

MANAGING INCLUSION:  
A STUDY OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP IN INCLUSION

by

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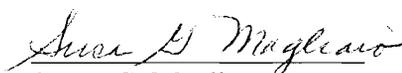
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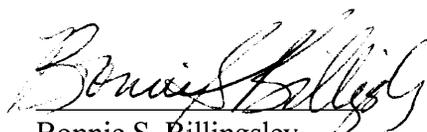
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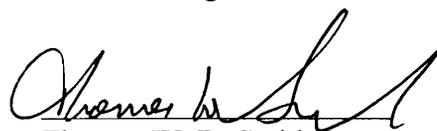
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Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

(ABSTRACT)

A case study approach was used to investigate how principals manage inclusive schools and how teachers and principals perceive inclusion. The study was conducted in two elementary schools known for successful inclusion practice. A total of five special education teachers, five regular education teachers and the two principals of the schools formally participated in the data gathering for the study while numerous other school personnel informally participated.

Qualitative research methodologies (Patton, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1994) were employed to determine the principals' role in supporting inclusion practices. Data were gathered by interviewing teachers and principals, observing the school environment and reviewing inclusion related school documentation.

This study demonstrated that principals have a pervasive effect on inclusion environments and program delivery. Several themes emerged which correlate with related literature on effective practices for principals. First, communication was identified as an essential tool for principals to practice. Through good communication, decisions

can be made and problems solved that relate to inclusion. Effective communication practices also provide outlets for expressions of feelings about inclusion. The second theme, principal support, was identified as necessary to the practice of inclusion. Support was defined as providing materials and equipment, hiring additional personnel, training, solving problems, and providing emotional support to teachers. The third theme involved creating an atmosphere of caring throughout the schools. Caring focused on valuing students and promoting acceptance of diversity among the schools' student population.

How principals manage a school in the context of inclusion was the central question of this study, therefore, the thoughts, beliefs, and feelings of the teachers and principals about the practice of inclusion were essential to uncover. Participants identified hard work as a necessary part of inclusion practice. Hard work was defined as working longer hours, collaborating with other teachers, problem solving, defining roles and making decisions. In this regard, teachers believed that the appropriate scheduling of students into certain teachers' classrooms was important to student success and teachers' satisfaction, and they spent many hours solving scheduling issues. High expectations also emerged as a common central theme in both schools. Expectations that appeared most clearly were teachers expecting other teachers to share in certain responsibilities, teachers and principals holding all students to similar standards, and teachers and principals expecting certain kinds of supports and duties of one another. In this regard, positive relationships were viewed as critical to program success, and both teacher and principals

worked hard to maintain this at all times.

The two cases reported here provide a window into how inclusion can be made to work. The stories told here support existing knowledge about leadership, and show explicitly that each setting for inclusion must be actively created by the key participants.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership practices of school principals who are implementing the inclusion model of special education service delivery. The literature review underlying this research shows that the inclusion approach, which involves regular classroom settings as the primary educational delivery vehicle for youth with disabilities, represents a significant evolutionary step in the states' attempts to implement the least restrictive environment provisions of **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990**.

Although the terms inclusion or inclusive education cannot be located in the law, the definition of least restrictive environment (LRE) is contained in the law and provided the initial legal impetus for creating inclusive education (Falvey, Givner, & Kimm, 1995).

The law states that:

to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including those children in public and private institutions or other care facilities are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational 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 satisfactory (PL.94-142, Section 1412 [5][B]).

The importance of the "inclusion" concept is that it clearly settles the basic responsibility for educating all children in the regular classroom and the regular classroom teacher acting in collaboration with special education professionals. Inclusion is an attitude - a value and belief system - not an action or set of actions (Falvey, Givner, & Kimm, 1995). This change in education programming represents considerably more than a cosmetic change in the lives of teachers, administrators, and school children. What it means, in effect, is that students with disabilities will become a part of the fabric of every classroom. It means that all the various nuances of the human condition, including the most severe disabling experiences, will become a commonplace in the regular classroom. It means also that teachers, school children, administrators, and parents will need to develop and learn a new game plan, one that promises to stretch the capacities of all for patience, collaboration, and instructional inventiveness.

My interest in the principal's role in inclusion models follows a long line of research which shows that when school innovations work, they generally do so when principals lead well. I was interested in learning what good leadership means in the context of the inclusion movement. How do administrators of elementary schools exercise their influence to negotiate the demands that the inclusion model will place on everyone involved?

This study attempts to establish an empirical record of inclusion problem solving, that is, the actions that principals and teachers took in establishing and implementing an inclusion model. Specifically, principals and teachers, regular and special education from two elementary settings were asked to describe their programs and talk about the onset and evolution of typical problems that have occurred in the implementation of the inclusion model. The primary focus of the analysis was on the principal's role in the problem solving process. In addition, I felt it important to analyze how teachers and principals think, believe, and act in inclusion.

Principals are sometimes less than courageous when they refuse to deal with the emotional turmoil and conflict that naturally accompany the change initiatives of inclusion (Thousand & Villa, 1995). We know that schools with successful inclusion track records are those where principal behaviors are thought to mirror those from the general "successful schools" literature (Udvari-Solner & Thousand, 1995). These general findings or assertions are helpful, but do little to inform educators of the particular problems that administrators of inclusion schools face, and how leadership behaviors play out within those particular problem frames. Thus, this descriptive research involved describing specific cases of leadership and problem solving practice within two elementary inclusion settings.

### The Movement Toward Inclusion

A growing number of schools and districts across the nation are moving in the

direction of welcoming all children regardless of their learning, physical or emotional characteristics as full members of their school communities (Daver & Schnorr, 1991). While some researchers insist on the inclusion of all students with disabilities, others are more cautious. Regardless of the research and attitudes, inclusive schooling is currently at the forefront of special education reform. **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990** (IDEA), formerly the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, stipulates that children with disabilities must be provided a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This LRE mandate means that each state education agency must ensure that "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with non-disabled children" (McCarthy, 1994, p.1). Under IDEA regulations, children can be placed in special classes or separate facilities "only when the nature of severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily" (McCarthy, 1994, p.1).

How does inclusive schooling provide a better environment for children with disabilities? Inclusion benefits these children both academically and socially. The regular classroom environment is thought to bolster academic progress because the children are held to higher expectations, exposed to more challenging content, and inspired by the example of their non-disabled peers (Willis, 1994). Critics of inclusion contend that the

regular classroom setting is not an optimal environment for students with disabilities (Villa, et al, 1995). These critics question placing students back in the settings where they could not succeed in the first place. If a school district decides to make greater inclusion of students with disabilities a goal, what does it take to meet these students' needs in regular classrooms? Many variables have been considered when implementing inclusion. Most analysts concluded that the attitude and commitment of the building level administrator is one of the single most important factors in determining the potential for success of inclusion. The principal's role and behaviors set the tone for the entire school. How principals manage the school environment determine how successful inclusion will be. For example, Billingsley, Farley, and Rude (1993), identified twelve leadership factors as critical to building high quality instruction and services to students with disabilities. Based on this review successful leaders:

1. Develop and communicate a shared vision for educating students with disabilities.
2. Provide opportunities for family, community, and other agency involvement in special education.
3. Facilitate Individualized Education Program (IEP) development and implementation.
4. Provide assistance with curriculum and instructional programs.
5. Ensure appropriate inclusion opportunities for students with disabilities.

6. Develop positive behavior management programs.
7. Ensure transition services for students with disabilities.
8. Monitor and evaluate student progress and effectiveness of special education programs.
9. Ensure appropriate staff development activities.
10. Support staff members and involve them in decision making.
11. Encourage collaboration among school staff.
12. Evaluate staff using systematic procedures. pp.17-20

"The critical elements of successful leadership include the ability of leaders to establish direction, align people, motivate and inspire others and produce useful changes in the organization" (Billingsley, Farley, & Rude, 1993, p.3).

With the re-authorization of the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** (IDEA) before Congress and with many groups expressing profound dissatisfaction with special education services, administrators are increasingly asking, "In what direction do I want to lead special education in my school?" It is time to recognize more specifically the leadership behaviors that principals can make to guarantee high quality programs which meet the needs of all students. Hopefully, the present study will contribute by examining principal leadership as it is applied within typical problem frameworks in inclusive schools.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Related Literature

#### Background

The regular education initiative (Will, 1986) has generated considerable debate concerning the most effective strategies to achieve appropriate educational opportunities for students with special needs (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; Gersten & Woodward, 1990; Jenkins, Pious, & Jewel, 1990; Sasso & Rude, 1987). Educators are seeking innovative service delivery models that can best meet the needs of special education students. One of the emerging service delivery options gaining widespread support in public education is the practice of providing totally inclusive schools to meet the needs of all learners in an integrated educational program (Rude & Anderson, 1992).

The inclusion of students with disabilities in general education programs has become, perhaps, the most compelling issue in the field of special education. It is presently a matter for both heated debate and extensive investigation. Current research suggests that professionally responsible, successful inclusion of children with special needs in general education programs is both difficult for special educators to accomplish and highly demanding for general education teachers and administrators.

According to the 1992 Report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, nearly 10% of all students are enrolled in special education (Gaylord, McEvoy, & Peterson, 1991). As states struggle with general

education reform, they are also questioning the effectiveness of special education as it exists today.

Special education was built upon a concern for access and process for students with disabilities. Three priorities for the advocacy coalition behind P.L. 94-142 were: returning disabled students to school, ensuring that children attending school were receiving appropriate services, and guaranteeing a fair process in the design of programs for individual children.

Educators have been criticized for unnecessarily labeling and segregating students; for educating students in overly segregated settings; for not providing differentially appropriate methods of instruction; and for limiting curricular options based on students' disability label. At the same time, some perceive that special education has evolved into a separate educational system. While the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires educational services for students with disabilities, it does not require a separate special education system. Concerns have led educators, parents and policy leaders to explore options for restructuring programming for students with special needs. Program models, student outcomes and exploring options for instruction outside of the special education system are being examined (Roach, 1991).

The America 2000 initiative states that schools must prepare our children to function effectively in this challenging and changing world by providing numerous opportunities to experience diversity (Gaylord, McEvoy, & Peterson, 1991). Students

with disabilities add to the diversity of the school community and can teach their non-disabled peers important lessons about equity and social justice, cooperation and collaboration, overcoming obstacles and dignity of the human spirit. While special education programs of the past decade have been successful in bringing unserved students into public education and have established their right to education, these programs have failed both to overcome the separation between general and special education and to make the separate system significant in terms of student benefits. School organizations and practices must be designed to enhance the role of the student (Lipsky & Gartner, 1989). For students with disabilities there is a growing recognition that many alternatives are available to provide instruction. Increasingly, efforts are underway to educate students with disabilities with regular students in standard classrooms. This initiative stems from the federal law which requires that students with disabilities be placed in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Simply stated, current special education law requires that all students with disabilities be educated alongside typical, nondisabled peers to the greatest degree possible. Any move to place a student away from the regular educational setting must occur only when it is not possible for that student's program, as supported with services, accommodations, and aides to provide him or her with an appropriate education (Snell & Eichner, 1989). The term "inclusion" is typically used to describe instruction for students with disabilities in the regular classroom setting or in the least restrictive environment.

## Clarification of Inclusion

There are many possible beginnings for a discussion of the current status of education of students with disabilities. It is important to begin by clarifying what is meant by inclusion. There is no one absolute prescription model of inclusion. Margaret Wheatley (1994), articulated this assumption by stating:

First, I no longer believe that [school] organizations can be changed by imposing a model developed elsewhere. So little transfers to, or even inspires, those trying to work at change in their own organizations. Second... there is no objective reality out there waiting to reveal its secrets. There are no formulas, no checklists or advice that describe 'reality.' There is only what we create through our engagement with others and with events. Nothing really transfers; everything is always new and different and unique to each of us (p.7).

Inclusion means people participating in families, schools, and classrooms, in work places, and in community life. Inclusion implies that people are welcomed and that each person reaches out to include another person. Inclusion conveys the idea that we appreciate each other, that we see each other's gifts, and that we value being together. Inclusion speaks to the importance of relationships. In an inclusive school system all teachers, including regular education and special education, support staff, administrators and parents, work collaboratively to insure a quality education (Walker-Thomas, McLaughlin, & Korinek, 1992). While inclusion is at the forefront of many educators' minds as a means for

service delivery, we must remember that if a continuum of service options is not available to individual students with disabilities, the intent of IDEA is not being met. This continuum of program options must include a full range of education and related services to accommodate an individual student's characteristics, needs, abilities, and interests in accord with the principal of least restrictive environment. Therefore, a variety of program models must be considered when developing programs for students with disabilities.

### Program Models

There have been various program models used with special education students over the years. As stated earlier, in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the least restrictive environment provision requires that states assure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who do not have disabilities (Sawyer, McLaughlin, & Winglee, 1994). Removal or separate schooling should occur only when the severity of the child's disability is such that the general curriculum cannot be modified to achieve satisfactory performance (Sloan, Denny, & Repp, 1992). The concept of least restrictive environment requires a continuum of placement options that includes the general public school (general education classrooms, resource rooms and separate classes), separate schools, residential facilities and homebound/hospital placements. It also requires that various in-school settings be considered.

The widely used "pull-out" approach - removing students with special learning

needs from regular classes - has been the predominant strategy for structuring programs to improve the education attainment of students with special learning needs (Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1986). Although well intentioned, the pull-out approach neglects that larger problem, that the regular classroom learning environments have failed to accommodate the educational needs of many students. Regular education teachers are relieved of any responsibility to educate students with special needs in their classrooms. The pull-out approach is driven by the fallacy that poor school adjustment and performance are attributable primarily to characteristics of the student rather than to the quality of the learning environment. This approach often causes serious problems. It has led to discontinuity and interruption in the instruction for teachers and students, loss of control by school district leadership over specialized programs and the fostering of narrow categorical attitudes and instructional programming (Heller, et al. 1982).

Variations of these pull-out programs are abundant. Integration is one such variation. Integration is a broad term which refers to the opportunity for the student with a disability to have access to and participate in all activities of the total school environment. Integrated environment classrooms are those that include both special and general education students. Effective integration means planning and providing maximal opportunities for interactions between non-disabled students and their peers who have disabilities. These interactions can and should occur in a variety of settings and ways (Biklen, Lehr, Searl, & Taylor, 1992).

Students with disabilities who are integrated into regular age-appropriate schools should and can use the same education facilities as regular education students. Integration can take place in several ways, i.e. physical integration, social integration, academic integration and community integration. Physical integration includes students with disabilities placed in schools in their home communities with non-disabled of the same chronological age. Disabled students should be spread throughout the building rather than separated in segregated classes for handicapped only. Social integration encourages and facilitates normal social interaction between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. Academic integration typically refers to placing students with disabilities and special education students into regular classrooms for academic instruction. Community integration facilitates the involvement of individuals with disabilities to be included in community living activities. In recent years communities have seen the building of group homes to house individuals with disabilities. This type of integration will hopefully introduce these individuals into the community as contributing citizens.

Mainstreaming implies much more than mere placement. The regular education teacher usually has the primary responsibility of instruction with the technical assistance of the special education staff and the school administrator. The term is commonly used to refer to the practice of placing special education students in general education classes for a part of the school day, usually in nonacademic settings. The necessary supplementary supports and resources are provided to enable the student to achieve his

or her individualized goals in the regular classroom setting (Bilken, Lehr, Searl, & Taylor, 1992).

Most special education students today receive part or the majority of the school day in a regular classroom. This has not always been so. Mainstreaming, as it is known today, has had a long development history. In the early days, special students were placed in regular classes because this was the only placement available. In the early days of American education, classrooms served a wide variety of students including those with handicapping conditions. The one room schoolhouse, with a wide range of ages and skills, is an example of this concept. Lewis and Doorlag (1991), describe a mainstreaming program for students with visual disabilities that began in 1913. Students spent part of their day in the regular classroom and part in a special sight saving class. Difficult students and those with severe disabilities were excluded from school. By the mid-to late-1980s and early '90s, many educators and parents recognized the need to educate all students, not just those labeled mildly or moderately disabled, in the mainstream of regular education (Forest 1987; Knoblock 1982; Sapon-Shevin, Pugach, & Lilly 1987; Stainback & Stainback 1987, 1990, 1992; Strully 1986; Thousand & Villa 1991; Villa & Thousand 1992). Advocates for students with disabilities began promoting part-time or full-time integration of students with severe and profound disabilities into the regular classroom, and some schools began experimenting with such integration (Forest 1987,

Knoblock 1982, Stainback & Stainback 1988, Strully & Strully 1985, Thousand & Villa 1988).

### Attitudes and Experiences

The idea of educating exceptional students in regular classrooms did not emerge in isolation from other social changes. Rather, it is the result of a gradual, but fundamental shift, in public attitudes toward people who differ from the majority in terms of race, religion, political beliefs or education needs. The result of this shift in attitudes is a tendency to reject programs that segregate individuals in favor of programs that bring individuals into the political, economic, social, and educational mainstream (Glass, Christiansen, & Christiansen, 1982). Yet, even today the status of exceptional individuals is not entirely secure.

A paradigm shift is required - a fundamental change in concepts about differences among people, about how schools organize education, and about the purpose of education. The weight of past practices and the difficulties professionals face in changing those practices make the task extremely challenging. Most schools have been designed with the de facto impact of preventing children with challenging needs to take part (Shaw, 1990).

Inclusion is a controversial issue that has caused concern to many educators. There are those who fear that the law demands that the education of all children with disabilities will fall on teachers and regular students or that special classes will be

completely eliminated. Other educators, however, believe that certain children with disabilities may profit from learning with regular students in regular classes without detriment to either group (Clarkson, 1982).

It is not only special education that must change but the total educational system must evolve to meet new challenges. The origin, growth and shape of special education have, in many ways, been defined by general education. Whatever the rationale or benign purpose claimed, children with disabilities have been denied access to public education, or when given access, have received an education that is not equal to that given to other children (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987). The problem is not special or general education alone. In a sense, regular and special education teachers have collaborated to relieve regular teachers of responsibilities for teaching difficult students. The pressure to succeed for teachers and students makes providing individual attention extremely difficult and more likely that teachers will seek uniformity of students, not diversity (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987).

Through research, discussions and observations it is evident that teachers, students, parents and administrators have varying attitudes about inclusion. One common attitude seems to emerge from all stakeholders on inclusion, "Students in segregated classes are perceived as more disabled than students in the integrated classes" (Walter-Thomas, McLaughlin, & Korinek, 1992 p. 3). This powerful statement provides a basis for inclusion. If students are singled out and identified as "different", educators are

sending the message that these students should not be accepted as part of the school community.

Non-disabled students who are integrated with students with disabilities are provided experiences and opportunities to develop positive attitudes toward individuals with disabilities. The Virginia Statewide Systems Change Project Newsletter (1991), has documented that disability awareness lessons, peer tutoring and special friends programs can contribute to positive attitude changes in students without disabilities. The most effective way to change attitudes and develop positive relationships however, is through activities that regularly involve students without disabilities in direct interaction with their peers who have disabilities (Ohanian, 1990).

