

**THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
IN THE CHANGE PROCESS:
THE ROAD TO INCLUSION**

by

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Much has been written about how school systems manage and sustain change. Central to the cultural change is the building level principal. This study was designed to examine the role of the building level principal and the relationship that exists between the teachers and the administrators with regard to implementing change.

The following research questions were utilized to frame this study:

1. What are the values and beliefs expressed by the building level principal and his/her teachers in successful inclusionary environments with regard to the inclusion of special needs children in the regular education classroom?
2. What types of relationships exist between the principal and staff in schools that are successful in the practice of inclusion?
3. How does the building level principal facilitate the knowledge creation and sharing needed to support the state and federal mandated change to inclusion through professional development?
4. What is the relationship between a principal's values and beliefs and a teacher's values and beliefs in regard to the change from a self-contained environment for special needs children to an inclusionary program?

5. How does a principal convey his/her values and beliefs regarding inclusion to his teaching staff to establish a shared commitment to facilitate and sustain the change?
6. How does the principal provide for sustainability of the mandated changes in the educational program?
7. What is the culture of the school system with regard to knowledge, collaboration and change?

In this case study, the researcher attempted to create a picture of the role of the building level principal when managing change. Teachers and administrators at three middle schools participated in the case study. Through the use surveys, interviews and document analysis, the researcher found that successful inclusionary environments are created by school systems where the principal practices distributed leadership, participates in professional development and continually shares his vision with regard to the inclusion of special education students in the regular education environment.

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PREFACE

*Success is to be measured not so much by the position one has reached in life
as by the obstacles which one has overcome while trying to succeed.*

~ Booker T. Washington

I would be remiss if I did not thank a number of people who have helped me overcome the obstacles,

~ To my husband, Vic, who has always provided love and support and reminds me to *look at a brick.*

~ To my beautiful daughters, Alexis and Victoria, who inspire me every day of my life.

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~ To the principals and teachers who opened their hearts and minds and allowed me to enter their world.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the *Seven's Club*

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1.0 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

“Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the greatest equalizer of the conditions of men – the balance-wheel of the social machinery.”

~ Horace Mann

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Joe is a 14-year old eighth grade student at an area middle school. He enjoys reading books about space. Joe’s favorite subject in school is science. Last week, with the assistance of an instructional aide, Joe succeeded in making a rocket with his regular education peers in science class. Joe has Down’s syndrome.

Students just like Joe are at the center of debate in schools and courtrooms across the United States. Parents, educators and politicians are questioning whether or not to include special needs children like Joe in the regular education classroom. Inclusion is defined as “the provision of services to students with disabilities, including those with severe disabilities, in their neighborhood schools, in age-appropriate regular education classes, with the necessary support services and supplemental aids – for both children and teachers” (Lipsky & Gartner, 1994, p. 763). The aim of inclusion is to mainstream special needs children in ways that will increase their capacity to learn by exposing them to the same rigorous curriculum as the regular education

children (Ainscow, 1999; Dyson, Howes, & Roberts, 2002). Inclusion is the process of identifying and overcoming barriers to learning for all students. Advocates for the inclusion of special needs children posit the promotion of inclusion will improve the achievement of all learners (Ainscow, 1991; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Skrtic, 1991).

The purpose of this literature review is to address the following questions:

- Why should schools include special needs children in the regular education classroom?
- How will schools manage the change to an inclusive environment?
- What is the role of the principal in the change process?
- How does a school system sustain this cultural and perhaps, structural change?

1.2 HISTORY OF THE INCLUSION OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

Although compulsory education laws have existed in the United States since 1918, many children with disabilities were excluded from being educated in public school until the mid-seventies. Since then, numerous laws have been established that govern the education of children with disabilities and promote the inclusion of special needs children in the regular education environment (Appendix A). A review of the history of special education legislation and litigation shows that three laws have impacted special education services the most. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, also known as Public Law 94-142, and later named the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB); and the settlement of *Gaskins v. Pennsylvania Department of Education* are the pivotal pieces behind the integration of special needs children into the regular education classroom.

1.2.1 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

In 1973, Congress authorized Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Public Law 93-112).

Section 504 requires public school districts that receive federal funds to place children with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible so as to meet the needs of the handicapped child. This law requires public school districts to supply the necessary supports and supplementary aids so as to support the success of the special needs child. Section 504 requires school districts to end discrimination by offering its services to people with disabilities. However, because the legislatures did not provide funding or require monitoring, the law has been virtually ignored by local and state educational agencies for over twenty years.

1.2.2 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

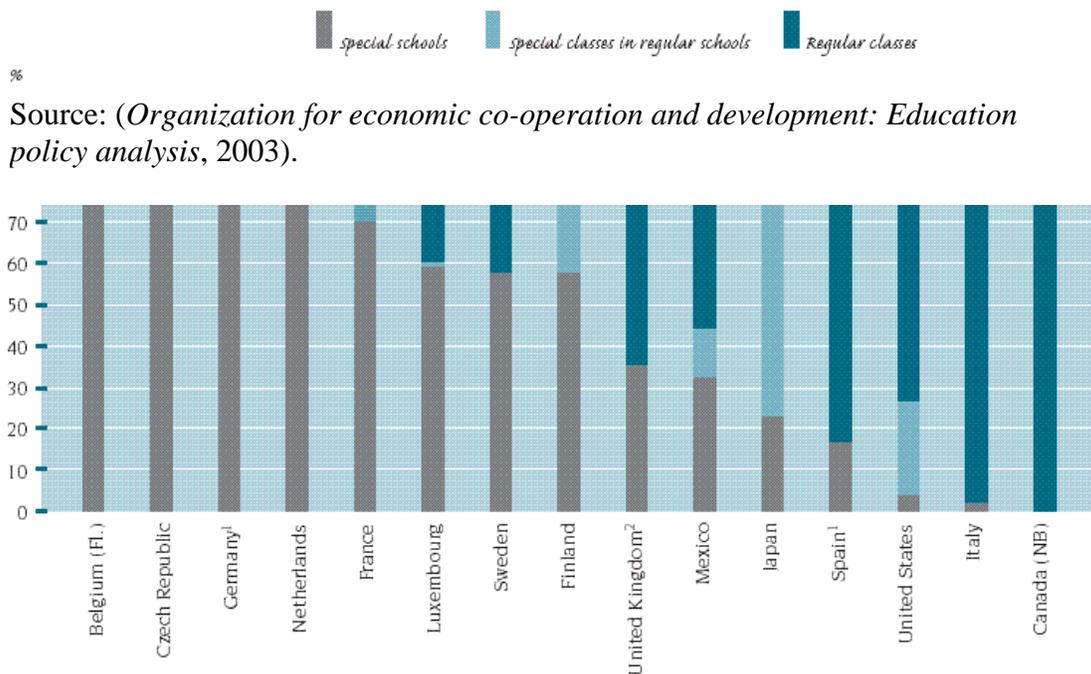
By 1975 Congress had determined that millions of American children with disabilities were still not receiving an appropriate education; therefore, they enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) (Martin, Martin & Terman, 1996). This landmark decision required public schools to provide children with a wide range of disabilities with a “free and appropriate public education.” Not only did PL 94-142 protect the rights of the disabled children, it also called for public school districts to provide the special needs child’s education in the “least restrictive environment possible.” The law was designed to place special education children along side their non-disabled peers; however, Sarasen (1996) posited that the way the law was interpreted was to protect the regular education classroom and to maintain as much of the status quo as possible. PL 94-142 became known as the “mainstreaming law” but

the word mainstream never appears in the legislation. In 1990, PL 94-142 was reauthorized and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and has since been reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). IDEIA mandates services and programs for special needs children from ages three to twenty-one.

IDEA has been amended and reauthorized numerous times since the legislation was first written. Although IDEA does not mandate that all special needs children be included in the regular education program, it does require that children with disabilities be educated “to the maximum extent appropriate” in the least restrictive environment. According to IDEA, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team must *first* consider the regular education classroom as the least restrictive environment. If the team chooses not to place the child in the regular education classroom, the team must include an explanation as to why the regular education classroom is not the most appropriate placement. Therefore, the purpose of IDEA is to educate as many children as possible in the regular education classroom. As we enter the middle of the 21st century, the majority of children with disabilities across the world are now being educated in their neighborhood schools alongside their non-disabled peers (Figure 1.1).

1.2.3 No Child Left Behind Act

Like Section 504 and IDEA, the No Child Left Behind Act does not mandate the inclusion of special needs children in the regular education classroom; however, special education is one of the disaggregated subgroups that is required under NCLB to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP). Schools across the United States are required to meet the 100% proficiency standard in both reading and mathematics in all disaggregated subgroups (ethnicity, disability status, English proficiency, and economically disadvantaged) by the year 2014. In order to achieve this standard,



1. Students in special classes are included in special schools.
 2. Students in special classes are included in regular classes.
 Source: Based on the classifications (category A) in the Appendix. For further details see OECD (2003).
 Data for Figure 1.2, p. 35.

Figure 1-1: Percentage of students in compulsory education receiving additional resources for defined disabilities by location, 1999.

school districts are transitioning towards the inclusion of special needs children to ensure they are exposed to the same rigorous general education curriculum as their non-disabled peers. The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (2003) states that all students, including those with disabilities, must be held to the same challenging content and achievement standards. In order to meet these high standards, schools must change the old way of educating and begin the transition into the inclusionary environment. Educators must focus on teaching and learning methods that use individualized approaches that focus on achieving high academic standards for all students.

Many believe that children with disabilities should be included in the regular education classroom not only because the law says it is required, but because it is morally and ethically right as well. Inclusion proponents claim that segregated programs are detrimental to students and do not meet the goal of special education. Research confirms a small to moderate beneficial effect of inclusion on the academic and social outcome of special needs students (Carlberg and Kavale, 1980; Baker, Wang, and Walberg, 1994-95). In a study conducted at Johns Hopkins University, a program to measure student achievement was implemented using Success for All. Success For All is a comprehensive reading program that identifies family support, a professional development plan, reading, tutoring and assessments as major components of a support program. While the reading assessments showed improved performance for all the students involved in the program, the most dramatic improvements occurred among the lowest achievers, the special education children. Furthermore, the research revealed that all students, not just those identified as special needs children, benefited from early intervention programs as opposed to continued remedial programs (Allington and McGill-Frazen, 1990; Pinnell, 1991; Silver and Hagen, 1989).

1.2.4 Gaskins verses Pennsylvania Department of Education

In 1994, parents of a student with Down's syndrome filed suit against the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) claiming that students with disabilities have been denied their right to a free and appropriate public education with supplementary services in the regular education classroom (Rhen, 2005). More than ten years later, the lawsuit has been settled with the Pennsylvania Department of Education agreeing to a series of undertakings involving training, monitoring and compliance. The goal of the settlement is to assure the Individualized

Education Plan team considers the regular education classroom before considering a more restrictive environment; and once again, in the history of special education laws and regulations, reemphasizes the goal of educating special needs children in the least restrictive environment with appropriate supports (Brinkley, 2005).

1.3 ADDITIONAL REASONS TO INCLUDE SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

Legislation and legal issues aside, in the *President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education*, Sailor (2002) suggests the issue of inclusion be framed on the basis of a shared educational agenda between the regular education teacher and the special education teacher. Rather than framing the issue around the least restrictive environment, he suggests we frame the issue around whole school reform. He posits, "Inclusion, framed this way, is more about including special services and supports for the common good and less about placement, as if it were, in and of itself, an important variable in predictive of student success" (p. 4). However, in a study completed by Zigmond et al. (1995) in which they evaluated the reformation of six school buildings from a self-contained model to an inclusionary model, the data suggests that inclusion of the special needs students in the regular education classroom produces unacceptable and undesirable achievement results. However, their research provides no basis for eliminating a full continuum of services (part-time, resource, pull-out, full-time) for the special needs student.

The rationale proposing inclusion has never rested on research findings, but on principle (Hines, 2001). Several other experts espoused that pullout systems are not effective in remediating even mild learning disabilities. They believe that teachers in regular classes provide effective instruction that is appropriate for all children and can accommodate individual

differences, including those differences associated with special needs children (Reynolds & Wang, 1983; Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1990; Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1986). Inclusion proponents parallel the concept to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 because inclusion guarantees students with disabilities the same rights to attend educational programs as other minorities (Sarason, 1996; Stainback & Stainback, 1990). Furthermore, segregating the special needs students from the regular education program may damage their self-esteem, restrict their social interaction with peers, narrow their curriculum, and diminish their motivation to learn (Yuen, Westwood, & Wong, 2004), while the benefits of inclusion include: it helps to facilitate a more appropriate social behavior of the special needs students because of the higher expectations of the students in the general education classroom, it helps to promote levels of achievement that are higher, or at least as high as, those achieved in the self-contained classrooms, it offers social support because the special needs students are included with their non-disabled peers; and it improves the ability of all of the students and teachers to adapt to different teaching and learning styles and to more openly accept diversity (Kochhar, West, & Taymans, 2000).

Yatvin (1995) writes that special education teachers are not highly qualified, or perhaps certified in a particular area. He notes that the special education teacher is not required to complete the same rigorous and content specific coursework to receive certification as that required to receive a certificate to teach English, reading, social studies, science or mathematics.

Yatvin's study identified three factors that led to the philosophy of inclusion:

- All children learn best in regular education classrooms where there are flexible organization and human supports,

- A child’s belief that he is entitled to a place in a community of peers is a precondition of learning, and
- Pull-out programs that impose the extra burdens of academic discontinuity, poor-quality instruction, social anxiety, and low status on special-needs children deprive them of the opportunity for the education they are entitled to and thus violate their civil rights.

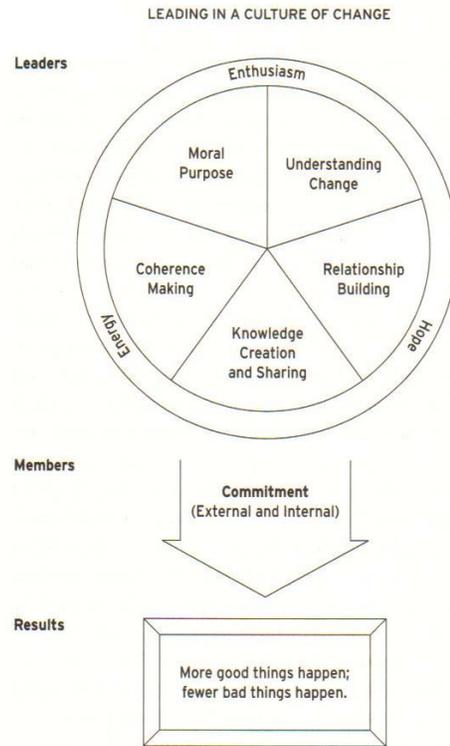
He also believes that the children who are not included in the regular education classroom are being done a disservice because the teacher is not trained or prepared as well and does not utilize a holistic approach to teaching (Yatvin, 1995).

1.4 THE FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHANGE

Principals leading schools from a self-contained classroom to an inclusionary model must understand that change is a cyclical, continuous and interactive process in which there is a dynamic relationship – events feed back into the problem and often times alter the decisions made at previous phases. In *Leading in a Culture of Change*, Fullan (2001) identifies a framework for those thinking about and leading through complex change (Figure 1.2). His five components of leadership are independent of each other; however, he posits they are “mutual reinforcing forces for positive change.” (2001, p. 3). Fullan identifies moral purpose, understanding the change process, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making as the framework for leading through complex change to enhance both internal and external commitment whereby building the capacity to produce results.

Moral purpose is defined as “acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of parents, students, teachers, or society as a whole” (Fullan, 2001, p. 3). It is the way

we, as leaders, connect with others and establish bonds. Effective leaders find a person’s moral purpose and make it a natural ally. Fullan’s concept of moral purpose parallels that espoused as



Source: (Fullan, 2001, p. 4)

Figure 1-2: Framework for leading through complex change.

“vision” in the work done by Thousand and Villa (2005). They identify a leader’s vision as that person’s assumptions or beliefs. For proponents of inclusion, their vision might be that they assume that all children can learn, that all children have a right to be educated with their peers and that the public school is responsible for addressing the unique needs of all children.

As mentioned previously, change is not easy; it is not linear. Change is a dynamic relationship between and amongst individuals (principal, teacher, and student) and things (culture, laws, structures). Schlechty (1997) identifies three types of change: procedural, technological and structural. Procedural change can best be explained as the way in which things

are done (i.e. how a school registers a new student or the steps followed by a teacher when ordering supplies). A technological change occurs when one alters the way something is done (i.e. using a computer word processor instead of a typewriter to write a research report). The more complex type of change is structural or cultural change. This type of change requires alterations in rules and relationships as well as beliefs, values and orientations (Schlechty, 1997). Fullan (1993) lists eight "basic lessons" that can be learned about the process of change and improvement:

Lesson One: You Can't Mandate What Matters (The more complex the change, the less you can force it.)

Lesson Two: Change is a Journey, not a Blueprint (Change is non-linear, loaded with uncertainty and excitement and sometimes perverse.)

Lesson Three: Problems are Our Friends (Problems are inevitable and you can't learn without them.)

Lesson Four: Vision and Strategic Planning Come Later (Premature visions and planning blind.)

Lesson Five: Individualism and Collectivism Must Have Equal Power (There are no one-sided solutions to isolation and group think.)

Lesson Six: Neither Centralization Nor Decentralization Works (Both top-down and bottom-up strategies are necessary.)

Lesson Seven: Connection with the Wider Environment is Critical for Success

(The best organizations learn externally as well as internally.)

Lesson Eight: Every Person is a Change Agent (Change is too important to leave to the experts, personal mind set and mastery is the ultimate protection.)

(pp. 21-22).

How do these eight lessons fit together? As Fullan (1993) notes later:

There is a pattern underlying the eight lessons of dynamic change and it concerns one's ability to work with polar opposites: simultaneously pushing for change while allowing self-learning to unfold; being prepared for a journey of uncertainty; seeing problems as sources of creative resolution; having a vision, but not being blinded by it; valuing the individual and the group; incorporating centralizing and decentralizing forces; being internally cohesive, but externally oriented; and valuing, personal change agency as the route to system change (p. 40).

Transforming a school system from a self-contained model to inclusionary classrooms is a complex cultural change. Effective change agents are leaders who need to be innovative yet receptive to others ideas. "Understanding the change process...is rocket science...we are inundated with complex, unclear, and often contradictory advice" (Fullan, 2001, p. 31).

The third element in Fullan's (2001) complex change framework is relationships. According to Fullan, relationships are the basis of all change. Collaboration and teamwork by and between administrators and teachers have been recognized as key elements in the successful

implementation of an inclusive school (Janney, Snell, Beers, & Traynes, 1995; Jenkins & Pious, 1991; Kaufman, 1987; Thousand & Villa, 1991). However, as Sarasen (1996) stated, “You can mandate teamwork, but unless the culture of the setting contains ingredients favorable to such functioning, it is most unlikely to become manifest” (p. 254). Principals leading through complex change must foster purposeful interaction and problem solving skills because when relationships improve, things within a school culture improve as well. Research shows that moral purpose, relationships and organizational success are closely interrelated. In fact, in a study conducted by Lewin and Regine (2000) on management styles of leadership in successful companies, a focus on people and relationships was found to be an essential management tool when achieving sustained results. Furthermore, good relationships strengthen the principal’s leadership and collegial support.

Fullan (2001) identifies knowledge creation and sharing as the fourth element necessary when leading an organization through change. Leaders must be committed to constantly generating and increasing knowledge inside and outside the organization. However, in relation to the first element identified by Fullan, moral purpose, he espouses that people need to feel a moral commitment in order to share knowledge. In other words, principals need to develop good relationships to turn information or data into knowledge. Change leaders must also realize that one cannot simply send a teacher out for training, change agents must work to change the environment they come back to as well. Principals committed to change must help create new settings that are conducive to learning and sharing. They must create professional learning communities.

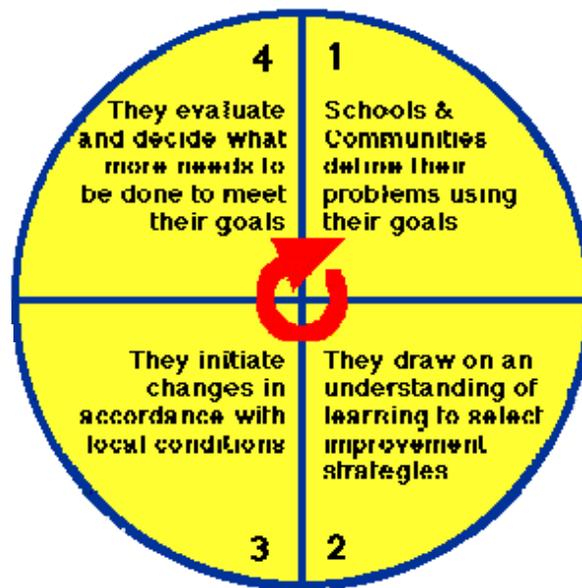
The fifth and final element in the leadership framework is coherence making. As stated previously, change is dynamic and complex, it is not linear. Through change, differences of

opinion in workers may arise. Effective change leaders need to be adept at recognizing the value of people's opinions and be able to tolerate the ambiguity of change. This ambiguity keeps one's creativity flowing. It is the leader's responsibility to channel those differences and that ambiguity in a productive manner that will make change cohesive within the system. Schools battle with a variety of initiatives, laws and regulations on a routine basis. They cannot make changes haphazardly. Effective change leaders need to be able to recognize the valuable changes that are needed and lead the system through the dynamics and hurdles. Within the concept of coherence making, Fullan (2001) describes "productive disturbance." This happens when a leader's ideas or vision is guided by moral purpose. Leaders guiding through change in a school system are typically working on complex issues. Perception and ideas on these issues may cause tension within the system. Because there is no "right answer," school systems need an adaptive leader who is able to work through the uncomfortable differences of opinion. Effective leaders need to be able to guide their workers through these disagreements and allow valuable discussion that enables their differences to surface, thus creating and cultivating a shared commitment between the system and the workers.

Reformations toward school improvement require a team effort. Research supports the need for representatives from the local communities and schools, including administrators and teachers, to engage in a continuous cycle of improvement. It is a self-regulating cycle. The team decides for itself what its schools should be, how they should operate, and in what ways they should change and improve their approaches to teaching and learning. The National Laboratory Network System (1994) established a model of school improvement (Figure 1.3) that identifies reform as a continuous cycle involving:

- Research-based knowledge,

- Expert advice,
- Demonstrations of successful practice,
- Resources in key educational areas,
- Critical issues to stimulate and inform the improvement process,
- Indicators of engaged learning, and
- Self-study tools.



