the investigator to fulfill the objectives of the study and to provide answers to primary research questions. The size of the sample, according to Bartz (1976), is in itself, not a matter of major concern, while Best and Kahn (1993, as cited in Charles, 1995) opined that careful selection of the sample is more important than increasing the sample's size.

Conducting research through the use of surveying a sample of the population has major advantages. Besides being more cost effective than would be a study of the whole population, surveys are more practical since it would take too long and would be a daunting task to attempt to study an entire population. As Anderson (1990) asserted, it is more important to do a thorough job with a representation of the group than to do a poor job with the entire group.

Charles (1995) believed that obtaining information from a sample of the population can indeed result in accurate research data from which findings can be generalized by the researcher provided that the sample is a proper reflection of the population at large. To help ensure that the sample does represent the population in general, it is incumbent that the researcher select it in a random fashion. The actual selection of the participants for the present study was carried out by using a table of random numbers method that, according to Anderson (1990), is perhaps the most frequently used process for obtaining a sample through random selection. This process enabled every elementary school principal from the target population to have an equal chance of being selected for participation in the study.
Instrument Development

The Institutional Review Board approved this research project on February 10, 1999 (See Appendix B). Following the researcher's receipt of the Board's approval, a jury of experts in February, 1999 examined the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey". The purpose of this activity was to test the face validity of the instrument and to uncover any possible weaknesses in it, so that the intended respondents in the main study would experience no difficulties in completing the survey. Since it is always difficult to criticize one's own work when it comes to developing questionnaires, research experts are inclined suggest a pilot study of the would-be instrument (Anderson, 1990). In discussing the piloting of questionnaires for research purposes, Bell (1987) maintained that ideally the survey instrument should be tested on a group similar to the one that will form the population of one's study. With that rule of thumb in mind, the researcher selected six principals, each of whom had experience with inclusive education programs in their schools. They were comparable, therefore, to the participants in the proposed sample with regard to their familiarity and experience with the research under consideration. The jury of experts was requested to offer their comments on such factors as the relevance and precision of expression of the survey items, organization of the survey and the time required to complete the survey. A cover letter (See Appendix C) which explained the purpose of the pilot study accompanied the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey" that was sent to the jury participants. The principals' comments and suggestions regarding the survey were obtained through use of a second and much shorter instrument, the "Jury of Experts Survey" (See Appendix D). None of the principals who comprised the jury of experts were included in the sample for the study.
The jury of experts were asked the following questions in regard to the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey":

1. How long did it take you to complete the survey?
2. Were the instructions clear?
3. Were any survey items unclear or ambiguous? If yes, which items and why?
4. Did you object to answering any items? If yes, which items and why?
5. Has any major topic been omitted from the survey? If yes, which topic(s)?
6. Was the layout of the survey clear/attractive?
7. Any additional comments or suggestions?

Pilot Study Results

Of the six elementary school principals who made up the jury of experts and who were sent both the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey" and the "Jury of Experts Survey", responses were obtained from each of them. The respondents reported that it took five to ten minutes for them to complete the survey instrument. All six principals found the instructions clear. In general, they did not find the survey items ambiguous nor did they object to answering any of the items. However, one respondent commented that he "would have liked to elaborate on several items."

As a result of the information received from the piloting of the survey instrument, the following revision was made to the initial questionnaire. The researcher deleted one question pertaining to the social development of students with disabilities since, as one
jury participant pointed out, it was very similar to another question on the survey and was thus regarded as redundant.

In addition, one of the principals in the pilot study suggested that the researcher might include on the survey, questions regarding the reactions of parents of regular education students towards inclusive education, as well as the reactions of regular education teachers toward inclusive education. While such inquiries might prove interesting, they did not align themselves with the research questions and were thought by the researcher to be beyond the purview of this study. Thus, they were not included in the revised survey. Such areas of interest may well serve as the foci of future research studies. Rea and Parker (1997) urged researchers to be as concise as possible when developing questionnaires and to avoid including in them any questions that, although intriguing, are extraneous to the research being conducted.

Lastly, the six elementary school principals who made up the jury of experts were asked whether they would like to receive a report of the findings of the present study. Of the six principals, four of them indicated a desire to receive such a report.

Data Collection

A cover letter (Appendix E), the survey instrument, and a self-addressed stamped envelope were sent to all 300 participants on March 10, 1999. The cover letter explained the purpose and expected benefits of the study and requested a survey return date of March 22, 1999. In the interest of confidentiality, respondents' names were not requested on the survey, however, a code number was placed in the upper right hand corner of each instrument, should a follow-up letter be needed after the first mailing. The code number
was also necessary in the event that the respondent requested a report of the findings of
the study which they had an option of doing. Upon the recommendation of Rea and
Parker (1997), the code number system was explained to the participants in the cover
letter that accompanied the survey instrument along with assurances of confidentiality and
privacy.

By March 22, 1999, the survey return date, a total of 113 surveys had been
returned. In an effort to increase this response rate, a reminder letter (See Appendix F)
and another copy of the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey" were sent on
March 24, 1999 to those principals who had not returned the initial survey. The reminder
letter was friendly in tone and again expressed the researcher's appreciation for the
respondent's cooperation. On April 16, 1999, some three weeks after sending the
reminder letter, the researcher closed the mailing process.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this section is to present a narrative description of the methods that
were used to analyze the data collected in this study.

As survey instruments were returned after being completed by the elementary
school principals, they were sorted according to the school's geographical location (i.e.,
urban, suburban or rural). Next, the researcher manually transcribed survey responses
onto tally sheets for purpose of analyses. The data collected from the returned surveys
were scored and kept secure by the researcher. All protocols were reviewed by the
researcher to ensure proper controls for anonymity of responses and security of the
instrument, as described in the research proposal approved by the Institutional Review Board of Seton Hall University.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized to examine whether years of experience (Research Question Number 1) had a significant effect upon a principal's attitude toward inclusive education. Comparisons between age groups were presented to identify any differences.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also used to determine whether the geographical location of the school (Research Question Number 2) had any bearing upon a principal's attitude toward inclusive schooling. Comparisons between school settings were presented to identify any differences.

For each of the following disabilities: (a) hearing impairments, (b) visual impairments, (c) orthopedic impairments, (d) learning disabled more than one year below a student's peers who are not disabled, (e) learning disabled more than two years below a student's peers who are not disabled, (f) mild behavior problems and (g) moderate to severe behavior problems, the percentage of principals who agreed that students who present with the particular disability should be educated in general education classrooms (Research Question Number 3) was represented using descriptive statistics. In addition to this best estimate, a 95% confidence interval was utilized and depicted in a table.

The following educational strategies often found in inclusive education classrooms, in class support instruction, use of instructional aides and curricular adaptations were analyzed through descriptive statistics. If any of the strategies were used in a principal's school, the percentage of principals who agreed to their effectiveness (Research Question
Number 4) was presented. In addition to this best estimate, a corresponding 95% confidence interval was utilized and illustrated in a table.