Parents and most administrators are still somewhat confused about inclusion due to confusing messages sent by teachers. The positive outcomes from inclusion which include improved social skills, self esteem and a feeling of belonging are difficult to evaluate through test scores. Positive outcomes have been documented through recent scholarly reviews of the literature and other evidence. Parents feel that students with disabilities make many gains in vocabulary and social skills (Shaw, 1990). Parents tend to resist the idea that their child needs more protection than other children because of their disability but strongly advocate their need for support. Studies conducted during the past 60 years and involving mostly students with mental retardation, generally show special-needs students in mainstream classrooms performing as well as, or better than,

their counterparts in special education programs (Fuchs & Fuchs 1995). Reviews of certain literature cast special education in a somewhat different light. Carlberg and Kavale (1980), for example, compiled a meta-analysis of 50 independent studies of special classes versus regular classes. They concluded that “special classes were...significantly inferior to regular class placement for students with below average IQs, and significantly superior to regular class for behaviorally disordered, emotionally disturbed, and learning disabled children .”p.295 In contrast, Houck and Rogers (1992) conducted a random statewide sample of Virginia’s special and general education supervisors, principals, elementary and secondary mainstream teachers, and teachers of students with learning disabilities to ascertain whether or not “pull-out” programs do students more harm than good. A total of 61.5% of respondents disagreed or tended to disagree with the statement.

Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, and Schattman, (1993) conducted a study to describe the experiences of general education teachers who have had a student with severe disabilities in their class. Data gathered from nineteen general education teachers in grades K through nine identified themes related to placement of a child with disabilities in their classroom. Teachers in the study shared a common initial experience that they typically described as negative. Most teachers had initial minimal involvement with students with disabilities and expected that someone else was responsible for these students' education. Seventeen of the nineteen teachers reported experiencing varying

degrees of change in their own expectations and behaviors toward the student with disabilities. The seventeen teachers experienced increased ownership and involvement with the student with severe disabilities in their classes over the course of the year. Subsequent to these changes, teachers identified a variety of benefits to the students' classmates without disabilities and themselves.

### Conflicting Views

As stated earlier, inclusion has provoked strong and often different opinions among educators. These conflicting views are evident in many recent articles found in the research. In a recent publication by The Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Richard Villa, and others (1995), collaborated to answer 16 of the most commonly asked questions about inclusion. The authors of this article struggled to identify areas of consensus and divergence in their views. In attempting to answer these questions the authors recognized that often objections come concealed as questions. The authors also remind us that every objection has two components - on the surface, a concern; and somewhere below that, a belief.

A sampling of concerns or beliefs typically found among educators include: a) parents fearful that they may not have a choice of settings for their child, with some believing that the inclusion setting will not provide an optimal learning environment; b) the deaf community takes a strong stand against inclusion; c) The National Learning Disabilities Association (NLDA) states that students with disabilities should not be

placed back in a setting where they failed initially; d) inclusion may sacrifice academic instruction for socialization; e) some educators believe that inclusion is asking too much of teachers already over-burdened with large classes and diverse student needs.

Fuchs and Fuchs (1994), address “e” above through their support of the Regular Education Initiative (REI). REI suggests that partnerships be formed between regular education and special education teachers. In order to support general classroom teachers, efforts have been made to gain their interest in special education. Collaborative efforts from teachers were established to provide support to general classroom teachers. As documented by Pugach and Sapon-Shevin (1987), general education took little notice, prompting Lieberman (1985), to quip that general education was like the “uninvited bride”.

Other critics of inclusion see it as an appropriate option for some children that may be beneficial in some cases. "Inclusion is viewed as a bandwagon affair and the pendulum of sensibility spends most of its time at the extremes," (Smelter, Rasch, & Yudewitz, 1995). Examples of extremes include those who argue for a complete dismantling of special education (Stainback & Stainback, 1992) and those who say special educators should provide services to disabled and non-disabled students but only in the regular classroom (Giangreco, et al., 1993). These two extremes appear to call for an almost total destruction of individualized instruction. While many proponents of inclusion remain on the bandwagon there are those who contend that inclusion is only one

option for serving students with disabilities. Unfortunately, in some cases "full inclusion" has been disastrous for students (Maloney, 1994/95). Typically these disastrous cases have been centered around regular classrooms lacking in strategies, resources and support known to be effective with students with disabilities (Kauffman, Lloyd, Baker, & Riedel, 1995). Naomi Zigmond and others (1995) conducted three multi-year studies which looked at outcomes of learning disabled students in three different settings. Their findings from these three studies suggest that general education settings produce achievement outcomes for students with learning disabilities that are neither desirable nor acceptable.

School administrators may sometimes feel caught between creating less restrictive environments and meeting the individual needs of students with disabilities. Principals are advised not to adopt either a blanket separation model or a blanket "full inclusion" model of service delivery for all students with disabilities but to continue to make individualized placement decisions that honor the concept of least restrictive environment (Huefner, 1994).

Policies and position statements on inclusive schools are publicized periodically. Such policies and positions are submitted by various influential boards and associations. Their positions are as conflicting as those of parents and educators caught in the daily decisions of inclusion. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) contends that to promote greater inclusion without providing the resources to make it work, offers a false

promise of improved opportunities for students with disabilities. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Platform 1994-95 supports inclusion of special education students as appropriate, in regular classrooms with their peers in their neighborhood schools if appropriate financial resources, staff development and support services are available. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) opposes inclusion or any movement or program that has the goal of placing all students with disabilities in general education classrooms regardless of the nature or severity of their disabilities. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) believes that a continuum of services must be available for all children, youth, and young adults. And the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) does not support “full inclusion” or any policies that mandate the same placement, instruction, or treatment for all students with learning disabilities.

Disagreements continue among parents, educators and community members in regard to inclusive education as well. Concerns and questions about inclusion will continue to promote important dialogue about inclusion: Are inclusion advocates only concerned with socialization? Are parents’ fears justified? Are academics being sacrificed for socialization? Are teachers being asked to accept an impossible task? Are administrators equipped to deal with the change that is necessary for effective inclusion? While there are no easy answers to these questions it is important that educators and parents continue to ask the questions and ponder the answers.

## Administrator Roles

Effective programming for all students, including those with special needs, must be comprehensive in nature. In order to address the needs of the whole child it is important to structure a program in a wholeistic manner. A number of established and emerging general education practices emulate the principles of inclusive education. When these practices are used, educators may be better equipped to facilitate meaningful and effective inclusive education for students perceived as disabled, at risk, or gifted, as well as those considered "average" (Udvari-Solner & Thousand, 1995).

There appear to be three basic components to successful inclusion programs: commitment, planning and staff development, and principal involvement. A commitment by all stakeholders to inclusion is vital. Planning programs with staff involvement in order to meet the needs of students and staff is necessary. Teachers and support staff must have information about students' needs and programs in order to deliver successfully the appropriate instruction which is conducive to student success. And lastly, the principal's involvement is frequently cited as the single most important determining factor to the success of inclusion.

Successful inclusive education guarantees that students with disabilities obtain their legal right to an individualized education plan (IEP) without being separated from their peers. For their peers, inclusive education means that special needs of the class members with disabilities will not dominate teaching time but will create opportunities for

positive experiences with a more diverse peer group. Reforming a school in which these characteristics are evident requires several things: a focus on the individual school as the unit for improvement; a principal who communicates the beliefs that a school must serve all its students and that all students can learn; and, a principal who facilitates dialogue between staff members and students in planning and carrying out the required changes (Raynes, Snell, & Sailor, 1991).

### Principal Roles - General Education

During this literature search, there were few findings on the specific roles and behaviors that principals use to influence inclusion programs. The evidence which did surface indicated that most barriers to effective inclusion have been attributed to administrative disinterest and a lack of administrative support for the process of inclusion (Thousand & Villa, 1989). According to the Bank Street College of Education Guide for the School Principal and Special Education (1982), one of the chief determinants of the effectiveness of a school is the principal. There is a considerable body of research which claims it is the principal who is the single most important factor for change in a school. The school effectiveness research, for example, has linked "strong leadership" to school performance (Goodlad, Sirotnik, & Overman, 1979). In a study conducted by Weber (1971), four successful urban schools were visited. Data were collected through interviews, observations and additional achievement testing. Strong leadership emerged as a common factor in all four schools. A 1974 study completed by the office of

Education Performance Review for the State of New York found similar school leadership factors as germane to effective schools (Shoemaker, 1974). A case study of two Manhattan elementary schools ( a high achieving school and a low achieving school) were selected for an in-depth examination. Factors associated with the high-achieving school included positive principal/teacher interactions, frequent informal classroom observations by the principal, a set of school wide practices for reading instruction, attention to atmosphere conducive to learning, and open communication with parents and the rest of the community.

A Michigan State University team led by Wilbur Brookover and Lawrence Lezotte, conducted an in-depth analysis of eight elementary schools (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979). Six were "improving" schools; and two were "declining" schools. The purpose of the study was to determine what, if any, relationship existed among school social structure, climate, programmatic or personnel changes and consistent patterns of improvement or decline in achievement. In the improving schools the principals were likely to be instructional leaders, more likely to be assertive in that role and more likely to be disciplinarians. Principals of improving schools also assumed responsibility for evaluating the achievement of basic objectives.

Shoemaker and Fraser (1981) reviewed studies of school effectiveness conducted during the seventies. Their review showed the fact that principals apparently can make a difference. Four key themes emerged from the review of the research. Assertive,

achievement-oriented leadership was effective in accomplishing goals. An orderly, purposeful, and peaceful school climate enabled staff the environment to accomplish tasks. High expectations for staff and pupils was deemed essential in principals' behaviors for effectiveness. A well-designed instructional objectives and evaluation system provides long range as well as short range feedback to staff.

Much of the research on leadership effectiveness focuses on the relationship between leadership characteristics and their impact on teachers. Joseph Blase (1987a), presents an extensive study of the socialization of professional and personal-life factors which contribute to changes in teachers' perspectives on work over time. Analysis of initial observations and interviews of teachers pointed out that the leadership orientation of effective school principals was a significant factor in shaping the teachers' perspective. Questions were designed to elicit information from teachers on factors related to ineffectiveness. The teachers described the characteristics of roughly 95 principals in a variety of urban, suburban and rural settings. The results indicated that ineffective school principals negatively affected teachers' self-esteem. Factors identified with ineffective school leadership included nonsupport, unwillingness to recognize achievements and unprofessional approach to evaluation, harassment, authoritarianism, criticalness, intimidation, and favoritism. Overall, the data supports the conclusion that in working for principals who were defined as negative role models, teachers tended to disassociate themselves from their work. From Blase's data, it is theorized that school principals'

values, goals, behaviors and decisions directly and indirectly affect teachers and their relationship with others. Such factors influence both the personal and professional self of the teacher (i.e., professional growth, self-esteem, morale, commitment, effort) and contribute to the development of a negative mind set oriented toward self-protection and survival (Blase, J., 1987a). Blase (1987b), used the same data to examine teachers' perspectives on effective school leadership. The teachers reported nine principal task-related factors that make a difference:

1. Accessibility - refers to availability and visibility.
2. Consistency - refers to the compatibility of principals; behavior and decisions with existing policies, programs, rules, regulations and norms.
3. Knowledge/expertise - encompasses principals' formal knowledge of curriculum and research in the content areas.
4. Clear and reasonable expectations - refers to the school administrators' success in creating policies, rules, goals and standards.
5. Decisiveness - refers to the principal's willingness to make decisions in a timely manner.
6. Goals/directions - describes global and comprehensive goal structures.
7. Follow-through - is associated with the principal's inclination to provide appropriate and timely resources.
8. Ability to manage time - was defined as effective principals who managed

time efficiently.

9. Problem-solving orientation - was seen as effective problem-solving orientation associated with the ability to interpret and conceptualize problems.

These findings support the idea that principal leadership is comprised of a number of highly interrelated elements - behaviors, values, beliefs, attitudes, goals, and skills - that should be considered collectively.

In a study conducted by the National Association of Secondary Schools Principals' Assessment Center project, three national award-winning schools were selected for analysis (Walker, 1990). All three schools had unique problems and unique programs to address these problems. All principals were extremely dedicated and hardworking - a 60-hour work week was minimal. Each principal was shadowed for a period of four weeks. From these observations 12 key skills were identified as essential to principal success: a) problem analysis, b) judgement, c) organizational ability, d) decisiveness, e) leadership, f) sensitivity, g) stress tolerance, h) oral communication, i) written communication, j) range of interest, k) personal motivation and l) education values. These skills simultaneously can offer many opportunities for program successes.

#### Principal Roles - Special Education

Regardless of where the inspiration to include children with disabilities comes

from - be it the state education agency or the district's central office - the leadership at the building level will determine the kind of success a program will have (Inclusive Education Program, 1994). Many significant achievements in the provision of educational services for students with disabilities have transpired since passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975, most commonly referred to as the Education of the Handicapped Act. Consequently, school administrators continue to be challenged with providing appropriate educational and related services to students with disabilities. As instructional leaders, principals must assume responsibility for proper implementation of special education in their school. Burrello, Schrup and Barnett (1989) contend that the principal's role is becoming even more important due to the drive to improve services to students with disabilities by their inclusion in regular education settings. While principals who lead schools that serve special education populations must possess all the strengths of their contemporaries in regular educational settings, there are characteristics which are particularly vital and must be developed to a greater degree.

Bank Street College of Education's Guide for The School Principal and Special Education (1982), defines effectiveness as follows:

1. It is essential that principals in special education settings relate to others as equal and differentiated individuals. They are empathetic not only to the plight of handicapped vs. non-handicapped students, but to different types of handicapping conditions as well, recognizing that the manifestation of

particular disabilities may run counter to the behavioral expectations normally held for students. In doing so, they separate their needs from the needs of others and demonstrate a commitment to cultural pluralism and social justice while holding high expectations for all students.

2. The empathy of these principals is also extended to teachers working with special needs children. They are cognizant of the physical and emotional demands which these students make upon staff and provide an environment where faculty members feel free to examine themselves and raise questions without fearing misjudgment, refection or manipulation by the principal. The creation of such a setting requires a principal who demonstrates integrity, honesty, adaptability, creativity, imagination, openness, and a sense of humor.
3. Principals in special education settings recognize that students and program success depends a great deal upon the personal and professional commitment of themselves and their staff. Aware that the sense of responsibility guiding the spirit of commitment may peak and ebb, these principals are able to recognize and analyze these fluctuations, and strive to enable all staff to continuously recommit themselves to their work. In doing so, they clearly see themselves as agents of change, working for self and organizational renewal. (p.3)

A study conducted by the Tennessee State Department of Education found that few principals were knowledgeable enough in the area of special education to provide an appropriate education for students with disabilities (Hirth & Watt, 1993). Recognizing the necessity to provide principals with training in special education, a class was developed through Memphis State University. Pre and post tests were administered to participating principals, primarily to determine whether the principals in the classes improved their knowledge of special education. The results of the pre-post test analysis indicated that the goal was achieved for this particular group of principals. The majority of principals admitted they knew very little about special education, but realized that knowledge and understanding were now essential for successful inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classroom environments.

Rude and Anderson (1992), conducted a qualitative study to determine the building administrator's role in supporting effective inclusion practices for students with special education needs. Their study targeted the beliefs and concerns of practicing principals, classroom teachers, and special educators from elementary, middle and senior high school sites. Using interviews, the study identified particular personality characteristics and support skills of administrators which were beneficial to teachers who were involved in the inclusion process. Results are displayed in three categories: administrative role, classroom teachers, and special educators.

Administrative role:

1. The attitudes of the administrator was cited as the most influential factor for the success of an inclusion program.
2. Administrators at inclusive schools cultivated a school climate that signified that all students belonged at the school site, and that all teachers would teach all students.
3. Administrators must continually redefine the role of both the classroom teacher and special educator based on previous inclusion successes and emerging student needs.
4. In some cases, modifications of the existing school's organizational structure were necessary in order to provide built-in teacher collaboration and planning time.
5. When possible, administrators sought out and hired new teachers who were willing to accept a philosophy of inclusion.
6. Staff members were encouraged to have patience with one another; implementation problems were to be expected.
7. Providing inservice education programs to staff members enabled the development of new skills and provided a common language of instruction and assessment.
8. Inclusion task forces were helpful for identifying goals, guidelines and

procedures for inclusion.

9. Administrators promoted the sharing of fears and concerns; an open-door policy was in effect for teachers, students and parents.

Classroom teachers:

1. When possible, the administrators provided additional support personnel and technical equipment.
2. Realize time for conferences or additional classroom monies were incentives for teachers to become involved in inclusion.
3. Administrators asked individual teachers what they found to be rewarding, rather than assuming they already knew.
4. Viable means of emotional support were available including: development of teacher support groups, assigning one special educator to each classroom teacher to facilitate problem solving discussions and the development of a resource team whose members remained "on call" to respond to classroom emergencies.
5. Some administrators encouraged their teachers to redefine their expectations and definition of success for their individual students with special needs.
6. Classroom teachers benefitted from visiting successful pre-existing inclusion programs.
7. When insurmountable differences in philosophy occurred, and administrative

show of support included assisting the teacher in transferring to another school location.

Special Educators:

1. Administrators gave teachers insight into working with difficult colleagues and encouraged teachers to cognitively rehearse responses before approaching the person with whom they were in conflict.
2. New positions for existing personnel were created, i.e., integration facilitator, special education consultant.
3. Administrators modeled the concept of collaboration, team teaching and problem solving.
4. Reinforcing activities and opportunities were provided to replace what the special educators found rewarding. (pp.33 -35)

It is through the cooperation and understanding of principals, teachers and parents that a transformation in attitudes will occur and students with disabilities will be able to be totally integrated into regular education classrooms. Since principals assume the leadership role in their school, it is imperative that they have knowledge of special education and sensitivity to students with disabilities. The principal's role in inclusion models will most certainly be a determining factor.

Why is school leadership so critical to successful inclusion programs? Principals are regarded as the primary contributors to leadership functions in schools. Their

leadership behaviors tend to support or discount educational programming in schools. In recent years principals have taken more responsibility for special education programming within their schools.

What the leader stands for and believes in about schooling, the place of education in society, how schools should be organized and operated, how people should be treated are guiding principals that give integrity and meaning to leadership. Leaders stand for certain ideals and principals that become cornerstones for their very being (Sergiovanni, 1982). Sergiovanni also suggests that problems arise in schooling when "theory and research have emphasized too much on what leaders actually do and how they behave and not enough on the more symbolic aspect of leadership - the meanings they communicate to others." He further states that "by emphasizing leadership tactics, we miss the whole point of what leadership is and can be. Needed is a strategic view of leadership that emphasizes quality" (p.331). Quality in leadership requires that balanced attention be given to both tactics and strategy. What principals do and how they do it is emphasized by the research of Peter Vaill (1981). Vaill's research identified leadership characteristics associated with high performing systems and corroborates many of the quality leadership principals as well. Data from his research identifies three common characteristics of the leaders of all the high performing systems he studied:

1. Leaders of high performing systems put in extraordinary amounts of time. They work hard. They demonstrate that they care.

2. Leaders of high performing systems have very strong feelings about the attainment of the system's purpose. They care deeply about the system. They want the system to be successful. Their feelings are evidenced in the way they talk about the system and in the way in which they behave in the system.
3. Leaders of high performing systems focus on key issues and variables. They understand the concept "management of attention" and recognize the importance of modeling organizational purposes and values. They focus on what is important and are able to rally others to this purpose.

The emphasis on what principals do and how they do it is the basis of this study. A better understanding of how principals facilitate the work of others involved in inclusion is imperative. Principals share and often direct the problem solving techniques used by inclusion team members. It is important to study the actions that principals and teachers take to make the inclusion approach work. Too little is known about how leadership works in inclusive settings. The research proposed here represents one attempt to contribute to case literature that can make a difference to practicing administrators.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

#### Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate and document the roles principals play in the development and maintenance of the inclusion model of special education delivery. The study focused on teachers' and principals' perceptions about inclusion, particularly with regard to the principal's role.

As there are many aspects of inclusion to be studied, my analysis of related literature suggested that the principal's role in inclusion is a significant determining factor for successful inclusion programming. In conducting this study I have attempted to contribute to the fundamental knowledge of how principals manage inclusion. The research focused on "what" principals do, not necessarily "why." The basic purpose of this study was to describe principal behaviors and to illustrate the fundamental contextual themes surrounding these behaviors.