Source: ("A draft design of a national laboratory network system," 1994)

Figure 1-3: National Laboratory Network System Model of School Improvement.

A building level principal when transitioning a school system into an inclusionary environment may also use this model.

1.5 THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER IN MANAGING CHANGE

Education reform experts espouse there has been a shift in the principal's role as a leader. No longer is the principal a "manager" but the principal is now seen as an instructional leader, a collaborator, and the key individual in any reform movement within a school system (Ainscow, 1999; Hipp & Huffman, 2000; Sarason, 1990). Because the principal's role in reform is pivotal, in order for inclusion to be successful, the principal must exhibit behaviors that advance the integration, acceptance, and success of students with disabilities in the regular education classroom (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Sage & Burrello, 1994). In fact, when principals pay attention to particular initiatives, there will be a greater degree of implementation in the classroom (Fullan, 1992). Principals are now expected to design, lead, manage and implement programs for all students, including those with disabilities (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Sage & Burrello, 1994). Elmore (2002) espoused that in order for this to occur, principals need to form a unity where all members of the school community are working towards one task, one common vision, and that shared vision is student achievement.

In order to rise to the level of this form of leadership, Elmore (2002) also suggests principals move toward "distributed leadership" where they can share reform responsibilities with teachers and other stakeholders in the school community. Gronn (2002) presents a conceptual framework for distributed leadership in the school setting that includes two forms of leadership: numerical leadership and concertive action leadership. He describes numerical leadership as that being dispersed through many or even all members of the school community including administration, teachers, parents and even students. Concertive action leadership emerges from "multi-member organizational groupings." Gronn identifies three main patterns of

concertive action distributed leadership: spontaneous, shared, and institutionalized. Leadership that is evident in the interactions and relationships that highlight an individual's expertise and skills is considered spontaneous collaboration. A shared role is typically between two individuals who work closely and intuitively with one another. Institutionalization-distributed leadership is one involving a committee. The practical appeal of distributed leadership is that it invites consideration for many members of the school community to participate in building the capacity for leadership in the organization by capitalizing on the strengths and weaknesses of an individual or a group. Furthermore, it is an effective way of dealing with school change and encourages the building capacity and sustainability of the complex reform (Gronn, 2002).

1.5.1 Capacity Building

Researchers cite building school capacity as the key to the successful implementation of school reform (Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2001) and have associated teacher knowledge and skills, professional community, program coherence, technical resources, and principal leadership as factors associated with successful reform. These five forces, in which you have to maintain an appropriate balance, are “less a matter of taking leadership and more a case of slow knowing and learning in context with others at all levels of the organization” (Fullan, 2001, p. 137).

A teacher's knowledge and skills can be cultivated through professional development (an area that will be discussed in detail in the next section) and needs to focus on collaboration.

Elmore (2002) suggests that educators need to focus on the next stage of improvement and determine where knowledge and skill are going to come from in the future. Effective change in the long run “depends on developing internal commitment in which the ideas and intrinsic motivation of the vast majority of organizational members become activated” (Fullan, 2001, p.

46). As professional knowledge grows, the professional community grows as well (Rhen, 2005). All members of the education community, principals, teachers and the support staff need to work as a team (Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kaplan, 2005) to build partnerships. Fullan (2001) recognizes that these partnerships help create and facilitate leadership at many levels of the organization to establish built-in safeguards because of the dynamics involved. He states, “Ultimately, your leadership in a culture of change will be judged as effective or not effective not by who you are as a leader but by *what leadership you produce in others*”(p. 137).

To sustain the implemented program, it must be carefully planned and regularly reviewed (Kalambouka et al., 2005). If innovative ideas are to be effective in changing teacher and student practice, they must be worked through the whole system of relationships and ways of working to achieve program coherence (Fullan, 2001). Additionally, technical resources cannot be overlooked. Teachers must be given support and training in order for inclusion and other complex change movements to be successful (Kalambouka et al., 2005).

The role of the principal is as important to sustaining change as it is to implementing change. Instructional leaders need to know and model the knowledge and skills needed to promote the inclusionary model. This includes knowledge about performance, knowledge about development in content areas, and knowledge about the improvement of instruction (Elmore, 2002). By doing this, the role of the principal is transformed from the command-and-control style of leadership that assumes followers must be bribed to that of assuming the commitment of the followers. This type of leader asks questions often, refers to the knowledgeable people on a particular subject, keeps the team informed, and provides training and support while establishing clear benchmarks (Schlechty, 1997).

Senge (1990) refers to this form of capacity building as creating a “learning organization,” in that it is an organization that is expanding its capacity to create its future by continually seeking to develop and refine its responses to the challenges it meets. Through this change process, steady, deepening improvement helps to build capacity and assurance in the organization. The key to systematic reform is the development of the capacity of a school district to support and sustain reform efforts at the building level and to ensure that those who occupy top-level positions in the system have the inclination and skills to use this capacity to the fullest (Schlechty, 1997).

The complex change towards inclusion does not occur in a vacuum. In order for teachers to buy into the reform movement and the organization to ensure sustainability, leaders must also change the way school systems manage professional development.

1.5.2 Professional Development and the Change Process

In order to transform a school system from a self-contained atmosphere to an inclusionary model, change agents must recognize the need for appropriate professional development. In *Revisiting “The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change,”* (1990), Sarason states the following regularities about teaching, thoughts he shared initially in his book of the same title which was published in 1971:

- Teachers tend to teach the way they were taught.
- In professional development experiences, teachers are minimally exposed to theories about question answering. Teachers and professional development facilitators need to look at the relationship between theory and practice.

- Teachers are too concerned with covering the curriculum, not with teaching the material to mastery.

To meet the needs of the special education students in the regular education classroom, educators need to reevaluate the way they are teaching, and school systems need to reexamine the model in which they are utilizing professional development opportunities. Elmore (2002) notes, “We put an enormous amount of energy into changing structures and usually leave instructional practice untouched” (p. 1). Research supports the move from fragmented, piecemeal efforts to professional development driven by a clear, coherent strategic plan for the district, each school, and even each department. Sarason (1990) and Fullan (1991) have criticized school systems for their fragmented approach to change and “one-shot” professional development experiences. They advocate a comprehensive approach to professional development that looks at all systems (assessment, instruction, delivery, curriculum, and parent involvement) working together toward a common outcome or vision. Elmore (2004) adds to this position, “...professional development, if it is to be focused on student learning, at some point must be tailored to address the difficulties encountered by real students in real classrooms as well as broader systematic objectives” (p. 95).

Sparks (1994) identifies three powerful ideas that are shaping professional development: results-driven education (like NCLB), systems thinking, and constructivism. Results-driven education judges students by what they know according to a standardized test. Therefore, teachers and administrators may need to alter their attitudes and acquire new instructional knowledge and skills, thus emphasizing a need for results-driven professional development. Systems thinkers are individuals who are able to see and understand how the parts of a system constantly influence one another in ways that can support or hinder the improvement efforts.

They understand that changes in one part of the system can have a significant effect on other parts of the system. Because educational leaders have traditionally not thought systematically, educational change and reform have been approached in a piecemeal fashion (Senge, 1990; Sparks, 1994). Constructivists believe that learners build knowledge structures rather than receive the knowledge from experts. Constructivists encourage collaboration, include action research, facilitate discussion about beliefs and assumptions that guide instruction, and often keep journals of the strengths and weaknesses of their instructional changes (Sparks, 1994).

Therefore, to make these changes in the culture of the system, leaders will need to change professional development from a district focus to a school focus, from a focus on adult needs to a focus on student needs and learning outcomes, from an orientation toward transmission of knowledge and skills to teachers by “experts” to the study by teachers of the teaching and learning process, from a focus on generic instructional skills to a combination of generic and content-specific skills. Furthermore, professional development needs to be an essential component of the system whereas teachers are no longer primary recipients of professional development, but active participants of professional development (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Sarason, 1996; Sparks, 1994). We need to move from individual development to individual development **and** organizational development.

1.5.3 Procedural Transformation

There is growing evidence that student performance is influenced by high-quality professional development opportunities for teachers (Cohen, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 1999). The goal of professional development should be to change an individual’s or an organization’s knowledge, understanding, behaviors, skills, values and beliefs. In leading through complex change,

principals and school administrators must recognize the need to facilitate the learning of adults so they can, in turn; facilitate active learning for the students. Joyce and Showers (1980) identified five procedural components of a productive and efficient professional development model.

1. **Presentation of theory or the description of a new skill or behavior** – This usually takes an hour of one-way delivery to a passive audience. The goal of the presentation of theories is to impart knowledge.
2. **Demonstration or Modeling of the new strategy** – The delivery is again one-way. No audience participation is necessary.
3. **Initial practice of the new strategy** – This usually occurs in a controlled environment where the audience participates and tries out the new skill.
4. **Structured and open-ended feedback about the performance** – Teachers are encouraged to participate in deliberation concerning the new skill or behavior.
5. **Coaching** – During the final component of the procedural transformation of the new skill or behavior, the teacher is encouraged to try the new idea or strategy in the classroom.

To evaluate the procedural transformation outlined by Joyce and Showers, Bush (1984) conducted a study to examine the necessity of utilizing all five components of the model. A small percentage of the participants were able to perform the new skill when one or more of the first five components (presentation, demonstration, practice, feedback, and coaching) were demonstrated. However, not until **all** five components were included, with emphasis on the coaching aspect, did the majority of the participants (95%) internalize the new skill or behavior and utilize it in the classroom.

1.5.4 The Functions of Change

In regard to implementing inclusion, Baker, Wang and Walberg (1995) espouse, “concern is not whether to provide inclusive education, but how to implement inclusive education in ways that are both feasible and effective in ensuring school success for all children, especially those with special needs” (p. 24). Researchers indicate commonalities of implementing change. These commonalities include: articulating a vision of change; planning and providing resources, making organizational arrangements; training and development of the necessary skills, monitoring and evaluating the change; and creating an environment conducive to change (Ainscow, 1999; Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1995; Fullan, 2001; Fullan & Miles, 1992; Janney et al., 1995).

In order for the teachers and other stakeholders to know what the change will look like when fully implemented, effective leaders will articulate a vision of change. This vision needs to be clear and a common set of goals and expectations should be established. The articulation or creation of a vision should include the input from those who will be affected – teachers, parents, students, and administrators alike. Most importantly, the staff needs to feel a part of the decision making so as to increase their investment into the reformation (Fullan & Miles, 1992; Janney et al., 1995).

Change agents have the responsibility to plan, provide resources, and make organizational arrangements to facilitate the desired outcomes. This may include allocating additional time for professional development activities. Once beginning the professional development, it should be ongoing and embedded into the teacher’s daily activities – this also supports building capacity within the organization.

Fullan (2001) recognizes that we often assume the capacity of teachers to move actively into implementation; however, he espouses that without a substantial amount of help and assistance provided through professional development, the reform will undoubtedly fail. Trainings should be long-term in order to respond to teachers' needs as they are implementing changes to their teaching and instructional delivery methods. However, in order for professional development to be successful, teachers, too, must be willing to learn and develop as teachers and professionals. Professional development is about individuality and collegiality (Ainscow, 1999). Sarason (1996) noted two essential elements involved: teacher-student relationship and teacher knowledge.

Sarason (1996) posits educators do not usually start where the children are but at a predetermined place in the curriculum. If teachers would reevaluate and modify the way in which they ask questions, they would be able to change that relationship. Instead of the teacher asking the questions, the student should be the one asking questions. He employs that students should not be passive recipients of knowledge but active learners. While advocating differentiated instruction and group-centered learning, Sarason (1996) reiterates the thoughts of John Dewey made nearly a century ago, "The difference between productive and unproductive learning is the difference between teaching children and teaching subject matter" (Sarason, 1996, p. 367). Therefore, professional development should also focus on modifying the teacher/student relationship.

Essential to the implementation of change is the element of teacher knowledge. Teachers need to be given a scheduled time to meet and discuss educational issues, teaching styles and pedagogy. Sarason (1996) espouses that the way teachers are now is a "culture of individuals."

However, they need to be more supportive of each other and establish collegial relationships that give them a sense of ownership in order for the knowledge obtained to be meaningful.

Change takes time. The impact of the professional development practices must be monitored and evaluated over time. Consultation with other professionals experiencing similar change, reinforcing the vision of the reform, and other interventions, may be necessary as the process continues.

The final element necessary when implementing change is to create an environment that is conducive to the change process. Because the change implementation is requiring us to work in an atmosphere of continuous improvement, members of the school community need to widely share the vision and participate in the decision-making. In this culture, relationships need to be caring and supportive. This atmosphere should encourage risk taking and behavior/value changes (Boyd & Hord, 1994; Hord, 1993). Reform must focus on the deeper issues of the culture of the system in order to be successful. As stated previously, leaders facilitating change must also involve learning. The journey may have obstacles; however, problems should be welcome, keeping in mind that extra resources may be necessary. Change is systematic and implemented locally (Fullan, 1993). This change becomes what Senge (1990) called a learning organization, “an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future” (p. 14).

These functions are not linear but cyclical. In order to succeed and implement the above factors, you need someone to plan, implement and oversee the reform movement. In the case of inclusion, this person or team of persons is the building level administrator and his implementation team. We know a great deal about professional development and change; we need to learn more about the person facilitating teams through this change -- the building level principal.

Before students can benefit from new and more effective programs, it will be necessary for teachers to adopt the new classroom practices that are required.

1.6 WHAT DOES AN INCLUSIONARY CLASSROOM LOOK LIKE?

In an inclusionary environment, general education teachers do not relinquish their responsibility for the learning disabled children. Special education teachers work alongside general education teachers cooperatively to provide a program for all children in the classroom (Praisner, 2003). Inclusion allows special education to be viewed less of a place (the self-contained classroom or resource room) and more as a support system (Sage & Burrello, 1994; Walther-Thomas, 2000). Researchers (Ainscow, 1999; Booth & Ainscow, 1988; Clark, Dyson, Millward, & Robson, 1999; Farrell, 2000) support the following ingredients when transforming a school system to an inclusive school:

- **Start with existing practices and knowledge.** Schools need to make better use of the knowledge they already have.
- **See differences as opportunities for learning.** Students learn at different rates according to different teaching styles. Inclusive schools welcome this diversity in student learning.
- **Recognize barriers to inclusion.** Teachers often convey subtle messages regarding their values on special education children in the regular education classrooms. Effective leaders must recognize these beliefs and work to change them.
- **Make use of available resources to support learning.** Educators need to make better use of the resources they already have. This includes greater cooperation between teachers, instructional aides, parents and the students themselves.

- **Develop a language of inclusionary practice.** Teachers need common planning time for collegial discourse about pedagogy and successful instructional practices to meet the needs of a vast array of learning styles.
- **Create conditions that encourage and support risk-taking.** Inclusion recognizes the diverse learning styles of many students. In order to attempt new approaches, teachers need to be encouraged to take risks in their teaching.

An inclusive school utilizes differentiated instruction where teachers will adapt the curriculum content, methods, grouping, strategies and instructional resources, and facilitate peer learning, the use of instructional technology, collaboration between and among school personnel, and accommodations and modifications in testing.

1.7 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this literature review was to identify a rationale for the change from a self-contained classroom to an inclusionary model, to discuss how schools manage change, to identify the role of the principal in the change process, and to examine how a school system sustains this cultural change. Through discussion of these areas, the importance of the role of the instructional leader and the dynamics of the interactions between the legislation guiding school systems, the relationships between teachers, students and administrators and the understanding of the change process began to emerge.

The literature revealed that the transition from self-contained classrooms for special needs students to an inclusionary model is more an issue of principle than one based on research findings. Laws dating back to 1918 advocate for the inclusion of special education students in the

regular education classroom. However, although the state of Pennsylvania has had tools in place for many years to monitor the percent of special education students in the regular education environment, it was not until the recent settlement of the Gaskin's case that public officials within the Department of Education have really paid attention to these statistics. School districts across the state of Pennsylvania are now rapidly working to change the school's environment to include special education students in the regular education environment.

Many researchers including Elmore, Sarason and Fullan have discussed the importance of leadership when transitioning through cultural change.

Fullan identified a change framework for leaders that includes moral purpose, understanding the change process, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making. Although the five components are independent of each other, Fullan espouses the need to look at all five components as overlapping and interwoven ideas.

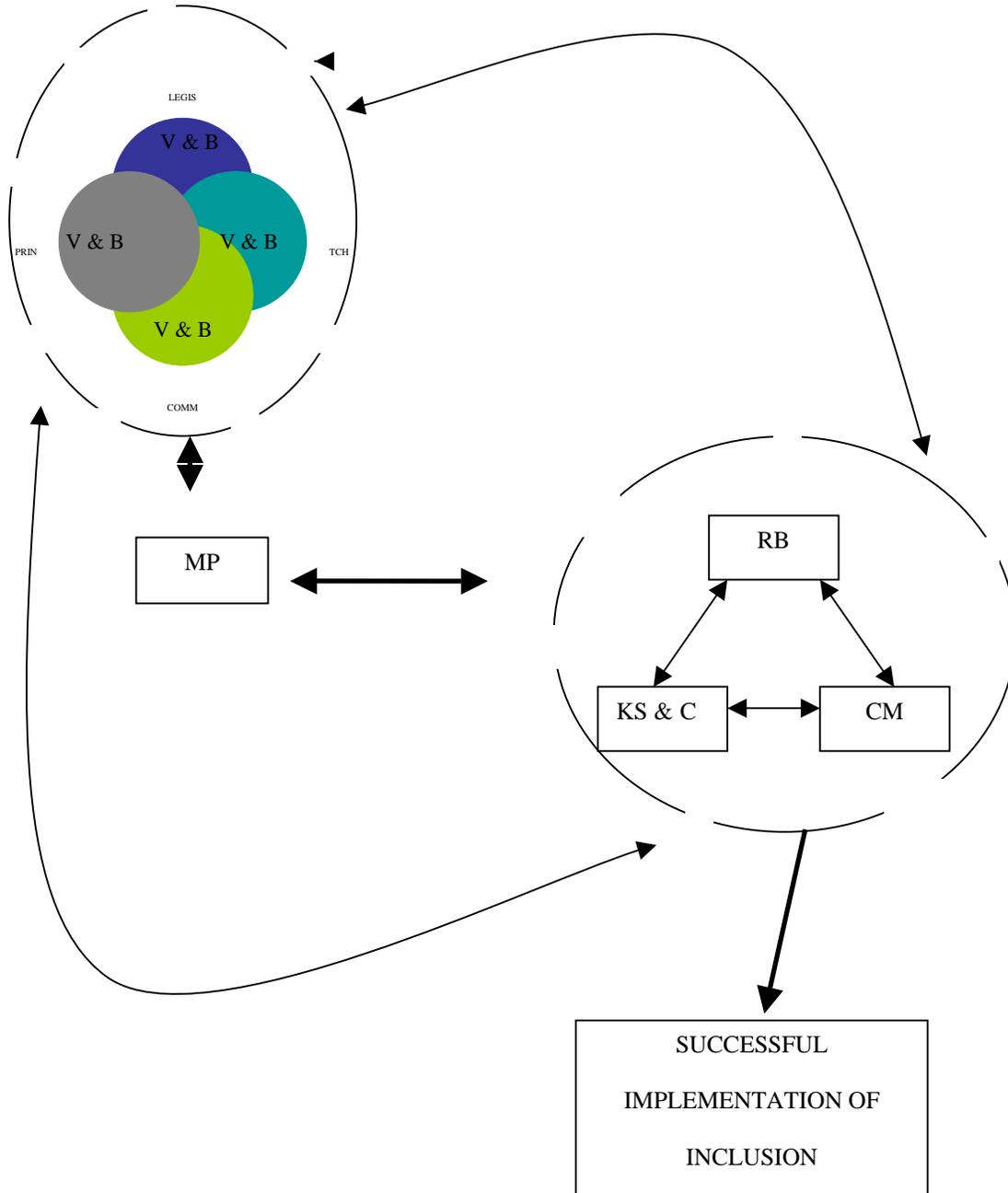
Elmore's work suggested principals move toward distributed leadership where teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders can share reform responsibilities thus building capacity within a school system and working toward sustainability of the reform. Elmore's elements of distributed leadership resonate with many of the concepts identified in Fullan's change framework. Building school capacity has been cited as the key to successful reform. Factors associated with successful reform include teacher knowledge and skills, professional learning communities, program coherence, technical resources, and principal leadership.

In 1971, Sarason first published "The Culture of the School and the Problem with Change." Twenty years later when he revisited the text, he again emphasized the lack on on-going, intense professional development opportunities for educators. Sarason and Fullan

advocate a comprehensive approach to professional development that looks at all systems within the school that are working toward a common vision.

Through a review of the literature, the specific role of the building level principal and his leadership through change emerged as an important factor. The need for additional research to understand the principal's role when transitioning to inclusion is evident. This research is designed to understand that leadership role.

1.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to utilize both qualitative and quantitative data to examine the principal's role in changing a middle school from a culture of self-contained special education classes to one where special education students are included in the regular education classroom alongside their non-disabled peers.

2.1.2 Statement of the Problem

As the educational framework transitions from a self-contained classroom for special needs children to an inclusionary model, what role does the building level principal play in managing this change?

2.1.3 Research Questions

The following questions will guide the research:

1. What are the values and beliefs expressed by the building level principal and his/her teachers in successful inclusionary environments with regard to the inclusion of special needs children in the regular education classroom?
2. What types of relationships exist between the principal and staff in schools that are successful in the practice of inclusion?
3. How does the building level principal facilitate the knowledge creation and sharing needed to support the state and federal mandated change to inclusion through professional development?
4. What is the relationship between a principal's values and beliefs and a teacher's values and beliefs in regard to the change from a self-contained environment for special needs children to an inclusionary program?
5. How does a principal convey his/her values and beliefs regarding inclusion to his teaching staff to establish a shared commitment to facilitate and sustain the change?
6. How does the principal provide for sustainability of the mandated changes in the educational program?
7. What is the culture of the school system with regard to knowledge, collaboration and change?

2.1.4 Definition of Terms

The following definitions are relevant to the study:

Effective Change – For the purpose of this study, effective change is defined in terms of the transition towards inclusion. Effective change is evidenced by principals and teachers who

are committed to educating special needs children in the regular education classroom and are working collaboratively to ensure the student's success.