Summary

The research design of this study, the participants, the instrument development, the results of the pilot study, the methods of data collection and the methods of data analysis were discussed in this chapter. After the researcher received permission from the Institutional Review Board of Seton Hall University on February 10, 1999 to proceed with the dissertation study, the data collection instrument, the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey", was mailed to and reviewed by a jury of experts in February, 1999. The revised instrument was mailed to and completed by the study's participants in March and April, 1999. The research findings in Chapter Four will speak to the attitudes of public elementary school principals in New Jersey towards inclusion and educational strategies related to its practice.
CHAPTER IV

Research Findings

The purpose of the current study was to examine the attitudes that public elementary school principals in New Jersey have towards inclusive education and educational strategies related to its practice. This primary research focus was investigated quantitatively by collecting data concerning the following four specific research questions:

1. Do the attitudes of New Jersey elementary school principals toward inclusive education differ with regard to years of experience as a principal?

2. Do the attitudes of New Jersey elementary school principals toward inclusive education differ with regard to the geographical location (i.e., urban, suburban or rural) of the school?

3. What percent of New Jersey elementary school principals agree that students with specific disabilities should be educated in general education classroom settings?

4. What percent of New Jersey elementary school principals believe certain educational strategies, if used in their schools, to be effective in inclusive classroom settings?

The findings in this study are organized in this chapter by first describing the score ranges of the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey", the instrument used to conduct the research. This is followed with an overview of the sent and return rates of the
"Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey". Statistical data and the results of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the first two research questions (Hypotheses 1 and 2) are presented. Percentage comparisons and confidence intervals with regard to research questions three and four round out the chapter. The data presented in this chapter are representative of New Jersey public elementary school principals, given the usable survey response rate of 56% in this study.

As previously stated, the instrument used in this study was the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey". It had a possible score range of a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 70 for the survey's section, "Attitudes toward Inclusive Education", (items 2 through 6d), and a possible score range of a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 15 for the survey's section, "Educational Strategies in Inclusive Educational Settings", (items 7 through 9).

Three hundred public elementary school principals throughout New Jersey were contacted through the mail and requested to complete the research instrument, the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey". Of that number, a total of 186 surveys were returned yielding a response rate of 62 percent (see Table 1). However, of these 186 surveys, 19 were not used in the study either because they were incomplete or because the identified principal chose not to participate. As a result, the actual usable response rate was 167 surveys or 56%. Return rates by geographical location of the school were urban, 48%; suburban, 59%; and rural, 60%. Two additional surveys were received after data analysis was completed.
Table 1

Description of Surveys Sent and Return Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principals surveyed by geographical location of school</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total principals surveyed</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surveys returned by geographical location of school</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total surveys returned</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surveys returned by geographical location of school and used for data analysis</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total surveys returned and used for data analysis</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of all surveys returned                                           62.0%

Percentage of surveys returned and used for data analysis                     55.6%
Results of Hypotheses Testing

In this section, the analysis of the data collected in regard to research questions 1 and 2 is presented. Hypotheses 1 and 2 will examine research questions 1 and 2. The hypotheses related to these questions are restated in the null form. Appropriate tests are provided to determine whether the hypotheses are either rejected or not rejected. In both test applications, the 0.05 alpha level was used for determining acceptance.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 sought to determine if the attitudes of New Jersey elementary school principals toward inclusive education differ with regard to years of experience.

Hypothesis 1.

H₀: \[ \mu_{1,5} = \mu_{6,10} = \mu_{11,15} = \mu_{16+} \]

H₁: Years of experience as a principal have no effect on a principal's attitudes toward inclusive education.

To investigate the outcome of Hypothesis 1, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on the collected data and an \( F \) value of .88 was obtained using the following formula:

\[
Hypothesis 1 \quad F = \frac{MS_a}{MS_w}
\]

The researcher should reject null hypothesis 1 if \( F > F_{5, 103, .05} = 2.66 \).

Since \( F = .88 \), was determined to be less than 2.66, the researcher failed to reject null hypothesis 1. In other words, the researcher accepted that years of experience have
no effect on a principal's attitudes toward inclusive education. The best estimate of these
attitudes as measured by the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey" is $M = 51.5$.

Table 2 presents the score totals for items 2 through 6d of the "Attitudes Toward
Inclusive Education Survey" for New Jersey public elementary school principals with
regard to years of experience.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Score Totals of Principals by Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of Experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 56 51 51 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 44 52 58 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 64 53 55 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 63 40 68 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 67 55 52 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 50 41 43 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67 40 55 66 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 53 19 61 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 62 50 45 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52 53 52 69 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 49 50 58 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 59 53 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 38 52 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 57 65 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 63 67 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 46 30 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 62 47 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 45 62 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 57 49 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53 41 53 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 58 50 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54 44 55 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 57 62 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 57 61 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 presents the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) developed in relation to Hypothesis 1, years of experience as a principal have no effect on a principal's attitudes toward inclusive education.

Table 3

ANOVA Computations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Years of Experience</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>271.97</td>
<td>90.66</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Years of Experience</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>16761.6</td>
<td>102.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>17033.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 sought to determine if the attitudes of New Jersey elementary school principals toward inclusive education differ with regard to geographical location (i.e., urban, suburban or rural) of the school.
Hypothesis 2.

H₀: \( \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_k \)

Hₐ: Geographical location has no effect on a principal's attitudes towards inclusive education.

To investigate the outcome of Hypothesis 2, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on the collected data and an \( F \) value of .56 was obtained using the following formula:

\[
F = \frac{MS_b}{MS_w}
\]

The researcher should reject null hypothesis 2 if \( F > F_{0.05, 3, 56} = 3.05 \).

Since \( F \), .56, is less than 3.05, the researcher failed to reject null hypothesis 2. In other words, the researcher accepted that geographical location has no effect on a principal's attitudes toward inclusive education. The best estimate of these attitudes as measured by the Attitudes "Toward Inclusive Education Survey" is \( M = 51.5 \).