The study took place in two elementary schools which practice inclusion. Data were collected through formal and informal interviews, observations and document reviews in both schools. Interviews were conducted with teachers and school principals to determine the process and conditions of inclusion implementation, as understood from each participant's own experiences. Open-ended questions were used to allow informants maximum flexibility to discuss inclusion decision making within their setting

(see appendix A, B) . Interviews were augmented by classroom observations and inspection of relevant school records and documents (see Appendix C). Focal points during observations were: teacher-teacher interactions, teacher-principal interactions, and instructional-classroom activities. Many teachers in each school participated in the inclusion model. For the purpose of this study ten teachers and two principals distributed across these two schools participated in the formal interview process. A total of fifteen teachers and the two principals participated in observations. Five days were spent in each school conducting interviews, observing and gathering documentation. Procedures for recruiting and selecting participants for the study were determined by the principals and the researcher.

### Framework

A conceptual framework for collecting and analyzing data is an important part of building a case study. The framework for the present study was based on Miles and Huberman's theory for building constructs. Conceptualizing a framework helps to decide which variables are most important, which relationships were likely to be most meaningful, and, as a consequence, what information to collect and analyze (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Good frameworks explain the main components to be studied - the key factors, constructs or variables - and the presumed relationships among them. First, the concept helps decide who and what will and will not be studied. Second, the framework assumes that some relationships exist between variables.

The present study viewed principal behavior within the context of inclusion as the focal point of the study. Teachers and principals involved in the study perceived the principals' behavior through experiences which involved the setting, process and events of inclusion. Behaviors of the principal influence teacher perceptions about inclusion. Teachers' relationships with principals and their perceptions about inclusion influence principals' behaviors and perceptions. Principal behaviors, as perceived by teachers and principals, depend on the events, process and setting of inclusion.

Questions for research were articulated more specifically in view of the framework for the study.

1. What are teachers' and principals' perceptions about inclusion?
2. What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of how principals manage inclusion and what behaviors do principals exhibit to manage inclusion?

### Site Selection

Two schools were selected for study with the idea that rich cases of inclusion would emerge to illuminate the questions under study (Patton, 1990). Site selection was thus a preliminary concern.

Two strategies were employed to determine the schools for study: literature review and conversations with knowledgeable sources. My literature review suggested several basic attributes of successful inclusion practice:

1. Inclusive schools have an attitude - a value system and belief system

(Falvey, Givner, and Kimm, 1995).

2. As a result of having high expectations for all students (Levin, 1992), many educators are providing students with individualized approaches to curriculum, assessment and instruction (Armstrong, 1987).
3. Staff, students, parents, and community are collaborating with one another in the design and delivery of effective education for all students (Villa & Thousand, 1992; Thousand, Villa, & Nevin, 1994).
4. School staffs are facilitating students' social skills as they interact and relate to one another and develop relationships and friendships (Noddings, 1992).
5. Actively engage staff to participate in inclusion (Udvari-Solner & Thousand, 1995).
6. Students with disabilities are educated with non disabled students in the regular classroom (Winners All, 1992).

My second strategy was to contact knowledgeable sources who could provide information regarding schools who practice successful inclusion. Individuals contacted included: public school special education directors, principals, superintendents, college and university professors, state department personnel and public school central office administrators. In addition to these discussions about appropriate inclusion settings there were obvious practical considerations related to the criteria. These included length of time the school had been practicing inclusion - minimum of five years; schools maintain

relevant documentation; sufficient number of teachers (regular and special education) involved in inclusion - minimum of three special education teachers per school and a minimum of five regular education teachers per school; and presence of a full time principal.

Following the literature review and my discussions with sources; two documents were developed; a criteria list for site selection and a questionnaire for principals (see Appendix D).

Criteria included the following:

1. Schools will be involved in inclusion for a minimum of five years.
2. Schools will provide inclusion models for learning disabled students but can include students with other disabilities.
3. Students with disabilities are provided at least part of their school day in the regular classroom along side same age peers without disabilities.
4. Schools will employ at least three special education teachers involved in inclusion.
5. Schools will employ a full time administrator.
6. Schools will employ at least five regular education teachers involved in inclusion.
7. Schools will house documentation of inclusion efforts.
8. Schools will involve parents, central office staff and support staff in

inclusion efforts.

9. Schools will encourage social interaction for students with disabilities.
10. Schools will have a written or spoken vision of inclusion.
11. Schools will promote a sense of community (teaming, parent involvement, co-teaching, paraprofessionals as partners, students as problem solvers, flexible scheduling).
12. Schools promote high standards for everyone (students, teachers, administrations, parents).
13. Schools will use a variety of accountability (portfolios, individual assessments, IEPs).

Two schools were selected based on my knowledge of schools within the state and suggestions from the sources. This knowledge hinged on the fact that I am a special education director and have direct contact with other school divisions. The principals of the two selected schools were contacted and meetings were arranged. During this initial site visit I explained the study and completed the questionnaire with the principals. Both schools appeared to meet the criteria generated from the literature and source discussions. In addition both principals agreed to participate in the study and committed their schools as a research site.

To ensure confidentiality, all identifiable names and places were given pseudonyms, which are used throughout this document.

## Data Collection

Data were collected through observations, audio taped structured interviews, informal interviews and documents such as class lists, lesson plans, memos, letters, written statements and any other available documents related to inclusion efforts. These data were collected and analyzed using standard qualitative research procedures. Data collection focused on teacher and principal perceptions of inclusion and specifically on the role the principal plays in inclusion. I attempted to determine what factors teachers and principals deem important to inclusion and what behaviors principals exhibited in an inclusive environment.

The primary data collection method used was the interview. Audio taped formal or structured interviews included principals, special education teachers, and general education teachers. Informal interviews or purposeful conversations included principals, general education teachers, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, secretaries, and other support staff.

Formal interview participants included twelve individuals in the schools who were knowledgeable about inclusion and had personal experience with inclusion. Seven individuals in one elementary school and five individuals in the second elementary school participated in the informal interviews. Open-ended questions were used in the formal interviews to guide the conversation, but other topics were explored with the subjects as

deemed appropriate. The questions focused on the subjects perceptions of inclusion as well as the behaviors of the principals. Patton's (1990), suggestion that six kinds of questions are basic and can be asked of people on any given topic was very helpful in this regard. The basic categories are as follows (see Appendix E for further data):

1. **Experience/Behavior Questions** - These are questions about what a person does or has done. These questions are aimed at eliciting descriptions of experiences, behaviors, actions, and activities.
2. **Opinion/Value Questions** - Questions aimed at understanding the cognitive and interpretive processes of people. Answers to these questions tell us what people think about some issues.
3. **Feeling Questions** - These are questions aimed at understanding the emotional responses of people to their experiences and thoughts.
4. **Knowledge Questions** - Knowledge questions are asked to find out what factual information the respondent has. The assumption here is that certain things are considered to be known.
5. **Sensory Questions** - These are questions about what is seen, heard, touched, tasted, and smelled. Sensory questions attempt to have interviews describe the stimuli to which they are subject.
6. **Background/Demographic Questions** - These questions concern the identifying characteristics of the person being interviewed. Questions

concerning age, education, occupation, residence and the like are standard background questions(see Figure 1).

Formal interviews with the participants within the two schools were recorded. Participants at both sites were informed that interviews would be approximately one hour long, private and audio tape recorded. Each formal interviewee signed a consent agreement. Formal interviews were held in private locations in the school, i.e. offices, conference rooms or classrooms. Each interview began with a review of the purpose of the research and assurances of confidentiality. Initial interview questions and follow-up questions were asked until the interview concluded. The tapes were then transcribed. Brief notes were written by the interviewer during and following each interview.

Numerous informal interviews or conversations were conducted with various school staff in hallways, classrooms, cafeterias, offices or other areas of the school. Brief notes were written by the interviewer during and following these interactions. These conversations centered on individuals' perceptions about inclusion and the principals' role in inclusion. A detailed discussion of typical experiences can be found in the Results section of my research.

Observations were conducted within classrooms to observe teachers interactions with other teachers and paraprofessionals, and interactions between principals and staff members in various settings within the school. Focus was placed on the daily

instructional organization in classes and throughout other school settings. Notes were taken during and after observations. These notes were then used in the analysis of the data (see Appendix C).

Available documents were reviewed for information relevant to the study. These documents include memos, letters, class lists, program descriptions and philosophy, lesson plans, teacher action plans, school improvement plans, materials/resource lists, and other pertinent written documents. These documents were used as a basic source of information about how decisions were made related to inclusion. The origin of inclusion in each school was supported through these documents. How inclusion was introduced to faculties and staff; and information about programming planning was gleaned from these documents.

Observational field notes and documents were used to corroborate the formal interview responses. The teachers' class lists identified that students were scheduled with students' groups according to needs. A letter from one of the principals talked about his expectations of teachers and required their commitment. Observations of the resource mobile unit supported the responses from teachers that they did have many materials to use which helped in reducing planning time. The action plans devised by teachers assisted in determining short and long range plans for students. The philosophies for each school involved in my study clearly stated that they were child centered institutions which was

observed numerous times in both schools.

### Data Analysis

The discipline and rigor of qualitative analysis depends on presenting solid descriptive data in such a way that others reading the results can understand and draw their own interpretations (Patton, 1990). Procedures for analyzing the data involved a multi-method, triangulation approach. Data source triangulation provides guidance to look for the phenomenon or case to remain the same at other times, in other spaces or as persons interacted differently (Stake, 1995). Multiple sources of information were sought: observations, interviews and documents. I was able to validate and cross-check findings through this multi source method.

The inductive analysis (Patton, 1990), approach was used to formulate patterns, themes and categories that emerged from the data rather than patterns, themes and categories imposed on the research collection prior to data collection. In this method of research, data were collected and arranged into theoretical themes. Data analysis began with early interpretation of interviews and observations to determine other avenues to follow. I alternated between interviews and observations to follow leads identified through these sources. Follow up contacts were made to answer questions or explain situations.

Procedurally, I read through the field notes and the transcribed interviews. Margin comments, notes and questions were made on these documents. This assisted in

becoming more familiar with the data and to obtain a “feel” for participants’ statements and actions. The next phase involved an accounting scheme suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1992): setting/context: general information on surroundings; definition of situations: how people understand, define or perceive inclusion; perspectives: ways of thinking about their setting, how things are done; ways of thinking about people: understandings of each other; process: subsequent events, turning points, changes; activities: regularly occurring behavior; events: specific activities; strategies: ways of accomplishing things, people tactics; relationships: unofficially define patterns cliques, coalitions, romances, friendships, enemies; methods: problems, joys, dilemmas (p.139). This coding method was used to retrieve the most meaningful material, to assemble chunks of words that go together, and to condense the bulk into readily analyzable units (Miles & Huberman, 1994) (see Appendix F, G). This method allowed me to make the data intelligible by helping to create thematic links which looked at conditions, interactions among actors, strategies, tactics and consequences. This exercise helped to know and understand the data. The categories were then coded by the frequency by which the attributes were noted to appear in the data (see Appendix H, I). Classifying the data into categories helped to facilitate the search for patterns or themes within the setting. In this manner I was able to generate themes that described how participants believed principals managed inclusion as well as their general beliefs about inclusion.

To enhance validity, I employed a variety of strategies. First, a method of

submitting individual case studies to research participants was used. Individuals who participated in the study received a collection of assumptions or themes taken from my interpretation of raw data. Participants critiqued their own individual case studies for accuracy of meaning.

Second, an independent reader reviewed samples of data from the case study to independently make judgements and interpretations about the content and meaning of the material. For validity sake, Barbara was selected to participate as the independent reader for the study. Barbara is an experienced educator with a Ph.D. in Education Administration and Finance. Since completing her doctorate six years ago, she continues to conduct research for the Women's Studies Program at the university where she conducted her graduate work. She also conducts research for the State Superintendents' Group on various matters. In addition, she serves as adjunct faculty member for another university in the area of education administration. Her review of the raw data allowed a check for any biases or unwarranted conclusions. Her method of review was based on the same accounting scheme I used. Her interpretations were compared to my analysis of the same data. Using Bogden and Biklen's accounting scheme Barbara established similar results. I met with her to discuss the coding scheme and the findings. In general she determined the same descriptors of importance from the samples. For example; both Barbara and I found that the principal of Arrow Point School discussed more often 'how things were done' and the strategies people used to accomplish tasks than he discussed

how people understand their setting and situation. Similar interpretation of the data resulted in three common assumptions or themes. While I subsequently identified five themes from the overall data, Barbara independently agreed with three of the five themes from the sample she analyzed.

The third strategy addressed my credibility. As a teacher involved in special education for several years and as a special education director for seven years I have knowledge and experience with special education practices. Providing direct instruction to students with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances and mental retardation has given me first hand experience with these special education practices. I have also had first hand experience with the implementation of inclusion. I was involved in the initial development of my own school division's first attempts of inclusion. The principal of this school and I provided staff development and lobbied the school board for additional funding to support inclusion. Since assisting in the initial implementation of inclusion in one school, five other schools in the division have adopted some form of inclusion. I was involved in some aspect of inclusion development in these five schools. My involvement in inclusion has allowed for personal interactions with teachers and principals involved in inclusion. Interactions involved initiating and implementing programs, and problem solving. Through this process I reviewed articles, books and attended state department conferences on best practices of inclusion. Although there have been pitfalls encountered in my own inclusion, experiencing the overall concept and

practice of inclusion is viewed as an appropriate and well received teaching model within the division.

Finally, I also took great responsibility to become a casual presence in the two schools where the studies were conducted. During the visits for data collection, I mingled and interacted with school staff. I worked hard to create an open environment for communication. During interviews, participants appeared to talk freely if not seemingly appreciative to have someone willing to listen to their stories. During the exit visits, I felt a real sadness about ending the relationships with the schools. Great effort was made to be caring, genuinely interested and responsive to participants all the while remaining impartial.

The following sections represent descriptions of each site. Descriptions of each school's surrounding environments (community), the physical plant itself, the faculty and staff within, the administrators who manage the schools, the inservices and staff development activities, instructional strategies and the participants are all included in this section.

### Arrow Point Elementary

#### Setting

##### Community

This school is located in a rural community. The county which supports Arrow Point Elementary sets adjacent to a large university in one direction and an urban area in

the other. Families have moved to the area in recent years who are affiliated with the university. The area has become in some respects, a partial bedroom community for the university population. Due to this influx of families, Arrow Point Elementary has quite a diverse population to draw from. School personnel described the population of the school as “children of university professors, professionals, blue collar workers, single parents, no parents, traditional two parent families where dad goes off to work and mom stays home to volunteer in the community.” The community is growing and this growth has increased the diversity among students. The mission statement says, “We are committed to success for every person who enters into our school system’s environment and will settle for nothing less.”

### School

The school which was built in 1956 has since been remodeled and takes on a modern appearance. An expansion project to add second grade classrooms (150 students) is projected to be completed by August 1996. This expansion is partially due to the above mentioned growth of the area. The school grounds were observed to be well maintained as were the hallways, classrooms, and other areas.

The main building of the school contains a library, cafeteria, auditorium, and administrative offices. In addition to the main building, four mobile units located behind the main complex, house two classrooms - an art room and a resource and materials room. Directly across the street is the ‘annex’ which houses all nine fourth grades. A time-out

house is located across the street as well. This house is used for discipline procedures and is staffed with a full-time paraprofessional.

Six hundred regular education students and approximately 100 special education students attend Arrow Point. This school serves grades three, four, and five and is the largest of four elementary school in the county system. This school has twenty-eight general classrooms; nine classes of third grade, nine classes of fourth grade and ten classes of fifth grade. There are twenty-eight general education teachers and twelve special education teachers or “resource” teachers as they are referred to in this school. In addition, four paraprofessionals, one full time music teacher, two full time physical education teachers and one full time guidance counselor are on the staff of Arrow Point. The school stated a 22:1 pupil teacher ratio. Itinerant speech therapist, occupational therapist and physical therapist provide related services to students with disabilities.

### Staff

Many teachers live in the area and some families have lived there for generations. Some of the teachers talked about attending the county’s school system, graduating from the system, and now teaching there.

Arrow Point Elementary has a fairly stable staff although it has undergone modest staff turnover over the past several years. Staff replacement typically has been experienced teachers from other schools, although some teachers have come to Arrow Point directly from college. Several teachers have graduate credits or masters degrees.

The school has a reputation as a ‘tight ship’ and a good place to work therefore, teaching replacements have been made relatively easy.

The staff at Arrow Point were extraordinarily open, warm and willing to share information. This was particularly evident among those helping newcomers acclimate to the school. New teachers cited incidences where veteran teachers worked one on one with new teachers to discuss how programs were established and run. Purposeful meetings were scheduled to accomplish this. All new teachers were provided information on inclusion to explain the purpose, characteristics, components, and goals. Certain teachers did talk about having social relationships with other teachers outside the school. While socialization was not described as a big part of the professional daily lives of these teachers, specific incidences were noted where teachers discussed non-school related topics. As was noted, teachers typically used their unencumbered lunch time in the teachers’ lounge to socialize.

There was a sense of pride in the school which was expressed through verbal statements, the appearance of the facility and the observed daily interactions between staff, students and the community. There were definite indications of direction and responsibility from the staff. The staff expressed through statements and actions they were headed in the inclusion direction and it was their responsibility to see that they got there.

### Administration

The principal at Arrow Point has led the school through seven school years. His focus has been on demanding high expectations from everyone, including himself. Teachers reported that the principal does not expect any more of the staff than he expects of himself. Staff cited specific situations where the principal went above and beyond duties of a principal to assist students and the school. In addition to the principal, an assistant principal is employed at Arrow Point. His main responsibility is to work with discipline. He also assists the principal in administrative kinds of tasks.

### Professional Development

The staff has been involved in a variety of professional development activities, some of them on an individual basis, some done as a staff or as a division. The principal believes and promotes staff to be responsible and involved in their own professional development. A case in point was when two staff members developed and presented a summer in service on teaming and problem solving to the rest of the Arrow Point teachers. Two staff members attended a workshop titled “Project Team” which provided information on special education, collaboration and problem solving. The two staff members adapted this information to fit the needs of Arrow Point and delivered the inservice to staff over the summer. Teachers were paid stipends to attend this summer session. Teachers have been encouraged to attend local and state conferences and visit other school systems to view programs. Staff have also been involved in developing a

curriculum. This has included research and personal responsibility in learning curriculum writing.

### Instruction

Observations of daily classroom structure incorporated approximately twenty-two students per class receiving instruction in a general classroom setting with one general education and one resource (special education) teacher. Two teachers provide instruction in one shared classroom. Classes are comprised of general education students, gifted, remedial, and students with disabilities. In general, all students with the exception of three or four multi-disabled students receive 100% of their instruction in the regular classroom. Students are instructed in a large group or small group within the classroom. The grouping of students into large or small groups depended on the needs of the students and not necessarily the label of the child. The grouping was formulated around gifted, remedial (students below the 25 percentile), and students with disabilities. Teachers share instructional responsibilities within the classroom. The resource teacher's primary responsibility was noted to be small group instruction for remedial students with disabilities. Re-grouping was observed to be common place and transition for students appeared natural.

Sharing instructional materials was common at Arrow Point. A resource library was established by the principal and teachers to supplement the teacher developed curriculum. The principal accessed grants and other funds to purchase over \$40,000

worth of materials. The curriculum and materials reduced teacher time and planning in preparing for instruction.