Full-time Learning Support – Full-time learning support is defined as “special education classes provided for the entire school day, with opportunities for participation in nonacademic and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate, which may be located in or outside a regular school” (22 Pa. Code Chapter 14).

Inclusion (inclusionary environment) – Inclusion is defined as “the provision of services to students with disabilities, ... in their neighborhood schools, in age-appropriate regular education classes, with the necessary support services and supplemental aids for both children and teachers” (Lipsky & Gartner, 1994).

Itinerant Learning Support – Itinerant learning support is defined as “Regular classroom instruction for most of the school day, with special education personnel inside or outside of the regular class part of the school day” (22 Pa. Code Chapter 14). Students who are considered itinerant learning support are in the inclusive environment for the majority of the school day.

Part-time Learning Support – Part-time learning support is defined as “Special education services and programs outside the regular classroom but in a regular school for most of the school day, with some instruction in the regular classroom for part of the school day” (22 Pa. Code Chapter 14).

Regular education classroom – The regular education classroom is defined as the classroom where non-disabled children are educated in the public school system and exposed to a rigorous curriculum.

Resource Learning Support - Resource learning support is defined as “Regular classroom instruction for most of the school day, with special education services and programs provided by special education personnel in a resource room for part of the school day” (“Special Education Services and Placement,” 2001).

Self-contained classroom – A self-contained classroom is a separate room for special needs children where they are segregated from the regular education students to receive instruction and support.

Special needs children – For the purpose of this study, special needs children includes students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and are considered to be in need of special education services. As determined in Chapter 14 – Special Education Services and Programs of the Regulations of the State Board of Education of Pennsylvania, special education children include those with the following disabilities: autism, deaf/blindness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment and visual impairment (“Public School Code of 1949, as amended,”). Children with traumatic brain injury will not be included in this study.

Successful Implementation of Inclusion – The successful implementation of inclusion was defined through a review of the literature (Janney et al., 1995; Thousand & Villa, 1991) and was measured by the following items: the principal’s and teacher’s acceptance of inclusion, the principal’s and teacher’s commitment to inclusionary practices, the teacher’s success in teaching special needs children in the regular education environment, the principal’s and teacher’s perception that the special education children are accepted by their regular education peers, and the principal’s and teacher’s willingness to continue the inclusionary model.

2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was completed by obtaining qualitative data via the methodologies of case study research and semi-structured interviews, and quantitative data through the use of surveys involving a five-point Likert scale.

Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach to inquiry. Soy (1998) suggests that the qualitative method “excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known” (p. 1). In addition, qualitative research seeks to describe and understand phenomena in context-specific settings. As defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990), qualitative research is “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (p. 17).

Qualitative researchers seek instead an understanding and extrapolation of complex situations through similar situations. Case studies and interviews are dominant in the naturalistic paradigm of research. As explained by Green (2001), “a mixed-method approach intentionally incorporates the lenses of more than one inquiry framework – through the collection of different kinds of information, the combined use of different kinds of methods, the maintenance of different philosophical assumptions about social phenomena and our ability to know them, and the inclusion of diverse values and interests” (p. 251). By utilizing case studies and interviews, the researcher was able to more fully investigate the principal’s role in the change process at a deeper level. Initially, the case study methodology was be used to understand the culture of the school and the relationship existing between the principal and his teachers. Then in order to “elaborate, enhance, illustrate [and] clarify” (p. 253) the results, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants. This study was conducted according to the framework identified in Fullan’s (2001) work on leadership. He identified five components of

leadership as a framework for leading through complex change: moral purpose, understanding the change process, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making.

Patton (2002) posits the researcher should immerse himself in the real-world context of the social phenomena during change so as to record the event before and after the change occurs. Researcher Yin (2003) advises case study research be used to “investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 23). Although this researcher admits that the narrative inquiry approach is conditional to the schools in context and the surrounding circumstances, she is aware of her responsibilities. The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Bachor (2000) explains, “there is one fundamental requirement placed on a researcher when reporting case studies; that is, the onus on the researcher is to conduct the case study in such a way that the result can be communicated to the reader” (p. 3). Bachor posits,

- The reader must be able to determine from the evidence presented the nature of the argument and why and how conclusions are drawn, and
- The reader must be able to determine how the case was developed.

In order to obtain a deeper understanding of the principal’s role in changing from a self-contained model to an inclusionary model for educating special needs children, the researcher also utilized semi-structured interviews. The main task in interviewing was to understand the meaning of what the interviewees said. The qualitative research interview covered both a factual and meaningful level (Kvale, 1996).

2.2.1 Subjects

Three middle schools were selected to participate in this study. Selection was based on the districts' commitment to promoting inclusionary practices in their middle school and the length of time they have been transitioning or implementing inclusion. A specialist from the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) assisted in recommending the potential sites. In addition to the aforementioned parameters, the researcher asked the specialist to recommend middle schools where the principal is actively involved in the transition from self-contained classrooms to inclusionary classrooms. To protect the identity of the research participants, all district names are pseudonyms. The specialist at PaTTAN helped the researcher identify:

- Calvert Area Middle School – A middle school that is in the first phase of the transition to an inclusionary model. Calvert Area Middle School's transition to inclusion began during the 2003 – 2004 school year.
- Newport Area Middle School – A middle school that is in the second phase of the transition to an inclusionary model. Newport Area Middle School's transition to inclusion began during the 2000 – 2001 school year, and
- Treeside Area Middle School – A middle school that is in the third phase of the transition to an inclusionary model. Treeside Area Middle School's journey to inclusion began during the 1989 – 1990 school year.

2.2.2 Surveys

The researcher first utilized a five-point Likert scale survey (Appendix B) that was administered to the building principal, two regular education teachers, two special education teachers and the Director of Special Education from each of the three sites. Typically, survey research involves eliciting responses from hundreds of respondents. Salant and Dillman (1994) explain, “The purpose of a sample survey is to obtain information from a few respondents in order to describe the characteristics of hundreds, thousands, or even millions” (p. 4). Furthermore, surveys are used to estimate the characteristics, behaviors, or opinions of particular populations. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the survey methodology as an inquiry to the respondents’ beliefs about the necessary elements required to implement inclusionary practices. The researcher used the survey results to formulate general questions regarding the transition to inclusion and specific questions raised through the participants’ responses. These questions were included in the interview portion of the study. The survey was administered to eighteen participants from the three middle schools identified by the specialist at PaTTAN. The participants were asked to return the survey in a self-addressed, stamped envelope that was provided by the researcher and included in the invitation packet. The survey included the following components:

- Five closed-response demographic statements regarding the participant’s position, the participant’s years of experience in education, the participant’s years of experience working in an inclusive environment, and the participant’s position with regard to grade level and subject areas.
- Three open-ended questions regarding the school’s mission statement, the participant’s definition of inclusion and the school’s greatest strength, and

- Thirty-four five-point Likert scale statements in which the respondents' identified their agreement with belief statements regarding inclusionary practices and the principal's role in the transition. The belief statements were framed according to Fullan's five components for guiding leadership through complex change: moral purpose, understanding the change process, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making.

2.2.3 Case Studies

The second stage of the research process included an in-depth review of the information obtained in the survey. Although the researcher had developed interview questions previously, an analysis of the survey data indicated the need for additional probing. The case study approach was utilized in order to reveal an in-depth, holistic picture of each school district. Furthermore, the case study research offered a better, deeper understanding of the change process and the principal's role in transforming the middle schools from a self-contained special education environment to an inclusionary setting. In order to create a picture of each of the three middle schools, the researcher requested and reviewed the following documents when they were supplied:

- District and building level special education policies,
- District and building level inclusionary practices policies,
- Building level inclusion procedures and documentation (letters, memoranda, agendas, study reports, scheduling matrices), and
- District and building level Professional Development Plans.

After reviewing each document, the researcher utilized three by five inch index cards to organize the data. Relevant information was recorded on each index card. Then the cards were labeled according to their relevance and connection to Fullan's theoretical framework that guided the study. After cross-references to the interview data were made, additional interview questions were developed.

2.2.4 Semi-structured Interviews

All interviews were conducted using an open-ended, semi-structured format. The semi-structured interview is a viable technique for many knowledge acquisition methodologies, including case studies. A semi-structured interview combines a highly structured agenda with the flexibility to ask subsequent questions (Kvale, 1996). Rubin and Rubin (2004) explain how to obtain rich, detailed information through the use of open-ended depth interviewing through a process they call the Responsive Interviewing Model. This model allows for flexible questioning with the semi-structured interview method. Because the Responsive Interviewing Model is not formulaic, it adapts to the type of project and the personality of the interviewer; therefore, this model allowed the interview questions to vary based on the responses of the interviewee. The researcher relied on a protocol of previously developed questions during the interviews; however, the Responsive Interviewing Model allowed the researcher the opportunity to ask questions based on the respondent's remarks (Appendix C). Like the survey, the interview questions were framed according to Fullan's five components for guiding leadership through complex change: moral purpose, understanding the change process, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making.

Throughout the interview, the researcher utilized the Responsive Interviewing Model to follow up with additional questions that allowed her to probe the subject and inquire at a deeper level. All sixteen interviews were recorded on an audio tape recorder. The researcher then transcribed the recorded interviews. To ensure credibility, the researcher periodically rephrased the respondent's comments during the interview to ascertain the researcher's understanding of the participant's beliefs. In addition, following the interview the researcher mailed each participant a follow-up packet. The follow-up packet included a thank you note requesting that each participant review a typed transcription of the interview and welcomed comments. Each participant was also given a gift card to a local bookstore as a small token of appreciation for his or her time and candid responses. Two participants returned the typed transcription with additional comments. Their comments were with regard to semantics and they did not change the content of the interview.

2.2.5 Qualitative Data Analysis

By utilizing the case study method in conjunction with semi-structured interviews, data collection and data analysis were completed simultaneously. In order to facilitate this process, a system of coding was developed for easy reference. The codes that were used were based on Fullan's five components of leadership that he identified as a framework for leading through complex change:

- MP = Moral Purpose – Values and Beliefs,
- UAC = Understanding and Accepting Change,
- RB = Relationship Building and Shared Commitment,
- KCS = Knowledge Creation and Sharing, and

- CM = Coherence Making.

The researcher utilized the aforementioned codes in all aspects of data collection and analysis including the surveys, the semi-structured interviews and the policy analysis. As similarities and differences between and within the three school districts and the sixteen participants developed, information was recorded on three-by-five inch note cards. The use of the note cards allowed for triangulation of the study and made cross-referencing within the various methods used more attainable.

2.2.6 Document Analysis

The researcher requested the following items for document analysis:

- District and building level special education policies,
- District and building level inclusionary practices policies,
- Building level inclusion procedures and documentation (letters, memoranda, agendas, study reports, scheduling matrices), and
- District level and building level Professional Development Plan.

Although none of the three school districts had a board approved Inclusion Policy, all three provided a Special Education Policy. Additional information regarding the district's mission statement and the district's Strategic Plan were also obtained. District web sites were accessed to obtain information for further documentation analysis. Other items obtained from the middle schools included:

- District's history of inclusion,
- Inclusive Practices Overview,

- Three-Year Inclusion Implementation Plan, and
- Scheduling Matrices.

In addition, the researcher utilized information obtained through the Pennsylvania Department of Education Division of Special Education web site.

2.3 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF RESULTS

Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand context-specific phenomena; therefore, the researcher must strive to ensure validity and reliability in her research. Reliability, according to Hammersley (1990), "refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions" (p. 67) and validity addresses whether the research explains or measures what the researcher said she would be measuring or explaining. Validity is, "truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers" (p. 57). Yin (2003) suggests that the use of multiple cases can strengthen the external validity of the results.

To accomplish reliability and validity the researcher:

- Used three distinct middle schools from three different school districts,
- Relied on the recommendations of an inclusionary practices specialist at PaTTAN to identify the middle schools,
- Used the same methodologies in all three sites.
- Allowed the interview participants the opportunity to review and comment on the interview transcripts, and

- Maintained a case study timeline (Appendix D) to track the steps in the research process.

2.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher recognizes there are limitations to obtaining qualitative data through the use of case studies and semi-structured interviews. Although the advantages are abundant:

- Allows the participant to describe what is meaningful or important to him or her using his or her own words rather than being restricted to predetermined categories; thus participants may feel more relaxed and candid.
- Provides high credibility and face validity; results "ring true" to participants and make intuitive sense to lay audiences.
- Allows evaluator to probe for more details and ensure that participants are interpreting questions the way they were intended.
- Interviewers have the flexibility to use their knowledge, expertise, and interpersonal skills to explore interesting or unexpected ideas or themes raised by participants.

She is also aware of the disadvantages to using this mode of inquiry:

- May be seen as more intrusive than quantitative approaches; participants may say more than they intended to say, and later regret having done so.
- May be more reactive to personalities, moods, and interpersonal dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewee than methods such as surveys.

- Analyzing and interpreting qualitative interviews are much more time-consuming than analyzing and interpreting quantitative interviews.
- More subjective than quantitative interviews.

The researcher is committed to being unbiased in her interpretation of the data. Other limitations of the study include the following:

- Only three middle schools were selected to participate in this research. Although this represents less than 1% of the school districts in the state of Pennsylvania, the design of the research limited the possible number of sites.
- The three middle schools were selected based on the recommendation of an expert at PaTTAN; they were not selected at random.
- The investigation of the final three school districts is based on the superintendent's acceptance to participate in the study.
- The teachers and administrators selected for the study are based on their agreement to participate in the study.
- The researcher was previously employed as a principal at one of the middle schools being studied and initiated the transition towards inclusion.

Mertens (2005) cautions the researcher to “enter the field in the least disruptive manner possible” (p. 250). To this extent, after initial affirmation to participate in the study, the researcher either spoke on the telephone to each participant or wrote an email to each participant. The day prior to the interview, an additional email was sent to each participant reminding him or her of the scheduled interview. To begin each initial interview session, the researcher explained her role as a doctoral candidate at the University of Pittsburgh. In addition, in an attempt to make the interviewees comfortable with the researcher, the researcher opened the interview with a

discussion of ordinary things like the weather conditions, a funny story that happened on the way to the interview, or the beauty of the building in an attempt to make the interviewee comfortable with the researcher. Although the majority of the participants appeared comfortable and seemed to speak freely, two interviewees did appear reserved and guarded. As was the case with all interviews, but emphasized more so at the school district where the researcher had been principal, the researcher explained that she would be the only person to listen to the digitally recorded audio tapes and that all names would be changed to protect their identity.

3.0 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The three middle schools described in this study embarked on a journey to provide an appropriate education for the special needs students in their schools in the least restrictive environment. The administrators and teachers worked collaboratively in an effort to include special education children in the regular education classroom alongside their non-disabled peers. In the following sections, first a background of each building will be described. Second, using Fullan's framework for leading through complex change, the researcher will describe the principals' roles in transforming their buildings into an inclusive environment. The case studies are arranged by the level of implementation in the transition to inclusion. The Treeside Area Middle School, a school district that is in the third phase of implementation into an inclusionary environment, will be discussed first. The Newport Area Middle School, a phase two school district that has been including special education students in the regular education environment for five years will be discussed next. Thirdly, the Calvert Area School District, a phase one school district will be discussed. Calvert began including special education students in the regular classroom environment in 2003. Within each school's case study, the researcher will share the district's story of its transition to inclusion based on its model of inclusion. The case

studies will follow Fullan's change framework. The chapter will conclude with an examination of the quantitative data.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SITES

3.2.1 Treeside Area Middle School

Treeside Area School District is located in a rural, farming community. The School Report Card (*Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2005*) indicates that 92.6% of the students are white, 3.7% are Native American, 1.9% are Multi-cultural, and the remaining 1.8% are Black or Latin American. The district, which educates approximately 1,375 students, is located on one campus. There is one elementary school, one middle school and one high school. Treeside Area Middle School includes grades six, seven and eight. Because the district is small, each grade level in the middle school has one team of teachers. A special education teacher and an instructional aide are assigned to each team. Although the special education teachers and the instructional aides follow the class schedules of their special education students, the principal permits them the flexibility to modify their schedules to fit the needs of their students.

Of the 1,375 students in the Treeside Area School District, 187 students, or 13.6% are labeled as special education students (Table 3-1). The Special Education Data Report (2005) for school year 2004 – 2005 indicates that 52.4% of the special education students have a specific learning disability, 22.5% are labeled emotional disturbance, 10.2% have a speech or language impairment, 8% are labeled as mentally retarded, 2.1% have multiple disabilities, 2.1% have other health impairments, and 1.6% are autistic.

Table 3-1: Percent of Special Education Student Enrollment by District and Exceptionality

	Calvert Area Middle School	Newport Area Middle School	Treeside Area Middle School	Pennsylvania Averages
Percent of Students who are in special education	14.3%	13.7%	13.6%	14.4%
Percent by disability:				
Autism	2.2%	3.6%	1.6%	2.8%
Deaf-blindness	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Emotional disturbance	10.3%	12.7%	22.5%	9.6%
Hearing impairment including deafness	1.1%	0.9%	0.0%	1.1%
Mental retardation	16.1%	4.9%	8.0%	9.9%
Multiple disabilities	1.5%	0.9%	2.1%	1.1%
Orthopedic impairment	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%
Other health impairment	0.0%	1.9%	2.1%	3.5%
Specific learning disability	59.7%	57.5%	52.4%	54.4%
Speech or language impairment	8.8%	15.4%	10.2%	16.3%
Traumatic brain Injury	0.4%	1.5%	0.5%	0.4%
Visual impairment including blindness	0.0%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%

Of the three schools studied in this research, Treeside Area School District is the most inclusive environment. Of the 187 special education students, 65.2% are itinerant, 23.0% are resource, 5.9% are part-time and 5.9% are full-time. In other words, the majority of the students, or 94.1%, are included in the regular education environment for most of their school day (Table 3-2). As evidenced by the words of a regular education teacher at Treeside Area Middle School, families move into the district because of the inclusion program, “Many families are moving to [Treeside] because of the inclusion program. They think ‘least restrictive environment’ and equate it to [Treeside]. We are known for educating kids as high and as far as they can go” (TAMS Regular Education teacher #1).

Table 3-2: Type of Support Provided to the Special Education Students

	Calvert Area Middle School	Newport Area Middle School	Treeside Area Middle School	Pennsylvania Averages
Itinerant	39.2%	41.7%	65.2%	37.9%
Resource	16.5%	40.8%	23.0%	26.9%
Part-time	35.9%	9.1%	5.9%	22.1%
Full-time	8.4%	8.3%	5.9%	13.1%

3.2.2 Newport Area Middle School

Newport Area Middle School is located in the suburbs of a large city. There are four major corporations that are growing and requiring the Newport Area School District to consider building a new middle school or high school to accommodate the growing population. Within the district, there are four elementary schools, a middle school and a high school. There are currently

over 3,843 students enrolled in the district. The middle school educates 863 sixth, seventh and eighth grade students.

Much like the ethnicities in the Treeside Area School District, 93.2% of the population is white and 3.6% is African American. The remaining 3.2% is made up of predominantly Asian students (*Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2005*).

Of the 3,843 students enrolled in the Newport Area School District, 527, or 13.7% receive special education services, 5.5% receive gifted support and 8.7% are economically disadvantaged. The Special Education Data Report (2005) for the 2004 – 2005 school year indicates that 57.5% of the special education students have a specific learning disability, 12.7% are labeled emotional disturbance, 15.4% have a speech or language impairment, 4.9% are labeled as mentally retarded, 0.9% have multiple disabilities, and 3.6% are autistic (Table 3-1).

Newport Area Middle School students are arranged into teams. There are three teams in each grade level. Each team includes the services of a special education teacher. The teams develop a mission and common policies and procedures so students are aware of the expectations. The special education students are divided into half of each grade level's teams during each school year. The Newport Area School District's Collective Bargaining Agreement stipulates that support classes (pull-out) have a class size limit of twelve students. No more than seven special education students can be placed in a regular education classroom without a special education teacher scheduled in the classroom as well. The following school year, the other teams will have the special education students. To assist with scheduling and providing the appropriate resources for the special education students, a special education teacher often helps schedule the special education students.

Table 3-3: Percentage of special education students at Newport Area Middle School with regard to their level of support.

	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004	2004 – 2005
Itinerant	35.1%	39.8%	41.7%
Resource	43.3%	38.9%	40.8%
Part-time	13.6%	9.5%	9.1%
Full-time	8.0%	11.8%	8.3%

Although Newport Area Middle School offers pull-out classes for those students who are struggling in the regular education environment, they also offer an inclusionary setting where there is a special education support teacher or an instructional aide in the regular education environment.

Currently, 41.7% of the special education students at Newport Area Middle School are considered itinerant, 40.8% are resource, 9.1% are part-time, and 8.3% are full-time (Table 3-3). Since the beginning of the transition to inclusion, the teachers and the administrators have worked to include an increasing number of students. In fact, they have increased the number of included students by almost 19% in the last four years (Table 3-3). Even so, they realize the process is not easy and will not happen quickly. In the words of the Newport Area Middle School Principal, “They [the special education students] are always included in Language Arts, social studies and science. We have pull-out for math.” She goes on to say, “One that is a tough spot...is health...that’s something I’m working on fixing. Inclusionary health is the trouble spot” (NAMS Principal). That being said, the fact that 44% (Table 3-4) of the special education students are being educated in the regular education environment for almost 80% of the school day indicates that the middle school is moving toward inclusion (*Special Education Data Report*, 2005).

Table 3-4: Placement of special education children with regard to the percentage of time they are outside the regular education classroom.

	Calvert Area Middle School	Newport Area Middle School	Treeside Area Middle School	Pennsylvania Averages
Special Education students outside the regular education classroom				
< 21%	37.0%	44.0%	66.3%	44.4%
21 – 60%	41.8%	44.6%	22.5%	35.2%
>60%	17.9%	3.4%	8.6%	16.1%
In other settings	3.3%	8.0%	2.7%	4.3%

3.2.3 Calvert Area Middle School

Calvert Area Middle School is located in a third class city. The district serves a diverse population of children from seven municipalities. Children from within the city limits represent more than sixty-five percent of the district enrollment. Students in kindergarten through twelfth grade are educated in four buildings; three of which are situated within the city limits on one campus. All four buildings have been renovated to update the facilities to enable the children to learn in a state of the art, technologically advanced atmosphere.