Table 4 presents the score totals for items 2-6d of the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey" for New Jersey elementary school principals with regard to geographical location.
Table 4

Survey Score Totals of Principals by Geographical Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Location</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51 64 54 48</td>
<td>52 64 68 47 53</td>
<td>51 54 58 53 46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58 47 60 45</td>
<td>38 49 67 50 35</td>
<td>69 40 55 57 54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57 67 44 52</td>
<td>58 57 57 38 55</td>
<td>59 44 65 64 50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 27 55 54</td>
<td>50 57 58 57 60</td>
<td>50 63 48 57 51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53 33 44 41</td>
<td>59 62 50 61 26</td>
<td>32 60 38 37 51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 49 51 62</td>
<td>45 53 55 47 56</td>
<td>36 30 49 39 42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 40 52 61</td>
<td>67 54 56 52 58</td>
<td>43 62 67 62 61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 66 53 58</td>
<td>44 50 26 52 47</td>
<td>46 51 55 58 57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57 41 56 54</td>
<td>55 52 21 52 55</td>
<td>60 50 14 66 53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57 61 43 48</td>
<td>51 64 55 47 59</td>
<td>53 59 47 56 53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67 29 59 46</td>
<td>53 51 63 45 63</td>
<td>61 30 45 51 45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 52 40 55</td>
<td>65 50 49 42</td>
<td>63 55 67 62 53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 presents the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) developed in relation to the hypothesis, geographical location has no effect on a principal's attitudes toward inclusive education.
Table 5

ANOVA Computations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Geographic Locations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>114.41</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Geographic Locations</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>168899.3</td>
<td>102.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>17003.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage Comparisons

In this section the analysis of the data collected in regard to research questions 3 and 4 is presented in the form of percentage comparisons.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 sought to determine what percent of New Jersey elementary school principals agree that students with specific disabilities should be educated in general education classroom settings.

Table 6 presents a percentage comparison of principals by geographical location who agree that students with specific disabilities should be included in general education classroom settings.
Table 6

Comparison of Principals by Geographical Location Who Agree to Include Students with Specific Disabilities in General Education Classroom Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Category</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Impairments</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Impairments</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic Impairments</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabled (1 yr. +)</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabled (2 yrs. +)</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild Behavior Problems</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate to Severe Behavior Problems</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above data it can be concluded that, save for students who are learning disabled more than two years below their peers, as well as those who present with moderate to severe behavior problems, principals in all three geographical locations were overwhelmingly in favor of including students with disabilities in general education classrooms. However, New Jersey public elementary school principals in suburban settings in comparison to elementary school principals in urban or rural settings appear to be more favorably inclined toward including students with specific disabilities in regular education classrooms in their schools. Suburban principals had the highest percentage ratings in three of the seven categories surveyed: visual impairments, learning disabled more than two years below peers and moderate to severe behavior problems. They tied
with rural principals in the category of hearing impairments. In addition, suburban principals had the second highest percentage in three other categories in this study: orthopedic impairments, learning disabled more than one year below peers and mild behavior problems.

Rural principals, on the other hand, ranked highest in terms of including students with specific disabilities in regular classrooms in two categories: orthopedic impairments and mild behavior problems. They tied with suburban principals in the category of hearing impairments. At the same time, however, they ranked lowest in three other disability categories: moderate to severe behavior problems, learning disabled more than two years below peers and learning disabled more that one year below peers.

Lastly, urban principals ranked first in only one category of disability, learning disabled more than one year below peers. This same group of school administrators evidenced the lowest percent in four other disability categories: hearing impairments, visual impairments, orthopedic impairments and mild behavior problems.

Confidence intervals were determined for urban, suburban and rural principals who agreed that students with specific disabilities should be educated in regular education classrooms. These data are presented in Tables 7, 8 and 9.
Table 7

Confidence Intervals for Urban Principals Who Believe That Students With Specific Disabilities Should Be Included in Regular Education Classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Category</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Impairments</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>67% &lt; p &lt; 91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Impairments</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>56% &lt; p &lt; 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic Impairments</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>65% &lt; p &lt; 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabled (1 yr. +)</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>79% &lt; p &lt; 97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabled (2 yrs. +)</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>42% &lt; p &lt; 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild Behavior Problems</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>56% &lt; p &lt; 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate to Severe Behavior Problems</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6% &lt; p &lt; 28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From a review of the data presented in Table 7 it can be seen that with regard to urban elementary school principals, the researcher is 95% confident that:

1. between 67% and 91% of these administrators believe that students with hearing impairments should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 79%;

2. between 56% and 82% of these administrators believe that students with visual impairments should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 69%;
3. Between 65% and 89% of these administrators believe that students with orthopedic impairments should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 77%.

4. Between 79% and 97% of these administrators believe that students who are learning disabled more than one year below their peers should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 88%.

5. Between 42% and 70% of these administrators believe that students who are learning disabled more than two years below their peers should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 56%.

6. Between 56% and 82% of these administrators believe that students with mild behavior problems should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 69%; and finally,

7. Between 6% and 28% of these administrators believe that students with moderate to severe behavior problems should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 17%.
TABLE 8

Confidence Intervals for Suburban Principals Who Believe That Students with Specific Disabilities Should Be Included in Regular Education Classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Category</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Impairments</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>73% &lt; p &lt; 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Impairments</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>76% &lt; p &lt; 94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic Impairments</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>80% &lt; p &lt; 96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabled (1 yr. +)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>71% &lt; p &lt; 91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabled (2 yrs. +)</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>45% &lt; p &lt; 71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild Behavior Problems</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>63% &lt; p &lt; 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate to Severe Behavior Problems</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10% &lt; p &lt; 30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From a review of the data presented in Table 8 with regard to suburban elementary school principals, the researcher is 95% confident that:

1. between 73% and 93% of these administrators believe that students with hearing impairments should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 83%;

2. between 76% and 94% of these administrators believe that students with visual impairments should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 85%;
3. between 80% and 96% of these administrators believe that students with orthopedic impairments should be educated in regular classrooms with the best estimate being 88%;

4. between 71% and 91% of these administrators believe that students who are learning disabled more than one year below their peers should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 81%;

5. between 45% and 71% of these administrators believe that students who are learning disabled more than two years below their peers should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 58%;

6. between 63% and 85% of these administrators believe that students with mild behavior problems should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 74%; and lastly,

7. between 10% and 30% of these administrators believe that students with moderate to severe behavior problems should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 20%. 
Table 9

Confidence Intervals for Rural Principals Who Believe That Students with Specific Disabilities Should Be Included in Regular Education Classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Category</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Impairments</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>73% &lt; p &lt; 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Impairments</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70% &lt; p &lt; 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic Impairments</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>85% &lt; p &lt; 99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabled (1 yr. +)</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>64% &lt; p &lt; 86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabled (2 yrs. +)</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>35% &lt; p &lt; 61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild Behavior Problems</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70% &lt; p &lt; 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate to Severe Behavior Problems</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6% &lt; p &lt; 24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From a review of the data presented in Table 9 it can be seen that with regard to rural elementary school principals, the researcher is 95% confident that:

1. between 73% and 93% of these administrators believe that students with hearing impairments should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 83%;

2. between 70% and 90% of these administrators believe that students with visual impairments should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 80%;
3. between 85% and 99% of these administrators believe that students with orthopedic impairments should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 92%;

4. between 64% and 86% of these administrators believe that students who are learning disabled more than one year below their peers should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 75%;

5. between 35% and 61% of these administrators believe that students who are learning disabled more than two years below their peers should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 48%;

6. between 70% and 90% of these administrators believe that students with mild behavior problems should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 80%; and lastly,

7. between 6% and 24% of these administrators believe that students with moderate to severe behavior problems should be educated in regular education classrooms with the best estimate being 15%.