Teachers work in teams of two or three; one or two general education teachers and one resource teacher to plan, organize and deliver instruction. Teachers meet daily to discuss curriculum and coordinate teaching strategies. In addition, many teachers exchange ideas on informal occasions (hallways, breaks, lunch, etc.). Although ideas and materials generally are introduced into teams by teachers, a significant proportion of the staff engage in what might be viewed as deeper levels of collaborative work. Such work, envelopes the inclusion program by teachers cooperatively planning units, dividing the labor and setting up and implementing learning centers. Formally, teachers meet before the beginning of school to develop a 'plan of action' for their teams. The plan of action is established by each team to address goals and objectives for student learning for the year. The plan must address diversity among learners, to include strategies for teaching gifted, average, remedial and students with disabilities. The plan determines what would be taught, when, where and by whom, taking into account the individual learning needs of students. Other kinds of instructional strategies are implemented as well, i.e. trade books, young authors program and the Dystar language program. All students are expected to take part during these instructional presentations.

### Participants

The inclusion model at Arrow Point Elementary has involved all teachers to some

degree - beginning with the initial planning and discussion five years ago to the current daily instructional decisions. However, for this study seven individuals were selected for formal interviews. The seven participants interviewed included the principal, three special education teachers and three general education teachers. The seven selected for interviews were also involved in classroom observations. Other teachers not formally interviewed were observed as well. Teachers involved in this research taught either third, fourth, or fifth grade students. All of the teachers interviewed with the exception of one, have been involved in inclusion since its conception at Arrow Point. The exception was a teacher who previously taught but left the profession only to return this year. A unique feature of this teacher was that while she was not teaching, she stayed involved in the school as a parent and as president of the Parent Teacher Organization.

#### 'Ward' the Principal

The principal, Ward, has been in education for 26 years within the system where the study took place. He has held a variety of positions, i.e. teacher, child development specialist, visiting teacher and principal. Ward previously taught at Arrow Point Elementary before he became principal. He also served as principal in another elementary school in this same division. Ward is viewed by his staff and peers as very professional. He takes seriously his profession and his role as principal. Ward spends most of his time during the school day out of his office addressing the daily management of running a school. Ward was observed on many occasions to carry a two-way radio with which to

converse with the assistant principal and the school's main office. Ward is viewed by staff as a "no nonsense kind of guy." Certain teachers reported feeling comfortable talking with Ward on a professional level only, while others talked about Ward as their friend.

I found Ward to be very easy and comfortable to be with. He appeared willing, open, and genuine when there were interactions between the investigator and Ward. He spoke with much pride of Arrow Point and their accomplishments. He also talked honestly and openly about concerns and problems they had struggled with in the past and problems they continue to face today. Ward could be described as a genuine optimist. He found positive in negative and talked of always finding other options to solve problems. It is evident that Ward is committed to Arrow Point and its inclusion program. He speaks of inclusion as a positive change. He talks about how important it is to make teachers feel valued, "they are the experts" and an integral part of the school. Ward states that putting hard questions before teachers is important and says that asking the hard questions makes teachers think about what they were doing. This was evidenced in a letter he sent to all teachers last summer.

The conversations, observations and documents reviewed never showed Ward losing sight of how important students were. When I observed Ward going about his daily process he continued to monitor the safety of students and the smooth running of the school.

Ward believes that without his persistence, inclusion would not have happened

but he also recognizes that without the initial idea from teachers and the continued commitment of staff, inclusion would not be happening today.

'Karla' Regular Education Teacher

Karla teaches third grade at Arrow Point. This year was her sixth year teaching and her fifth year teaching at Arrow Point Elementary. It was also her fifth year to work with Ward as her principal. Prior to becoming a classroom teacher Karla was a dance instructor for children and continues this instruction today. In all, Karla stated that she had been working with children for almost 30 years. Karla is the mother of a young adult attention deficit disorder daughter. Karla spoke candidly about her daughter and trying to secure educational support for her. "I look back on what my daughter went through and it breaks my heart. I think inclusion would have been good for her. She needed more than she got and I'll always be sad about that." Karla's beginning with inclusion started five years ago on a trial basis with a physically disabled student. The student and aide joined Karla's class with welcoming attitudes from Karla and the class.

Karla's classroom provides a sense of exploration and a feeling of hominess. There are numerous animals in cages and walls full of colorful posters about various topics. To one side of the room stands a large reading loft that Karla's husband assembled in the room (it had to be built in the room due to its size.) The loft has an upper and lower level full of soft, fluffy pillows. Students are allowed to take turns in the loft during certain reading times.

Karla's teaching manner was observed to be relaxed but in total control. When queried about her role in inclusion, Karla smiled and said, "I'm mommy for 21 - these are all my students." Karla also expressed that the practice of inclusion had improved her teaching skills. "It (inclusion) forces me to think about and use a variety of strategies to reach all students." She also takes responsibilities outside her classroom. She used her dance instructing talents to produce a brief version of the Nutcracker at school. She spoke about how everyone can be involved and stated, "You can never have too many mice. There were parts for everyone." Karla spoke about the importance of parent involvement in their child's education. She stated that parent communication is her 'biggy.'

'Christy' Regular Education Teacher

Christy teaches fourth grade at Arrow Point which was her ninth year teaching. All nine years have been in Arrow Point Elementary and all nine in grade four. Christy has a bachelors degree in elementary education with a minor in special education. Upon receiving her degree Christy waited ten years before accepting a teaching position. Christy has worked with Ward the past seven years.

Christy has been involved in inclusion since its beginning at Arrow Point. She stated that inclusion depends on the number and kinds of students you have and the resource teacher you are paired with. She talked about difficulties of having "too many of them with the same problem."

Christy explained that she needs much structure and quiet to teach. During the

observation of Christy's classroom the need for structure was noted. Upon entering Christy's classroom the third member of this team (a regular education teacher) was instructing a group. The group was noisy and moved about. At the end of the lesson Christy took over the class and the other regular education teacher left the room. The class took on a completely different personality. Students were quiet and moved directly to their assigned seats. Also, during this observation, the resource teacher worked almost unnoticed with a small group of students in an isolated part of the room. Little contact was made between Christy and the resource teacher or group.

Christy talked about not feeling supported by her principal and was concerned about morale at the school. Christy teaches in the fourth grade annex across the street from the main building. She stated that she sometimes does not feel she is a part of the school. She talked about often having problems in the beginning of the school year. Christy also could not remember having very many staff development activities.

Christy gave the impression that she was 'worn down' as a teacher - sometimes referred to as teacher burn-out. There was no way to determine if inclusion alone caused Christy to express these feelings or if other factors contributed to this despair, i.e. not feeling supported, housed in annex, taught same grade for nine years, or some outside factor.

#### 'Phyllis' Regular Education Teacher

Phyllis is a fifth grade regular education teacher who will tell anyone that inclusion

is “the best program to have happened to students and teachers - ever.” This is Phyllis’ twelfth year of teaching at Arrow Point. Although, Phyllis accepted a position at Arrow Point directly out of college and taught ten years, she left teaching her tenth year to raise a family only returned last year.

Phyllis stayed active in education during the time she was not teaching. She served as Arrow Point’s Parent Teacher Organization president while her children were students there. Her relationship with Ward is unique in that he was her seventh grade teacher and in recent years has taken an aerobics class with him.

Phyllis became involved in inclusion initially as a parent. Her involvement came through her children. Both her daughter and son participated in the inclusion support services. Her daughter was provided the enrichment support for the gifted and her son received remedial support for reading. Phyllis praised the inclusion model from a parents’ perspective “because both children received expert help without being labeled.”

Phyllis is a very personable, talkative individual. She has much enthusiasm about teaching and about inclusion. She talked positively about having another professional in the classroom to share in the responsibilities. “You really do work as a team to try and make sure that every child is served as they should be and it’s just nice to know that you get to share the responsibility. You know, two heads, two brains, four hands are better than one. I think it’s wonderful. I wish that other schools in the county did this.”

### 'Andy' Resource Teacher

Andy was one of the main players that instigated the first ideas of inclusion. Andy is a fifth grade resource teacher. He has sixteen years of teaching experience, eight at Arrow Point. His experience has been all at the elementary level with regular classroom positions, learning disabilities positions and mental retardation positions. Before becoming a resource teacher in the inclusion model five years ago, Andy was the gifted and remedial coordinator for Arrow Point Elementary.

Andy is a professional that continually looks for ways to improve instruction. The initial ideas about inclusion came from his efforts to ease classroom teacher's frustrations and help students. He was so willing to find better ways that he voluntarily gave up his coordinator position for inclusion.

To observe Andy in the classroom was to observe a master teacher at work. His style of teaching was textbook. Students were held captive to his instruction by creative teaching techniques. He used precise organizational strategies to ascertain mastery of goals for students and document needed review. Other teachers in the school view Andy as a leader in his field and seek him out for advice. I observed certain teachers and the principal seeking Andy for assistance. He is involved in many aspects of the school, i.e. scheduling of students, staff development, curriculum development and even extra curricular activities such as directing a musical production for the school.

Andy appears to have a deep sense of responsibility for inclusion. He talked in

terms of the school's success, not just his classroom. He also talked about his responsibility to let the principal know what teachers need to make inclusion successful. It also appeared he has the ability to recognize a problem and act on it. Above all, it is evident that Andy has high expectations for himself and others at Arrow Point.

#### 'Carrie' Resource Teacher

Carrie is a third grade resource teacher. She has taught eleven years in this school system and has a masters degree in reading with a certification in learning disabilities. Carrie has worked with Ward for seven years and has been involved in inclusion for five.

After the interview and observations of Carrie it was noted that she is a friendly individual who takes a direct approach with people. She is clear and concise in her conversations and her instruction. Carrie stated that inclusion has gotten easier. She said that certain teachers who worked together could have personality problems. She gave an example of this which seemed to be extremely frustrating for her at the time. She stated that she now enjoys working with other teachers closely and that working together is important for inclusion. She expressed concern over the principal switching teachers around each year to work with different teachers. She said that moving teachers can cause problems as teachers compare teachers.

Carrie spoke about the positive aspects of inclusion many times. She stated that she really enjoyed working with the gifted students and how important it is for her to work with any student who needed help or enrichment.

### 'Donna' Resource Teacher

Donna is responsible for the students at Arrow Point who have multiple disabilities. She has taught for eleven years, seven at Arrow Point. Since coming to Arrow Point she has obtained her masters degree in severe disabilities. Donna has worked with Ward since coming to Arrow Point and even talked about her initial interview with Ward. Donna said she remembered that she expressed quite an interest in including her students in the regular classes and this interest was probably why they offered her the position and probably why she took it.

She began her first year at Arrow Point by integrating a few of her severely disabled students into the regular classroom. She stated that the first year was an “experimental” year. Donna appeared to be very sure of what she wanted for her students. She talked about her students who were included in other classes :

I might teach around a small core group of students who have more intense needs and I also might teach a group of remedial students. This year it is students with mild mental retardation in combination with slow learners and remedial students. It's not necessarily a special education group - it's a group of students who need help.

Donna also spoke about the need of regular classroom teachers to know that they were supported. Donna would adjust the curriculum, make alternative tests to assist the instruction for students in the regular classroom.

High expectations are a large part of the success of inclusion according to Donna. She stated that she feels it is her responsibility to be a role model for other teachers. She talked positively about inclusion and stated she did so with other faculty members and the community. Donna also had high expectations for Ward. She cited an issue with Ward when she first came to Arrow Point. The issue had to do with accessibility, “You cannot have an inclusive school unless all students have physical accessibility to all areas of the building.”

#### Other Participants

Other individuals within the school setting where informal discussions were held included the school secretary, vice principal, guidance counselor, various regular education teachers and other resource teachers. Some of these discussions took place during lunch in the teachers’ lounge. Teachers are provided a duty free lunch which gives them an opportunity to discuss issues. I had the opportunity to be included in these discussions. These staff members talked freely about inclusion and the daily operation of the school. The discussions with the school secretary who had been employed at this school for 33 years were enlightening. In those 33 years she had only worked for three different principals. She was very matter-of-fact about what went on in Arrow Point. She stated, “I’ve seen a lot of changes - many people come and go.”

Most staff members in this school have had involvement with inclusion since the initial implementation but a small number of staff were only beginning their involvement

in inclusion. The conversations with staff new to inclusion were much more tentative than those with past experience.

## Blue Hills Elementary

### Setting

#### Community

This school is located in a suburban community. The community is a fairly homogenous, predominantly Caucasian, middle-class neighborhood. Many of the teachers and most of the students live nearby. Only children in special education programs are “bussed in.” Generally, the parents of students are concerned about educational issues and organized and active in the school community. Many parents serve as volunteers in the school and a large number show up for parent-teacher nights, school concerts and other school functions.

#### School

Blue Hills Elementary is a K-5 school with 424 regular education students and approximately 55 special education students. Blue Hills also houses two preschool handicapped classes and a regional autistic program for students who are not necessarily residences of this school’s attendance area.

The building is fairly modern and in good repair. There are 18 regular education classrooms: three - kindergartens, four - first grades, three - second grades, three - third grades, three - fourth grades, and two - fifth grades. In addition, the building contains six

special education classrooms, an administrative office, library, cafeteria, auditorium/gymnasium, and guidance area. All facilities are under one roof with two wings off the main hall. The two wings were built in recent years to accommodate student population growth. The school claims a 23:1 pupil teacher ration in regular education classrooms.

### Staff

There are eighteen general education teachers, eight special education teachers and nineteen paraprofessionals. Blue Hills has a full time physical education teacher, music teacher, art teacher, librarian and speech therapist. Related services for students with disabilities, occupational and physical therapy, are provided by itinerant personnel. A full time principal and assistant principal provide the leadership for Blue Hills.

Blue Hills Elementary has undergone fairly modest changes in staffing over the past several years. All staff categories have been affected and replacements have been mostly experienced teachers from other schools or teachers straight out of college. The reasons for staff turnover are varied and range from promotion to positions of added responsibilities, to relocations, to retirements. The administration has been very active in recruiting good caliber teachers to fill vacancies, but this job has been made easier by virtue of Blue Hills' reputation; the school and its neighborhood are known to many as a desirable place to work and generally lots of teachers apply when vacancies become available.

The staff at Blue Hills were extraordinarily open, warm and willing to share. They spoke openly and with pride about their school. Staff at Blue Hills are genuinely concerned about their fellow staff members. Natural mentoring occurs for newcomers or staff in need of assistance.

### Administration

The principal at Blue Hills arrived on the scene eleven years ago. His focus has been on improving curriculum and instruction through the involvement of staff and parents. The principal encourages parent participation in school decision making and has established a forum for such opportunities. The principal's role has been a facilitative one; he remains open and supportive, yet provides the impetus for staff to demonstrate leadership and participatory decision making.

The principal appeared to be very friendly with staff. He was observed to openly express personal concern over individual needs. This was not only seen with staff but with students as well. He knows all students by first name and knows most of their family histories. The principal creates a friendly, family atmosphere whenever he is present. This atmosphere appeared to be genuine and not contrived.

Blue Hills also has an assistant principal who has held positions at the school her entire tenure - first as a teacher then as vice principal. She was observed to be as genuine and open as the principal. Their professional personalities compliment each other. The vice principal works with many of the same administrative duties as the principal.

### Professional Development

The staff were involved in a wide variety of professional development activities, some of them on an individual basis, some done as a staff or as a division. Individual initiatives include attending personally appealing central office inservice sessions, additional qualification courses and graduate programs. But the staff were also very much involved in coordinating and presenting workshops at the school level. Frequently, these were held after school or on professional activity days.

At least yearly, inservice programs on special education topics are provided for staff at Blue Hills. These topics focus on specific areas of interest to the staff and are not chosen at random.

### Instruction

Teachers work in grade level teams to plan and organize instruction. Teachers meet regularly to discuss issues of inclusion. In most instances teachers seek out other teachers when issues arise that need immediate attention. Many teachers exchange ideas on informal occasions ( hallways, breaks, etc.).

The inclusion model at Blue Hills Elementary involves all eighteen regular education teachers, four special education teachers and eight paraprofessionals. Eight of the regular classroom teachers have a paraprofessional assigned to their classrooms. Every regular classroom teacher has one to eleven students with disabilities assigned as class members. Paraprofessionals are assigned to classroom teachers depending on the

severity of the student/s with disabilities in their class. Through individualized education programs (IEPs) a small number of students do not participate in regular classroom instruction or are served for a portion of their day in regular class settings. The majority of students with disabilities receive all or part of their instruction in regular classrooms.

Regular classroom teachers teach students with disabilities using various assistance. The instruction for the teacher and the class depends on the needs of the students. Paraprofessionals assigned to certain classrooms are there based on the needs of students. The paraprofessional's duties are to assist the students with disabilities with modified curriculum or simply to assist in the regular curriculum but possibly scribe or take notes for students. Often, paraprofessionals were seen helping unidentified students who needed help. Special education teachers collaborate with regular classroom teachers to devise accommodations or modifications for students with disabilities. Computers are an important part to instruction for some students since this can become a means for facilitating communication.

Instruction is a shared responsibility for regular classroom teachers, special education teachers, paraprofessionals and administration. Teachers talked openly about support being essential for inclusion to work.

### Participants

All staff at Blue Hills Elementary are involved in the inclusion concept in some manner. However, for this study four teachers and the principal were formally

interviewed. The teachers interviewed included two regular classroom teachers and two special education teachers. In addition to the formal interviews two paraprofessionals were informally interviewed and numerous other teachers and paraprofessionals were observed. All the participants formally interviewed were experienced professionals who had been involved in inclusion over the last several years.

### 'Troy' the Principal

The principal, Troy, of Blue Hills Elementary has been in education for 20 years. During that time he has held a variety of positions, all within the same school system. Before coming to Blue Hills eleven years ago, Troy was principal at a smaller elementary school, an assistant principal and had held a number of elementary teaching positions. Troy is a very personable, friendly "easy going" person. He was easily approached and was open in his conversation. I found Troy's behavior to be consistent in other interactions also.

Troy rarely spent time in his office during this study. He spends most days in and about the school, talking with staff and managing the daily tasks of schooling. Troy takes a hands on approach to his role as principal in particular as it relates to inclusion. He takes an active role in child study, eligibility and IEP writing. He spoke frankly about his knowledge of special education and the responsibility he felt as the administrator of Blue Hills. Troy is a child oriented educator who works to 'fit the program to the child not the child to the program.' He talked about the importance of having a continuum of

services for special education students.

'Kathy' Regular Education Teacher

Kathy teaches fourth grade regular classroom. She has taught in this system for 24 years, all at the elementary level. Her last fifteen years have been at Blue Hills Elementary. She has worked with Troy for the past eleven years and became actively involved in inclusion three years ago while working with physically disabled students. She spoke about teaching as being “my life.”

Kathy has a paraprofessional who works with her this year and has had paraprofessionals in the past. Although, Kathy appeared to be positive when she talked about inclusion she also spoke about her responsibility to the entire class. She spoke about the challenges that come with working with physically disabled students. These comments were tempered with a sense of accomplishment, “Having a special education student in my classroom seems normal.”

I came away from this interview with the feeling that Kathy looked at her teaching from a humanistic view. She talked about kids feelings and wanting them to feel safe and wanted.

'Polly' Regular Classroom Teacher

Polly teaches third grade regular education. She had taught for 21 years with the last 18 at Blue Hills Elementary. For the past three years she has been the third grade coordinator or department chair.

Polly stated that she began working with special education students 18 years ago and interacting with students with multiple disabilities 16 years ago. Her first contact with autistic students came five years ago. She spoke of this with a matter of fact attitude. She said that she took the initiative to interact with these students, “People tend to fear the unknown. The only way to understand these students is to know them.”

Polly views Troy as a mentor to her and to other teachers. She stated that she is comfortable going to Troy with concerns and that he is available when problems arise.

#### ‘Robbie’ Special Education Teacher

Robbie teaches students with emotional and behavior problems. This was her sixth year at Blue Hill Elementary. Before she came to Blue Hills she taught at the high school level. At the beginning of the interview, Robbie questioned what was meant by inclusion. She stated that she needed this clarification in order to frame her answers.