The students and community members come from diverse backgrounds. The predominant ethnicities in the Calvert Area School District are white (68.24%) and African American (30.97%). According to the 2004 – 2005 District Report Card, the Calvert Area School District has an enrollment of 1,904 students. Of this enrollment figure, 273 students (14.3%) receive special education services, 3.6% receive gifted support and 58% are economically disadvantaged. The Special Education Data Report (2005) for the 2004 – 2005 school year indicates that 59.7% of the special education students have a specific learning disability, 10.3%

are labeled emotional disturbance, 8.8% have a speech or language impairment, 16.1% are labeled as mentally retarded, 1.5% have multiple disabilities, and 2.2% are autistic (Table 3-1).

The philosophy of the district is that the goal of the middle school is to transition the students from an elementary environment and prepare them for a high school setting. To enable the transition to middle school, the sixth grade is divided into three teams of two to three teachers each. The seventh and eighth grade class structure is designed to prepare the students for the high school; therefore, the students have a different teacher for each core subject area.

There are seven and a half special education teachers assigned to Calvert Area Middle School. Of the seven and a half teachers, one special education teacher is designated as the inclusion teacher for each grade level. These three special education teachers spend the majority of their day team-teaching in collaboration with the core subject area regular education teachers. The half-day special education teacher also provides additional support in the inclusive environment; however, does not team-teach. Two of the special education teachers provide reading and math support and small group instruction in the resource room for students who are not quite ready to be included with the regular education environment. When the researcher questioned why the students were not considered “ready,” the teachers responded that some of the students are reading at levels three to four years below grade level and the IEP team believed the resource environment would best serve their needs. Also, they indicated that some parents are apprehensive about including their children in reading and math for fear they will fail. The principal decided that to ensure the success of the inclusion initiative, the school needed to slowly transition the students, parents and teachers into an inclusive environment and provide a thorough continuum of services. The remaining two special education teachers support the Autistic Support and Life Skills students in both an inclusive environment and a resource room.

In addition to the seven and a half special education teachers, Calvert Area Middle School utilizes five instructional aides. All of the instructional aides are assigned to inclusionary classrooms to assist the special education students, regular education students and classroom teachers.

Special education students in all three grade levels are hand scheduled to ensure those with the greatest need are in a classroom where there is: 1.) A team-teaching scenario where there are two teachers, a special education teacher and a core subject area teacher, or 2.) A core subject area teacher and an instructional aide.

Of the three middle schools included in this study, Calvert Area Middle School is in the earliest phases of the transition to inclusion. Calvert began exploring the transition to inclusion during the 2001 – 2002 school year; however, they did not officially begin the transition until the 2003 – 2004 school year. Since that time, an increasing number of students have been placed in an inclusive environment. Table 3-5 shows the percentage of students with regard to their level of support at the Calvert Area Middle School. The percent of students who were considered itinerant, or required limited support, more than doubled by the end of the third year of the transition to inclusion. Table 3-4 shows the placement of the special education children with regard to the percentage of time they are outside the regular education classroom. The table indicates that 37.0% of the special education students at Calvert Area Middle School are educated with their non-disabled peers for at least 70% of their school day. In addition, 41.8% of the special education students are educated in classrooms with their non-disabled peers for at least 40 – 70% of their school day and only 3.3% of the special education students are in outside placements.

Table 3-5: Percentage of special education students at Calvert Area Middle School with regard to their level of support.

	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004	2004 – 2005
Itinerant	14.3%	19.3%	39.2%
Resource	12.4%	14.4%	16.5%
Part-time	50.4%	42.8%	35.9%
Full-time	22.9%	23.5%	8.4%

3.3 THE ROAD TO INCLUSION

3.3.1 Treeseide Area Middle School

*The mission of Treeseide Area School District
is to develop Comprehension, Appreciation, and Contribution
by effectively utilizing both school and community resources.*

(Treeseide Area School District Web Site)

3.3.1.1 Moral Purpose – Values and Beliefs

In the Treeseide Area Middle School Student Handbook, the principal writes,

In a good school teachers and students work together, and I can get one-on-one time with a teacher who really knows and cares about me. Students don't sit all day; they get up and interact. In a good school, grades are not given, but they are earned, and students are responsible for understanding, monitoring and reporting

their own progress. It is a place where teachers and students continually learn and change (*Treeside* Area Middle School Student Handbook, 2005*)

It is here that one can see the essence of an inclusive culture at Treeside Area Middle School, a culture where the teachers and administrators have a moral purpose for inclusive education. Their values and beliefs are to take responsibility for making sure that all students can learn.

Inclusion, in the words of the Treeside Area Middle School principal, “is involving all students, no matter what their strengths or weaknesses are. Inclusion is about involving the students in all facets of the school life” (TAMS Principal). Treeside Area Middle School began the journey to inclusive education as a result of their values and beliefs. They began the journey because they believed it was morally right to treat special education students the same as regular education students. Their belief was that the special education students needed to be exposed to the regular school curriculum in order to develop the comprehension and appreciation identified by the school’s mission statement. In an effort to create an environment within which all students, including those with special needs, would work hard and learn well, the Treeside Area School District transitioned to an inclusionary model. Their belief was to include the special education students in all aspects of the school’s culture because doing so “helps provide an ideal environment. They [the special education students] are not set apart, they are not identified” (TAMS Principal).

Treeside Area School District began the journey to inclusion because their belief was that special education children should be included in the regular education environment to the maximum extent possible for them to be successful. This was evident in the results of the survey that was administered prior to the interviews. In the section regarding *Moral Purpose – Values and Beliefs*, the teachers and administrators at Treeside **all** stated that they strongly agreed with

the statement, *Special education children should be included in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible for them to be successful*. In addition, they **all** strongly disagreed with the statement, “Special needs children should only be included in regular education classrooms where they show an interest.” Both the teachers and administrators agreed that inclusion creates an environment where, “Every child can achieve! Some just take more support” (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #1).

3.3.1.2 Understanding and Accepting Change

In 1987, Treeseide Area School District was selected to participate in a three-year Quality Education Grant from the state of Pennsylvania. As part of the grant, Treeseide Area School District was encouraged to implement one of several model programs that focused on effective ways of meeting the needs of special education students. The central office administrators assembled a team to identify a program that would meet the needs of the Treeseide community. In addition to central office administrators, the team consisted of building level administrators, teachers from all levels of the district, parents of special education students, parents of regular education students, and community members. After a year of research and site visitations, the team knew they had to change the entire culture of the school system. They selected a model that was developed in the Johnson City Public School District. This model, the Mastery Learning Model, utilized the work of William Glasser’s Choice Theory (2001) and Reality Therapy , and Steven Covey’s (2004) *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. After a year of training including regular education teachers, special education teachers, administrators, and community members, they realized that this model was not just for special education students, but a total shift in the culture of the school system. The committee members, teachers and administrators understood the need for change and began to implement the Mastery Learning Model.

3.3.1.3 Relationship Building

Another key factor to the successful transition to inclusion at Treeseide was the emphasis on relationships and shared decision-making occurring in the district. Although two teachers believed the decision to implement an inclusionary model was top-down, not all of those interviewed agreed. According to the Treeseide Area Middle School Principal,

There was a strong interest on the part of the teachers [to implement an inclusive environment]. The teachers, along with administration, cooperatively decided it was best for the students. We had a lot of staff development, a lot of interactions with consultants. There was a tremendous outpouring of support for this. It took collaboration with administration, staff and parents to affect this (TAMS Principal).

Many teachers agreed with his position. In the words of a regular education teacher, “It is not looked at like a hierarchy here; it is more like we all work on the same page, and we are all working together” (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #2). Both of the special education teachers agreed that the decision to include the special education students was a shared-decision,

The teachers had a shared philosophy with the administration, but we had to build relationships with the kids, too. The teachers had to get to know them, to become invested in them and them in you. Behavior and emotions [had to be addressed] first, academics came next, like Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (TAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

As stated previously, although the transition to an inclusive environment was a shared decision between the Treeside teachers and the administration, not all teachers or parents agreed with the decision. In the beginning, teachers “were afraid of the special education students” (TAMS Special Education Teacher #1) and parents were “afraid of the unknown” (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #1). To alleviate the anxiety of the teachers and parents, the district embarked on an extensive professional development plan. Parents and community members, as well as students, teachers and administrators, joined together in planning sessions and informational meetings.

We involved everyone! We have trained the maintenance workers, the custodial staff, the cafeteria workers, the aides, the secretarial staff, as well as classroom teachers and administrators. They all needed to be brought on board. This was a total change in the culture of the school (TASD Director of Special Education).

Treeside Area Middle School has consistently worked to improve the inclusive environment. Some of those interviewed felt the inclusive model increased the special education students’ self-esteem while others believed it was only morally and ethically right to provide the same education for special needs students as they were for regular education students. Even so, not all of the Treeside staff members who were interviewed agreed that all of their teachers liked working in an inclusive environment. “Sometimes, they, the special education teachers, feel they are more of an aide than having direct instruction. That’s hard...when they don’t actually have the control of the classroom” (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #2).

To build relationships and emphasize a shared mission, Treeside Area Middle School developed a team approach. Each team develops a mission and shared values each school year. The teams meet two to three times a week to discuss individual students and their needs. The

teachers have found the team approach to be invaluable, “You can’t be the lone ranger. The team is an effective approach” (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #1).

3.3.1.4 Knowledge Creation and Sharing

Before implementing an inclusive environment, the teachers, administrators, parents and students participated in activities to educate them on The Mastery Learning Model. This model emphasized Glasser’s Choice Theory and Reality Therapy and Covey’s *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.

3.3.1.4.1 Choice Theory

The district began its professional development with an intense focus on William Glasser’s Choice Theory (previously known as Control Theory). Glasser (2001) contends that behavior is never caused by a response to an outside stimulus. Instead, Glasser’s Choice Theory states that behavior is inspired by what a person wants most at any given time. He identifies the most significant needs as: survival, love, power, freedom, or any other basic human need. Glasser attests that all living creatures "control" their behavior to maximize their need for satisfaction; therefore, students are not necessarily unmotivated, but their basic needs are not being satisfied. According to Glasser, if students are not motivated to do their schoolwork, it is because they view schoolwork as irrelevant to their basic human needs. The goal of the Treeside Area School District’s professional development with regard to Glasser’s work, was to help the teachers learn methods to satisfy the student’s basic needs and see relevance in academic achievement.

In addition, the professional development activities were designed to promote higher level thinking skills. Glasser identifies two types of teachers, *boss teachers* and *lead teachers*. Boss teachers use rewards and punishment to coerce students to comply with rules and complete

required assignments. Glasser calls this "leaning on your shovel" work. He shows how high percentages of students recognize that the work they do, even when their teachers praise them, is very low-level work. Lead teachers, on the other hand, avoid coercion completely. Instead, they make the intrinsic rewards of doing the work clear to their students and attempt to correlate the assignments to the students' basic needs. Furthermore, lead teachers use grades as temporary indicators of what the student has and has not learned, rather than a reward or punishment. Lead teachers will "fight to protect" highly engaged, deeply motivated students who are doing quality work from having to fulfill meaningless requirements.

Both Glasser's Control Theory and teacher identification definitions have an impact on learning. With regard to curriculum, Treeside Area School District teachers needed to learn how to negotiate both content and method with students. Students' basic needs literally helped shape how and what they were taught. With regard to instruction, the teachers were trained on cooperative, active learning techniques that enhanced the power of the learners. The teachers were trained to make sure that all assignments met some degree of their students' need satisfaction. The end result was student loyalty and a cultural change that realized the potential of all students, regular education students and special education students alike.

3.3.1.4.2 Reality Therapy

Glasser's Reality Therapy, is a practical approach to psychology. The three R's (reality, responsibility, and right and wrong) are the framework for this approach to dealing with troubled students. Reality Therapy can be used for classroom management strategies in an effort to avoid discipline problems. The term refers to a process that is people-friendly and people-centered and helps people to recognize how fantasy can distract them from their actual choices (what they can control) in life. The basis of Reality Therapy, first and foremost, is to establish a relationship

with the students. Glasser posits without this relationship, the other steps will not be effective. Treeside Area School District implemented Glasser's Reality Therapy as a basis for the entire school's classroom management plan.

Glasser's Reality Therapy (2006) is centered on our five basic, genetically endowed needs. These needs are classified under five headings. The first is our primary and physical need for survival. This includes the need for food, clothing, nourishment, shelter, and personal security. The following four are psychological. They include: 1.) the need to be connected to the environment, to belong and to be loved; 2.) the need to have power, this includes the need to learn, achieve, and feel worthwhile; 3.) the need for freedom, this includes the need for independence, autonomy, and one's own 'space'; and 4.) the need to have fun.

3.3.1.4.3 The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

In addition to Glasser's work, the Mastery Learning Model utilized by Treeside Area School District incorporated Covey's (2004) work on the consistent habits of highly effective people. According to Covey, these habits can be taught, practiced and learned. The habits include:

1.) Be proactive – This is the ability to control one's environment, rather than have it control you. He asserts that people need to have self-determination. They need to have choices and the power to decide their response to stimulus, conditions and circumstances.

2.) Begin with the end in mind – Covey calls this the habit of personal leadership in that a person is leading oneself toward what he considers his goals. Covey asserts that by developing the habit of concentrating on relevant activities, you will build a platform to avoid distractions and become more productive and successful.

3.) Put first things first – Covey calls this the habit of personal management. “Putting first things first” is about organizing and implementing activities in line with the aims established in

the second habit, beginning with the end in mind. Covey says that Habit 2 is the first, or mental creation; Habit 3 is the second, or physical creation.

4.) Think win-win – Covey calls this the habit of interpersonal leadership. This is necessary because achievements are largely dependent on co-operative efforts with others. He says that win-win is based on the assumption that there is plenty for everyone, and that success follows a co-operative approach more naturally than the confrontation of win-or-lose.

5.) Seek first to understand and then to be understood – This is Covey's habit of communication. Covey helps to explain this in his analogy “diagnose before you prescribe.” It is simple and effective, and essential for developing and maintaining positive relationships in all aspects of life.

6.) Synergize – Covey says this is the habit of creative co-operation. Synergize relies on the notion that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It puts forth the challenge to see the good and potential in other peoples’ contributions.

7.) Sharpen the saw – This is the habit of self-renewal. It surrounds all the other habits, and enables and encourages them to happen and grow. Covey interprets the self into four parts: the spiritual, mental, physical and the social/emotional. All four parts need to be feed and developed.

Treeside Area School District trained the entire staff on the components of the Mastery Learning Model prior to implementation of their inclusion plan. The staff members interviewed all agreed that the success of the transition to inclusion was based partially on the fact that the district provided professional development for all stakeholders to ensure that all stakeholders had a shared commitment to inclusion. “Inclusion is successful because it is part of the school’s

philosophy. You can't be here and there, you must be totally immersed" (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #1).

3.3.1.5 Coherence Making

In any school district, teachers and administrators have a variety of values and beliefs. The successful implementation of any change requires the various parties to make some sort of coherence. Coherence requires people to make connections and have mutual support of different beliefs. Throughout the transition to inclusion, the implementation team at Treese Area School District dealt with conflicting beliefs of the administration, teaching staff, parents and students. The principal became the primary agent to provide support and to facilitate the process of coherence making. "The principal was very supportive. There was a distinct trust. The principal acted as a sounding board. He never questioned, just supported us" (TAMS Special Education Teacher #1). The principal agreed, "My role is to make sure the process goes smoothly. That people have what they need to be successful – materials, resources, staff development – all they need to be successful" (TAMS Principal).

3.3.1.6 Sustainability

To sustain a program, you need consistency – we have been consistent. We have added staff as needed, but for the most part, we have been consistent. If it's not broken, don't fix it (TAMS Principal).

Since beginning the transition to inclusion in 1989, the middle school has had three different principals. Even so, they have been able to maintain their successful inclusionary model. They are currently interviewing for a new middle school principal. In order to ensure that the Treese

Area School District hires a person who shares its values and beliefs, the principal candidates are subject to a multi-stage interview process. A fourteen-member interview team, which consists of the superintendent, teachers and administrators, meets with potential candidates at least three times. Together they select an individual to recommend to the school board. The new principal will be required to participate in the professional development activities that are essential to the culture of the school district. Therefore, they are not concerned about the sustainability of the inclusive program because, they “will select who is the best fit for our school” (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #2).

The program will be strong because the staff is very supportive of inclusion – they are part of the evolution. Administrators come and go but strong staff members will carry on – this will be sustained (TAMS Principal).

3.3.2 Newport Area Middle School

Our mission is to educate every student in a respectful, safe enriching environment through comprehensive programs that inspire excellence, life-long learning, and responsibility.

(Newport Area School District Web Site)

3.3.2.1 Moral Purpose – The Middle School Philosophy

Newport Area Middle School adheres to the middle school philosophy and has received awards for its successful program. The middle school philosophy emerged in the 1980s. Alexander and George (1981) wrote about the middle school philosophy:

The concept of a bridging school is not enough, however, because children of middle age have their unique characteristics and needs which cannot be subordinated to the impact of the elementary school nor to the demands of the high school. An effective middle school must not only build upon the program of earlier childhood and anticipate the program of secondary education to follow, but it must be directly concerned with the here-and-now problems and interests of its students. Furthermore, the middle school should not be envisioned as a passive link in the chain of education below the college and university, but rather as a dynamic force in improving education (p. 2).

In an effort to promote the middle school philosophy, the Newport Area Middle School developed advisor-advisee programs to enable the students to develop relationships with teacher mentors. In addition, they implemented a team approach called Interdisciplinary Team Organizations (ITO). The core curriculum, which includes language arts, reading skills, mathematics, social studies and science, is delivered through the ITO. The teachers on each ITO share a daily common planning time, teaching area, and the responsibility for a common group of students. Each team develops a shared vision and set of outcomes based on the school's mission statement, which was framed on the wall in the main office:

The mission of the Newport Area Middle School, above all else, is to educate each student to his/her greatest potential by establishing and maintaining high

academic standards. It is only through the cooperative effort of the students, parents, staff, and the community that this and the following can be achieved:

- Provide an academic and social transition from a more structured elementary school to a more independent high school setting.
- Create and maintain a safe, caring, and disciplined school environment.
- Enhance the self-esteem through academic achievement and individual accomplishments.
- Promote an atmosphere where there is a sense of belonging, cooperation, personal responsibility, and mutual respect.
- Prepare students for lifelong learning and success.

Because the middle school philosophy promotes teaching the individual student in a team atmosphere, the inclusion of special education students in the regular education classroom was the next step.

Before [inclusion], we were just special education teachers. Everything was self-contained. We were just sort of out there on our own. We weren't put on any teams. When the middle school went on teams, it was just me with other special education teachers. We were just kind of separate (NAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

The teachers and administrators realized this was not the best atmosphere for the special education students. Based on their belief that the special education students needed to become part of the entire school's culture, during the 2000 – 2001 school year, the middle school began

the transition to inclusion. “Now instead of meeting with other special education teachers, we meet with the regular education teachers daily” (NAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

3.3.2.2 Understanding and Accepting Change

Although the building has successfully transitioned to an inclusion model, the principal at Newport Area Middle School admits that not all of the teachers are in agreement with the inclusion model, “I have one person who is close minded. He treats his special education teacher like an aide. ‘This is my room. These are my overheads. This is the way I’ve done it for thirty years’” (TAMS Principal). She goes on to explain how she deals with teachers who do not accept the inclusion model,

That’s when I have to go and talk to him and explain that it’s [inclusion] not done that way and offer support. You have to give it a chance. I’m not telling you you’re going to love it, but you have to give it a chance (TAMS Principal).

The principal then offers additional resources and recommends workshops on team-teaching and inclusionary practices to those who are struggling with the inclusion concept. With regard to the transition to inclusion, the principal states, “Change is inevitable; but if you don’t change and learn and grow, why do you come to work everyday?” (NAMS Principal).

3.3.2.3 Relationship Building

The principal at Newport Area Middle School has worked to develop relationships between teachers by developing a team-teaching approach. Relationships have been built with parents by developing trust between the school and the home.

3.3.2.3.1 Building Relationships through Team-Teaching

Each grade level at Newport Area Middle School is divided into three teams. Each team includes the support of a special education teacher. When both the regular education teacher and the special education teacher are in the classroom together, they often team-teach; however, the principal does not require team-teaching. Team-teaching “isn’t really set for the school, it’s just kind of each individual and how they work it out...Some do the team-teaching approach but it depends on the personalities” (NAMS Special Education Teacher #1). Therefore, the teachers have the discretion to team-teach or work in small groups.

The building level principal and many of the teachers value the team-teaching aspect of inclusion and the middle school philosophy.

I think inclusion can be very positive if it’s done in collaboration with the two teachers in the room. In our middle school, I have a content teacher and a special education teacher within an inclusion setting. If they team-teach, and they approach it in the same philosophy and outlook for the students, I think it’s productive for those students (NAMS Principal).

However, she goes on to say,

If you don’t have a teacher who is for it, then they are not going to sell it to the students as being beneficial...we try to encourage them to be creative...inclusionary is not for everyone...but as long as the two team-teachers work together, it is successful. I think something I’ve always tried to do is sit back and try to match the teachers...If I’m creative enough, matching personalities with their strengths and weaknesses, then I can get a better blend in the classroom (NAMS Principal).

Some teachers believe that building the relationships necessary for team-teaching in the inclusionary environment has been more difficult. One special education teacher described her first experience team-teaching with a regular education social studies and science teacher, “When it was first introduced ...I think there was a lot of trial and error...I think he retired the next year. I felt it wasn’t working” (NAMS Special Education Teacher #2). She goes on to describe a more recent experience,

I hit it where I was doing four inclusion classes...I was completely co-teaching in one. I planned, she planned...we made extra time to plan, you have to plan. But we made extra time so I knew everything she was going to do. I got more involved with it and I was teaching more. It worked out really well. There were times she worked more with the support kids and I taught the class. We really experimented...we just did whatever worked (NAMS Special Education Teacher #2).

To prepare the teachers for the middle school philosophy and team-teaching, professional development was provided in the areas of interdisciplinary instruction, student support services, meeting the needs of students, diversity, teaming, and the Learning Accommodations Framework.