Research Question 4

Research Question Number 4 sought to determine what percent of New Jersey elementary school principals believe certain educational strategies, if used in their schools, to be effective in inclusive classroom settings.

Table 10 presents a percentage comparison of principals by geographical location who believe certain educational strategies to be effective in inclusive classroom settings.
Table 10

Comparison of Principals by Geographical Location Who Believe Certain Educational Strategies to Be Effective in Inclusive Classroom Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Strategy</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Class Support Instruction</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Paraprofessionals</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular Adaptations</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above data it can be concluded that, of the three educational strategies studied, the use of paraprofessionals appears to receive the highest acceptance from school principals in general. Suburban elementary school principals (91%) are more likely to favor the use of paraprofessionals as an effective educational strategy in inclusive classroom settings as compared to their urban (84%) or rural (80%) counterparts. Suburban principals (80%) also seem more inclined to endorse curricular adaptations as an effective educational strategy in comparison to either urban (71%) or rural (70%) principals. The use of in class support instruction, on the other hand, appears to be more widely accepted by rural principals (87%) than by urban (82%) or suburban (80%) school administrators.

Confidence intervals were determined for urban, suburban and rural principals whose schools use these educational strategies in inclusive classroom settings and who believe them to be effective. These data are presented in Tables 11, 12 and 13.
Table 11

Confidence Intervals for Urban Elementary School Principals Who Believe Certain Educational Strategies to Be Effective in Inclusive Classroom Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Strategy</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Class Support Instruction</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>70% &lt; p &lt; 94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Paraprofessionals</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>72% &lt; p &lt; 96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular Adaptations</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>57% &lt; p &lt; 85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From a review of the data presented in Table 11 with regard to urban elementary school principals, the researcher is 95% confident that:

1. between 70% and 94% of these school administrators believe that in class support instruction is an effective educational strategy in inclusive classroom settings with the best estimate being 82%;

2. between 72% and 96% of these school administrators believe that the use of paraprofessionals is an effective educational strategy in inclusive classrooms settings with the best estimate being 84%; and lastly,

3. between 57% and 85% of these school administrators believe that using curricular adaptations is an effective educational strategy in inclusive classroom settings with the best estimate being 71%. 
Table 12

Confidence Intervals for Suburban Elementary School Principals Who Believe That
Certain Educational Strategies to Be Effective in Inclusive Classroom Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Strategy</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Class Support Instruction</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>69% &lt; p &lt; 91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Paraprofessionals</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>83% &lt; p &lt; 99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular Adaptations</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>69% &lt; p &lt; 91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From a review of the data presented in Table 12 it can be seen that with regard to suburban elementary school principals, the researcher is 95% confident that:

1. between 69% and 91% of these school administrators believe that in class support instruction is an effective educational strategy in inclusive classroom settings with the best estimate being 80%;

2. between 83% and 99% of these school administrators believe that the use of paraprofessionals is an effective educational strategy in inclusive classroom settings with the best estimate being 91%; and lastly,

3. between 69% and 91% of these school administrators believe that using curricular adaptations is an effective educational strategy in inclusive classroom settings with the best estimate being 80%.
Table 13  

Confidence Intervals for Rural Elementary School Principals Who Believe Certain Educational Strategies to be Effective in Inclusive Classroom Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Strategy</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Class Support Instruction</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>77% &lt; p &lt; 97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Paraprofessionals</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>69% &lt; p &lt; 91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular Adaptations</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>63% &lt; p &lt; 77 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From a review of the data presented in Table 13 it can be seen that with regard to rural elementary school principals, the researcher is 95% confident that:

1. between 77% and 97% of these school administrators believe that in class support is an effective educational strategy in inclusive classroom settings with the best estimate being 87%;

2. between 69% and 91% of these school administrators believe that the use of paraprofessionals is an effective educational strategy in inclusive classroom settings with the best estimate being 80%; and lastly,

3. between 68% and 82% of these school administrators believe that using curricular adaptations is an effective educational strategy in inclusive classroom settings with the best estimate being 70%.
Summary

The data presented in this chapter are representative of New Jersey public elementary school principals, given the usable survey response rate of 56% in this study. The primary question of what are the attitudes of New Jersey elementary school principals toward inclusive education was examined through four secondary questions.

The results of testing the first two hypotheses, and thereby addressing research questions one and two, provide evidence that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of New Jersey public elementary school principals toward inclusive education either in terms of years of experience as a principal or geographical location of their schools. Thus, principals’ attitudes toward inclusive education were not effected by either of these variables. With regard to research question number three, an analysis of the data suggests that, generally speaking, New Jersey public elementary school principals in suburban settings, in comparison to elementary school principals in urban or rural settings, appear to be more favorably inclined toward including students with specific disabilities in regular education classrooms in their schools. Lastly, with respect to research question number four, it can be concluded that of the three educational strategies studied, the use of paraprofessionals on average appears to be the strategy most favored by all categories of principals, with suburban principals endorsing its use the most.
CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The present study was conducted to investigate the attitudes of public elementary school principals in New Jersey toward inclusive education and toward certain educational strategies related to its practice. More specifically, the purpose of the research was to determine whether administrators' attitudes varied significantly with regard to such variables as years of experience as a principal, as well as geographical location of their schools. Additionally, this study sought to determine the extent to which principals believed that students with specific disabilities should be included in regular classroom settings and that certain educational strategies, frequently utilized in inclusive classrooms, are effective.

In Chapter One the researcher presented background information, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions to be answered in this investigation, limitations related to the study, definitions of terms and significance of this study with respect to educational practice. Chapter Two provided a review of the related literature which included an investigation of the IDEA, a survey of court decisions regarding inclusive education cases, an overview of the REL, a description of the parallel systems of regular and special education, an examination of barriers to change in school settings, an assessment of how school restructuring has impacted inclusive education and,
finally, an analysis of attitudes of school personnel and others toward inclusive education. The methodology for collecting the data for this research, which included a description of the instrument used in this study, the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey", was the focus of Chapter Three. The findings of this study in terms of the attitudes that elementary public school principals demonstrated toward inclusive education and educational strategies were documented in Chapter Four. This section, Chapter Five, will present a summary, conclusions, implications of the study, as well as recommendations for further research.

Summary of Study

In order for students with disabilities to be successful in regular education classroom settings, a logical assumption would be that the building principal must have a positive attitude towards the concept of inclusive education. As a result of special education legislation over the last three decades, together with more recent demands for school restructuring, principals today are being asked to assert bold leadership in order to establish inclusive schools and classrooms in which diversity is viewed as a strength (Videlock et al., 1996). Since the principal is recognized as the key player in instituting change in the school, as noted by Payne and Murray (1974), the principal is in a unique position to ensure the success of an inclusive program provided it has his or her backing. This philosophy is in line with Wilczenski (1993) who concluded that in order for students with disabilities to be successfully included in our nation's schools, school personnel must be receptive to new and creative special education initiatives that foster integrated regular education classroom settings. It is, therefore, important that we analyze the attitudes
which principals have toward inclusive education particularly in an age when public schools are attempting more and more to infuse democratic ideals into their educational programs and to celebrate the diversity of all students.