Robbie talked about the importance of collaboration and communication to have successful inclusion. She stated that it was her responsibility to convey to the regular classroom teachers that she felt comfortable with placing a child in the regular classroom, “I don’t put someone out there that I don’t feel comfortable about.” She spoke often about how important it was to look at each student independently - “case by case basis.” Robbie stated that, “you don’t set teachers or students up to fail.”

#### ‘Robert’ Special Education Teacher

Robert teaches students with multiple disabilities at Blue Hills and has done so for

six years. Altogether, Robert has taught in a variety of settings for over 27 years. Until Blue Hills Elementary, Robert's teaching positions have been in special education segregated environments; juvenile detention center, training center, occupational school, etc. Robert's experiences in education have centered around the moderate to severe student population. Robert has a masters degree in special education and has consulted for the technical assistant center for nine years with a focus on communication. Robert had presented inservice on inclusion at Blue Hills when he first joined the staff. Robert relayed the story of how he arrived at Blue Hills. His wife taught for Troy and Robert knew Troy through his wife.

Robert spoke in terms of feeling he was responsible for many of the special education decisions made at Blue Hills. He stated that the principal and teachers depend on him for guidance. Robert had not been involved in inclusion until he came to Blue Hills Elementary. His first opportunity to integrate students came with his position at Blue Hills' six years ago. He expressed concern for regular classroom teachers. He talked about how inclusion could "overburden" regular classroom teachers. Robert said he saw his job as 'putting out fires.' He talked about how important the paraprofessionals were to inclusion and to the school as a whole. He called them "overpaid volunteers." He talked at length about how special education had changed. The students he now works with are much more needy than in years past. The medical attention that students need is overwhelming.

### Other Participants

Informal conversations with Blue Hills staff included discussions with the school secretary, the vice principal, guidance counselor, paraprofessionals, classroom teachers and even a visiting teacher from South Africa who was there to learn about inclusion. Two of the paraprofessionals were informally interviewed. As with other staff members the paraprofessionals were open and willing to discuss their roles in inclusion. One paraprofessional, Sue, stated that even though she felt a tremendous amount of responsibility due to the medically fragile student she worked with, she felt comfortable in her position because this was a school that cared. She stated that her own children had attended Blue Hills and the school had always included students with disabilities. She stated, “The school climate comes from the top (referring to Troy).” Another paraprofessional, Joy, worked with a student with Down’s Syndrome and talked about the difficulties she encountered trying to meet the expectations of the parents, the regular classroom teacher and the student, “I try to get everyone to compromise and it’s difficult.” She explained that the student she now works with began the year with significant behavior problems. These behavior problems have diminished due to the development of a behavior management program for the student.

## Chapter 4

### Results

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate how principals manage inclusion. The behaviors principals exhibited and how teachers and principals perceived those behaviors were the primary focus. However, principal behavior cannot be understood without examining the total inclusion context, therefore; an important secondary piece of this study was my attempts to document the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes the teachers and principals involved in this study have about the inclusion model of service delivery for students with disabilities. The context in which inclusion occurs serves as the basis of this study. The experiences and situations described by the participants of the study tell the story. The general idea is that inclusion is something experienced in situations. These participants had experiences to share. Situations were made up of people and their surrounding environment. Lessons can be learned about the experiences and situations by studying the interactions of people according to certain processes.

The results presented here were established by reviewing notes, organizing the data, looking for patterns, checking emergent patterns against the data, cross-validating data sources and findings, and making linkages among the various parts of the data and the emergent dimensions of the analysis. This process required making carefully considered judgements about what was significant and meaningful in the data. Ultimately, this

process led to recurring regularities or regularities representing patterns that could be sorted into themes. This study demonstrated what actually happened to teachers and principals involved in inclusion and what they said about what happened to them. A summary of these findings is presented with supporting data. The results have been organized by schools. The “story” of each school is presented followed by themes on principal behavior along with teachers’ and principals’ perceptions about inclusion.

The programs described in these cases represent variations on the theme of including students with special needs in the regular education classroom. The intent of this study is to describe the richness of these cases in terms of how inclusion operated from the teachers’ and principals’ perspectives. This was accomplished by describing the roles and responsibilities of these actors involved in this study. How the program feels and looks as described by the participants will add to the richness of the description.

#### Arrow Point Elementary

The following is a representation of the situations and experiences of individuals who work at Arrow Point Elementary. A description of how inclusion began and is currently implemented is provided.

#### The Story

Inclusion in Arrow Point Elementary was born out of need, a need to find better ways of serving students. The faculty was faced with the dilemma of how to serve the seemingly growing population of those students who fell below the average. These

students were sometimes referred to as - at risk, slow learner, lower quartile, or remedial. A growing frustration sparked incentives to find ways to address this need. At the same time this need was being assessed, the Systems Change Project was initiated and Arrow Point began their collaboration with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to initiate this program with a moderate and severe class. This project involved the support of the VDOE to certain school systems who were interested in piloting an inclusion program in their schools. Ward, the principal, was approached by two faculty members, Andy, the school's gifted coordinator and Charles, a special education teacher with a proposal to pilot a fifth grade inclusion program (Charles has since moved from the area). Ward expressed this in these terms, "We began to look at how we were going to serve the lower quartile and then the state came out with the Systems Change Project. We had been given a position along with the gifted position to provide remedial services." The consensus of the fifth grade teachers was to model this program after the inclusion program already established by the Systems Change Project. The next hurdle was to develop a program with existing resources. This was accomplished through the determination of Charles and Andy. With the support of Ward, these two teachers worked with fifth grade teachers to organize and plan an inclusion model at the fifth grade level. This model of inclusion represented the combined expertise of state department professionals as well as local expertise of special education teachers, regular education teachers and administration. The first year yielded many success stories and other

discussions and organizational meetings followed.

Arrow Point used a collaborative approach which teamed resource and classroom teachers in the classroom in order to reach as many students as possible. This program was designed to assist all the students in a class with particular attention given to meeting the requirements of Individual Education Plans (IEP) for identified special education students. These classes revolved around the continuous communication between the parent, resource teacher, regular classroom teacher, and any other needed personnel to create a successful learning environment for the child. The continuous growth of this type of service delivery for special education students was multifaceted. The staff and principal recognized that more time preparing for students' needs was essential, staff development was identified as lacking, and the scheduling of students into classrooms was known to create problems if not conducted with much thought. As other teachers saw the benefits students were receiving, their interest peaked. Donna recalled:

Once we started it, people began to see that I was getting calls from parents of regular education students saying that they were very pleased that my child is having the opportunity to grow socially and emotionally. Teachers would see kids on the playground or in the classroom helping each other and that it was not just an experience where a student with severe disabilities was taking from their peers constantly, but there was a give and take experience.

Not only were special education students receiving support in the regular classroom, but

gifted and remedial students were receiving support as well. Many observations were made of various students requesting assistance during instruction from the special education teacher. The challenge of inclusion placed many demands on the faculty and administration. The first and most obvious demands were those of personnel and materials. The faculty and principal determined that in order to serve the diverse needs of students in regular classrooms, additional personnel would be needed. Recognizing this need, the principal lobbied parents for support and the school board for additional personnel. Due to the positive benefits students were receiving through this model of instruction, parents supported and encouraged the school board to hire additional personnel. The principal also accessed grants and other funding sources to secure supplementary materials in excess of \$40,000. The materials were stored in a large collection located in one of the mobile units at the back of the school. All teachers have access to these materials. Teachers were seen in planning sessions which incorporated these materials.

Training was an essential part of Arrow Point's inclusion program. Time and money were allotted each summer to allow teachers to develop curriculum and plan staff development activities. Curriculum developed by staff was observed for both reading and math. The staff development activities have consisted of information on collaboration, teaming, communication, problem solving, scheduling and special education regulation.

Teachers at Arrow Point reported many meetings where their thoughts, feelings and attitudes about inclusion were discussed. The teachers and the principal reported being faced with the need to commit to inclusion. A poignant letter was sent to the faculty by the principal expressing his desire to continue with inclusion. In this letter the principal asked the faculty if they were committed to continuing this “journey” with him.

The letter continued:

As we move forward I would like for each person to consider this as a journey and make the decision if they want to take the journey. Not everyone feels our journey has been in the right direction. If this is your feeling, you should consider if you should continue working here. The majority of students, parents, and staff have found success at Arrow Point and look forward to continuing. The staff at Arrow Point is exciting to work with and the creative talent shows in all you do for students. I look forward to continuing the journey with you.

Upon entering this school, I conversed with and observed a group of faculty who were committed to the “journey.” I learned that the majority of teachers who participated in the study were committed and the letter was a reminder of that commitment. After the faculty received the letter, Ward met with each faculty member privately and asked if they were willing to commit. Ward said that every faculty member stated to him that they were there for the journey.

Arrow Point Elementary works on the premise that all students belong. All

students, no matter what their need, are served in a regular classroom. Only one special education class room exists. This room houses equipment and materials for the moderate and severe special education students. Teachers reported that scheduling or clustering was a major component of inclusion. Students are grouped in classrooms where two teachers provide the instruction. Classrooms or teachers' class roles typically include five to eight students with IEPs. Small group instruction consists of special education students, remedial students, and any other students who needs assistance is provided by resource teachers (special education teacher). The regular classroom teachers provide instruction to a larger group or the average, gifted, and often special education students. During group instruction both the teachers teach the same subject but with different approaches and in some situations at different ability levels. Student placement within the class is determined by the need of a particular student at that time. Students were observed approaching the resource teacher for assistance. In one instance, during instruction time a student from the larger group removed himself and came over to the small group to ask the resource teacher for help. The resource teacher paused from the instruction and assisted the student. This was carried out with no disruption to other students. This behavior appeared to be accepted when seeking assistance. Resource teachers typically provide enrichment instruction for gifted students, also.

Observations of classroom interactions between the resource teacher and the regular classroom teacher revealed a well planned and organized professional relationship.

These teams needed little discussion about instructional strategies during class time. The two teachers delivered the instruction seemingly with ease. Sometimes each teacher taught the same lesson but to smaller groups. Other times, the two teachers taught the same objective, but used different instructional strategies and/or materials. The special education teacher provided a designated group of students with a remedial lesson while the general education teacher taught the rest of the class an enrichment lesson. Teachers reported they had regularly scheduled planning with established grade level teams to discuss and organize instruction. A plan of action was also developed at the beginning of each year to map out what would be taught, when and by whom. This plan also outlined the strategies teachers would use to meet the many diverse needs of their students. Teachers viewed this document as essential to instruction.

These descriptions of experiences and situations provide documentation of the lives of the participants who practice inclusion. From these interviews, observations and documents themes surfaced that appeared to have a direct impact on the success of inclusion as it relates to the principal's leadership skills. The data collected through the study were analyzed in terms of five themes that emerged on principal behavior in inclusion:

1. Faculty involvement in decision making.
2. Staff support.
3. Communication.

4. An atmosphere of caring.
5. Risk taking and problem solving.

Faculty involvement in decision making.

It was very clear early on in the study that the principal felt it important for teachers to be involved in school decisions and to take responsibilities. The principal was observed conversing with faculty informally on many occasions about school related matters. My analysis of the interviews, observations and documents indicated that the principal expected teachers to be involved in decisions made regarding inclusion and that teachers should share in the responsibility of building effective inclusion programs. Teachers were given many opportunities to share in the process. Before inclusion was implemented and even after implementation, faculty meetings were held to discuss curriculum, scheduling, instructional planning, and overall thoughts about inclusion. “Each person had a hand in the decision making and whether they wanted to take part.”(Ward) Ward and the teachers who participated in the study used plural nouns when describing decision making situations. The principal stated, “Around the second year I was here we began to look at how we were going to serve the lower quartile . . .” One teacher agreed with this by stating, “We had a lot of changes that we needed to make for our remedial children.” Most discussions centered around the idea that faculty and staff at Arrow Point were viewed as a team. Very little conversation focused on individual decision making. The principal even described what they did when beginning

inclusion in terms of teacher decisions and responsibilities, “What we do is take a team of teachers and make them responsible for the instruction of the children in their classroom,” and “The decision was made as we looked at a problem and we came up with some ideas of how to handle it. Each person had a hand in the decision making and whether they wanted to take part.”

Teachers cited incidences of the principal requiring teachers to take on decision making tasks, i.e., student scheduling, curriculum writing, inservice presentations and overall program and school improvement issues. Teachers are expected to create and establish successful programs for all students. Most teachers interviewed talked about the importance of student scheduling and how critical student scheduling is to instruction. The teachers involved in the scheduling stated that much time and effort went into making those decisions. “I wish outsiders knew how much time and effort goes into scheduling students.”(Carrie) Scheduling students into classrooms seemed to have an effect on certain teachers’ attitudes about inclusion. Christy stated “. . . there are a lot of days where I’m just fed up by the time I go home because I’m tired of dealing with this stuff. I don’t feel that this many of the same children should be in the same room.” Carrie talked about what was involved in scheduling, “It takes us hours to do the third, fourth, and fifth grades. To group the children, it takes us hours. We do it in about three days. If they (visitors) could see all that we do to try to decide.”

Another decision responsibility cited by Carrie included what role she perceived

Ward to play during the decision to go to inclusion, “I think trying to present ideas and get people’s feedback. I think he (Ward) wanted us to be the decision making people. He didn’t want to say we’re doing it and this is how we are doing it.” Ward expects teachers to create and establish successful programs for all students. He was cited as describing teachers as the experts, “In approaching inservice I’ve helped teachers by allowing them to learn and then them teach other teachers rather than bring in an expert, we haven’t brought in the experts. Our own people become the experts.” Teachers are viewed as experts by Ward due to their involvement in inclusion. Teachers at Arrow Point talked about the problems they solved and the processes they went through to solve them. Many teachers had taken or were in the process of taking additional course work in special education or curriculum development. Teachers created a curriculum for Arrow Point students. This curriculum was written with the inclusion model as part of the curriculum equation.

#### Staff Support.

According to teachers’ responses and the observations made, the principal was attentive to the needs of faculty and staff. Materials were observed to be abundant. An estimated \$40,000 had been spent on resource materials for teachers to use as supplementary aids, with the teacher developed curriculums. All teachers have access to these materials at anytime. Teachers discussed the importance of the materials in supplementing the curriculum. They cited instances of using materials to develop lessons

which reduced preparation time drastically. Andy stated, “The materials have been a real bonus. If we had to hunt for materials it would have taken twice the time.” The materials library was noted to be an impressive part of the school. Many shelves were filled with an enormous selection of instructional materials. It was observed on many occasions in the classroom where teacher utilized these materials to enhance instruction. A science lesson on plant germination included the use of visual (charts), and manipulative (beans, cards) to enhance the learning process.

When asked, Ward stated that he supported teachers in a variety of ways. He talked about helping them solve problems, managing the school’s budget, providing additional personnel and communicating with the public. He supports the faculty in their inclusion efforts continuously by keeping people informed. He stated that if your parents are informed about good programs when benefits are apparent, they will support them. He went on to explain:

We’ve constantly worked on keeping parents informed. One reason this (inclusion) works is parents’ support it. When we wanted more resource teachers it came out of our parent group last year, it came out of our teacher group. We wanted more resource teachers the last two years. I have gotten additional resource teachers. Not funded by special education . . . That’s one of the things I’ve done for teachers - is to provide for them the support staff and in terms of materials they need.

According to the staff teaching roster the number of resource teachers certainly exceeded the requirement set by the program standards for special education pupil teacher ratios.

Teachers talked in terms of having the support of the principal to solve certain problems for them. Problems dealing with difficult parent issues or legal issues. Carrie expressed her desire for the principal to solve problems, "Think being a problem solver is important. Sometimes you have personality conflicts between teachers and sometimes you have parent complaints. It's a relief when Ward takes care of it." Donna discussed Ward's support by giving examples of his leadership, "He helped us support it (inclusion) by bringing us together and talking about how teams work together and showing us different programs we can use."

#### Communication.

Many references were made to communication in discussions of inclusion. One of the main focuses of the school was the assumed understanding that this was an open democratic environment where everyone was free to express themselves. Not only was this an environment which offered opportunities for free expression, but there was a sense that there were people who would readily listen to what individuals had to say. Phyllis stated, "The resource teacher and I talk everyday. I'm lucky to have someone who shares my concerns for students and wants to listen. We sit and talk everyday about the day, the next day, or whatever." The principal created forums for open discussions by scheduling time for teachers to plan and organize and by inviting faculty to state their

opinions, beliefs, and feelings. Early in the planning stages of inclusion, Ward offered many opportunities for discussion. Donna expressed these sentiments by saying, “I think that being able to be honest about your feelings and then being able to communicate what those feelings are is important and we’ve been able to do that.” Ward described his initial role in inclusion as, “In the beginning I listened . . . I listened a lot.” He also talked about inviting teachers individually to discuss with him their commitment to inclusion. He stated that one of the most important things he had done for teacher was to put the question of commitment before them. He said that by putting the question out there, “... made people think about what they were doing.” Ward appeared to want honesty from the people he worked with. It was acceptable not to believe in inclusion but he wanted people to be honest with themselves and about their beliefs. This is why asking the “question” was so important to him. I believe that this type of openness is viewed by most principals as risky. Past experiences indicate that most principals do not invite faculty opinions since it could lead to what principals would consider insubordination. Ward could possibly be viewed as confident and comfortable with his place among his staff.

While in school communication was important, parent and community contact was also viewed as important. Documents revealed weekly letters, notes, and newspapers were sent to parents about student progress and school wide activities and events. The principal viewed part of his role as public relations person for Arrow Point

Elementary. After the first couple of years of inclusion, Ward received positive feedback from parents. The expressed consensus of the parents were that the additional help for non-identified students was very positive. It was reported that parents of gifted students like the enrichment support their children received, i.e. special projects, challenging individualized instruction. Ward and Andy have made presentations about inclusion in Arrow Point at the local, regional, and state levels. Ward believes that you should “keep inclusion out there before the public.” Polly talked about going before the school board as a parent and requesting funding for additional personnel to support inclusion. She said that Ward had garnered the support of these parents to make this happen.

#### Atmosphere of Caring.

Teachers reported feeling ownership for all students in their classrooms. All interviews and conversations were flavored with words such as; we, our, or mine, indicating that staff expressed a sense of responsibility for students’ education. Teams of teachers approach instruction by sharing responsibilities. These teams consisted of teachers trained to work with students and teachers individually and are scheduled to go to each classroom that contained children identified as special education, gifted or remedial to share in the instruction. Karla expressed this eloquently by saying, “We have a lot of people here who just think it makes sense, who really value children. I think children are basically respected, are worked with that way and I think that’s it, maybe it’s Ward and the people he has hired.” Ward also described inclusion as, “A program that revolves

around the theory that children should not be pulled out of the classroom and that all children should work in the regular classroom.” Historically speaking, schools have handled teaching to diversities by segregation. What Arrow Point is doing is providing a program which teaches the students that they were valued members of the school community and the school would do whatever it takes to include them in the total school environment. It was important for Ward to set up Arrow Point for inclusion. He talked in terms of “driving it through.” He stated:

My leadership in terms of me just decided that this was what we needed to do after looking at everything and knew we could do it and provided the leadership to keep it going. One of the things that I wanted to happen is for Ward, the principal, to be able to walk out of the building and inclusion continue.

Ward realized that in order for that to happen he had to create a philosophy that all children belonged. He knew that inclusion was built on this philosophy.