3.3.2.3.2 Building Relationships with Parents through Trust

Efforts have been made to build relationships with parents as well. All of the teachers interviewed in the Newport Area School District expressed that some parents are apprehensive of the inclusionary model. They are concerned that their children will not be successful. The principal shared a story regarding a family who moved into the district. The parents were

enrolling their two daughters in the middle school, both of whom were deaf. The parents wanted the girls transferred to a special school for deaf children. The principal, Director of Special Education, and support personnel met with the family and explained how they would help the girls in the regular education environment. The district personnel educated the family on the resources available to them. The parents decided to try the district's placement proposal. "They (the parents) were shocked at the [girls'] success!" explained the Newport Area Middle School Principal, "We have to teach the parents to trust us and to try the inclusionary model" (NAMS Principal).

3.3.2.4 Knowledge Creation and Sharing

Teachers in the Newport Area School District are encouraged to participate in district-wide professional development activities on inclusion and team-teaching strategies as well as local professional development activities outside the district. The district has conducted workshops to train teachers on inclusionary practices. The principal and the Special Education Director "work collaboratively to try to come up with new ideas that help the teachers become excited and encouraged so that they are not overwhelmed" by inclusion (NAMS Principal). However, some of the teachers feel they have not received enough training on inclusionary practices, "We really have not had a lot of in-services on it, speakers early on, but there really has not been anything since that time" (NAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

3.3.2.4.1 The Learning Accommodations Framework

The district implemented *The Learning Accommodations Framework* (Newport Area Middle School Web Site) which emphasizes a standards-based curriculum. The focus is on instructional design, instructional accommodations and knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses.

While family and community support are central to the framework, district, school-wide and class-wide structures are emphasized also.

The framework ties instructional interventions to the general curriculum using a three-tiered approach for selecting appropriate interventions. These include class-wide, small group, and individual focus instruction. Class-wide approaches can be applied to the entire class to meet the needs of individual students. When the class-wide approach does not meet an individual students' needs, small group or individual focus structures are employed. Regardless of the approach, the focus is always on the general education curriculum and what students need to be successful.

Because the basis for the framework asserts, "The content and skills necessary for the success of all students lie within the general education curriculum," (*Newport* Area School District, The Learning Accommodations Framework*) the accommodations identified in the framework leant itself and the Newport Area Middle School to the transition to inclusion.

3.3.2.5 Coherence Making – Shared Decision Making

Coherence can only be obtained if there is a shared vision in the culture of the school system. One component of this coherence making is shared decision-making. The teachers in the Newport Area Middle School believe they are given the opportunity to express their needs and concerns regarding the special education students' schedules. Before the special education students are scheduled for their classes, the special education teachers meet with the guidance counselor and the principal to discuss individual students. "We work with the guidance to try to spread the needs of the kids as evenly as possible amongst the teams" (NAMS Special Education Teacher #1). Through these discussions, the special education teachers have expressed a need for inclusion math. Currently, the students can take a regular math course or an advanced math

course; however, there is not an inclusionary math class with a regular classroom teacher and a special education teacher team-teaching. The special education teachers have presented their proposal to the building principal and the Director of Pupil Services. They hope to implement the new inclusionary math class during the 2006 – 2007 school year.

3.3.2.6 Sustainability

The Newport Area Middle School transitioned to an inclusionary environment for special education students during the 2000 – 2001 school year. Since the initial implementation of the inclusion model, the building has had three principals. The current principal was previously a high school teacher in the district. She practiced the inclusion model as a teacher and facilitated the implementation of inclusion at the high school level. Because the district is committed to inclusion, the teachers believe the program will continue regardless of who is the leader at the building level. “It is pretty well embedded into the system” (NAMS Regular Education Teacher #1).

The principal believes inclusion is successful and will remain at Newport Area Middle School because of the collaborative efforts of the administration and staff. “I think the special education department leader is a key element” (NAMS Principal). She goes on to say “The Director of Special Education, along with the subject leaders in the building and the principals at each building working together to facilitate and support the process” is the driving force behind the district’s inclusion program (NAMS Principal).

3.3.3 Calvert Area Middle School

*In the Calvert Area School District, we are committed
to an exemplary educational program which is built upon
trust, caring, diversity, and opportunity.*

(Calvert Area School District Web Site)

3.3.3.1 Moral Purpose – The Reason for Change

The decision to transition to an inclusionary environment at Calvert Area Middle School was initiated by the middle school principal. As students transferred from the elementary school where inclusion was already implemented, the principal realized that the structure of the middle school schedule and the teaching techniques of the staff were not conducive for the inclusion of special needs students in the regular education environment.

The students coming into the sixth grade from the elementary school were already included for all classes except math and reading. The middle school special education teachers had to either amend the IEPs or include the students in the regular education classrooms without the support of a special education teacher. After researching inclusion and discussing the situation with the superintendent, the Director of Special Education and the elementary principals, the principal met with the special education department chairperson at the middle school. Together they decided that “inclusion was the right thing to do. The special education students needed to be part of the school culture” (CAMS Principal). That is when the principal presented the proposal vision to transition to inclusion to the middle school staff.

For the next year, the principal and special education department chairperson at Calvert Area Middle School attended conferences and workshops. Together, they started planting the

seeds to implement inclusion. The idea of inclusion “was discussed and a shared vision was created. It was cooperation and a gradual change. We are all a team and we did it as a team” (CAMS Special Education Teacher #2). A regular education teacher agreed, “It was always positively enforced by the principal. I always thought it was a natural progression. I never thought it was a big leap, and I didn’t feel pressured either” (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #2). However, not all of the teachers agreed, “The principal was a little bit more strict when she introduced it. She said, ‘Look this is the law. It doesn’t matter if you want to do it or not’” (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #1). Later in the interview, she went on to explain,

You have to start somewhere. We started it here with two teachers and we got things going. I think the last principal did what was best to get things going...The last principal affected a core and that’s what you have to do when you’re changing something; and hopefully, that core will spread (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #1).

Even though the administration and teachers are still working on the transition to an inclusionary environment, they realize the need for inclusionary practices and are working collaboratively to accept the changes and to facilitate the transition through professional development.

3.3.3.2 Understanding and Accepting Change

In an effort to create an understanding of inclusionary practices, the principal asked members of a neighboring school district who had been including special needs students for over ten years to share their successes and challenges with the teachers at Calvert Area Middle School. A focus group consisting of regular education teachers, special education teachers, building level administrators and central office administrators was created. From these discussions, the focus

group developed a shared vision to include special needs students in the regular education environment.

For the next several months, the focus group shared information with regard to special education laws and regulations, as well as teaching strategies to promote inclusionary practices, with the middle school staff. Both special education teachers and regular education teachers shared information with the staff at faculty meetings and after-school training sessions. At the same time, special education students were being transitioned into the regular education environment. Slowly, some of the teachers were beginning to accept the changes,

I was really nervous when we had an influx of nine kids into [my reading class]. [The special education teacher] came along with them...I didn't know if I could manage that many IEPs with all the adaptations...I was overwhelmed...I shouldn't have been because I should have had more confidence because of my previous experiences with [the special education teacher]. She really came in and went the extra mile (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #2).

The regular education teacher and the special education teacher developed a team-teaching relationship that strengthened the program.

[The special education teacher] came in weekly for planning for that class. She taught it at least once or twice a week...she would rotate among [the students]...She kept the whole thing up and running and it was an enlightening experience (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #2).

By the end of the year, this teacher was an advocate for inclusion. One afternoon the superintendent stopped in the reading class. The teacher pulled him aside and asked him to pick

out which students were special education students. He was only able to identify two of the nine children.

That was the best possible scenario for me! Look what happens when we put our kids in the least restrictive environment. Look what we can do. Look how many are blooming! When you give them a chance, look at what they are able to do!
(CAMS Regular Education Teacher #2).

However, not all of the teachers who were interviewed believe teachers are accepting of the transition to inclusion,

A lot of the teachers have the attitude when the child walks in the room and the inclusion teacher follows them in, it's the inclusion teacher's responsibility to get them to par, and they are all going to be up to par. It doesn't work that way
(CAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

Even so, she, too is an advocate for inclusion,

If you walk into my [pull-out] classroom, you can see the difference between the kids who are included and those who are not. The transformation is amazing...A lot of them [the inclusionary students] have better self-esteem; they are more willing to work; their test scores are going up immensely (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

3.3.3.3 Relationship Building

During the 2002 – 2003 school year, the special education teachers worked to prepare the special education students for the transition into the regular education environment. They taught the students appropriate study skills to help them be successful. In the meantime, through district-wide professional development, the teachers were learning how to teach reading across the

content areas and differentiate instructional methods to meet the needs of diverse learners. As the special education students were being included in the regular education environment, the principal and guidance counselors were continually modifying the special education teachers' schedules to place them in the regular education environment to provide support.

In the beginning, little thought was placed on building relationships between the team teachers. Special education teachers were being placed in the regular education classrooms as the need arose. At times, the team-teaching combination did not work well.

There are too many people who don't get along with one another. I know that I have worked with people that I don't necessarily get along with. You have to find out who is going to be good with who and stick with that (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #1).

A recent needs assessment revealed the teachers believed that team-teaching and relationship building were two key focus areas in which they needed professional development. The district anticipates initiating additional professional development in the future with regard to these two areas.

3.3.3.4 Knowledge Creation and Sharing

The Calvert Area School District supports the train-the-trainer approach to professional development. For the past three years, teachers have been the primary facilitators of the professional development activities through the school year. Each summer, a group of teachers attends summer workshops on specific areas the district has identified in its needs assessment. This past summer, two teachers (a regular education teacher and a special education teacher) received training on differentiated instruction. Throughout the school year, they have facilitated on-going workshops on differentiated instruction.

Although the Calvert Area School District has experienced successful implementation of programs through the train-the-trainer model, the model presents some limitations. Some teachers believe the staff would respond more to outside facilitators,

Some people are not willing to listen to their colleagues. But if you throw somebody in there who is a good speaker and from somewhere else, I think they [the teachers] would be more respectful (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #1).

3.3.3.4.1 Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is an approach to planning. One lesson is taught to the entire class but strategies are in place to meet the individual needs of each child. The model requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and adjusting the curriculum and presentation of information to learners, rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum. Classroom teaching is a blend of whole-class, group and individual instruction. This model is based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in classrooms. In the differentiated instruction model, the teacher weaves the individual goals into the classroom content and instructional strategies. The content and the instructional strategies are the vehicles by which the teacher meets the needs of all the students. Bloom's Taxonomy is used in all aspects of the differentiated instruction model from presenting the lesson to asking students questions, to assessing student work.

3.3.3.5 Coherence Making

Although Calvert Area Middle School teachers and administrators began researching inclusion in 2001, the transition to inclusion did not start until the beginning of the 2003 – 2004 school year.

Because they are in the early stages of the implementation process, they are still working on establishing their roles in the change process.

The principal believes in shared decision-making and that collaboration with the staff is vital, “I think it’s important that they share with their colleagues” (CAMS Principal). A special education teacher agreed, “Just because you are the authority figure doesn’t mean you can’t go to someone and say, ‘Hey, I need your input...Help me out here’” (CAMS Special Education Teacher #2). However, the principal also realizes his role as a change agent in the building, “You have to believe in it, support it, and continuously communicate what needs to be done. The top sort of sets the tone for anything, not just for inclusion” (CAMS Principal).

The teachers, on the other hand, are not quite ready to share in the decision-making. When asked about her role in the decision-making process and leading through the transition, one teacher stated,

It has to be the principal [who leads through the transition] because I can say things and people will look at me and say, “Who do you think you are?” Or if the principal would want to defer that to someone else, he would have to make that explicit to everyone (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

3.3.3.6 Sustainability

It was difficult to discuss sustainability with the teachers at Calvert. Because the program is in its infancy, they are still anxious about the changes. One teacher said,

I think a lot of us are wavering because it is uncharted waters. Not that we are not capable but we are not sure what to do...other than that we are doing inclusion. We are on murky waters (CAMS Special Education Teacher #2).

However, he did not believe the anxiety the teachers feel is a result of the change in leadership,

It has been a transition. It isn't a fallback, but maybe just a transition because the policies and procedures that were put in place are continuing to be implemented because everyone is on the same page. The programs are continually being evaluated and improved. But we might be taking things slower (CAMS Special Education Teacher #2).

The anxiety was put into perspective when talking with a special education teacher. She had recently returned from a differentiated instruction workshop where she had the opportunity to speak with teachers from another school that is further into the implementation of inclusion, "It was an eye-opener to see how long the journey takes. It made me feel better to see we weren't just jumping in" (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

The principal believes the inclusion program will be sustained. "It is the vision of the district. It isn't going away. If a new person came in, he would have to comply with the district mandates and policies" (CAMS Principal). He also believes the teachers have grown through the year. They seemed to agree, "I think I'm seeing things in a different light, now. I actually want to get out of this year and get on to next year so that it will be a whole different ball game!"

(CAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

3.4 SURVEY RESULTS

In an effort to provide a true case study, the researcher chose to remove the descriptive statistics from the surveys from the case study portion of this research. However, the survey results provided a wealth of information that helped guide the researcher to develop in-depth interview questions. In the following sections, the researcher will discuss the results of the surveys. The sections are organized by Fullan's five basic concepts for leading through complex change. Information obtained through the interviews is also included to further explain the survey data.

3.4.1 Moral Purpose – Values and Beliefs

Eight statements on the initial survey instrument were designed to ascertain the values and beliefs of principals and teachers with regard to including special education students in the regular education environment. The respondents were directed to select a value from one to five on a Likert-type scale to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each statement. A one signified the respondent strongly disagreed, a two signified the respondent disagreed, a three signified the respondent was neutral, a four signified the respondent agreed, and a five signified the respondent strongly agreed. The results of each respondent's survey were analyzed by utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical analysis software.

Table 3-6 identifies the average of each of the eight value statements for Moral Purpose – Values and Beliefs for the Treeside Area Middle School. The first column of data indicates the mean of the regular education teachers at Treeside Area Middle School. The second column identifies the mean of the special education teachers' responses at Treeside. The third column represents the mean of the administrators' responses. The fourth column represents the

Table 3-6. Treeside Area Middle School: Moral Purpose - Values and Beliefs

		REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1	All special needs children should be included in the regular education classroom.	3.00	2.00	4.00	3.00
2	Special needs children should be included in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible for them to be successful.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
3	Special needs children need to be exposed to the regular education curriculum in order to be proficient on the PSSA.	4.50	4.00	4.00	4.17
4	Special needs children need to be exposed to the regular education classroom in order to be successful in their future.	5.00	4.00	4.50	4.50
5	Special needs children should only be included in regular education classrooms where they excel.	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.33
6	Special needs children should only be included in regular education classrooms where they show an interest.	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
7	I enjoy working in an inclusive environment.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
8	I prefer working in a less inclusive environment.	1.00	1.50	1.50	1.33

mean of all six Treeside Area School District participants’ responses. Tables 3-7 and 3-8 are designed in the same manner, however, represent Newport Area Middle School and Calvert Area Middle School respectively.

The data obtained from the surveys at Treeside Area Middle School reveal a culture that embraces an inclusionary environment. Table 3-6 shows a positive correlation between the values and beliefs of the regular education teachers, the special education teachers and the administrators. All participants from Treeside Area School District indicated that they strongly agree with the inclusion of special education students in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible for the students to be successful (Statement #2). However, during the interviews, many of the teachers indicated that they were not comfortable with the word “all” in

Statement #1. One teacher stated, “I don’t like ‘all.’ I don’t think inclusion is the least restrictive environment for all students. I think it does satisfy the needs of low students, but there are exceptions to the rule” (TAMS Special Education Teacher #1). A regular education teacher agreed, “Some students do need a different environment” (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #1).

Unlike the survey data obtained at Treeside Area Middle School, the Newport Area Middle School teachers’ and administrators’ responses to the statements regarding Moral Purpose – Values and Beliefs showed a negative correlation (Table 3-7). For Statements #1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, both the regular education teachers and the special education teachers indicated that they were either neutral or disagreed with the five value statement while the administrators indicated they either agreed or strongly agreed with the same statements. “Inclusion can be very positive if it’s done in collaboration with the two teachers in the room” (NAMS Principal). A discussion with two Newport Area Middle School teachers offers insight to this discrepancy,

Teacher A: The biggest thing, as long as the teachers go along with it, it will work.

Teacher B: At the beginning it was just jammed down everybody’s throats.

Teacher A: There were not a lot of happy teachers when we first put this thing in place.

Interviewer: And now, have they become accustomed to it?

Teacher A: Yes, it’s a reality that’s not going to change.

Responses regarding Statement #6, *Special needs children should only be included in regular education classrooms where they show an interest*, were consistent with both the teachers and the administrators. All either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 3-7. Newport Area Middle School: Moral Purpose - Values and Beliefs

	REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1 All special needs children should be included in the regular education classroom.	2.00	1.50	4.00	2.20
2 Special needs children should be included in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible for them to be successful.	2.50	3.00	5.00	3.20
3 Special needs children need to be exposed to the regular education curriculum in order to be proficient on the PSSA.	2.00	2.00	4.00	2.40
4 Special needs children need to be exposed to the regular education classroom in order to be successful in their future.	3.00	2.50	4.00	3.00
5 Special needs children should only be included in regular education classrooms where they excel.	2.00	2.00	4.00	2.40
6 Special needs children should only be included in regular education classrooms where they show an interest.	2.00	1.50	1.00	1.60
7 I enjoy working in an inclusive environment.	4.00	3.50	NA	3.75
8 I prefer working in a less inclusive environment.	2.50	2.50	NA	2.50

The survey data obtained at Calvert Area Middle School shows both positive and negative correlations amongst regular education teachers, special education teachers and administrators (Table 3-8). The teachers and the administrators tend to share a belief that special education students belong in the regular education environment. However, the extent to which they agree is not consistent.

All respondents indicated a shared belief in statements 2, 3, and 4 that special education students should be included in the regular education environment to the maximum extent possible, to be proficient on the PSSA, and in order to be successful in their future. In addition, they all either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, *Special needs children should only be included in regular education classrooms where they excel* (Statement #5). However, they all were either neutral or disagreed with the statement, *All special education students should*

Table 3-8. Calvert Area Middle School: Moral Purpose - Values and Beliefs

	REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1 All special needs children should be included in the regular education classroom.	3.50	2.00	3.00	2.83
2 Special needs children should be included in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible for them to be successful.	5.00	4.50	4.50	4.67
3 Special needs children need to be exposed to the regular education curriculum in order to be proficient on the PSSA.	4.50	4.50	4.00	4.33
4 Special needs children need to be exposed to the regular education classroom in order to be successful in their future.	4.00	3.50	4.00	3.83
5 Special needs children should only be included in regular education classrooms where they excel.	1.50	2.00	3.50	2.33
6 Special needs children should only be included in regular education classrooms where they show an interest.	1.50	2.00	4.00	2.50
7 I enjoy working in an inclusive environment.	5.00	3.00	4.00	4.20
8 I prefer working in a less inclusive environment.	1.50	2.50	2.00	2.00

be included in the regular education classroom (Statement #1). One special education teacher explained her response to the survey,

I believe there are children, because of their intellectual limitations, that need a different type of curriculum. If you are always going to include them in the regular classroom, you're not going to be able to provide them with that curriculum (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

The regular education teachers and the administrators both indicated that they enjoyed working in an inclusive environment; however, the special education teachers' responses were divided. The mean of the special education teachers' responses on the survey to Statement #7 was 3.00, or neutral, while the regular education teachers indicated a 5.00 and the administrators indicated a 4.00. One special education teacher stated, "I like it because it gets the kids involved

with the regular education teachers” (CAMS Special Education Teacher #2). The other special education teacher responded, “I think the inclusive environment depends a lot on the interaction between the regular education teacher and the special education teacher. In some situations, it’s wonderful. But, [in others] it’s tough and it effects your motivation” (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

3.4.2 Understanding and Accepting Change

Eight value statements were included on the survey to indicate the respondents’ level of understanding and accepting change. Like the value statements for Moral Purpose, the Understanding and Accepting Change portion of the survey utilized a five-point Likert-style scale.

Perhaps because the Treeside Area School District created a team of district personnel and community stakeholders to investigate inclusive practices, their views on understanding and accepting change were consistent amongst regular education teachers, special education teachers and administrators (Table 3-9). All participants agreed that the current legislation provides special needs children with the opportunity to receive an education in the least restrictive environment. In fact, the majority of the respondents believed it was the government’s right and responsibility to mandate these changes in the best interest of the students. The TAMS Principal stated, “Sometimes mandates are necessary because some school districts just won’t do certain things. You have to mandate.” A regular education teacher supported federal mandates as well, “Forcing might be a good idea! Many teachers and school districts resist change” (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #1).

Table 3-9. Treeside Area Middle School: Understanding and Accepting Change

		REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1	I understand the implications of PL 94-142 which provides all students with a free and appropriate education.	5.00	5.00	4.50	4.83
2	I understand the implications of the Individuals with Disabilities Act with regard to the inclusion of special education students.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
3	The teachers in this school understand the implications of the Gaskin’s Case.	2.50	4.00	5.00	3.83
4	I feel that the current legislation provides special needs children the opportunity to receive an education alongside their non-disabled peers.	4.50	5.00	4.50	4.67
5	I feel that the legislation is forcing school districts to educate special needs children in the regular education classroom.	5.00	4.50	4.00	4.50
6	I believe special needs children should receive their education in a resource room.	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
7	I believe special needs children should receive their education in the least restrictive environment.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
8	I do not believe the federal government should mandate changes in public education.	1.50	3.50	2.50	2.50

The regular education teachers at Treeside are not familiar with the Gaskins Case. One teacher stated, “We do not include special education children because of a law or a court case. We include special education students because it is the right thing to do” (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #2).

The views on Understanding and Accepting Change at Newport Area Middle School (Table 3-10) were similar to those expressed by the teachers and administrators at Treeside Area Middle School. The teachers and administrators understand the implications of PL-94-142 and the Individuals with Disabilities Act. Like the teachers at Treeside, they are unfamiliar with the Gaskins Case; therefore, the majority of the responses were neutral.