The IDEA is a federal statute, signed into law by Congress in 1975, that guarantees a student with disabilities the right to a free and appropriate, public education. The law contains language that identifies a state's responsibility for placing a student with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. For the student with disabilities, the least restrictive environment is often the regular education classroom in that student's neighborhood school (Chalmers & Faliede, 1996). Although the term inclusion is nowhere to be found in the federal statute, the concept of inclusion, according to Yell (1998), is equivalent to that of the least restrictive environment component of the law.

While the federal mandate of least restrictive environment has been in effect since 1975, its implementation by public school administrators has been anything but consistent (Lipton, 1997). Since the late 1980s, a series of famous court decisions involving the least restrictive environment issue within inclusive education is compelling evidence of the strong desire of some parents of students with disabilities to have their children educated in integrated classrooms. Included among these cases are Roncker v. Walker (1983), Daniel R.R. v. State Board of Education (1989), Greer v. Rome City School District (1991) and Oberti v. Board of Education of the Borough of Clementon School District (1993).

In light of these recent court decisions, Conrad and Whitaker (1997) offered four considerations for school districts in determining the most appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities. First, the district should
ascertain whether the student in question can be educated in a regular education classroom which may require the use of supplementary aids and services. Second, if the district is considering a more restrictive setting, it must be prepared to prove that the expected benefits in this setting outnumber the benefits in a more integrated setting. Third, the district must consider the possible disruptive effects, including behavior problems and an inordinate amount of the teacher's attention devoted to the student with disabilities that would ensue as a result of having the student in the integrated setting. Lastly, although a district cannot rely solely on the cost factor in denying an inclusive setting to a student, the courts have stated that cost can be a possible consideration in deciding upon placement, and thus districts should give thought to this component as well.

As we have seen, over the years federal legislation and the courts' interpretation of the law have assisted advocates in placing students with disabilities in regular education classrooms whenever appropriate. Mainstreaming, a movement whose purpose was to foster the part-time integration of students with mild disabilities into regular education settings, was prevalent in American schools in the 1970s and 1980s (Power de-Fur & Orelove, 1996). In the 1980s, this idea of mainstreaming gave way to a new special education concept, the REI, whose leading proponent was Madeline Will (1986), the U.S. Department of Education's Assistant Secretary of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. Advocates of the REI sought to have students with mild and moderate disabilities educated in regular education settings by encouraging a partnership between regular and special education (Stainback & Stainback, 1995).

As special education has grown rapidly over the last several years in this country, it has evolved apart from general education into a second system, complete with its own
teachers, administrators, programs and budgets (Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1988). The debate over the effectiveness of a separate educational system has continued into the 1990s, as researchers held that in comparison to their nondisabled peers, students with disabilities were leaving schools with inadequate skills thus making it difficult for them to take their places in the community as adults (National Council on Disability, 1994). Today as general and special education move away from a parallel system model and merge into a more unified model, teachers from both arenas are discovering that, collectively, they possess a broad base of knowledge and skills that can serve the needs of all learners (York, Doyle, & Kronberg, 1992). However, in order to have a successful blending of the parallel systems of regular and special education, educators need to examine several barriers to mainstreaming including inadequate teacher preparation, outmoded organizational structures, resistance to school structures and marginal leaders.

For the last several decades there has been a small but growing body of research regarding the attitudes of school personnel toward the integration of students with disabilities into regular education settings. Past research studies have uncovered considerable data regarding teachers' perspectives toward inclusion, however, there is less research on the perspectives of building principals toward integration (Downing, Eichinger, & Williams, 1997). Thus, the design of this study was developed to analyze quantitatively the attitudes of public elementary school principals in the state of New Jersey toward inclusive education. To accomplish this task, the researcher developed a written survey instrument, the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey". This questionnaire sought to ascertain the attitudes of these principals toward inclusion with regard to years of experience as a principal and geographical location of their schools. It
also sought to determine the extent to which principals believed that students with various disabilities should be included in general education classrooms, as well as the extent to which they believed that certain educational strategies were effective in inclusive classroom settings.

The self-administered instrument, the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey", consisted of eighteen items arranged in three sections: I. Demographic Information, II. Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education and III. Educational Strategies in Inclusive Classroom Settings. In the first section, principals were requested to indicate their years of experience as a principal. In the second section, the respondents were surveyed regarding their attitudes toward the practice of inclusion and toward having students with specific disabilities in an integrated setting. Principals were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with several statements regarding inclusive education using a five-point Likert style scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The effectiveness of three educational strategies, often utilized in inclusion classrooms, served as the focus of the survey's last section.

At the time this study was conducted there were, according to the New Jersey Department of Education, 1459 public elementary schools throughout the state to which a principal had been assigned. The 300 elementary school principals who were the participants in this study were selected by using a table of random numbers method. The principals were divided into three categories by geographical location of their schools (i.e., urban, suburban and rural).

Prior to mailing the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey" to the 300 principals, a pilot study of the survey instrument was conducted with six elementary
school principals, each of whom had experience with inclusive education programs in their schools. This jury of experts analyzed the research instrument with regard to such factors as the relevance and precision of expression of the survey items, as well as the time required to complete the questionnaire. As a result of the information received from the pilot study, a revised "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey" was developed and mailed to the 300 participants on March 10, 1999. Of that number, the actual usable response rate on which the findings of this study were based was 167 surveys or 56 percent.

The data collected and analyzed in this study resulted in the following findings:

Research Question Number 1

1. Do the attitudes of New Jersey public elementary school principals toward inclusive education differ with regard to years of experience as a principal?

The hypothesis related to research question number 1 was tested by using an analysis of variance (ANOVA). When investigating the public school elementary principals' attitudes toward inclusive education with respect to years of experience as a principal, there was no significance found. Therefore, the researcher accepted that years of experience have no significant effect on a principal's attitudes toward inclusion.

This finding concurs with a study on principals' attitudes toward inclusion conducted by Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) in the state of Illinois, as well as with a related study carried out by Conroy-Hof (1994) who researched perceptions of principals in four western states toward inclusive practices. In both of these studies experience as a principal had little or no influence on the principal's attitudes toward inclusion. At the same time, this finding disagrees with a similar study conducted by Center, Ward,
Parmenter, & Nash (1985) who reported that principals with fewer years of experience appear to exhibit significantly more positive attitudes toward including students with disabilities than those principals with lesser years of service.

Research Question Number 2

2. Do the attitudes of New Jersey public elementary school principals toward inclusive education differ with regard to geographical location (i.e., urban, suburban or rural) of the school?