Another expression of student belonging came in the form of expectations. Teachers and principal had relatively high expectations for students. Students were often seen tutoring each other, working together in small groups, or even wheeling the severely disabled student about in their wheelchairs. Examples of high expectations were expressed through using the same discipline procedures for all students. Problems in the classroom are dealt with as a class, or with support of the administration. A problem-solving process is part of the discipline system and students are expected to take responsibility

for their actions. Serious discipline problems have decreased in recent years and students are spending more time in class as a result. All students are expected to master similar content with appropriate modifications and accommodations. Andy explained this by stating, "I want all students to try because they are going to learn from it. With all the help they are given like individualized instruction, small group, modified tests, and modified materials they should be able to make it." Other expectations came in the form of teacher expectations for colleagues and expectations teachers have for the principal and the principal has for the teachers. Teachers expected all other teachers to set students up for success and to take responsibility for all students in their classrooms. Ward promotes teacher acceptance of integration of all students in academic environments by implementing inclusion. His letter to teachers was an example of promoting this concept that all students belong.

#### Risk Taking and Problem Solving.

Teachers described situations of approaching the principal with problems. The teachers indicated that the principal would often lead the teachers into problem solving techniques to use. Ward views his role as a facilitator to faculty members in solving issues. Certain faculty members were less than pleased with this mode of problem solving. One teacher talked about going to Ward with a problem she had with another teacher. According to the teacher, Ward made suggestions of how she might solve the problem but did not intervene. The teacher felt that Ward should have taken

administrative action against the other teacher. The flip side of problem solving was that Ward did indeed solve many problems within the school. Andy explained, “That’s been an important role of his (Ward) - finding the money, finding the personnel, finding the resources, letting parent voice their opinions.”

The data revealed that Ward can be viewed as a risk taker. He embraced major changes in Arrow Point when he first took the principal’s position. Arrow Point operated on a middle school concept. Ward’s goal was to change this approach to an elementary school environment. He felt the school was getting big and overpowering and an elementary approach would provide a more nurturing, personalized atmosphere. Several major changes had to take place to achieve this goal. Ward accepted this challenge and within a year had successfully made this transition.

Other cites of taking professional risk had to do with encouraging and promoting teachers to freely express their opinions. Ward solicited teachers’ feedback about inclusion. Often administrators in education do not allow teachers to openly and freely express opinions. Ward explained, “I allowed a lot of input and I talked to a lot of people.” Ward also was willing to listen to ideas about change from his faculty. The idea of inclusion was born of a suggestion from two teachers. “He was willing to let Charles and Andy try out their idea of inclusion as a pilot the first year. He listened to their ideas and allowed them to present it to the whole faculty.”(Carrie)

### Teachers' and principal's perceptions about inclusion.

While the management of inclusion by the principal was the focus of this study conducted at Arrow Point, research on inclusion would be lacking if teachers' and the principal's perceptions were not explored. Their thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes about inclusion have an immense impact on the implementation of the inclusion model. These impressions or assumptions about teachers' and the principal's perceptions emerged from the data analysis.

Teachers and the principal of Arrow Point Elementary reported to believe inclusion was good for all students but especially for special education students and remedial students. A personality profile assessment was conducted after one year of inclusion on a core group of special education students. Results of this assessment showed a tremendous positive change in how children felt about themselves. Ward stated:

A group of us at that time tried inclusion at the fifth grade level on a pilot program and showed that it worked with the LD students. We set it up, we wrote the IEPs so that students could go out of the pull out program back into the classroom and we served those students for a year and then we tested them and looked at some personality profiles. Really that's where we saw the tremendous change was how these children felt about themselves. The gains were the same or better in terms of academics. The gains didn't go down, they stayed the same and some were better. It wasn't a big massive change academically, but it wasn't a

drop either, but there was tremendous change in how ... the students felt about themselves.

In addition, according to the participants in the study, life lessons were taught about accepting individual differences. These lessons were not just learned by students but by the staff as well. “Our regular students will never look at those types of students and feel they don’t belong.” (Ward) Karla described this by stating:

The situation (inclusion) has done so much. The smiles on the faces, the involvement. I think its done a lot for the children whether they were EMR or special education that they are not off in another place by themselves. It has also helped the other children be more accepting and understanding of the differences and more tolerant and able to start getting along a little better with other people.

Teachers referred to inclusion as hard work, commenting on longer hours, difficulty planning and in general continual collaboration with another professional. Andy explained:

I think it’s a whole lot harder. It takes a lot more time, it takes a lot more planning. Sometimes it is hard to work in small spaces in classrooms when you’re used to larger rooms. So, I think that most special education or resource people would say that it’s much harder than what we did before. I think most would say that it’s the best thing for children, and it’s more real life, the real world is right here in this classroom, because when you get out [of school] you don’t have separate jobs.

Scheduling, grouping, or clustering as some teachers discussed, were particularly hard to accomplish and important in order to provide the best services possible. Not grouping students caused services to be fragmented and disjointed by spreading resource teachers too thin. Teachers talked about working during the summer to schedule students. They tried to group the students so that teachers would have equal distribution of gifted, average, remedial and special education. Due to the number of students identified special education this was not always an easy task. Certain teachers continued to become frustrated with their class mix of students. "They should not all have been placed in the same classroom. There are too many of them with that same problem." (Christy)

High expectations for all was cited as very important to inclusion. The data revealed that everyone involved in the inclusion program had some expectations. These expectations came in many forms and in different roles. Teachers had certain expectations of other teachers such as sharing instructional planning and delivery, discipline, staying until the job was done. Karla stated:

I know the resource teacher I had two years, I felt just she did her job and didn't do anything extra. And then see the resource teacher this year who is wonderful, pulling rabbits out of hats and somebody else is doing it and I just say 'come on'. That was a major school wide thing that bugged me, well actually it bugged all of us. I liked her as a person, nice person, but just didn't put in the time, didn't go the extra mile.

The teachers also held high expectations for their students and certainly for the principal. Teachers expected all students to follow the same school rules and receive the same consequences. Students were held responsible for their behavior. If students broke school rules they lost privileges and were required to earn back their privileges. In the same vein, the rewards were shared by everyone. Teachers expect the principal to support their efforts by providing additional personnel and materials. Andy described his expectations of the principal as:

If I need something or if any teacher I work with needs something then I expect that we can get it, within reason. That's why this room probably looks so cluttered, we have asked for materials and have gotten them. If I need a certain kind of support then I expect to get it.

Many examples of communication as very important aspects of inclusion were cited. The principal and most teachers referred to keeping inclusion "out there before the public." Keeping the community informed about what was going on in Arrow Point Elementary was viewed as important to the success of inclusion. Communication tactics used to facilitate inclusion included teachers planning time - daily and weekly, daily and weekly communication with parents, and faculty meetings where specific topics in inclusion were discussed. All teachers at Arrow Point were required to have weekly communication with parents. Some teachers prepared a newsletter for their class which discussed the events of the class. Other teachers made phone calls, wrote letters and notes

to parents or made comments in student assignment notebooks. Phyllis stated:

I send these notebooks home every week and so I communicate with all of the parents even that way. She (resource teacher) calls a lot and I talk a lot on the phone to parents. I'm lucky because we sit down every day in here and talk about the day, the next day or whatever.

All teachers who participated in the study viewed good working relationships as very important to inclusion. Teachers cited negative experiences with other teachers as detrimental to the inclusion process and indicated that teaming and collaboration were positive. Teachers discussed personality conflicts and feelings of ineffectiveness. Andy explained:

He (regular classroom teacher) takes them to the front table and works with them individually during the creative writing period. He does whole group stuff, but he always sets a side some time to work with remedial and LD students that are in the classroom. So, definitely, it is a partnership that I don't think you would have from a pullout program. So we have a very strong partnership.

Another subcategory to relationships and personal interaction included the issue of teachers feeling valued, equal, and respected by their peers. The data revealed that most teachers identified situations of mutual respect or feelings of peer equality as important. Incidences where teachers felt less than equal or devalued were harmful to professional relationships. Donna described this as:

I think that was probably one of the best ideas (inservice on teaming) he has had as far as making it (inclusion) work for everybody because if we treat everybody with respect from para-professionals all the way through teachers, then I think that the kids see that everyone is respected.

The data revealed an overall general positive attitude or tone toward inclusion. The principal as well as most teachers interviewed thought that not only were they positive about inclusion but that others in the school and the community were positive. Donna stated:

Once we started it (inclusion) I was getting phone calls from parents of regular education students saying that I am very pleased that my child is having the opportunity to grow socially and emotionally from this experience and teachers would see kids on the playground or in the classroom helping each other and that it was not just an experience where a student with severe disabilities was taking from the peer constantly and demanding of that student, but that there was a give and take experience in that both students were learning from it. Teachers saw that and they began to accept it because it's accepted by the kids and parents are complimenting the positive for what their kids are getting in the community and it just kind of ripples down and everyone feels good about it.

I did note that one participant expressed negative statements about inclusion. These negative statements pertained to specific issues within her classroom. As stated by

Christy:

We've had a morale problem and I don't think it's been worked through. And I don't know that it is necessarily directly related to inclusion except that I know that it is very stressful to be working with these kids all day and if you have a resource teacher who either doesn't know what she's doing or refuses to take any kind of suggestion.

Above all other indicators identified through this study, the support of additional staff, materials, and resources were overwhelmingly reported as necessary to inclusion. All teachers interviewed indicated that without this support the practice of inclusion would be very difficult. Karla said:

There are probably a lot of things that have made inclusion work here. The manpower that we have is tremendous. We have a tremendous amount of resources for a school of this size. Without having the financial backing or the manpower it wouldn't work.

#### Blue Hills Elementary

The following section is a portrait of the experiences and situations of the participants of the study who practice inclusion at Blue Hills Elementary. A description of how inclusion was formulated and how it is implemented today is provided.

## The Story

The philosophy of least restrictive environment was adopted at Blue Hills Elementary many years before the world of special education embraced the term - inclusion. Inclusion has many descriptions and the basis of inclusion hinges on the federal mandate of this least restrictive environment. Inclusion in Blue Hills Elementary has a different description than Arrow Point Elementary but continues to work from very similar philosophies, beliefs, and attitudes.

Inclusion in Blue Hills had no definitive beginning. When asked how inclusion began, participants in the study used statements such as, "This is the way its always been," and "We've always had special education students in our classes." The consensus of the principal and teachers interviewed was that inclusion was the norm and expected. There appeared to be one major event in the school division's history that brought the concept of inclusion to the forefront of educators' minds. That one event was the closing of a segregated school for special education students in 1989. The special education school was described as a separate school within the division that housed only moderate, trainable and severe special education students. The Virginia Department of Education required the system to close the school as a separate school for students with disabilities due to non compliance with the state and federal regulation section of least restrictive environment. According to regulations, if possible - students with disabilities should be educated in a regular day school as close as possible to the students' home. At the closing

of this facility Blue Hills Elementary received a large portion of elementary age students with disabilities. With this influx of special education students the principal established a regional autistic program within Blue Hills. While students with disabilities were already attending Blue Hills Elementary, this event introduced additional special education students into the school environment.

Teachers talked about always having students with learning disabilities mainstreamed into their classrooms. But it was not until the students from the segregated school came to Blue Hills that teachers began working directly with physically disabled students, and students with moderate and severe disabilities. Special education students with mild, moderate and severe disabilities were placed in regular classrooms with the regular classroom teachers. The model of inclusion Blue Hills Elementary practices was developed locally with little or no assistance from university faculty or other outside sources. Assistance was provided by the division's central office professionals and the expertise of the teachers and administrators at Blue Hills. All teachers are expected to participate in inclusion. According to Kathy, "He (Troy) nicely told us that this was the law and it was our job and we had to get used to it." Teachers are encouraged to accept the integration of special education students or to rethink their reasons for teaching at Blue Hills. Supplementary aides and services are provided to the students to ensure success. Regular classroom teachers are provided materials, training, computers, and support from special education teachers to assist the special education students.

Materials were observed to be abundant in each classroom. A variety of manipulatives for math lessons, supplementary literature books, visual such charts, graphs, posters and activity centers are accessible to the teachers, paraprofessionals and students in each room. Special education teachers' support was seen as: modification of the curriculum such as test variety, homework and project choices, and daily and weekly meetings between regular and special education teachers to discuss specific issues. Special education students with severe disabilities are involved in the inclusion model with the assistance of a personal paraprofessional and/or computer. Paraprofessionals are assigned to these students for the school year. For the present school year, Blue Hills has 19 paraprofessionals, nine who are assigned to individual students for the school year. Teachers reported much dependence on these paraprofessionals. Other paraprofessionals are assigned to classrooms or teachers to assist with groups of students or if the need warranted individual students. Most teachers talked about having a sense of security with the paraprofessionals in the classroom. These paraprofessionals typically sat with the student/s with disabilities to assist with the requirements of the class instruction. Some paraprofessionals take notes, turned pages, read to students, worked with small groups within the classroom or worked one on one with instructional activities with students. Teachers reported to like the assistance of the paraprofessional to work with any student who needs support. Special education teachers did not co-teach with regular education teachers, instead they provided support to teachers and students through

consultation. Robbie explained:

I've always sent out a lot of information as far as identifying kids and modifications that could be used in the classroom and always welcomed any opportunity to lend suggestions for what could happen so I think that if I do anything it's more as a consultant when it's accepted and while it's needed.

Blue Hills Elementary retained certain special education classrooms. While many students are involved in the inclusion model some were instructed in separate special education classrooms. The basic philosophy revealed from the data suggested that Blue Hills functions on the premise that all children belong, but students must be successful. Staff contend that some students needed small group, highly structured environments to succeed. The principal and the teachers reported that "we're not totally inclusion unless it's the way to go with the child." While Blue Hills does practice inclusion or least restrictive environment, students' programs are established based on the individual needs of the students and the potential for success. Pat explained:

If the child is capable of being able to do the work and I'm talking academic work, the child is mainstreamed. If the child has a problem where they have the ability but physically can not write or talk then the child is given an aide or I even had a child that couldn't talk so we had a computer that talked for him.

In a limited number of cases parents have demanded that the school system educate their child with severe disabilities in a regular classroom. In one particular case,

the school system hired a paraprofessional who had been a teacher to work with the child in the regular classroom. The school also purchased a computer for this student who was nonverbal. The student was observed in Kathy's classroom working with the paraprofessional. It did not appear that the student was aware of other students' presence. The student often made unintelligible noises and gestures. Eventually, the paraprofessional removed the student from the classroom as the student was distracting other students. Kathy explained that she and the paraprofessional have eye signals to communicate when the student needs to be removed from the classroom. This situation was an example of commitment of the school to work with parents and provide extreme supports for children.

Participants of the study provided rich descriptions of the situations and experiences they encountered at Blue Hills. From these descriptions themes were noted that appear to have implications on how principals manage inclusion. The data collected through this study were analyzed in terms of four themes that emerged on principal behavior in inclusion:

1. Staff support.
2. Communication.
3. Atmosphere of caring.
4. High expectations.

### Staff Support.

Principal support of staff appeared in a variety of approaches. Teachers and the principal identified support as hiring additional personnel such as paraprofessionals, willingness of the principal to listen to problems or concerns and providing materials, information and/or training when needed. Troy, the principal, talked candidly about his role in this program:

We had to educate our teachers because they weren't trained in special education and it scares them and I think the best thing that you can do is try to minimize the impact it's going to have in the classroom... when you say special ed that they really are scared. I think that if you take it real slow and let them know that you're going to be there to support and you're not going to let it go but so far before it becomes too much of a task for them, where it's going to take away from the regular program, you have to assure them that you're going to get them the help they need and that can be in many forms. Once the program begins you need to let them know that you are there. Verbal compliments, praise goes a long way and I think once they feel your support they're not afraid to try this and everybody ends up being a winner.

Troy's recognition of this aspect of his role and being aware that teachers have these feelings and needs was very insightful as a principal. Not only did Troy voice this recognition, but teachers identified behaviors that verified his statements. Kathy

explained:

Last year I had an autistic child, actually I had two but one didn't show the characteristics of an autistic child as much as the other one did but every time I always had an aide. I've never been without somebody who could take care of them and take them out if they got upset or something, and I think he (principal) tried to match the teacher with the kid you know and doesn't try to always give any particular teacher the hardest case every year.

Robbie went on to say, "Since I've been here I've not felt like I've been made to do anything that I've felt uncomfortable with. I mean I do feel like my opinions are listened to and that makes a difference." Troy has taken a proactive approach in the past by providing information to teachers. When he heard that they would be receiving a child who had the assistance of a 'helping' dog he inserviced the teachers and the entire grade the child would be going into the next year. The teachers and the other children were aware of the situation and knew what to expect. It was also very obvious, when observed, that everyday relationships between the principal and staff were very open and free for dialogue. He appeared to invite conversations about concerns and issues as he asked, "How are things going today?" or "Do you need anything today?" When Polly was asked what she expected from Troy she replied:

I guess backup, follow-up if I have a problem to know that I can come in and talk about it and get it taken care of. And to know that he is aware of what I do and

would hope that if he sees that there's something that is needed to do differently that he would be able to talk to me about it and if I see that there's something that bothers me I would feel comfortable enough to come in and say something to him about it, and I do. I feel very comfortable and he's been very supportive of anything that we've asked.

Support in terms of hiring additional personnel was obvious. Many paraprofessionals were observed throughout the building. These positions are seen as providing support to special education teachers and general education teachers. Certain special education classrooms had two paraprofessionals while a few regular education classrooms had one general paraprofessional and one paraprofessional assigned to a specific student with disabilities. This area of support appeared to carry the most significance with teachers. Pat explained, "As long as I know I have an aide to help me I am willing to take on almost anything."

#### Atmosphere of Caring.

When talking to staff formally or informally at Blue Hills Elementary it was evident that this school cared about all the children. Children were greeted at the bus or car area in the morning by a multitude of school personnel i.e., principal, assistant principal, several teachers, several paraprofessionals and certain students. The greeting was a robust "good morning" with smiling faces and a genuine concern in their greeting. This greeting was probably more evident with the special education students than with

regular education students. As I stood with the principal several mornings during this time, it became obvious that this was no show but a feeling or attitude these people had about children. Along with positive greetings, positive comments were made about these children. Such statements as, “Susie won the spelling bee last year or Martha was the poster child for muscular dystrophy, we are so proud of her.” Informal conversations with paraprofessionals yielded unsolicited feedback about attitudes in the school. One paraprofessional talked about how kids were revered at Blue Hills and stated that the “caring comes from the top.” Troy talked openly about supporting staff but he also stated that, “...you also have to let them know the laws have changed and this is the way it is now, where if you choose to work in public education our doors are open to everyone.” Kathy talked about how teachers just expected to have students with disabilities in their classrooms. She said, “When you say inclusion to most regular ed teachers or at least to me I only think of those physically handicapped, LD kids were just always there.” Kathy also talked about Troy and his role in creating an environment of belonging:

He nicely told us that this was the law and it was our job and we had to get used to that. We had to get used to the idea and if we didn't think we could get used to the idea then you know, we needed to...well not look for a job somewhere else but we needed to think about it because this was the way of the future.

### Communication.

The principal expects teachers to be involved in IEP meetings. He expects regular and special education teachers to participate in these meetings and he expects related service personnel to attend and contribute as well. These meetings were viewed by staff as informational meetings so that all individuals involved in the child's education could be informed about the needs of the child. Troy talked about this as his responsibility to set up the meetings and have everyone there, "It's my job to see that all the pieces fit together and one way to do that is to make sure people communicate." He also promotes teachers to discuss student needs and encourages informal as well as formal conversations about children. He did this by providing teachers planning time, before and after school to seek out other teachers who might have information about a child. Regular meetings are scheduled to discuss curriculum adaptations and instructional issues. Certain children had physical needs as well as academic needs. There were incidences where immediate medical needs took precedence over academics. In these cases teachers or paraprofessionals sought out the advice of a specialist within the school. Robert is viewed by some teachers as a specialist for students with physical needs. Robert is often seen in classroom doorways talking to teachers about specific physical needs of students. An example of communication between teachers and other staff was given by Polly:

I think that in some ways the special education teachers had a lot to do with

deciding to go to inclusion. They (special education teachers) would come and talk to us if they had a child they felt would work out in our classroom, they would come and talk to us first and tell us about the child. Tell us what the child could and could not do and then it would be decided who's room we'd put the child in so it was kind of a working situation between the special education teacher and the regular education teacher. I'm sure they 'd already talked to the principal because it was considered ok. At first they would come and talk to us individually or at least to the grade chairman before the child was put into a classroom in that grade level ... and ask us what does a child need to be able to do on your level and of course now they are familiar with us too so they know whether they'd fit in or not.