Table 3-10. Newport Area Middle School: Understanding and Accepting Change

	REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1 I understand the implications of PL 94-142 which provides all students with a free and appropriate education.	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
2 I understand the implications of the Individuals with Disabilities Act with regard to the inclusion of special education students.	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.20
3 The teachers in this school understand the implications of the Gaskin's Case.	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.80
4 I feel that the current legislation provides special needs children the opportunity to receive an education alongside their non-disabled peers.	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.60
5 I feel that the legislation is forcing school districts to educate special needs children in the regular education classroom.	3.50	3.50	5.00	3.80
6 I believe special needs children should receive their education in a resource room.	2.00	2.50	2.00	2.20
7 I believe special needs children should receive their education in the least restrictive environment.	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.25
8 I do not believe the federal government should mandate changes in public education.	3.00	3.50	3.00	3.20

With regard to understanding and accepting change, there were two differences in opinion at the Newport Area Middle School from their colleagues at Treeside Area Middle School. First, the administration indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement, *I feel that the federal government is forcing school districts to educate special needs children in the regular education classroom*, while the teachers indicated that they were either neutral or agreed. Secondly, all respondents at Newport Area Middle School indicated a neutral response to Statement #8, *I do not believe the federal government should mandate changes in public education*. The NAMS Principal explained that some mandates are necessary to improve the quality of education.

The survey results for the section regarding Understanding and Accepting Change at Calvert Area Middle School (Table 3-11) were consistent with those obtained at Treeside Area

Table 3-11. Calvert Area Middle School: Understanding and Accepting Change

	REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1 I understand the implications of PL 94-142 which provides all students with a free and appropriate education.	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50
2 I understand the implications of the Individuals with Disabilities Act with regard to the inclusion of special education students.	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50
3 The teachers in this school understand the implications of the Gaskin’s Case.	3.50	1.50	4.00	3.00
4 I feel that the current legislation provides special needs children the opportunity to receive an education alongside their non-disabled peers.	4.00	4.00	3.50	3.83
5 I feel that the legislation is forcing school districts to educate special needs children in the regular education classroom.	4.00	3.50	4.50	4.00
6 I believe special needs children should receive their education in a resource room.	1.50	3.50	2.00	2.33
7 I believe special needs children should receive their education in the least restrictive environment.	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50
8 I do not believe the federal government should mandate changes in public education.	2.00	2.00	2.50	2.17

Middle School and Newport Area Middle School for Statements 1, 2, 4, and 7. Like the Newport Area Middle School survey results, the results for Statement #3 were not consistent with the results obtained at Treeseide Area Middle School. Interestingly, the regular education teachers and the administrators believe the teachers understand the implications of the Gaskins Case; however, the special education teachers do not believe the regular education teachers truly understand the Gaskins Case. A regular education teacher explained how she learned about the case, “All of the teachers learned about the Gaskins settlement at a recent professional development day. The Assistant Superintendent reviewed the case and then she had a guest speaker go into more detail” (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #1). A special education teacher had a different opinion, “They [the regular education teachers] just know that they have to include the special education students” (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

Like the teachers and administrators at Treeside Area Middle School, the teachers and administrators at Calvert Area Middle School believe the federal government often needs to mandate change. “Sometimes we need federally mandated change, especially in school districts. We get so accustomed to doing things a certain way that it is difficult to change” (CAMS Director of Special Education). However, some also feel that the federal government should seek more input from those working in the school systems, “I think that they, they being the powers that be, the lawmakers, need to have more input from the building level administrators and teachers” (CAMS Principal).

3.4.3 Relationship Building

Eight statements were included in the Relationship Building portion of the survey instrument. In the Treeside Area Middle School, administrators and teachers have established a collaborative relationship that has helped facilitate the transition to inclusion. The principal explained his philosophy of building relationships and leading through change,

A lot of administrators will go in and say, “We are going to make this change.” That’s not the way it works. You have to do a lot of background work. Sometimes people don’t understand that and as a result, the change will fail. You can’t go in and try to change without laying the groundwork. You have to be a great communicator. You have to spend some time with your faculty building up a trust. They have to trust you. They have to perceive that you know what you are doing. Then the process takes place. Then you start feeding them bits and pieces of information. Then touch on things you are trying to put in place. Encourage them to visit others doing well. They start to get excited and experiment. Success

breeds success. They do things in the classroom and they see success. They get excited about it. The staff has to be committed (TAMS Principal).

The consistency of the Treeside Area Middle School survey data (Table 3-12) and interview responses reinforces the fact that the district has built the relationships necessary for change.

The only area of dissent with regard to Relationship Building observed through the survey data was in reference to the statement, *The regular education teachers like working in an inclusive environment* (Statement #2). In this area, the regular education teachers and the special education teachers agreed with the statement while the administrators were not sure that the regular education teachers enjoyed the inclusive environment. In fact, a special education teacher noted, “I receive a great deal of gratification by seeing my kids go out into the regular education environment” (TAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

Contrary to the results obtained from Treeside Area School District, the administrators at

Table 3-12. Treeside Area Middle School: Relationship Building

		REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1	The special education teachers like working in an inclusive environment.	4.00	5.00	5.00	4.67
2	The regular education teachers like working in an inclusive environment.	4.50	4.50	3.50	4.17
3	I enjoy working in a team-teaching environment.	5.00	5.00	NA	5.00
4	Inclusion is successful because the regular education teacher and the special education teacher team-teach.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
5	The inclusion process is most successful when it is considered part of the entire school’s philosophy.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
6	The regular education teachers have a greater understanding of the special needs children after working in an inclusive environment.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
7	The principal supports inclusionary practices.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
8	The principal listens to suggestions from his staff regarding inclusion.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Newport Area Middle School agreed that the special education teachers and the regular education teachers enjoyed working in an inclusive environment, while the beliefs of the teachers were divided (Table 3-13). One teacher noted, “It depends on the personalities [of the two team-teachers]” (NAMS Special Education Teacher #1). Another stated, “It’s about 60/40, maybe even 70/30 that are accepting. Some are completely accepting and open-minded. Some think, ‘You’re the special education teacher, you make the adaptations’” (NAMS Special Education Teacher #2). However, both the regular education teachers and the special education teachers surveyed indicated that they did enjoy working in a team-teaching environment (Statement #3).

Consistent to the results presented in the case study, the teachers and the administrators at Newport Area Middle School agreed that inclusion is successful in their school for two reasons: 1.) The teachers team-teach, and 2.) Inclusion is part of the school’s philosophy. In addition, they all agreed that the principal supports inclusionary practices and that the principal listens to their

Table 3-13. Newport Area Middle School: Relationship Building

	REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1 The special education teachers like working in an inclusive environment.	3.50	3.50	4.00	3.60
2 The regular education teachers like working in an inclusive environment.	3.50	3.00	4.00	3.40
3 I enjoy working in a team-teaching environment.	4.50	4.50	NA	4.50
4 Inclusion is successful because the regular education teacher and the special education teacher team-teach.	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.20
5 The inclusion process is most successful when it is considered part of the entire school’s philosophy.	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.20
6 The regular education teachers have a greater understanding of the special needs children after working in an inclusive environment.	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.20
7 The principal supports inclusionary practices.	4.00	4.00	5.00	4.20
8 The principal listens to suggestions from his staff regarding inclusion.	4.00	3.50	5.00	3.80

suggestions regarding inclusion. One special education teacher indicated a neutral response to the final item in this section (Statement #8). When asked to explain, she stated that she often speaks with the Director of Special Education at Newport because he has the responsibility of making changes with regard to inclusion.

The data obtained from the surveys at Calvert Area Middle School regarding Relationship Building is not as consistent among the regular education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators (Table 3-14) as was the case with Treeside Area Middle School and Newport Area Middle School. One explanation for their varying beliefs may be that they are a phase one school district. They have been including special education students in the regular education classroom for only three years.

The teachers' and administrators' beliefs regarding Statement #1, *The special education teachers like working in an inclusive environment*, were evenly divided between neutral and

Table 3-14. Calvert Area Middle School: Relationship Building

		REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1	The special education teachers like working in an inclusive environment.	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
2	The regular education teachers like working in an inclusive environment.	2.50	2.50	3.00	2.67
3	I enjoy working in a team-teaching environment.	5.00	4.50	NA	4.75
4	Inclusion is successful because the regular education teacher and the special education teacher team-teach.	5.00	4.50	4.50	4.67
5	The inclusion process is most successful when it is considered part of the entire school's philosophy.	5.00	4.50	5.00	4.83
6	The regular education teachers have a greater understanding of the special needs children after working in an inclusive environment.	4.00	1.50	4.00	3.17
7	The principal supports inclusionary practices.	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.33
8	The principal listens to suggestions from his staff regarding inclusion.	4.50	3.00	5.00	4.40

agree. Their beliefs regarding the regular education teacher enjoying working in an inclusive environment were again evenly split; however, they were divided between disagree and neutral. When asked to respond to their personal feelings regarding working in an inclusive environment, all respondents either agreed (one response) or strongly agreed (three responses). Therefore, although the teachers interviewed are advocates for inclusion and enjoy working in an inclusive environment, they are not sure their other colleagues within the school building share their feelings. "It's one thing to understand the legislation, but I don't think we have tapped the moral obligation that our teachers should have to every individual child" (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #2).

All respondents did agree or strongly agree, as did the teachers and administrators at Treeside Area Middle School and Newport Area Middle School, that inclusion is successful because the regular education teacher and the special education teacher team-teach. In addition, their responses were consistent with the other two school districts with regard to the fact that inclusion must be part of the entire school's philosophy.

Both the administration and the regular education teachers believe that the principal supports inclusionary practices; however, the special education teachers' beliefs were neutral. Similar results were obtained on Statement #8 of the Relationship Building portion of the survey. The following comments show the differing opinions,

The principal is more of a collaborator than a manager. He is very good with follow through (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #2).

I think that, at times, the principal needs to step in. I know the principal doesn't want us coming to him with every problem, and I don't think he needs to actually

address every problem. But I do think he needs to light the way to where we are going so that people know what's expected of them so that they can at least go toward that (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

My role...is to give them support...We have always been open to ideas to make the best choices for the kids in the school....My role is to believe in it, support it, and continuously communicate what needs to be done. The top sort of sets the tone for everything, not just inclusion (CAMS Principal).

The principal gives us leeway to try different things that are research-based. We are allowed to try things out (CAMS Special Education Teacher #2).

As the district continues on its road to inclusion, the entire staff may need training on team-building and creating trusting relationships. In the words of a Calvert Area Middle School Special Education teacher, "It boils down to trust. We can do better" (CAMS Special Education Teacher #2).

3.4.4 Knowledge Creation and Sharing

Six value statements were designed to ascertain the respondent's beliefs with regard to Knowledge Creation and Sharing. Table 3-15 indicates the responses of the teachers and administrators at Treeside Area Middle School. As has been the case with the previous analyses,

Table 3-15. Treeside Area Middle School: Knowledge Creation and Sharing

		REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1	My school district offers opportunities for professional growth that are important to inclusionary practices.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
2	I have the opportunity to share my expertise with my peers.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
3	My peers value my opinions.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
4	My peers are supportive of each other.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
5	My principal values my expertise.	5.00	5.00	NA	5.00
6	My principal is supportive of the teachers.	5.00	5.00	NA	5.00

all teachers and administrators at Treeside indicated that they strongly agree with the six statements. Knowledge Creation and Sharing have been integral elements in the transition to inclusion in the Treeside Area School District. The following excerpts from the interviews at Treeside are indicative of the district’s beliefs about knowledge creation and sharing:

We believe in the train-the-trainer model. The district trains choice staff, then they train the rest of the staff. The district is good about sending people out to get training (TAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

The Director of Special Education has given us the opportunity to share what we have learned regarding inclusion and Gaskins and some of the more prevalent cases that have come up. She has pulled the entire special education staff to share what we have learned from workshops. I don’t know of anyone else who does that (TAMS Special Education Teacher #2).

We offer regular training on Choice Theory and the ADAPT Process. Our special education teachers do regular training on things we can do in our classrooms to adapt our classes. The district does training for all kinds of adaptations. Anytime

there is something you want to learn more about, like Aspersers Syndrome, we are sent out (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #2).

Survey data with regard to knowledge creation and sharing for Newport Area Middle School is reflected in Table 3-16. Although the administrators believe they have provided professional development on inclusionary practices, the regular education teachers and the special education teachers do not agree. When asked if the teachers have received training on inclusive practices, both a regular education teacher and a special education teacher responded, “Very little.” A special education teacher disagreed with their position, “We don’t have too much as far as our in-services that are provided on inclusionary practices at all. But there are so many offered outside the district and the principal encourages us to go” (NAMS Special Education Teacher #2).

The teachers at Newport Area Middle School all agreed that the principal is supportive and values their opinions on issues involving inclusion. Table 3-17 shows the survey results with regard to knowledge creation and sharing for Calvert Area Middle School teachers and administrators. Both the teachers and the administrators agreed that the school district offers

Table 3-16. Newport Area Middle School: Knowledge Creation and Sharing

		REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1	My school district offers opportunities for professional growth that are important to inclusionary practices.	2.50	2.50	4.00	2.80
2	I have the opportunity to share my expertise with my peers.	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.20
3	My peers value my opinions.	3.50	3.50	4.00	3.60
4	My peers are supportive of each other.	4.00	4.50	4.00	4.20
5	My principal values my expertise.	3.75	4.00	NA	3.88
6	My principal is supportive of the teachers.	3.75	4.00	NA	3.88

opportunities for professional growth that are important to inclusionary practices. The teachers also agreed that school district allows the teachers the opportunity to share their expertise with their peers. The Director of Special Education described the professional development that currently exists in the Calvert Area School District:

For the past two year, we have utilized the train-the-trainer model. We have sent teachers out to a number of intense workshops, not one-day events, and focused our district-wide professional development on intense, content-oriented concepts.

For the past two years, eight teachers have committed to facilitating the professional development for the entire staff (CAMS Director of Special Education).

However, she goes on to say, “It takes a great deal of preparation for each session and some of the facilitators are a little burnt out though. Some of the staff members were not as respectful as they should have been” (CAMS Director of Special Education). The facilitators’ feelings of frustration are evident in the survey response to Statement #3, *My peers value my opinion*. A special education teacher who co-facilitates the professional development sessions with a regular education teachers, indicated disagreement with this

Table 3-17. Calvert Area Middle School: Knowledge Creation and Sharing

		REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1	My school district offers opportunities for professional growth that are important to inclusionary practices.	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
2	I have the opportunity to share my expertise with my peers.	4.00	4.00	4.50	4.17
3	My peers value my opinions.	3.50	2.50	4.00	3.33
4	My peers are supportive of each other.	4.00	2.50	3.50	3.33
5	My principal values my expertise.	5.00	3.00	NA	4.20
6	My principal is supportive of the teachers.	5.00	3.00	NA	4.00

statement. A regular education teacher explained,

I think that if you give them [the teachers] training outside of this school and show you are vested in it, then you will have more success. The reason I say this is because some people are not willing to listen to their colleagues. But if you throw somebody in there from the outside who is a good speaker and from somewhere else, I think [the teachers] would be more receptive (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #1).

While the regular education teachers believe the principal values their opinions and is supportive of inclusion, like the data revealed in the section on Relationship Building, the special education teachers again indicated that they were neutral. A special education teacher cited the change in leadership to support this uncertainty,

It has been a transition. It isn't a fallback, but maybe just a transition because the policies and procedures that were put in place are continuing to be implemented. Everyone is on the same page. There's always going to be some of that with the changing of the guard (CAMS Special Education Teacher #2).

Their uncertainty may also be a result of the complex change to an inclusionary environment, "It has been an eye-opener to see how long the journey [to inclusion] takes" (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

3.4.5 Coherence Making

Treeside Area Middle School has been including special education students in the regular education environment for almost twenty years. They have collaboratively worked through the challenges that are inevitable when transitioning through systematic change. Table

Table 3-18. Treeside Area Middle School: Coherence Making

		REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1	The majority of the teachers in my school agree with inclusionary practices.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
2	The teachers in my school support each others differences.	4.50	5.00	5.00	4.83
3	I enjoy working with my principal.	5.00	5.00	NA	5.00
4	I enjoy working with the faculty and staff at this school.	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

3-18 identifies the beliefs of Treeside Area Middle School survey participants with regard to coherence making. The teachers and administrators all strongly agreed with the four statements designed to measure coherence making with one exception. A regular education teacher noted “agree,” as opposed to “strongly agree,” to Statement #2: *The teachers in my school support each others differences*. During the interview, the teacher stated, “You’re always going to have someone that doesn’t agree” (TAMS Special Education Teacher #2).

That being said, Treeside Area Middle School has had five principals since the initial transition to inclusion. The Director of Special Education talked about one principal who did not understand the philosophy of inclusion that was central to Treeside Area Middle School’s culture. She explained, “We needed to coach him. We had to coach him and teach him that [a placement] was a last resort” (TAMS Director of Special Education). In addition to coaching, the school district provided the new principal with professional development so that he would understand the district’s philosophy.

At the time of the interviews, Treeside was again looking for a new middle school principal. In the fashion of shared decision-making, a team of teachers was invited to participate in the selection process. Their goal is to find the right person to fit their needs.

We believe in that managing process, not where, “I’m the administrator, this is how it is.” But in that managerial process where we are all involved in the process. We, the teachers, actually hired [the last principal]. We actually selected who we thought was best for our school in agreement with the superintendent (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #2).

However, they are not worried about the continuation of the inclusionary environment they have worked to create. One teacher summarized her feelings on the new principal, “It will be really hard on him if he’s not an inclusion person. But we will remind him that this is who we are” (TAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

The regular education teachers and special education teachers at Newport Area Middle School enjoy working with their principal and the Newport staff. In their interviews, the teachers expressed a mutual respect for each other. However, the teachers’ responses to the Coherence Making portion of the survey did not support the same conclusion (Table 3-19). Both the regular education teachers and the special education teachers disagreed with Statement #1, *The majority teachers in my school agree with inclusionary practices*. One teacher stated, “There are teachers that find it tough” (NAMS Special Education Teacher #1). However, another teacher said, “It

Table 3-19. Newport Area Middle School: Coherence Making

		REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1	The majority of the teachers in my school agree with inclusionary practices.	2.75	2.00	4.00	2.70
2	The teachers in my school support each others differences.	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.20
3	I enjoy working with my principal.	4.50	4.00	NA	4.25
4	I enjoy working with the faculty and staff at this school.	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

(inclusion) is pretty well embedded into the system. It's a reality that's not going to change" (NAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

In addition, they all responded neutrally with regard to Statement #2, *The teachers in my school support each others differences*. This refers back to the statements shared previously regarding team-teaching in the district. Although Newport Area Middle School embraces the middle school philosophy, some teachers agree with the team-teaching model and others do not. The principal described the challenges she faces with regard to inclusion and team-teaching,

You just have to find the right combination of teachers. If they team-teach, and they approach it in the same philosophy and outlook for the students, I think it's productive for those students. If I'm creative enough, matching personalities with their strengths and weaknesses, then I can get a better blend in the classroom

(NAMS Principal).

At Calvert Area Middle School, while the administration was neutral, the teachers did not agree with the statement, *The majority of the teachers in my school agree with inclusionary practices* (Table 3-20). The principal explained, "They're coming around. They realize this is here to stay so they might as well join. There have been some nice relationships built. The key is

Table 3-20. Calvert Area Middle School: Coherence Making

		REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	ADMIN- ISTRATION	ALL
1	The majority of the teachers in my school agree with inclusionary practices.	2.00	2.00	3.50	2.50
2	The teachers in my school support each others differences.	2.50	1.50	4.00	2.67
3	I enjoy working with my principal.	4.50	3.50	5.00	4.20
4	I enjoy working with the faculty and staff at this school.	4.50	4.00	5.00	4.50

to mix the right aide or support teacher with the regular classroom teacher” (CAMS Principal).

When asked to explain disagreement with the statement in the survey, a special education teacher said, “A lot of the teachers have the attitude when a child walks in the room and the inclusion teacher follows, it’s the inclusion teacher’s responsibility to get them up to par” (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1). The perspective from a regular education teacher is similar in context but with regard to the support received from the special education teachers and instructional aides. She described her first year as an inclusion teacher,

That first year was a really good experience because we would talk about adaptations and what’s required in the IEP. They made it very pleasant because they kept us on track. I could count on them. That was really a wonderful introduction for me because the special education teachers really did their job and went above the call of duty to make inclusion successful for all of us (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #2).

During the second year of inclusion, the regular education teachers did not feel she received the level of support she had during the first year, “As the years went on, whenever I would have to seek out if this was even a learning support student in my room. (This special education teacher) has never really followed up on anything” (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #2). The second statement on the survey, *The teachers in my school support each others differences*, received similar responses. While the administrators agreed to this statement, the regular and special education teachers did not. The Director of Special Education attributed the differences in opinion to the fact that the school is in the initial phases of implementation, “We are not entirely ‘there’ when it comes to inclusion. We still have a way to go. Some of the staff are on board. Some are not there yet” (CASD Director of Special Education). The principal

shared his perspective on the differences in the beliefs. When speaking about the greatest challenges the building has faced with regard to inclusion, he felt that, “Staff members who at one time worked alone and now have to work in teams” (CAMS Principal) are having a difficult time adjusting. However, he goes on to say,

I think the culture for the special education kids is better because they don’t feel excluded because of their disability. For the rest of the school I think it’s too early to tell if the culture is better or worse (CAMS Principal).

The regular education teachers and the administrators indicated that they have a collaborative relationship with the other. The principal stated, “We have always been open to ideas to make the best choices for the kids in the school” (CAMS Principal). A regular education teacher added, “Our principal does a nice job supporting us with our ideas” (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #1) However, the special education teachers are feeling lost and frustrated, not only in the transition to inclusion, but also in the transition to a new principal,

The last principal left us and we felt lost. Now we need someone to lead us in the inclusion again. We need help to make it work. We also realize that the new principal will help to make it work. It just takes time (CAMS Special Education Teacher #2).

To continue in its efforts to promote coherence, the district continues to offer professional development on differentiated instruction. They are also discussing opportunities for the staff to participate in team-building experiences.

3.5 SUMMARY

This study focused on the role of the building level principal when transitioning a self-contained environment for special education students to an inclusive environment. Through the methods of surveys, interviews and document analysis, this researcher attempted to create a picture of the role of the building level principal and the relationships established with his or her staff that are necessary throughout transition or change.

The phase three school, Treeside Area Middle School, has been including special education students in the regular education environment for almost twenty years. The belief that all children, regardless of disability, should be included in the regular education environment is interwoven into the culture of the entire school district. This culture is evident in the middle school handbook, the district's mission statement and the actions of the teachers, administrators, and community members. The commitment from all stakeholders has made the transition to inclusion successful. It is also one of the key factors for the sustainability of the program.