The hypothesis related to research question number 2 was tested by using an analysis of variance (ANOVA). When investigating public school elementary principals' attitudes toward inclusive education with respect to geographical location of their schools, there was no significance found. Therefore, the researcher accepted that the geographical location of a principal's school has no significant effect on a principal's attitudes toward inclusion.

This finding differs with previous research conducted by Payne and Murray (1974) who reported that there were significant differences between suburban and urban principals in their attitudes toward the placement of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

Research Question Number 3

3. What percent of New Jersey elementary school principals agree that students with specific disabilities should be educated in general education classroom settings?

An analysis of the data revealed that suburban principals had the highest percentage ratings in three of the seven categories of students with disabilities which they
believed should be included in regular education classrooms as assessed on the "Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey": visual impairments, learning disabled more that two years below peers and moderate to severe behavior problems. Rural principals, on the other hand, obtained the highest percentage scores in two categories of disability: orthopedic impairments and mild behavior problems. The only disability category in which urban principals ranked the highest was that of learning disabled more than one year below peers. Not surprisingly, the category that received the least acceptance among principals in all three geographical locations was that of students who present with moderate to severe behavior problems.

This last finding is in keeping with Ferris' (1996) study that measured the attitudes of general and special educators toward inclusive practices. This researcher reported that 99% of the 238 general education teachers in the investigation felt that students with severe emotional/behavioral problems did not belong in their classes. Similarly, Rankin's (1995) research on the attitudes of principals in Pennsylvania toward inclusive education revealed that principals perceive that the categories of students with disabilities that are most easily included in regular education settings are those students with physical disabilities and specific learning disabilities. On the other hand, students with serious emotional disturbances are the least easily included. This finding corroborates the present study. In addition, Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996), after conducting a research synthesis of twenty-eight investigations on teacher perceptions of inclusion, noted that general education classroom teachers are more inclined to accept students with learning disabilities as compared to those with serious behavioral disorders. This finding also corresponds
to the attitudes of the elementary school principals in the present research.

**Research Question Number 4**

4. What percent of New Jersey elementary school principals believe that certain educational strategies, if used in their schools, to be effective in inclusive classroom settings?

An analysis of the data revealed that of the three different educational strategies often found in inclusive classroom settings that were studied: in class support instruction, curricular adaptations and use of paraprofessionals, it was the latter strategy that appeared to receive the highest acceptance in terms of effectiveness from elementary school principals in general. Both suburban elementary school principals (91%) and urban elementary school principals (84%) rated the use of paraprofessionals as the most effective of the three educational strategies investigated in this study. Rural principals (80%), on the other hand, ranked this strategy as the second most effective, perceiving in class support instruction as the most effective of the three educational strategies used in inclusive classroom settings.

Rankin (1995) also reported that principals perceive the use of paraprofessionals as one of several resources needed to facilitate inclusion in their schools.

**Conclusions**

In response to the major research question of what are the attitudes of public elementary school principals in the state of New Jersey toward inclusive education and educational strategies related to its practice, there are several conclusions that can be
drawn from the data. These conclusions are derived specifically from data concerning principals' attitudes and are organized according to implications for practice.

Despite individual variations within sub-groups of principals, the quantitative data suggested that public elementary school administrators overall held positive attitudes about the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. An exception to this outlook would be students who present with moderate to severe behavior problems and students who are learning disabled more than two years below their peers, possibly reflecting the principals' awareness that the needs of these types of students exceed the pedagogical skills of the typical classroom teacher. Given this possibility, principals should find ways of providing comprehensive inservice programs that would arm their teachers with various teaching and management methodologies geared toward these particular kinds of students.

A particularly important finding of this study was the overall consistency, with few exceptions, in which principals from all three locations (i.e., urban, suburban and rural) replied to the survey items. It is encouraging to see the generally positive attitudes demonstrated by principals across the board given the increasing numbers of students with disabilities receiving their education in regular classroom settings.

Principals, compared to classroom teachers, have the most positive attitudes toward integrating students with disabilities into regular classrooms settings, as reported by Garvar-Pinhas and Schmelkin (1989). If this be the case, principals, as the leaders in their schools, must seek ways of improving the acceptability of students with disabilities by their classroom teachers. The research of Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) resulted in consistent findings that teachers who are called upon to implement inclusive education
programs feel the need of administrative support in several issues, including those related to time, training, personnel, materials and class size.

1. **Time**: Teachers require additional time for planning for students with disabilities in their classrooms, particularly if the disability is severe or if they are involved in a collaborative model of instruction such as the in-class support model.

2. **Training**: Teachers must have the opportunity to avail themselves of intensive training programs, provided both in and outside of the school district, on a continual basis in order to hone their skills in working with students with disabilities who may be assigned to them.

3. **Personnel**: Teachers may need a paraprofessional, the strategy that the principals in this study deemed most effective, to assist them in their classrooms in order to successfully accommodate certain students with disabilities, especially if those disabilities are severe in nature.

4. **Materials**: Teachers need materials and supplies that are appropriate to their integrated students. Not only does this include the proper curricula, but it may also mean special furniture or augmentative communication devices designed specifically for students with special needs in their classrooms.

5. **Class Size**: Teachers who have been assigned to instruct students with disabilities should receive special consideration in terms of the overall number of students who make up their classes.

The ultimate success of an inclusion program may well depend on the extent to which building principals, who are in a unique position to respond to the perceived needs
of their teaching staff, will make such supports a reality. With inclusive education, as with other reform initiatives, the leadership skills of the building principal will determine whether any positive change will occur in the school (Hasazi et al., 1994). Research has shown that while most principals do offer support to both general and special education teachers, it may not be the type of support that teachers feel is needed in order for them to be successful in their teaching (Littrell, Billingsley, & Cross, 1994). For those principals who are intent upon maintaining a successful inclusionary program in their schools, it is incumbent upon them to ensure that their behaviors translate into the support that their teaching staffs believe is important to them.

Additionally, as the present research has demonstrated, principals respond more positively to children with certain types of disabilities. It becomes important, therefore, for principals to analyze their responses to students with disabilities in their schools, especially to these students who demonstrate serious management problems, since their own behaviors toward these students may well be affected by their attitudes.

A further implication is that as the movement toward including students with disabilities in general classroom settings becomes more and more a reality, all educators, particularly school principals, must learn better skills, such as ways to accommodate diverse student populations. Restructuring university courses that prepare future principals for leadership positions is essential. Courses relating to the needs of special populations served within general classroom environments should be a requirement for principals in training. Principals-to-be need to learn more effective strategies, especially for servicing students with moderate to severe behavior problems. Teachers who aspire to principalships should also be knowledgeable about special education law as outlined in the
recently reauthorized IDEA, particularly with that aspect of the federal mandate that pertains to the disciplining of students with disabilities. They must be schooled in coursework that deals specifically with students with disabilities. Perhaps principals' attitudes toward this particular sector of the student population will improve once they have acquired additional knowledge and skills.