Polly went on to say that Troy is viewed as a mediator at times. Teachers scheduled meetings with other teachers to discuss difficult decisions and talk about the possibilities. Certain times Troy was pulled into those meetings and intervened as a mediator to resolve issues. Robert talked about communication from his position as intervening in people relations issues. He stated that, "Sometimes you are there advocating for your students and you end up putting out fires all the time." He also stated that when they first began including physically disabled students there were some problems with the acceptance of special education students by regular education students and regular classroom teachers. He further stated:

That doesn't happen much any more. I work with the inclusion, I call them my cooperative teachers. I work with them almost everyday and it's not a planned thing most of the time. They let me know when there is a concern. I've learned which ones you can't push the buttons and which ones you can. I have to be careful.

Robert explained that, "After several years of working through inclusion, teachers have come to realize that support is there for them." He stated that teachers still are concerned for their classes if they don't think they will get the support they need.

#### High Expectations.

Expectations run high at Blue Hills and come in many forms. The mere fact that Troy stated to teachers that Blue Hills promoted an acceptance of special education students and "they better get used to it" depicts an expectation that teachers should be willing to work with all students. Troy expects all teachers to be involved with special education students in some form. Troy stated:

I expect teachers to be open and not have preconceived ideas ... to send the message that you care whether students are special education or not. I expect that teachers are going to do everything they can to make the program work and I expect the same out of students.

Teacher expectations went beyond achieving high standards. Kathy explained that expectations should also be realistic. She stated that in order for inclusion to work,

“...everybody can not be included, sometimes it just is not going to work. I expect him (Troy) to pick and choose who he puts a handicapped kid with.”

Teachers also expect much support from Troy, other teachers and paraprofessionals. Many incidences were cited where teachers stated that without the supports (materials, paraprofessionals, computers and communication) inclusion would be difficult. Polly explained, “Teachers are upset if they think they are not going to get help. They have to understand that it (inclusion) doesn’t just mean the child is going to be dumped. There is going to be help available.”

#### Teachers’ and principal’s perceptions about inclusion.

One cannot dissect an instructional program without considering the overall impact the model has on the participants involved. While the principal’s role in inclusion was the focus of the study, the study would not be complete without a global view of the entire model. How teachers and the principal perceive the total inclusion program was important to understand the study. Certain impressions or assumptions about inclusion emerged as the principal’s and teachers’ perceptions were studied.

Teachers have a willingness to work in an inclusive environment if they can obtain a comfort level. This comfort level was described as having information and support to work with special education students. Teachers fear the unknown and can be unwilling to work in an atmosphere of the unpredictable and ill informed. Teachers and the principal discussed common fears among teachers when working with special education students

who had complicated needs. There were discussions that in most situations if teachers understood these needs and felt they received support then these fears diminished. Troy talked often about the importance of teachers feeling comfortable:

So the teachers at this school are more receptive to inclusion because we've grown up with it. The schools who are just getting inclusion, its scaring those teachers. Once you educate the teachers and let them know you're there and what they need to do through the IEP they're ok. Just putting a special education child in a room and saying now he's yours, that's not the right way to approach it.

Kathy described her comfort level, "I've always had an aide, they've been real good about having somebody whose with them all the time. That way I feel a lot more secure. I've been real cooperative but that's because they've given me somebody to help me." Robbie, a special education teacher, also talked about trying to make sure she didn't put someone (student) in there she didn't feel comfortable about. Special education teachers are aware of this comfort level and appeared to address this with regular education teachers when considering which students were appropriate for inclusion. Robbie stated that she needed to be able to feel comfortable with her decisions and so far that had happened. It was evident through observations, interviews and class lists, that most teachers have reached a certain level of comfort when working with student with disabilities. Every teacher had at least one special needs student and other teachers more. The teachers observed were confident in their approach when working with special

education students. They appeared to have conversed easily and attended to students needs without second thought.

Time and time again the assumption that all special education students benefit from inclusion was challenged from participants in this study. Students were placed in the inclusion model on a case by case basis. The inclusion model at Blue Hills is formed around the idea that students are placed where their needs can be met for success. If after all supplementary aides and services have been addressed in the regular classroom and the child is not successful then inclusion is not appropriate. “We always have options for students. If plan A doesn’t work then we try plan B.”(Troy) Blue Hills Elementary strives to include everyone through purchasing materials, adapting curriculum, varying lesson plans, one on one assistance in the classroom and through technology if needed. If these supports do not afford the opportunity for success in the regular classroom then plan B is implemented, which might be a special education classroom as the next option. Robbie felt confident that Blue Hills did leave options for students where other schools might not give students these options, “Everyone is included no matter what, in some schools.”

Students’ programs are established on a case by case basis. Teachers are aware of individual needs and based their instruction on IEPs which addressed the students academic functioning and their emotional, and social needs. Every teacher interviewed stated this type of procedure when deciding where the child should be educated.

The data revealed that not only could certain special education students benefit from inclusion but regular education students could also. Teachers in the study cited specific examples of kindness and compassion by regular education students shown to special education students. One such example cited involved a student with very limited verbal skills. One day early in the school year, as students were getting to know each other and settling down to the daily routine, students in the class told the teacher that ‘John’ (the non verbal special education student) was crying. After questioning John as to the reason for his crying, all John could say was “mmmmmmmm”. After some time of trying to understand his emotion, one of the other students said “John can’t eat his ice cream.” As the teacher looked down at John’s ice cream, it was a Mickey Mouse ice cream bar, “That had little ears and eyes on it and what he was saying was that he couldn’t eat Mickey Mouse.” The teacher stated that she took the ice cream back and got another kind because not only was John upset but the entire class was upset. The teacher explained how that one situation made the class realize that although John could not communicate in the typical fashion, he had thoughts and feelings just like everyone else. She went on to say that after that day John was a major part of the class.

There appeared to be certain expectations of teachers, administration and students. Teachers had certain expectations of students. They held special education students to standard discipline procedures. “We try to instill more self-correcting kinds of behavior. I think we expect special education students to follow the same rules.” (Robbie)

Teachers also had expectations of other teachers. Regular education teachers expected special education teachers to provide them with student information and to make appropriate suggestions for classroom assistance. “I’ll have Robert come in to discuss concerns I have about his (student), in fact Robert did most of the communicating with the parents. Robert was real helpful. He helped me teach sounds and letters - what kinds of things to work on. I’ve come to expect that kind of help.” (Kathy) Teachers expect the principal to provide for their needs in the classroom. They expected to receive requested items in order to promote student success. “Troy knows we need materials and another person sometimes to make it all work.” (Polly) The principal also held high expectations of teachers. He expects teachers to meet the needs of all students in their classroom given the appropriate support. Troy stated that:

I expect the very best. Whether they’re special education or not you’re (teachers) going to do everything you can to make the program work, I expect the same out of kids. The triangle comes in where you have the school doing their part, the student doing their part and the parent doing their part.

These results generated themes about how inclusion is managed. The experiences and situations described in this study represent the richness of the operation of inclusion in these two schools. How these results are interpreted will be addressed in the discussion and conclusions section. It would appear from these results there are many avenues for discussion and development of conclusions.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate and document the roles principals play in the development and maintenance of the inclusion model of special education delivery. The study focused on teachers' and principals' perceptions about inclusion, particularly with regard to the principal's role. A case study approach was used in these two schools, Arrow Point Elementary and Blue Hills Elementary, to delve into the complexity of inclusion programming within these two schools. This approach provided data to help us understand the role that leadership plays in these circumstances. It was my intention to accomplish more than a list of behaviors exhibited by principals in inclusive schools. Therefore, I focused the study not only on the principals' role in inclusion but also on how teachers and principals think, feel, and act with respect to the program model of inclusion.

This chapter serves to summarize this study in terms of my interpretation of the data, the conclusions drawn from the study and lastly the recommendations which were developed from the findings. The initial research questions are posed along with summary responses. In these responses, key elements of the study are identified.

#### Discussion

What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of how principals manage

inclusion? What behaviors do principals exhibit to manage inclusion?

The process of creating and maintaining an inclusive school is no simple task. Schools are faced with new and different challenges while implementing inclusion models. Faculties must take on new roles and responsibilities. Teachers become facilitators of learning as they provide support and work together in collaborative arrangements. Teachers also participate in problem-solving teams to solve school and individual student problems. Schools must build flexible learning environments in order to meet the needs of all students. Even though full inclusion may be a goal, a continuum of educational options must be present to meet the needs of each child. Meeting the diverse needs of students through instructional methods complicates responsibilities for teachers as well. Active, positive and supportive leadership is important and demanding for principals. Involving staff in the planning and implementation of inclusion can be taxing and risky for principals. A multi state study of 680 education professionals by Thousand, Villa, Meyers, and Nevin, (1994) identified the following as necessary supports for inclusive schooling:

1. On-going administrative support and leadership to promote a vision and practice of inclusive education;
2. A culture and climate of caring and community;
3. Shared decision making and collaboration among regular and special educators, students, families, and other school personnel;

4. Time for collaboration;
5. Ongoing inservice training and technical assistance to develop educators' competence in heterogeneous educational practices.

While this study supports these factors presented by Thousand, Villa, and Nevin, 1994, the context in which the supports are operationalized can determine the success of those factors. Blue Hills and Arrow Point both have strong administrative support and leadership through principals who promote a particular vision and practice of inclusion. I certainly observed an environment of caring and attitude of belonging at both schools. Teachers shared in the development and implementation of inclusion in both schools. Further, support for staff were evidenced through inservice, materials, additional personnel and communication tactics. The study of Arrow Point Elementary and Blue Hills Elementary focused on how people worked, built relationships and solved problems in the context of inclusion and while building the inclusion model.

The principal's role in the process of inclusion is the guiding force behind the implementation of these factors. Three common themes emerged from both Arrow Point and Blue Hills. The first theme involved the use of communication as an essential tool in facilitating inclusion. Principals who facilitate dialogue between staff members was viewed as important by Raynes, Snell, and Sailor (1991). The cases of Arrow Point and Blue Hills were about principals who encouraged or promoted dialogue between teachers and between the principals and the teachers. This dialogue was not only encouraged but

expected to discuss feelings, attitudes and anxieties about inclusion. Through these conversations emotions could be dealt with adequately. Rude and Anderson's (1992), study of the building administrator's role in supporting effective inclusion practice found promoting the sharing of fears and concerns and an open door policy as effective for teachers. Faculty members involved in this study participated in these discussions through faculty meetings, informal conversations, team meetings, and one on one discussions. These opportunities provided outlets for teachers to express true feelings about inclusion. During initial organization, or planning meetings, teachers had opportunities to discuss in group meetings, or privately with the principals, their feelings about inclusion. These dialogue sessions also made teachers feel supported. Teachers stated that they felt they were listened to. These communication sessions were also used as problem solving ventures and decision making times. This practice of involving teachers in problem solving and decision making supports the Billingsley, Farley, and Rude (1993); Blase (1987b); and Rude and Anderson (1992) studies of effective practices for principals of inclusive schools. Teachers and principals of Arrow Point and Blue Hills planned for scheduling and program structures. Discussions about commitment were sought. Principals were often viewed as the catalyst in these discussions. Commitment to the program was seen as important and discussions about inclusion helped teachers define that commitment. Both principals viewed commitment to inclusion as critical to the success of the program. In both Arrow Point and Blue Hills

principals questioned staff members about their commitment to inclusion. This type of dialogue provided teachers with avenues to freely and willingly discuss concerns. These conversations also brought about information to teachers so that teachers could find a comfort level in inclusion. Villa, et al (1995) stated, “We’re asking them (teachers) to feel uncomfortable and incompetent for a while.” What teachers at Arrow Point and Blue Hills were saying was that they could obtain a comfort level if they were provided adequate support. Obtaining information about students was viewed as important by teachers for successful teaching. This open communication policy could have been viewed as risky for principals. Principals encouraged teachers to question and scrutinize decisions. Some principals could view this as a loss of control or even insubordination. Principals in this study believed that allowing teachers to question and scrutinize would result in better programs.

The second common factor identified principal support of staff as necessary to inclusion. A lack of strategies, resources and supports were noted by Kauffman, Lloyd, Baker, and Riedel (1995) to be disastrous to classrooms with students with disabilities. Supports from the principals at Arrow Point and Blue Hills were identified as providing materials, hiring additional personnel, securing appropriate training, helping to solve problems and providing compliments and assurances to teachers. Teachers identified materials such as computers, books, supplementary items to school curriculum and basic supplies as necessary for inclusion. Additional personnel was provided in the form of

certified teachers or paraprofessionals. Teachers stated that this support alone gave them a willingness to participate in inclusion. Rude and Anderson (1992), confirm that additional personnel and equipment are necessary for effective inclusion programs. The training teachers received provided information and knowledge to teachers which created a sense of confidence in teachers. Principals also talked about teachers needing to be listened to and assured that support would be there. This sensitivity by principals helped give teachers a comfort level also. Giangreco, et al. (1993) concluded from a study of classroom teachers that experiences and information of special education students changed their expectations and behaviors toward students with disabilities. By providing these supports Arrow Point and Blue Hills teachers felt they had what they needed to perform their jobs. If teachers feel supported then they would support the inclusion program. These principals did not just “talk the talk, they walked the walk.” In other words, the materials were in the classrooms being used, the additional personnel was hired and an important function of the program and evidence of attentiveness and problem solving was abundant.

The third theme has to do with an atmosphere of caring created within these two schools. Sergiovanni (1982) explained that “theory and research have emphasized too much on what leaders actually do and how they behave and not enough on the more symbolic aspect of leadership - the meaning they communicate to others.” Principals at Arrow Point and Blue Hills worked hard to create an environment where all students are

valued. Participants in this study talked in terms of “we”, “us”, “our”, “mine” when talking about students and inclusion noting a real ownership and a sense of responsibility to all children. Principals set up classes so that more than one staff member is responsible for the instruction of students. Classes are formed around students of different abilities. The principals made statements such as, “These children belong in the regular classroom” and “We will teach all students in our school.” Raynes, Snell, and Sailor’s (1991) work on school reform shows that the characteristic of a principal communicates the belief that a school must serve all its students and that all students can learn. The principals and teachers who participated in this dissertation study were observed relating to special education students in genuine positive ways as teachers were instructing students of diverse needs in the same classroom. These behaviors not only created an environment of belonging for special education students but for all students. This modeling by faculty helped to create an atmosphere of acceptance in the school. There also appeared to be a shared responsibility for each other. Students were seen wheeling students in wheelchairs in hallways and other areas of the building. Ohanian (1990) stated that the most effective way to change attitudes and develop positive relationships is through regular involvement between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

#### What are teachers’ and principals’ perceptions about inclusion?

This study was based on the perspectives of two segments of the school

community; teachers and principals. The teachers who participated in this study approached their responses to questions in terms of the context of their particular classrooms and experiences with specific individuals while principals responded to questions typically in more global terms. Principals' responses usually focused on the whole school or community. Certain specific individual experiences were related by the principals. These differences in perspectives should be taken into account when reading these findings. However, these findings were well grounded in individuals' personal experiences and attitudes about inclusion.

A further consideration of this study for readers is the 'look' of inclusion in these schools. Related to the literature review Wheatley (1994) suggests there is no absolute model of inclusion. Arrow Point and Blue Hills implement inclusion through two different instructional models which is consistent with Wheatley's assertions. Arrow Point has basically eliminated all but one special education classroom while Blue Hills has retained many. Arrow Point provides personnel support in terms of additional teachers while Blue Hills provides personnel support by additional paraprofessionals. Arrow Point encourages inclusion for all students but maintains a special education classroom for students with physical disabilities and severe mental disabilities. Blue Hills retained certain special education classrooms but places students with physical disabilities and severe mental disabilities in the inclusion model. The one force that seems to bind these two schools together is their philosophy that all children belong. Both schools create an

environment conducive to addressing diversity. Diversity of students was addressed through curricular adaptations and changes, varied teaching strategies, individualized instruction, small group instruction, abundance of materials, specialized equipment, and additional personnel. These are caring school communities which create a place to learn and where all students feel accepted.

All participants involved in the study concluded that the implementation of inclusion was hard work. Not only did they talk directly about inclusion being hard work but implications of hard work came through in many of their responses. Hard work was described as working longer hours since implementing inclusion, more planning time was needed to facilitate inclusion, more collaboration between teachers and additional problem solving. Defining roles and responsibilities of individuals could prove difficult for staff new to inclusion. Each year with new and different students and colleagues, teachers must find their place within the program. Sometimes these places or roles can be complicated. Participants did believe that through this process they provided better instruction, addressed the needs of all students better and were more efficient in their work. Teachers and principals said that collaboration was exhaustive and took much energy in solving problems, making decisions and coming to a consensus about decisions. Teachers cited these components as what makes inclusion work.

Teachers viewed scheduling, grouping, or clustering of students as an important part of successful inclusion. Teachers reported that much time and effort was put into

this task. The importance of this effort was to create the right ‘mix’ of students with the appropriate teaching team. Wrong ‘mixes’ resulted in teacher dissatisfaction and possible poor student performance. Through this grouping or matching of students to instructional teams, students’ needs were believed to be better met.

High expectations emerged from the analysis as central to inclusion. Expectations were viewed from every angle. Teachers held high expectations of other teachers. They expected their colleagues to share in all teaching tasks such as planning, organization and the delivery of instruction. Teachers expected other teachers to “stay until the job was done.” Teachers stated that ill feelings were created when these expectations were not met. Teachers also had high expectations of students. Typically special education students were held to the same discipline standards and in most cases same academic content standards as other students. The academic expectations were addressed with accommodations and modifications within the classrooms. Teachers and principals held mutual high expectations. Teachers stated that they expected principals to provide for their instructional needs whatever they were and principals expected teachers to meet the needs of all students. It appears that practicing inclusion raises the expectation level in schools. From this study new forms of accountability for schools are evident. In order to implement inclusion every person must accept certain responsibilities. Strategies for pursuing excellence without sacrificing equity must be pursued.

Participants identified good relationships among colleagues as important to

successful inclusion. Through these models of inclusion faculties work closer together than ever before. Teachers teach in the same room or paraprofessionals work along side teachers to provide support for special education students. Past teaching practices have isolated teachers and created independent individuals who guard their territories. Inclusion has provided a basis for collaboration and encouraged teachers to work on relationships. These teachers stated that they enjoyed and even cherished the partnerships that have been created due to inclusion. They felt it important to the success of inclusion to have a personal support system. Teachers also talked about how poor relationships could and in some cases had caused conflict and feelings of inequality. Through positive, successful team relationships teachers were validated as good teachers and successful practitioners of inclusion.

### Conclusions

The premise on which this study originated was that principal behaviors influence the practice of inclusion. It is widely recognized that principals' actions directly influence the total school culture. Therefore, it is necessary for researchers to continue to gather data to determine appropriate leadership practices that facilitate successful inclusion programs for students with disabilities. The skills and strategies identified in this study all contribute to positive programming for students with disabilities. Even though there were only two schools involved in this study, the common factors identified were certainly significant strategies for principals to use. How these principals acquired

these practices was not explored but the fact that they were identified spoke to their importance. I believe the practices identified are basic practices for all principals whether or not they are involved in inclusion.