Throughout the transition to inclusion, the leaders who have served as principal at the middle school, have played a major role in the process. The principal was the primary agent to support and facilitate the transition. However, the successful implementation of the inclusive environment would not have been obtained without the support of the teachers, central office administrators and community members as well.

To ensure a shared value and belief in inclusion, the implementation team provided opportunities for the teachers, administrators and community members to participate in activities to learn about special education students' needs, the law, and teaching strategies. The principal supported these professional development opportunities and encouraged his teachers to take an active role in the process.

Communication was also a key element employed by the principal to ensure the success and sustainability of the transition to inclusion. He was supportive of the teachers, listened to their ideas, and let them experiment, all the time keeping the vision of inclusion forefront in the minds of his staff. He established a trusting relationship with the teachers, the families, and the central office staff.

Newport Area Middle School, the phase two school district, had already adopted the middle school philosophy. They were already practicing the team approach to develop the whole child and improve each student's education. The transition to inclusion seemed a natural progression.

Even so, the teachers were candid about the challenges they have faced through the transition. They explained that they were not sure there was a shared belief in inclusionary practices when the process first began. Even though they were familiar with middle school teaming, team-teaching with another teacher sharing the classroom was often difficult.

The current principal has worked to develop and cultivate a shared value in inclusion. Her role is to support the teachers and oversee the transition. She observes classrooms and speaks regularly with her staff to ensure accommodations and adaptations are being made to support all of the students.

The principal at Newport is flexible and open to the suggestions her teaching staff offers. She advocates collaboration and shared decision-making with her staff. She also works to analyze potential problems and address them through candid conversations, peer observation and professional development.

Calvert Area Middle School is the phase one school district identified by the specialist at PaTTAN as a successful inclusionary environment. The teachers and administrators at Calvert were open concerning the challenges and successes they have faced in the past three years.

The vision of inclusion, although initiated by the building level principal, was investigated by a team of regular education teachers, special education teachers and administrators. The team attempted to create a shared vision through communication and professional development with the middle school staff but the transition to inclusion has still seen many challenges.

The change has been difficult. The building principal has had to intervene and continually remind some teachers of the vision. He continues to encourage teachers to attend workshops on inclusion so that they too will come to know the value of inclusion.

Two major challenges surfaced through the interviews. One challenge identified by both the administrators and the teachers has been identifying compatible teams. The principal has relied on the recommendations of his staff when making teaming decision. Another challenge identified by the teachers and administrators who participated in this study concerns shared decision-making. The principal at Calvert Area Middle School values the specialties of his staff and advocates shared decision-making. Many of the lead teachers on the implementation team are not comfortable with this responsibility. They want to make recommendations; however, they do not feel they have the power, or at times the respect of the other teachers, to implement the recommendations.

It was difficult to ascertain the sustainability of the inclusive program at Calvert Area Middle School. The teachers believed the program would be sustained. They indicated that the district has adopted policies and procedures to ensure the progression to inclusion; however, they

also indicated that without the principal's support of the program, the transition to inclusion would be stifled.

At Calvert, the principal sees himself as a collaborator with regard to the inclusion program. He believes his job is to support his teachers, to make sure the teachers have the necessary tools and training, and to oversee the transition. Some of the teachers interviewed, on the other hand, want the principal to unilaterally make the decisions and to "manage" the transition.

4.0 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

4.1 DISCUSSION

Special education students like the student with Down's syndrome described in the Review of Literature are being included in the regular education environment in schools across Pennsylvania. Even though laws and regulations regarding the inclusion of special needs students have been in existence since the early 1900's, it has only been since the settlement of the Gaskin's case in 2005 that the state of Pennsylvania has really monitored the inclusion of special needs children in the regular education environment. This change in philosophy of educating special needs children has resulted in a cultural change in many school systems. At the center of this cultural change is the building level principal, the central agent responsible for transitioning schools from self-contained, pull-out cultures for educating special education students, to an inclusionary environment where special education students are provided the necessary supports in order to learn alongside their non-disabled peers.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Public Law 93-112), authorized by Congress in 1973, required public school districts to include special education students in the regular education environment. The Education for All Children Act (Public Law 91-142) enacted in 1975, required school districts to provide special needs children a free and appropriate public

education in the least restrictive environment. The most recent reauthorization of IDEA requires that the IEP team first consider the regular education environment before considering a pull-out classroom to educate special needs children. Perhaps because of the lack of additional funding supplied by the federal government, these mandates; however, have been ignored by many school districts.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires school districts to obtain 100% proficiency on the PSSA for all students, including the special education subgroup, by the year 2014. NCLB, coupled with the recent Gaskin's settlement are perhaps the two main reasons school districts in the state of Pennsylvania are transitioning toward an inclusionary environment where special education children are provided the opportunity to learn alongside their non-disabled peers in a classroom taught by a highly qualified content area teacher.

The purpose of this study was to learn about the role of the building level principal when transitioning a middle school from a self-contained environment for special education children to an inclusionary environment. The literature revealed that cultural or structural change such as this is a cyclical, continuous and interactive process in which there are dynamic relationships between all stakeholders of a school system. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the role of the building level principal when implementing change, the case study approach to research was utilized by the researcher. Through the methods of surveys, interviews and document analysis, the researcher attempted to create a deep, context-specific understanding of the role of the principal in transforming a middle school into an inclusive environment.

The three middle schools described in this case study approached the transition to inclusion in different ways. All three middle schools began the transition to inclusion before the settlement of the Gaskin's case; therefore, the reasons for implementing the cultural change were

based on the vision and beliefs of the school personnel. Although all three middle schools are considered successful in their implementation of inclusion, the extent to where they are in the transition, the role of the building level principal and the degree to which the teachers and administrators agree that they are successful varies. In the following sections, the researcher will address the seven research questions as they pertain to the three middle schools and the role of the building level principal.

4.1.1 Research Question #1

What are the values and beliefs expressed by the building level principal and his/her teachers in successful inclusionary environments with regard to the inclusion of special needs children in the regular education classroom?

Sailor (2002) and Hines (2001) espouse that the transition to inclusion should be framed around whole school reform, not the impetus of laws and regulations. The teachers and administrators at the three middle schools discussed in this research began the journey to inclusion long before the Gaskin's case, which was settled in 2006. Treeside Area Middle School started researching inclusionary practices in 1989, while Newport Area Middle School began the transition in 2000 and Calvert Area Middle School began the transition to inclusion in 2003. Therefore, their respective decisions to transition to an inclusionary environment were based on the values and beliefs of the principals and teachers that special education students should be included in the regular education environment.

In order for the inclusion of special education students in the regular education classroom to be successful, the research revealed that both the principals and the teachers need to value the differences of both the students and the teachers. The data collected through the five-point Likert

style surveys and the interviews indicated that the principals believe that special education students should be included in the regular education environment. The principals interviewed indicated a belief in inclusionary practices, a belief in understanding differences and a belief in celebrating diversity. They valued the expertise of their teachers and advocated for continued professional development for all staff members in order that they would all be able to understand the unique needs of the special education children and the regular education children alike.

The principals also valued shared decision-making and insisted that by advocating a distributed leadership model, the teachers would feel they were part of the decision-making process and be vested in the transition to inclusion. Elmore (2002) and Gronn (2002) advocate a distributed leadership model as well. This form of leadership allows for all stakeholders within the school system to share their strengths and learn from one another. The employment of distributed leadership involves all members of the group. Because the various stakeholders are given the opportunity to create and guide the change efforts, researchers espouse a vested interest in the reform, thus enhancing the sustainability of the program's implementation (Elmore, 2002; Fullan, 2001; Gronn, 2002; Sarason, 1996).

Teachers and administrators at Treeside Area Middle School are comfortable with the distributed leadership model. They have had the opportunity to see the value of expressing their opinions and sharing in the decision-making process at many levels within the transition to inclusion. The shared view of distributed leadership at Treeside Area Middle School is not as evident at Newport Area Middle School and Calvert Area Middle School. At Newport, the principals and some of the teachers believed that the teacher's opinions on inclusion were welcome, however; two teachers interviewed believed that the decisions were all based on the

views of the administration. They believed that the decision to transition to inclusion was a top-down decision made by the central office staff.

Like the data obtained from Newport Area Middle School, the level of comfort with regard to distributed leadership at Calvert Area Middle School and its use was not consistent with Treeside Area Middle School data. The administrators and some of the teachers shared that the decision to transition to inclusion was based on the proposal of a committee. Some of the teachers were comfortable sharing their ideas with the administrators and believed their ideas were valued and considered. Two of the teachers interviewed at Calvert Area Middle School were not comfortable with the shared decision-making model employed by the administration. They wanted the administration to take more of a managerial role than they believed was occurring.

The principals conveyed their values and beliefs in a number of ways. The most common way to transmit values and beliefs that was utilized by the principals was through educational discourse with the teachers and central office staff. The principals and teachers indicated that regular building-level and team-level meetings were necessary to discuss individual students and teaching techniques. Communication was a vital part of the transition at all three sites. To facilitate communication between the teachers and principals, all three principals entertained an “open door” policy. Teachers were encouraged to discuss their ideas in a comfortable environment that was free from recourse.

The majority of the teachers interviewed indicated that they and their fellow teachers shared the principals’ values and beliefs with regard to inclusion. However, they all agreed there was some dissention among various staff members. The teachers indicated that continuous discussions and professional development regarding special education laws and regulations, as

well as training on accommodations and adaptations, was required to ensure that all staff members share in the vision.

4.1.2 Research Question #2

What types of relationships exist between the principal and staff in schools that are successful in the practice of inclusion?

The building of collegial and collaborative relationships was a common theme among all research participants. The principals indicated the need for strong teachers who have an expertise in their area of certification, whether it is special education or a core curricular area. Both the teachers and the principals indicated that successful inclusionary environments result from relationships where the teachers feel comfortable sharing their expertise with the principal and the other teachers in the building. These conversations may be about individual students or different teaching strategies. The teachers also need to be allowed to try new techniques and given the latitude to fail without recourse.

Building these collegial relationships is often a difficult task. The teachers and administrators at Treese Area Middle School believe they have strong relationships with their peers. The teachers and administrators at Calvert Area Middle School and Newport Area Middle School are working on building relationships; however, they have not achieved the level of success with regard to building open and trusting relationships that was evident at Treese.

4.1.3 Research Question #3

How does the building level principal facilitate the knowledge creation and sharing needed to support the state and federal mandated change to inclusion through professional development?

The building level principals interviewed facilitate knowledge creation and sharing in a number of ways. The principals interviewed saw themselves as collaborators with their staff. They indicated that their job was to facilitate the transition to inclusion and give the teachers the tools they needed to be successful. One method of facilitating knowledge creation and sharing was through professional development.

Professional development of all stakeholders helps to improve the sustainability of cultural change. Elmore (2002) suggested that in order to meet the needs of the special education students in the regular education environment, educators need to reevaluate the way they are teaching and assessing children. In addition, principals need to reevaluate the way they are leading (Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2001; Sarason, 1990; Sparks, 1994). These researchers advocate for results-driven education, systems thinking, and constructivism. These methods encourage collaboration, include action research, and facilitate discussion about beliefs and assumptions that guide instruction. These researchers challenge leaders to focus professional development on the school system, individual student needs and learning outcomes, the learning process and content-specific skills. Although none of the principals interviewed in this study actually conducted the various trainings, they supplied their staff with the time and resources to advance their knowledge of special education children in the regular education classroom.

Another method of facilitating knowledge creation and sharing that surfaced through the interviews was the principal's role in identifying various conferences and training sessions

conducted outside the school district. The principals would then recommend the professional development programs to certain staff members and encourage their participation.

Not all of the teachers interviewed believed that their principal facilitated the necessary knowledge creation and sharing that was necessary to facilitate change. The teachers at Newport Area Middle School felt that they were responsible for finding appropriate professional development conferences on their own and then seeking administrative approval. The Newport Area Middle School teachers indicated that they would like the opportunity to visit other schools that are including special needs students. At Calvert Area Middle School, all of the teachers interviewed felt that too much emphasis was placed on the train-the-trainer model. They would like to see more outside facilitators conduct the professional development experiences for the staff. The teachers and administrators at Treese Area Middle School supported the train-the-trainer model and believed that by investing in the development of the trainers, the school district was showing their commitment to inclusion.

4.1.4 Research Question #4

What is the relationship between a principal's values and beliefs and a teacher's values and beliefs in regard to the change from a self-contained environment for special needs children to an inclusionary program?

Fullan's (2001) framework for leading through change emphasizes the need for shared values and beliefs. At Treese Area Middle School, both the teachers and the principal shared in their beliefs that all special education children can be successful in an inclusionary environment if the necessary supports are provided. As evidenced by the data from the surveys and

interviews, there was a strong commitment to include special education students on the part of all research participants at Treeside.

Newport Area Middle School and Calvert Area Middle School research participants did indicate a belief in inclusion; however, to a lesser extent. While the principals at both middle schools had a strong commitment to inclusion, the regular education teachers and the special education teachers were not as strong in their convictions. Some felt that they were including special education students because of the recent settlement of the Gaskins case. Others did not feel they had a choice because it was the district's vision.

4.1.5 Research Question #5

How does a principal convey his/her values and beliefs regarding inclusion to his teaching staff to establish a shared commitment to facilitate and sustain the change?

At Treeside Area Middle School, the vision to transition to inclusion was introduced by a group of teachers and administrators. They have worked collaboratively to institute a shared vision. Because they have been including special education students for almost twenty years, during which time they have had five different principals, the teachers and administrators believe they have the necessary supports in place to sustain the inclusionary environment they created.

At Newport Area Middle School, inclusion was introduced by a past principal. The teachers did not feel they had a choice. They believed they had to include special needs students regardless of their beliefs. However, because they were already utilizing the middle school philosophy and team-teaching approach, many teachers felt the transition was natural. They all agreed that the district's philosophy was to include special education students in the regular education program; therefore, inclusion would be sustained. To sustain the commitment to

inclusionary practices, the principal at Newport believes her role is to continually communicate best practices with regard to inclusion and to provide her staff with the necessary tools, training and time to make inclusion successful.

The teachers and administrators at Calvert Area Middle School have mixed feelings. The regular education teachers and the administration believe that the inclusion of special education students in the regular education environment was a shared decision. When inclusion was first introduced at Calvert, the teachers said the vision was conveyed through the principal's words and actions. The regular education teachers recalled meetings where they were given the opportunity to talk with other school districts that were including special education students. The special education teachers recalled the meetings, but felt they were forced to begin including. They acknowledge a gradual transition to inclusion, but one where they did not think they had a choice.

4.1.6 Research Question #6

How does the principal provide for sustainability of the mandated changes in the educational program?

The major theme that emerged with regard to the principal's role in providing sustainability for inclusionary practices was through support. All three principals saw themselves as a support for the regular education and special education teachers as well as for the students. They all believed that it was their responsibility to ensure that the teachers were provided "everything that they needed" to make inclusion successful. This included training sessions on inclusionary practices, common planning time, and flexible scheduling. In addition, they explained that "support" also included listening to the ideas and suggestions of the regular

education and special education professional staff, allowing them the opportunity to experiment in a risk-free environment and collaborating with the teachers to establish compatible teams. The three principals posited the need for continuous communication regarding the vision of inclusion in order to sustain the program.

4.1.7 Research Question #7

What is the culture of the school system with regard to knowledge, collaboration and change?

At all three middle schools, it appeared that the culture of the school welcomed new knowledge. The teachers and administrators interviewed all participated in a number of professional development experiences to further their knowledge of special education children and differentiating teaching techniques. Two of the teachers interviewed took an active role in conducting the professional development within their respective districts.

Like the culture with regard to knowledge, the culture in the three school districts with regard to collaboration between the teachers and the administrators appeared to be quite strong. The research participants explained that they valued their peer's opinions and ideas; however, at one site, the special education teachers interviewed did not feel their peers reciprocated with regard to their collaborative efforts.

Change has been difficult at Newport Area Middle School and Calvert Area Middle School. Perhaps because they are in the earlier phases of the transition, their challenges are more real. Their anxiety with regard to the transition to inclusion was more apparent to the researcher. The teachers and administrators at Newport and Calvert shared that the transition to inclusion, although successful to the outside world, has not always been successful in their eyes. They struggle with what the "end" might look like. They also struggle with the amount of time that the

transition is taking. One teacher from Calvert said, “It was an eye-opener to see how long the journey takes and I think (talking to others who have successfully transitioned to inclusion) was comforting. It made me feel better to see that we weren’t just jumping in” (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1).

4.2 CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the researcher’s analysis of the surveys, interviews and documents, the importance of the role of the building level principal when transforming a school system through cultural change became clear. At one time, the principal was seen as the manager of a building. He was responsible for creating student and teacher schedules and overseeing the day-to-day operations of a building. That role has expanded to become an instructional leader that must not only manage a building, but also lead a school system through changes that enhance the education of all students, including special education students. The varying roles of a principal leading through cultural change that surfaced throughout this study include: the principal as a visionary, the principal as a collaborator, the principal as a colleague, the principal as a manager, and the principal as a life-long learner.

4.2.1 The Principal as a Visionary

Principals leading through cultural change must be visionary leaders. As a visionary leader, the principal must know himself and establish his personal values and beliefs before he can share

them with his staff or the community. The visionary leader must be true to these beliefs and continuously work to focus the staff to keep the vision alive.

4.2.2 The Principal as a Collaborator

It is important for principals to realize that they are not the sole person responsible for implementing change. Those principals that were identified as successful in implementing change were advocates for collaboration, shared decision-making and team work. They all utilized the expertise of their teachers to advance the initiative and build trust within the school system.

4.2.3 The Principal as a Colleague

Principals leading through complex change need to build trusting relationships with their staff members. All three principals talked about the importance of listening to their colleagues, giving support and learning together.

4.2.4 The Principal as a Manager

There are times during cultural change implementation that the principal may need to revert back to being a manager. If staff members are opposing the transition to inclusion and not doing their job by refusing to participate in professional development, not team-teaching, or refusing to make accommodations for the included students, the principal must address the situation directly.

4.2.5 The Principal as a Life-Long Learner

Professional development is a key component when implementing change. In order for the staff to value the professional development experiences, the administrators must participate alongside the teachers. By learning together, the principal is showing his commitment to the initiative.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Revisit the same three middle schools in five years to ascertain the level of inclusionary practices at that time. A comparison could be completed to see if the phase one and two school districts utilized in this study have reached the level of implementation that the phase three school district has reached at the present time.
- Perform a similar study using three schools that are in the same phase of the transition to inclusion and discuss how the role of the building level principal is similar and different.
- Perform the same study but limit it to a case study of one school's transition to inclusion. The researcher would then be able to increase the number of participants and perhaps create a deeper level of understanding of the culture of the school system with regard to change in that particular school.
- Study the effects of the change in leadership on the implementation of an initiative such as inclusion.
- The definition of inclusion in this study was based on the expertise of a specialist at PaTTAN. Further research may reveal differing results if the definition of inclusion were

framed differently – perhaps if the definition was based on the percent of students who were included in the regular education environment.

- Study the impact inclusionary practices have had on the achievement levels of both regular education and special education students alike.

APPENDIX A – SPECIAL EDUCATION TIMELINE

1918	Civil Rights Movement – Compulsory education laws were established; however, many children with disabilities were routinely excluded from public schools.
1954	Brown v. Board of Education – This decision extended equal protection under the law for minorities. It also paved the way for similar gains for children with disabilities.
1958	The Captioned Films Act of 1958 (PL 85-905)
1959	The Training of Professional Personnel Act of 1959 (PL 86-158) – helped train leaders to educate children with mental retardation.
1960’s	Advocates sought a Federal role in providing leadership and funding for efforts to provide a free appropriate public education, or FAPE, to children with disabilities.
1966	Congress took a step toward FAPE in 1966 when it established the Bureau for Education of the Handicapped under Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA).
1961	PL 87-715 – supported the production and distribution of accessible films.
1961	Teachers of the Deaf Act of 1961 (PL 87-276) trained institutional personnel for children who were deaf or hard of hearing.
1965	Elementary and Secondary Education Act (PL 89-10) and the State Schools Act (PL 89-313) provided states with direct grant assistance to help educate children with disabilities.
1967	State institutions were home to almost 200,000 persons with significant disabilities Congress adds Title VI to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, creating a Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (now called OSEP) and creating and funding what is now called the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, by which school districts can acquire and disseminate promising educational practices to teach students with disabilities.
1968	The Handicapped Children’s Early Education Assistance Act of 1968 (PL 90-538) which offered support for exemplary early childhood programs
1970	US schools educated only one in five children with disabilities, many states had laws excluding children with disabilities (deaf, blind,

	<p>emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded).</p> <p>By this time, the Federal government had supported training for more than 30,000 special education teachers and related specialists and captioned films were viewed by more than 3 million persons who were deaf.</p> <p>Subsequently, a number of initiatives earmarked small amounts of Federal funds for serving children with disabilities. As these programs proliferated, the Bureau recommended that they be codified under a single law (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996). The resulting Education of the Handicapped Act, P.L. 91-230, was passed in 1970.</p>
1971 – 1972	<p>The Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. Commonwealth (1971) and Mills v. Board of Education of District of Columbia (1972) established the responsibility of states and localities to educate children with disabilities. The right of every child with a disability to be educated is grounded in the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution (US Department of Education, 1995a, p. 1). These decisions set the stage for the enactment of a major new law and states joined advocates in seeking the passage of Federal legislation to provide consistency, Federal leadership, and Federal subsidy of the costs of special education (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996, p. 29).</p>
1972	<p>Economic Opportunities Amendments of 1972 (PL 92-424) – increased Head Start enrollment for young children with disabilities</p>
1973	<p>Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 required that a recipient of federal funds (i.e. public school systems) place children with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible to the needs of the handicapped child. The legislation stated that special needs children must be in regular education classrooms with supplementary aides unless IEP team can show that the aides and services cannot be satisfactorily achieved.</p>
1974	<p>The Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA), now replaced by IDEA is enacted to greatly expand Title VI</p> <p>The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is enacted, allowing parents to have access to all personally identifiable information collected, maintained or used by your school district in regard to your child.</p>
1975	<p>Congress enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act – better known as Public Law 94-142. It was a landmark decision that required public schools to include children with a wide range of disabilities (physical handicaps, mental retardation, speech, vision and language problems, emotional and behavioral problems, and</p>

	other learning disabilities) with a “free and appropriate public education.”
1977	Section 504 regulations are issued and include a requirement for a self-evaluation of all policies and procedures of the school district and state education agency so that discriminatory policies would be stopped. (Congress notes in 1990 hearings that school districts illegally ignored this requirement).
1980’s	IDEA supported several Severely Handicapped Institutes to develop and validate effective approaches for integrating children with significant disabilities with their non-disabled family members at home and their non-disabled peers at school
1986	Amendments to EHA mandated that states provide services and programs from birth The EAHCA is amended with the addition of the Handicapped Children's Protection Act (in which Congress overturns a Supreme Court decision that said the EAHCA was "an exclusive remedy" and that parents could not also use Section 504 to protect their child). The amendment makes clear that students and parents have rights under the IDEA and Section 504 at the same time.
1990	Amendments to EHA – which changed the name to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) The Americans with Disabilities Act is enacted. Congress finds that the failures of school districts over the past 15 years of special education laws requires them to add the protection of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to parents and students with disabilities. The ADA also adopts the Section 504 regulations as part of the ADA statute, so now the 504 regulations have the full weight of a federal statute.
1997	IDEA again reauthorized and stated that students are required to be assigned to small classes where specially trained teachers tailored their lessons to each student’s educational needs. Schools are required to provide any additional services (interpreters, computer-assisted technology). Also supported transition services from high school to adult living. Each student’s IEP Individualized Education Program must include transition plans or procedures for identifying appropriate employment and other appropriate community resources,
1999	The new IDEA Regulations are issued with many changes including additional language concerning LRE.
2001	Early intervention programs were provided to nearly 200,000 eligible infants and toddlers and nearly 6 million children and youth received special education and related services to meet their individual needs.