Along with restructured university programs for future principals, there is the added need of inservice programs for principals who are already in the field. Such training for school administrators cannot be accomplished in a one-day presentation. Rather, the training must be comprehensive, should begin prior to the establishment of the inclusion program and should be on-going as the needs of the inclusion program dictate. With more and more parents of students with severe disabilities, including those with serious behavior problems, seeking placement of their children in the least restrictive environment, school districts should be systematically planning for this phenomenon. This may mean providing effective inservices for principals on how to manage students who are in mainstreamed settings and who exhibit serious behavior problems. Since the principal plays such a key role in whether a school's programs will be successful or not, an emerging inclusion program has a poorer chance of being effective if the principal is not knowledgeable about the educational and emotional needs of the students with disabilities to be served.

Of the educational strategies investigated in the current study, the use of paraprofessionals was perceived overall by the principals as being the most effective. Lipsky and Gartner (1997) reported that ever since the passage of the IDEA, paraprofessionals have been utilized with increasing frequency to work in classrooms with students with special needs. While at one time their role was relegated to record keeping
or maintaining equipment, today they are becoming more and more involved in actual instruction. With paraprofessionals taking on a more important function in the inclusion process, it is incumbent upon school districts not only to provide the necessary training that will enhance their effectiveness in the classroom, but also to offer attractive salaries, benefits and career ladder opportunities. Such compensation will enable districts to retain these valuable members of the school community.

Additionally, it is interesting to note that this particular strategy of using paraprofessionals in inclusive classroom settings even outranked the strategy of in class support which utilizes two teachers (a regular education teacher and a special education teacher) in the same classroom. In class support is currently receiving strong endorsement from the New Jersey Department of Education. Perhaps this finding reflects the principals' perception that in some inclusive settings where there may be "turf issues" between teachers, as revealed by Ferris (1996), regular education teachers feel more comfortable having a non-certificated person in their classroom as compared to a certificated peer. Should this be the case, perhaps the principal would be wise to provide the teaching staff with training in effective collaboration strategies for successful inclusion.

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this investigation not only answered questions, but also raised several questions. Based upon the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations for further research are offered:
1. Respondents in the present study represented only one geographical region of the country, New Jersey. It might be useful to replicate this study in other states in the country.

2. Only principals of elementary schools were included in the present study. The attitudes of public school principals at the secondary level might be quite different and make for an interesting study.

3. There are many other factors besides years of experience of a principal and geographical location of schools that may influence principals' attitudes toward inclusion. It would be beneficial to investigate these factors in future research studies, thereby adding to our understanding of the specific variables that have an effect on principals' attitudes.

4. The practice of integrating students with severe disabilities into typical classroom environments is a relatively new occurrence with limited research having been conducted in this area. It would be helpful to have data on actual student outcomes for this portion of the student population who are in integrated settings.

5. Future studies should be conducted to isolate those factors which mitigate against the acceptance of students with severe disabling conditions by school principals.

6. This study investigated principals' attitudes toward inclusion and educational strategies. It would be enlightening to know why principals have the attitudes they do and why they perceive certain educational strategies used in general classroom settings to be more effective than others.

7. Finally, it would be helpful if future studies investigated what are the critical competencies and specific leadership styles of principals that best lend themselves to successful inclusion programs.
Concluding Remarks

By assessing the attitudes of public elementary school principals toward inclusive education and educational strategies related to its practice, this study adds to the growing body of literature on the subject of inclusion. The ultimate goal of this researcher was to contribute to the emerging fund of information and to future studies on this topic that may ultimately lead to interventions to bring about more positive attitudes among school administrators toward students with special needs, who will be included in regular education classrooms. Given the key role that principals play in school settings, documenting what their attitudes are toward including students with specific disabilities in their schools and toward frequently utilized educational strategies in inclusive settings helps to clarify some of the many issues surrounding inclusion. An understanding of the various elements involved in the inclusion process will enable us to realize the tasks to which educators must attend so that students with disabilities can take their rightful places in general education classrooms.

Since many school districts in this country have already embarked upon some form of inclusive education and with many more considering an implementation of the practice, the issue of principals' attitudes warrants our attention. When considering the possibility of inclusion, more often than not the focus is on the student to be included (Cochran, 1997), less frequently are the principal's attitudes examined. As noted earlier, principals, by virtue of their leadership roles, are pivotal factors for inclusion programs to be successful (Garvar-Pinhas & Schmelkin, 1989). This research has revealed that while most principals in the study evidenced positive attitudes overall toward students with
certain disabilities, they were not as favorably inclined to include students who present
with serious learning disabilities or severe behavior problems. Hopefully, this investigation
will provide interested parties with a better understanding of principals' attitudes toward
inclusion and toward specific educational strategies used in inclusive settings, resulting
ultimately in the kinds of behaviors on the part of principals that will ensure the education
of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.


Clyde K. v. Puyallup School District No. 3, 35 F.3d 1396 (9th Cir. 1994).


Administrators, New Orleans, LA.


Roncker v. Walter, 700 F. 2d 1058 (6th Cir. 1983).

Sacramento City United School District Board of Education v. Rachel H., 14 F.3d 1398 (9th Cir. 1994).


historical perspective. In R. Villa & J. Thousand (Eds.), *Creating an inclusive school* (pp. 16-27). Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen.


Appendix A

Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey
ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SURVEY

I. Demographic Information

Directions: Kindly answer all items on the survey.

Please respond to the following items by filling in the appropriate number.

1. Total Number of Years as Elementary School Principal: ________

II. Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education

Directions: Please circle the number below each item that best describes your disagreement or agreement with the statement. There are no right or wrong answers.

2. Students, no matter the level of disability, have a right to be educated in general education classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>1</th>
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<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>undecided</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
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3. Students with disabilities should be educated in general education classrooms even if social gains, as compared to academic gains, are the only anticipated outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>undecided</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>

4. Students with the following impairments should be educated in general education classrooms:

   a. hearing impairments

      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
      |---|---|---|---|---|
      | strongly disagree | undecided | strongly agree |

   b. visual impairments

      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
      |---|---|---|---|---|
      | strongly disagree | undecided | strongly agree |

   c. orthopedic impairments

      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
      |---|---|---|---|---|
      | strongly disagree | undecided | strongly agree |

(please continue on next page)
d. learning disabled more than 1 year below their peers who are not disabled

1  2  3  4  5
strongly disagree undecided strongly agree

e. learning disabled more than 2 years below their peers who are not disabled

1  2  3  4  5
strongly disagree undecided strongly agree

f. mild behavior problems

1  2  3  4  5
strongly disagree undecided strongly agree

g. moderate to severe behavior problems

1  2  3  4  5
strongly disagree undecided strongly agree

5. Experience in teaching students with disabilities in general education classrooms enhances teachers' skills in working with diverse student populations.