Teachers who participated in this study typically responded in a positive manner about inclusion. This positive reaction directly or indirectly stems from the leadership role the principal plays in inclusion. Numerous conversations where principals spoke in positive terms about inclusion were documented. These conversations included discussions with teachers and other staff members. The principal's support, philosophy and techniques for communicating are reflected in how teachers view this model of instruction for students with disabilities. Information from this study would be beneficial to any administrator, either experienced or relatively new to the administrative ranks, who seeks to implement effectively inclusion for students with special education needs. The information would be particularly useful to members of school organizations who are restructuring their school to better meet the needs of all learners (Berreth, 1992).

Obvious but not explicit in the literature are two themes that must be discussed. The notion that inclusion is hard work and teachers needed to find a comfort level with inclusion participation were critical in the findings of this study. This comfort level was identified as teachers having paraprofessionals in classrooms to assist students, abundant materials to use, and opportunities to discuss issues with colleagues and their principal. The current literature on inclusion surely speaks about these two themes but does not

specifically define them as such. The idea that inclusion is hard work is evident. The teachers involved in this study described hard work as working longer hours, collaborating and communicating with other teachers, committing to inclusion, meeting the needs of all students and defining their roles and responsibilities. Comfort level was described by teachers as having the supports needed to implement inclusion. These supports were viewed as having access to knowledge and information, additional support personnel whether professionals or paraprofessionals and materials and equipment. While the literature did address the components of these themes there is no common term used to articulate these variables. It is important to identify the motivation factors for teachers who participate in inclusion. The participants in this study identified that inclusion is hard work. They also identified comfort level as a main component that motivates teachers to take part. Rewards for teachers come in the form of supports to facilitate the hard work they do for students.

These common themes or factors were illuminating but not surprising. The real contribution of this study was how these supports/factors/behaviors fit together. These themes about principals' behaviors hopefully should contain lessons for understanding effective inclusion. Each of these factors provided insight into an important element of inclusion programming that does not necessarily formulate into any particular pattern or sequence. It was not possible to prioritize these factors because it turned out that they worked together in such a way that no one factor is primary, rather each made a critical

contribution to an integrated, effectively functioning whole. The lesson that emerged for effective inclusion was not a series of behaviors or steps to follow but rather a design to create; that is, effective inclusion appears to be a process of matching and integrating elements so that the pieces fit together in a meaningful and comprehensive way. The challenge for inclusion, then, is putting all the pieces and factors together to create positive results. It is only through a concerted effort by all participants of inclusion that inclusion will be successful. This study was certainly not an end in itself but a means of generating powerful insights about effective program practices and processes for students with disabilities.

#### Recommendations for Practice and Further Study

Based upon the findings from this study numerous suggestions emerged which could benefit educators in their endeavor for inclusion. In order to assist teachers in their attempt at inclusion, principals should provide inservice as well as basic information and knowledge to teachers and support staff about inclusion situations. Before inclusion is implemented in schools, staff development activities should be provided to teachers. During the implementation of inclusion staff inservice or meetings should be available to teachers to gain knowledge and information about inclusion related topics or students. Along with staff development activities team building and problem solving training should be provided for all staff of inclusive schools. Implementing inclusion requires collaboration and in certain situations consensus building. Teachers typically are not

trained in these areas. While many teachers have innate skills associated with team building and problem solving it is important to offer professional workshops on these topics to build confidence in those who will be using these techniques.

Principals should consider that time and additional money are needed to support inclusion. Staff will need time to plan, organize and communicate processes of inclusion. Money may be needed to provide supports such as materials, equipment and additional personnel. It would appear from my findings that school systems may not save money implementing inclusion. To the contrary, inclusion may cost school systems more money than past instructional models for students with disabilities. Therefore, principals should be aware that additional money may be needed to implement successful programs. As with providing additional time, principals should consider that inclusion is hard work and allow staff opportunities to express needs and frustrations. Through these opportunities of expression, principals can identify specific supports and anxieties staff members may have. The time that principals allow teachers to have open dialogue may fend off future problem areas.

While principals are held to providing numerous supports, teachers can be expected to share in the responsibility. Teachers should demand and expect supportive leadership. Teachers should accept the responsibility to professionally approach principals with instructional needs. Teachers can take on leadership roles within schools and by expecting principal support teachers can advocate for other teachers and

programs. Too often teachers are not viewed and do not view themselves as professionals. Teachers should conduct themselves as professionals and expect to be treated as such.

The single most important practice for educators is the practice of creating an environment of caring or belonging. Schools who wish to implement inclusion should strive to create a vision or philosophy that all children belong and can learn in the mainstream of school. Schools should value and celebrate diversity. This vision or philosophy can be achieved by treating people as equals, valuing differences, and supporting one another's needs.

While this study does not necessarily contribute profound new knowledge in the area of inclusion it does give insight into two schools which practice inclusion. By sharing stories of the predicaments and dilemmas they face daily, teachers and administrators can help one another to gain insight and perspective, and to grow professionally as a result. Given this, the following recommendations are made for further study. This case study approach should be replicated at other elementary schools where inclusion is in place to determine if similar results can be obtained. Similar studies should be conducted at middle schools and high schools to ascertain if developmental levels or curricular structures have significant impact on principal practices to influence inclusion. Similar studies should be conducted in rural and urban schools to determine if principal practices are affected by community cultures. Similar studies should be

conducted with schools that are in the early stages of inclusion versus schools that have been practicing inclusion for five or more years. It would be helpful to compare practices for differences or similarities based on time involved. Similar studies should be conducted involving parents and students of inclusive schools to determine principal practices from additional perspectives.

Inclusion is established by the way educators configure the delivery of services. What we know at this point is that certain necessary supports are needed in order to successfully structure schools which practice inclusion. Successful school leaders are those who provide support and resources within their schools. These leaders must be aware of barriers to inclusion and are willing to take the risk.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Interview Questions - Teachers

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teachers name/grade: \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been in education?

How many years have you been working in this school division and this school?

How long have you worked with this principal?

When did you get involved in inclusion?

Describe the inclusion program here.

How do you think regular/special education teachers view inclusion?

How was the decision made to go to the inclusion model?

Who was involved in that decision?

What role did your principal play in that decision?

Describe your role as it relates to inclusion?

Describe your principal's role as it relates to inclusion?

What kinds of problems have you encountered and how have they been solved?

How do you work with grading issues in inclusion?

How do you work with disciplining special education students involved in inclusion?

How do you work out parent communication with regard to special education students?

How are curriculum/instruction issues addressed?

How do you feel about another teacher in your classroom/being in a classroom with another teacher?

Have you encountered any major school wide problems as a result of inclusion?

What has made inclusion work here?

What kinds of inclusion staff development activities have been offered?

What are your expectations of your students?

What are your expectations of your principal as it relates to inclusion?

Comments:

## Appendix B

### Interview Questions - Principals

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's name/grade: \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been in education?

How many years have you been working in this school division and how long have you been principal in this school?

When did you get involved in inclusion?

Describe the inclusion program here.

How was the decision made to go to the inclusion model?

Who was involved in that decision?

Describe your role as it relates to inclusion in this school.

What do you do for teachers to support their efforts in inclusion?

What kinds of problems have you encountered and how have you solved those problems?

How do you work with grading issues in inclusion?

How do you work with discipline within the inclusion program?

How do you deal with parent communication issues as it relates to inclusion?

How are curriculum and instructional issues dealt with?

How do you think teachers feel about inclusion?

What has made inclusion work here?

What kinds of inclusion staff development activities have been offered?

What are your expectations for students/teachers?

Comments:

## **Appendix C**

### **OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR CLASSROOMS**

**Date:**

**Teacher/s:**

**Classroom setting:**

**Instruction:**

**Students:**

**Teacher interaction/responsibilities/duties/roles:**

**Materials:**

**Other:**

## Appendix D

### Principal Questionnaire

School Name \_\_\_\_\_

Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Number of years involved in inclusion.
2. Disabilities of students involved in inclusion. (The presence of students with and without disabilities in the same physical facility.)
3. How much instruction time for disabled students is provided in the regular classroom? (The presence of students with and without disabilities in regular classrooms during academic instructional time).
4. How many special education teachers involved in inclusion?
5. How many regular education teachers involved in inclusion?
6. Who else in the school community is involved in inclusion?
7. What kinds of documentation does the school have on inclusion?
8. The presence of students with and without disabilities during time when social interaction potential is present i.e., playground, hall, assemblies, PE, lunch.

9. Does there appear to be an inclusion vision i.e., written or spoken that diversity is valued?
10. Is there a sense of community i.e., problem solving teams, parent involvement, co-teaching, paraprofessionals as partners, students as problem solvers, community volunteers, time for planning, are services brought to students, flexible scheduling, opportunities to interact.
11. Is there evidence of collaboration and cooperation i.e., “my kinds vs. your kids”, working together?
12. Are there high standards for everyone i.e., all students expect to do best, outcomes?
13. Are there new forms of accountability i.e., portfolios, individual assessments, regular education teachers part of IEP committee?
14. Are there physical modifications made within the school?

**Appendix E**  
Interview Questions Using Patton's Model for Questions

**Teacher Questions**

- a. Experience/Behavior Questions:
  - 7) How was the decision made to go to inclusion?
  - 12) What kinds of problems have you encountered and how have they been solved?
  - 13) How do you work with grading issues in inclusion?
  - 14) How do you discipline special education students involved in inclusion?
  - 15) How do you work out parent communication with regard to inclusion?
  - 16) How are curriculum and instruction issues addressed?
  
- b. Opinion/Values Questions:
  - 17) How do you feel about another teacher in your classroom (being in a classroom with another teacher)?
  - 18) Have you encountered any major school wide problems as a result of inclusion?
  - 19) What has made inclusion work here?
  - 21) What are your expectations of your students?
  - 22) What are your expectations of your principal as it relates to inclusion?
  
- c. Feeling Questions:
  - 6) How do you think regular (special education) teachers view inclusion?
  
- d. Knowledge Questions:
  - 8) Who was involved in the decision to go to the inclusion model?
  - 9) What role did your principal play in the decision to go to inclusion?
  - 20) What kinds of inclusion staff development activities have been offered?
  
- e. Sensory Questions:
  - 5) Describe the inclusion program here.
  - 10) Describe your role as it related to inclusion.
  - 11) Describe your principal's role as it related to inclusion.
  
- f. Background/Demographic Questions:
  - 1) How many years have you been in education?

- 2) How many years have you been in this school division and in this school?
- 3) How long have you work with this principal?
- 4) When did you get involved in inclusion?

### **Principal Questions**

a. Experience/Behavior Questions:

- 5) How was the decision made to go to inclusion?
- 8) What do you do for teachers to support their efforts in inclusion?
- 9) What kinds of problems have you encountered and how have you solved those problems?
- 10) How do you work with grading issues in inclusion?
- 11) How do you work with discipline within the inclusion program?
- 12) How do you work with parent communication issues as it relates to inclusion?
- 13) How are curriculum and instruction issues dealt with?

b. Opinion/Values Questions:

- 14) How do you think teachers feel about inclusion?
- 15) What has made inclusion work here?
- 17) What are your expectations for students and teachers?

c. Feeling Questions:

none

d. Knowledge Questions:

- 6) Who was involved in the decision to go to inclusion?
- 16) What kinds of inclusion staff development activities have been offered?

e. Sensory Questions:

- 4) Describe the inclusion program here.
- 7) Describe your role as it relates to inclusion here.

f. Background/Demographic Questions:

- 1) How many years have you been in education?
- 2) How many years have you worked in this school division and how many years have you been principal at this school?
- 3) When do you get involved in inclusion?

**Appendix F**  
**SCHOOL - Arrow Point**

**Category Codes: Frequency participants discussed attributes of categories.**

Charles

Code	Frequency	Attributes
1	1	Setting/Context
2	12	How People Understand Setting
3	41*	How Things Are Done
4	25	Ways of Thinking About People
5	38*	Flow of Events, Change, Turning Point
6	3	Activities: Regular
7	5	Events: Specific
8	47*	Strategies: People's Tactics
9	12	Relationships
10	10	Problems, Joys, Dilemmas

Carrie

Code	Frequency	Attributes
1	4	Setting/Context
2	12	How People Understand Setting
3	24*	How Things Are Done
4	35*	Ways of Thinking About People
5	19	Flow of Events, Change, Turning Point
6	5	Activities: Regular
7	4	Events: Specific
8	45*	Strategies: People's Tactics
9	2	Relationships
10	15	Problems, Joys, Dilemmas

Donna

Code	Frequency	Attributes
1	5	Setting/Context
2	12	How People Understand Setting
3	13	How Things Are Done
4	35*	Ways of Thinking About People
5	15	Flow of Events, Change, Turning Point
6	3	Activities: Regular
7	2	Events: Specific
8	42*	Strategies: People's Tactics
9	1	Relationships
10	6	Problems, Joys, Dilemmas

Christy

Code	Frequency	Attributes
1	3	Setting/Context
2	5	How People Understand Setting
3	15	How Things Are Done
4	13	Ways of Thinking About People
5	6	Flow of Events, Change Turning Point
6	0	Activities: Regular
7	1	Events: Specific
8	22*	Strategies: People's Tactics
9	3	Relationships
10	12	Problems, Joys, Dilemmas

Phyllis

Code	Frequency	Attributes
1	9	Setting/Context
2	3	How People Understand Setting
3	23*	How Things Are Done
4	21*	Ways of Thinking About People
5	13	Flow of Events, Change, Turing Point
6	1	Activities: Regular
7	1	Events: Specific
8	32*	Strategies: People's Tactics
9	5	Relationships
10	3	Problems, Joys, Dilemmas

Karla

Code	Frequency	Attributes
1	5	Setting/Context
2	3	How People Understand Setting
3	22*	How Things Are Done
4	18*	Ways of Thinking About People
5	4	Flow of Events, Change, Turning Point
6	8	Activities: Regular
7	4	Events: Specific
8	29*	Strategies: People's Tactics
9	3	Relationships
10	3	Problems, Joys, Dilemmas

Ward

Code	Frequency	Attributes
1	2	Setting/Context
2	6	How People Understand Setting
3	15	How Things Are Done
4	25*	Ways of Thinking About People
5	20*	Flwo of Events, Change, Turning Point
6	5	Activities: Regular
7	6	Events: Specific
8	36*	Strategies: People's Tactics
9	9	Relationships
10	11	Problems, Joys, Dilemmas

**Appendix G  
SCHOOL - Blue Hills**

**Category Codes: Frequency participants discussed attributes of categories.**

Troy

Code	Frequency	Attributes
1	4	Setting/Context
2	10*	How People Understand Setting
3	2	How Things Are Done
4	28*	Ways of Thinking About People
5	5	Flow of Events, Change, Turning Points
6	1	Activities: Regular
7	0	Events: Specific
8	18*	Strategies: People's Tactics
9	0	Realtionships
10	0	Problems, Joys, Dilemmas

Kathy

Code	Frequency	Attributes
1	4	Setting/Context
2	9*	How People Understand Setting
3	0	How Things Are Done
4	36*	Ways of Thinking About People
5	1	Flow of Events, Change, Turning Point
6	1	Activities: Regular
7	0	Events: Specific, not frequent
8	22*	Strategies: people's tactics
9	10	Relationships
10	10	Problems, Joys, Dilemmas

Robbie

Code	Frequency	Attributes
1	1	Setting/Context
2	7*	How People Understand Setting
3	0	How Things Are Done
4	22*	Ways of Thinking About People
5	1	Flow of Events, Change, Turning Points
6	1	Activities: Regular
7	0	Events: Specific
8	17*	Strategies: People's Tactics
9	3	Relationships
10	2	Problems, Joys, Dilemmas

Polly

Code	Frequency	Attributes
1	2	Setting/Context
2	12*	How People Understand Setting
3	0	How Things Are Done
4	35*	Ways of Thinking About People
5	4	Flow of Events, Change, Turning Point
6	0	Activities: Regular
7	0	Events: Specific
8	24*	Strategies: People's Tactics
9	3	Relationships
10	6	Problems, Joys, Dilemmas

Robert

Code	Frequency	Attributes
1	4	Setting/Context
2	8*	How People Understand Setting
3	0	How Things Are Done
4	30*	Ways of Thinking About People
5	2	Flow of Events, Change, Turning Point
6	3	Activities: Regular
7	0	Events: Specific
8	4	Strategies: People's Tactics
9	0	Relationships
10	5	Problems, Joys, Dilemmas

**Appendix H**  
**Principal Behaviors**  
**Arrow Point**  
**Teachers and Principal Responses According to Strategies Identifies**

Themes	Teachers: #	<i>f</i>	Principal: <i>f</i>
<i>Principal believes and involves faculty in school decisions and responsibilities.</i>	5	14	11
<i>Principal was supportive of staff</i>	5	31	7
<i>Principal promotes communication as an integral part of inclusion.</i>	3	7	6
<i>Principal is a problem solver and a risk taker.</i>	5	10	5
<i>Principal establishes a philosophy 'all children belong'.</i>	3	5	6

# = number of teachers responding

*f* = frequency of responses from interviews

**Appendix I**  
**Principal Behaviors**  
**Blue Hills**  
**Teachers and Principal Responses According to Strategies Identified**

Themes	Teachers: #	f	Principal: f
Principal is supportive of staff.	4	20	8
Principal establishes philosophy 'all children belong'	4	12	3
Principal promotes communication	3	6	8
Principal has high expectations	4	10	7

# = number of teachers responding  
f = frequency of responses from interviews

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*University of Virginia*, Charlottesville, VA. Course work - Administrative Certificate, 1990-91.

*Radford University*, Radford, VA. Master of Science - Special Education, 1987.

*University of Arkansas*, Monticello, AR. Bachelor of Arts - Elementary Education, Cum Laude, 1981.

### ENDORSEMENTS

*Virginia State Teachers Certificate*

Director Instruction  
Elementary Supervisor  
Middle School Supervisor  
Secondary Supervisor  
General Supervisor  
Supervisor Special Education  
Special Education Learning Disabilities K-12  
General Education K-7

### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1987-Present      *Rockbridge County Public Schools*, Lexington, VA  
Director Special Education, 1989-Present

*Rockbridge County High School*  
*Highland Belle Middle School*  
Resource Learning Disabilities, 1987-1989

1983-1986      *Carroll County High School*, Hillsville, VA  
Resource Learning Disabilities, 1985-1986

*Carol E. Whitaker*

*Carroll County High School*  
*Hillsville Intermediate*  
Resource Learning Disabilities, 1984-1985

*Carroll County High School*  
Self-contained Emotional Disturbed, 1983-1984

1981-1982      *Gordan Elementary School*, Dillion, South Carolina  
6th Grade Language Arts

#### **AFFILIATIONS**

Phi Delta Kappa - Shenandoah Valley Chapter. Membership since 1991.

Delta Kappa Gamma - Rockbridge Chapter. Membership since 1993.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Membership since 1992.

#### **BOARD SERVICE**

Rockbridge Mental Health Advisory Board - Past Vice President, Service: 1992-Present

ARC Rockbridge - Past Secretary, Service: 1990-Present

State Work Group - Comprehensive Services Act, Service: 1994-1995

Rockbridge Area Policy and Management Team for Youth and Families - Secretary,  
Service: 1993-1995.

#### **PRESENTATIONS**

Summer Institute - Virginia State Mentoring Project - Keynote Speaker. Mountain Lake Resort, August 1993. Topic: "How Teachers Collaborate"

Virginia School Board Association, Williamsburg, VA, November, 1994. Presenter and Panel Member. Topic: "Inclusion"