1  2  3  4  5
strongly disagree undecided strongly agree

6. Including students with disabilities in general education classrooms is likely to result in:

a. an improvement in academic skills for those students

1  2  3  4  5
strongly disagree undecided strongly agree

b. an improvement in social skills for those students

1  2  3  4  5
strongly disagree undecided strongly agree

c. social benefits for students who are not disabled

1  2  3  4  5
strongly disagree undecided strongly agree

d. increased tolerance for differences on the part of students who are not disabled

1  2  3  4  5
strongly disagree undecided strongly agree

(please continue on next page)
III. Educational Strategies in Inclusive Classroom Settings

Directions: Below are listed descriptions of three educational strategies often found in inclusive classroom settings. Please indicate if the strategy is used in your school, and, if "yes", circle the number below each strategy that best describes how effective you believe the strategy to be. There are no right or wrong answers.

7. In Class Support Instruction: Instruction provided by a special education and a general education teacher working collaboratively. The general education teacher is responsible for the class lesson while the special education teacher provides assistance to the students with disabilities. These students have the same educational goals and objectives as their classmates who are not disabled.

Is this strategy used in your school? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If yes, how effective?

1 2 3 4 5
not effective undecided extremely effective

8. Use of Instructional Aides: Instruction provided to students with disabilities, usually by a non-certificated adult, under the supervision of the general education teacher.

Is this strategy used in your school? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If yes, how effective?

1 2 3 4 5
not effective undecided extremely effective

9. Curricular Adaptations: Allowing students with disabilities to work in the same subject area but at different levels of the curriculum.

Is this strategy used in your school? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If yes, how effective?

1 2 3 4 5
not effective undecided extremely effective

Thank you for your cooperation in responding to this survey.

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Please indicate if you would like to receive a report of the findings of this study.

______ Yes, please forward to me a report of the findings of this study.
Appendix B

Approval Letter from Institutional Review Board to Conduct Research
REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION OR RELATED ACTIVITIES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

PROJECT TITLE: The Attitudes of Public Elementary School Principals Toward Inclusive Education and Educational Strategies Related To Its Practice

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:

In making this application, I(we) certify that I(we) have read and understand the University's policies, procedures governing research, development, and related activities involving human subjects, and that I(we) shall comply with the letter and spirit of those policies. I(we) further acknowledge my(our) obligation to (1) obtain written approval of significant deviations from the originally-approved protocol BEFORE making those deviations and (2) report immediately all adverse effects of the study on the subjects to the Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board Involving Human Subjects and to the Director of the Office of Grants and Research at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079.

Frank J. Argano
RESEARCHER(S) OR PROJECT DIRECTOR(S)
**Please print or type out name below signature**

Anthony J. Goleva, Ph.D.
RESEARCHER'S ADVISOR OR DEPARTMENTAL SUPERVISOR
**Please print or type out name below signature**

The request for approval submitted by the above researcher(s) was considered by the IRB for Research Involving Human Subjects Research 01/99 meeting.

The application was approved ___ not approved ___ by the Committee. Special conditions were not ___ set by the IRB. (Any special conditions are described on the reverse side.)

Robert C. Hallissy
CHAIRPERSON, SETON HALL UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

February 10, 1999
DATE

Robert C. Hallissy, Ph.D.
Acting Chair
Appendix C

Letter to Jury of Experts in Study
Dear New Jersey Public School Principal:

I am currently engaged in a doctoral study at Seton Hall University as I work towards an Ed.D. degree in Educational Administration and Supervision.

In this study I am attempting to learn more about the practice of inclusive education for students with disabilities in public schools in New Jersey. To accomplish this, I have designed a research project to ascertain the attitudes of public school principals toward inclusive education and educational strategies related to its practice. The participants in the study will be 300 public elementary school principals in New Jersey.

One of the first steps in conducting this project is to survey a jury of experts to test the face validity of the survey instrument I have developed for use in this study. Enclosed you will find a copy of the Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey which I am requesting that you complete. Also enclosed is the much shorter Jury of Experts Survey which I am asking that you kindly answer after you have completed the first survey. Your comments regarding the relevance and precision of expression of the survey items, organization of the survey and the time needed to complete the survey will be most valuable. Kindly return both surveys to me by March 1, 1999 in the envelope provided.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation in this project.

Very truly yours,

Frank J. Inzano

If you would like to receive a report of the findings of the doctoral study, please complete this form and return it with the two surveys.

Please mail to

Name:__________________________________________________________

Address:__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________
Appendix D

Jury of Experts Survey
Jury of Experts Survey

Directions: Please answer the following questions after you have completed the Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey.

1. How long did it take you to complete the survey? ______________

2. Were the instructions clear? [ ] Yes [ ] No

3. Were any survey items unclear or ambiguous? If yes, which items and why?

4. Did you object to answering any items? If yes, which items and why?

5. Has any major topic been omitted from the survey? If yes, which topic(s)?

6. Was the layout of the survey clear/attractive? [ ] Yes [ ] No

7. Any additional comments or suggestions?
Appendix E

Letter to Participants in Study
Dear New Jersey Public School Principal:

I am currently engaged in a doctoral study at Seton Hall University as I work towards an Ed.D. degree in Educational Administration and Supervision.

In this study I am attempting to learn more about the practice of inclusive education for students with disabilities in public schools in New Jersey. To accomplish this, I have designed a research project to ascertain the attitudes of public elementary school principals toward inclusive education and educational strategies related to its practice. I would greatly appreciate your assistance in the completion of this study, the results of which will hopefully provide valuable information about inclusive education practices throughout the state and help to improve the quality of education for students with disabilities.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education Survey. Please complete the survey which should take no more than ten minutes, and return it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided so that your input can be included in the study. I realize that your schedule is a busy one and that your time is precious, but I would very much like to include your valuable input as part of the collected data.

The information obtained from principals in this project will remain strictly confidential and the reporting of results will be by group analysis only. The surveys are numbered for follow-up purposes only, if needed, and all coded information will be destroyed after the completion of the study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Services Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (201) 378-9809.

Please be assured that your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time. If you have questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at (732) 388-6200.

Please sign and return this form along with the completed survey by March 22, 1999.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation with this research project.

Very truly yours,

Frank J. Izzo

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I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Subject or Authorized Representative ____________________________ Date ____________________________
Appendix F

Reminder Letter to Participants in Study
Dear New Jersey Public School Principal:

Public school principals are busier these days than they perhaps would like to be and so I realize how difficult it may be to spare even a few minutes of your time to attend to something extra. However, your input is important to me as I complete my doctoral study on the attitudes of elementary school principals toward inclusive education.

Two weeks ago I mailed to you the Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Survey, which I hoped you received, but I have not yet received your reply. Perhaps you mislaid the survey or it may have miscarried in the mail.

In any event, I am enclosing another copy of the survey along with another self-addressed stamped envelope. Despite your busy schedule, could you please find the time to complete and return the survey so that I may include your valuable feedback as part of my data.

Please know that I would be deeply appreciative for your attention to and cooperation in this study.

Very truly yours,

Frank Inzano

Frank Inzano