	Institution of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
2004	Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004)
2005	<p>IDEA amended – Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEIA) The majority of children with disabilities are being educated in their neighborhood schools. Through sustained Federal leadership, the US is the world leader in early intervention and preschool programs for infants, toddlers and preschool children with disabilities</p> <p>Despite the challenges involved in serving such a heterogeneous group, the key tenets of IDEA have remained intact since 1975 (US Department of Education, 1998). Although provisions have been added or amended in order to expand the provision of services to younger groups of children with disabilities, or to improve the quality of the services provided under the law, the four purposes of IDEA have remained essentially the same: to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their particular needs; to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents or guardians are protected; to assist States and localities to provide for the education of all children with disabilities; and to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities (US Department of Education, 1995a, p. 1).</p>

APPENDIX B – SURVEY

School Name: _____

Introduction:

An introduction of the research being done and the researcher's background will be discussed. The researcher will thank the participant for his/her open and honest answers and ensure the interviewer that he/she will not be named in the study.

A. Demographic Information

1. Is your community considered rural, urban or suburban?

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban

2. What is your position in the school district?

- General Education Teacher
- Special Education Teacher
- Principal
- Director of Special Education

3. If you are a teacher, what grade and subject do you teach?

Grade _____ Subject(s) _____

4. How many years of experience do you have in education?

- 0 – 3 years**
- 4 – 7 years**
- 8 – 11 years**
- 12 – 25 years**
- 16 – 19 years**
- More than 19 years**

5. How long have you been working in an inclusive environment?

- 0 – 3 years**
- 4 – 7 years**
- 8 – 11 years**
- More than 11 years**

6. How would you personally define inclusion?

7. Tell me about your school and its mission.

8. If a family moved into your school district, what would you tell them is the greatest strength of your school?

B. Moral Purpose – Values and Beliefs

Likert Scale

The next eight questions ask you about your beliefs concerning inclusion. For each question state a number from one to five with 1 meaning you strongly disagree, 2 meaning you disagree, 3 meaning you are neutral, 4 meaning you agree with the statement, and 5 meaning you strongly agree with the statement (use of Likert scale).

9. All special needs children should be included in the regular education classroom.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. Special needs children should be included in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible for them to be successful.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. Special needs children need to be exposed to the regular education curriculum in order to be proficient on the PSSA.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

12. Special needs children need to be exposed to the regular education classroom in order to be successful in their future.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

13. Special needs children should only be included in regular education classrooms where they excel.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. Special needs children should only be included in regular education classrooms where they show an interest.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

15. I enjoy working in an inclusive environment.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. I prefer working in a less inclusive environment.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

C. Understanding and Accepting Change

Likert Scale

The next seven questions ask you about understanding and accepting change. For each question state a number from one to five with 1 meaning you strongly disagree, 2 meaning you disagree, 3 meaning you are neutral, 4 meaning you agree with the statement, and 5 meaning you strongly agree with the statement (use of Likert scale).

17. I understand the implications of PL 94-142 which provides all students with a free and appropriate education.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

18. I understand the implications of the Individuals with Disabilities Act with regard to the inclusion of special education students.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

19. The teachers in this school understand the implications of the Gaskin's Case.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

20. I feel that the current legislation provides special needs children the opportunity to receive an education alongside their non-disabled peers.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

21. I feel that the legislation is forcing school districts to educate special needs children in the regular education classroom.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

22. I believe special needs children should receive their education in a resource room.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

23. I believe special needs children should receive their education in the least restrictive environment.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

24. I do not believe the federal government should mandate changes in public education.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

D. Relationship Building – Shared Commitment

Likert Scale

The next eight questions ask you about the relationships of the special education teachers, regular education teachers, and building principal. For each question state a number from one to five with 1 meaning you strongly disagree, 2 meaning you disagree, 3 meaning you are neutral, 4 meaning you agree with the statement, and 5 meaning you strongly agree with the statement (use of Likert scale).

25. The special education teachers like working in an inclusive environment.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

26. The regular education teachers like working in an inclusive environment.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

27. I enjoy working in a team-teaching environment. (Skip to the next question if you are not a teacher.)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

28. Inclusion is successful because the regular education teacher and the special education teacher team teach.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

29. The inclusion process is most successful when it is considered part of the entire school's philosophy.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

30. The regular education teachers have a greater understanding of the special needs children after working in an inclusive environment.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

31. The principal supports inclusionary practices.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

32. The principal listens to suggestions from his staff regarding inclusion.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

E. Knowledge Creation and Sharing

Likert Scale

The next six questions ask you about knowledge creation and sharing. For each question state a number from one to five with 1 meaning you strongly disagree, 2 meaning you disagree, 3 meaning you are neutral, 4 meaning you agree with the statement, and 5 meaning you strongly agree with the statement (use of Likert scale).

33. My school district offers opportunities for professional growth that are important to inclusionary practices.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

34. I have the opportunity to share my expertise with my peers.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

35. My peers value my opinions.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

36. My peers are supportive of each other.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

37. Answer this question only if you are a teacher: My principal values my expertise.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

38. Answer this question only if you are a teacher: My principal is supportive of the teachers.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

F. Coherence Making

Likert Scale

The next four questions ask you about coherence making. Coherence making can be equated to unity. For each question state a number from one to five with 1 meaning you strongly disagree, 2 meaning you disagree, 3 meaning you are neutral, 4 meaning you agree with the statement, and 5 meaning you strongly agree with the statement (use of Likert scale).

39. The majority of the teachers in my school agree with inclusionary practices.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

40. The teachers in my school support each others differences.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

41. Answer this question only if you are a teacher: I enjoy working with my principal.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

42. I enjoy working with the faculty and staff at this school.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

APPENDIX C – INTERVIEW OUTLINE

Moral Purpose – Values and Beliefs

1. What are your feelings about inclusion? (Probes: What types of disabilities should be included? What challenges have you faced?)
2. What type of environment do you feel is best for special needs children? (Probes: Do you believe the principal would agree or disagree with your interpretation?)

Understanding and Accepting Change

1. What are your feelings about federally mandated changes in the education institution?
2. What actions were done to facilitate the change process?
3. Do you feel the school culture is better or worse because of inclusion? Explain.

Relationship Building – Shared Commitment

1. How did the principal (you) share his (your) vision on inclusion? (Probes: How was his (your) vision relayed? (faculty meetings, discussion, committees))
2. Has the relationships between the faculty and administration changed as a result of the transition to inclusion? If so, how?
3. Is the building of a supportive school community seen to be as important as raising academic achievement?
4. Is there an emphasis on valuing difference rather than conforming to what is normal?
5. Is there a shared value to minimize inequalities of opportunity?

Knowledge Creation and Sharing

1. Is the fostering of collaboration between staff seen to be important? Explain the culture of knowledge creation and sharing.
2. What types of professional development have you participated in with regard to inclusion?
3. Have you facilitated the professional development? (Probes: Who typically facilitates?)
4. How does the building level principal (you) facilitate professional development?

Coherence Making

1. What is your role in the inclusive process at your school? (Principal – scheduling, IEPs, Special education teacher, regular education teacher, team teacher) Special education teacher – Do you go into the classroom on a regular basis? What role do you play in the partnership? What role does the regular education teacher play in the partnership? Tell me about your experiences.
2. Regular education teacher – Does a special education teacher come into the classroom to help the special needs children? Do the two of you team teach? What role do you play in the partnership? What role does the special education teacher play in the partnership?
3. How does (do) the building level principal (you) facilitate the cohesion of the culture in the school?

Closing

1. What would happen to the established inclusion in your school if the principal (you) transferred to another district? (Probes: Would the special education children still be included? How do you know?)
2. Is there any additional information you would like to share about the role of the building level principal in transitioning from a self-contained special education classroom to an inclusionary model?
3. What is the most important factor you would attribute to the success of the inclusive practices in this school?
4. How important was the principal's (your) role in managing the change to inclusion? Explain.

APPENDIX D – RESEARCH TIMELINE

March 2006	Called the three principals recommended by the specialist at PaTTAN requesting their participation in the study.
March 2006	One school district was not able to commit to all aspects of the study. Contacted specialist at PaTTAN for identification of an additional school
March 2006	Called principal at fourth school requesting participation in the study.
March 2006	Mailed letters to Superintendents requesting permission to conduct research in their district
April 2006	Applied to Institutional Review Board (IRB) for permission to conduct research, used expedited application
April 2006	Application returned for additional information and revision regarding how the teachers were to be selected. (The superintendent and the principals were not permitted to identify the teachers. The IRB was modified stating that the researcher would write letters to the teachers requesting their participation in the study.
April 2006	Application modified and resubmitted
June 2006	IRB approval
June 2006	Sent surveys to all participants
June 2006	Scheduled and conducted interviews with Calvert Area Middle School teachers, Newport Area Middle School teachers and Treeside Area Middle School teachers
July 2006	Scheduled and conducted interviews with administrators and special education directors at all three sites
July 2006	Additional administrator interviews conducted

August 2006	Additional teacher interviews conducted
September 2006	Transcriptions sent to all participants
October - November 2006	Data Analysis and Interpretation, Compilation of results
November 2006 – January 2007	Interpretation and Writing
January 2007	Continued to attempt to schedule interviews with Newport Area School District Director of Special Education

APPENDIX E – TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWS

E.1 CALVERT AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

E.1.1 Calvert Area Middle School Principal

Interviewer: How did inclusion begin at CAMS?

CAMS Principal: The last principal had a vision that special education kids needed to be included. She worked with the staff to make it happen. I guess inclusion was the right thing to do. The special education students needed to be part of the school culture.

Interviewer: What are your feelings about inclusion?

CAMS Principal: Inclusion is positive as long as all Central Office, building administrators, teachers work together.

Interviewer: Do you think all disabilities should be included?

CAMS Principal: MR, Autistic and life skills I would say are best served in their own settings.

Interviewer: What challenges have you faced?

CAMS Principal: Staff members who at one time worked alone and now have to work in teams, collaboration. Whose responsibility is it as far as adaptations, who

makes the parent contacts, basically a whole new division of work. The aides at times feel resentful that they do as much for about 1/5 the price of the teachers.

Interviewer: What are your feelings about federally mandated changes in the education institution?

CAMS Principal: I think that they, they being the powers that be, the lawmakers, need to have more input from building level administrators and teachers. I feel that the teachers union really doesn't do a real good job as far as having their concerns heard. I don't know if their suggestions are not welcome or they just choose to do...it is kind of unknown what their agenda is. I'm talking about the teacher union. Are they consulted before these changes are made or are they done and you just kind of deal with it – whatever the political fallout is, so be it.

Interviewer: What things were done to facilitate inclusion here?

CAMS Principal: The aides were dispersed where the special education kids were scheduled rather than them being assigned to one teacher. They received In-service training as far as how to adapt lessons for the kids.

Interviewer: Do you think the culture here is better or worse because of inclusion?

CAMS Principal: I think for the special education kids, the culture is better because they don't feel they are excluded because of their disability. For the rest of the school, I think it's too early to tell if the culture is better or worse.

Interviewer: How do you share your vision of inclusion?

CAMS Principal: Basically back up and defend the district's vision of inclusion. I make sure the legalities are covered – give them the support they need.

Interviewer: Do you think the relationship between the faculty and you has changed because of the transition to inclusion?

CAMS Principal: No. We have always had a good relationship and that continues.

Interviewer: Is it good? Relationship wise, do they come to you and tell you they agree or disagree?

CAMS Principal: We have always been open to ideas to make the best choices for the kids in the school. That hasn't changed.

Interviewer: Do you think that the school community has been supportive?

CAMS Principal: I think they are very much uninformed on anything about what we do in here. They only pay attention to sports and tragedy.

Interviewer: Do you think the teachers are supportive of inclusion?

CAMS Principal: They're coming around. They realize this is here to stay so they might as well join in. There have been some nice relationships built. The key is to mix the right aide or support teacher with the regular classroom teacher.

Interviewer: Isn't that the hardest part?

CAMS Principal: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Do you think the teachers values differences instead of conforming?

CAMS Principal: I think we are making progress in that area. There are still some who are sort of rigid and think this is the 1980's but its not.

Interviewer: Is there a shared value? Do you think the people are trying to differentiate instruction and learn more about teaching strategies?

CAMS Principal: It's a work in progress and I think we are making positive strides. I have a good staff here at the middle school and I think that's key. I think in other places it could be a problem. If you had to hire eight staff you could run into problems with people being set in their ways. But the majority of our people are not so far in their careers that they can't make some changes.

Interviewer: Do you think that collaboration amongst your staff is important?

CAMS Principal: Absolutely. People go to training and In-Services...I think it's important that they share with their colleagues.

Interviewer: What have you participated in with regard to inclusion?

CAMS Principal: District-wide trainings, different In-Services through Principal's Academy. We learned about differentiated instruction, reading strategies, and things like that.

Interviewer: Have you facilitated professional development on inclusion?

CAMS Principal: No. We have a special education department chair who pretty much stays on top of that. She is knowledgeable and into it. It makes my job a lot nicer.

Interviewer: What is your role in inclusion?

CAMS Principal: Scheduling the support teachers and the aides in the classrooms, attending IEP meetings, and just making sure they have what they need to make inclusion successful.

Interviewer: How do you facilitate cohesion of the culture? How do you make it all work?

CAMS Principal: Strategic planning of personnel, working to keep the moral up, positive communications, basically through direct observation – knowing what is going on around the school.

Interviewer: What would happen to inclusion in this building if you left?

CAMS Principal: It is the vision of the district. It wouldn't go away. If a new person came in, he would have to comply with the district mandates and policies. They would obviously put their own spin on it – their own personal touch.

Interviewer: Do you think that is because there are certain people in your building that want inclusion or do you think it is because of central office?

CAMS Principal: It is probably 50/50 in the special education department whether they would want to continue inclusion there are some that feel positive about it, some want to have their own classrooms back. Some really enjoy going out there and helping the kids and team-teaching. I think it a personality type thing.

Interviewer: What's the most important thing you attribute to the success of inclusion in this building?

CAMS Principal: I think the self respect that some of the kids are gaining, being able to get out and challenge themselves somewhat. The discipline problems of the special ed kids who are in the regular classrooms has decreased in this particular age group, they think their behavior is inappropriate amongst their regular ed peers. It really helps in that respect.

Interviewer: What is your role in the transition?

CAMS Principal: You have to believe in it, support it, and continuously communicate what needs to be done. The top sort of sets the tone for anything, not just for inclusion.

E.1.2 Calvert Area Middle School Director of Special Education

Interviewer: What are your feelings about inclusion?

CASD DSE: I believe children, regardless of their disability, should be included in the regular education environment to maximum extent possible. In this district, we have support classes for Life Skills, Autistic Support and Emotional Support. We recently had a student at the high school. He was in the autistic program. When he was at the middle school, he was only included for Spanish. Now at the high school, he is included for Algebra and English as well. He did so well in his first year being included in Algebra last year that his mother wanted to try more. I think the problem is that we are all so afraid of the unknown. What might happen if we include kids with disabilities? The reality is we will not know until we try. The worst that can happen is that student will either need additional support or pulled back into a support classroom; however, we have found that once they are “out there,” they don’t want to go back. That’s exciting!

Interviewer: What type of environment do you feel is best for special needs children?

CASD DSE: Whatever environment they can be most successful in. Gone are the days when the special education students were hidden in one hallway of a

school building. They are now part of the mainstream of the school system.

Interviewer: Do you believe the principal would agree or disagree with your interpretation?

CASD DSE: I think he would agree. It is hard to be placed into this type of transition during your first year. Not only are you learning a new role, an entire school system, but you are also now responsible for leading the charge towards inclusion – regardless of whether or not you agree with it. That’s a difficult position to be in. But our new principal is more than capable. He understands the importance of the vision.

Interviewer: What are your feelings about federally mandated changes in the education institution?

CASD DSE: That’s a tough one. Sometimes we need federally mandated change, especially in school districts. We get so accustomed to doing things a certain way that it is difficult to change. There have been so many initiatives in my career, just imagine how many there have been in the careers of our veteran staff. They often say, “This too will pass.” But I don’t think that is true of inclusion. Federal law mandated inclusion, or mainstreaming, many years ago. It will probably take state and federal monitoring in order for some school districts to get on board. There are other things that are mandated that I disagree with; however, we can’t pick and choose.

Interviewer: What actions were done to facilitate the change process?

CASD DSE:

The students coming into the sixth grade from the elementary school were already included for all classes except math and reading. The middle school teachers either had to amend the IEPs or include the students in the regular education classrooms. After researching inclusion and discussing the situation with the superintendent, the Director of Special Education and the elementary principals, the principal met with the special education department chairperson at the middle school. That is when the principal presented her idea to transition to inclusion. The middle school principal seemed to plant seeds. It started with a visit from a successful inclusion school to discuss how they do it. Then the principal asked a number of regular education and special education teachers to go to conferences. She was really establishing the teams that she thought would work best. She met with the special education staff in the building and discussed the possibility of including more and more students. I think one reason for the change may have been the issues concerning middle level certification. If the state's philosophy is that students need to be taught by highly qualified teachers who had deep content area knowledge, how couldn't this be appropriate for special needs students as well? Slowly, the groundwork was put into place. Teachers started talking about including more and more. They started asking questions about making accommodations, modify teaching strategies, and working with another teacher. That's when we started looking for professional development activities to enhance their practices.

Interviewer: Do you feel the school culture is better or worse because of inclusion?
Explain.

CASD DSE: I'm not sure it is better or worse because of inclusion. We have had the Autistic Support and Life Skills classes at the middle school for many years. For the most part, they were only included for Related Arts, lunch and physical education. However, the students were always kind and considerate to their needs. They always accepted them and actually looked out for them. I think it is too early to say what kind of impact inclusion has had on the culture.

Interviewer: How did the principal share her vision on inclusion?

CASD DSE: Like I mentioned before, it started with discussions with various people. Kind of feeling things out and laying the groundwork. Then certain people were asked to go to conferences of inclusive strategies, like differentiated instruction. Now we have two trainers who have been asked to "take their show on the road" and share their knowledge with other school districts.

Interviewer: Has the relationships between the faculty and administration changed as a result of the transition to inclusion? If so, how?

CASD DSE: Although it is too early to tell with the new principal, the relationship did change with the old principal. She replaced a "manager." She was more of a collaborator. It was important to her to have the staff supportive and knowledgeable about the initiative. Some will be hard on the new principal; however, I think it is too early to make such a judgment.

Interviewer: Is the building of a supportive school community seen to be as important as raising academic achievement?

CASD DSE: The community supports the school district, more so here than in other places. There is a unique sense of trust.

Interviewer: Is there an emphasis on valuing difference rather than conforming to what is normal?

CASD DSE: I would say, to some extent, yes. We are not entirely “there” when it comes to inclusion. We still have a ways to go. Some of the staff is on board. Some are not there yet. The change in administration was difficult. It is hard to expect someone to continue the plan of another person. It takes time. Now that we all have a year under our belts, I think the transition will pick up again.

Interviewer: What types of professional development have you participated in with regard to inclusion?

CASD DSE: We have had sessions on differentiated instruction, teaching strategies, modifying lessons, adapting tests and assignments, and things like that. We have also had extensive professional development in the areas of Reading in the Content Areas, and math and science strategies. But not everyone had the same training; it was based on what content area the person was teaching.

Interviewer: Who facilitates the professional development?

CASD DSE: For the past two years, we have utilized the “Train-the-trainer” model. We have sent teachers out to a number of intense workshops, not one-day

events, and focused our sessions on intense content-oriented things. So, for the past two years, eight teachers have committed to facilitating the professional development to the entire staff. I think they are a little burnt out from it though. Plus, some of the staff members were not as respectful as they should have been.

Interviewer: Have you facilitated the professional development? (Probes: Who typically facilitates?)

CASD DSE: I have facilitated in regards to special education updates and things specifically for the special education department.

Interviewer: How does the building level principal facilitate professional development?

CASD DSE: The building level principal took care of making the connections, helping the teachers find the training they needed, securing funds, etc. She didn't really facilitate the professional development, but participated in it. The staff needed to see her commitment in order for them to buy into it. If the leader of the building is not interested in an initiative, the initiative will slowly die off. Her participation was more during after school meeting, departmental meeting and Faculty meetings. I think that's where the real learning and program development took place.

Interviewer: How does the building level principal facilitate the cohesion of the culture in the school?

CASD DSE: I think the principal is key in establishing the culture of the school. He or she needs to have an inclusive vision in order for the entire staff to accept inclusion and in order for the culture of the school to change so that

everyone accepts inclusion. I think the kids are better at doing this than the teachers. The special education kids, for the most part, love going to the regular classrooms. Their behaviors are better and they are learning the same stuff as the regular education kids. Once you put them in the same classrooms and get ride of the labels and the barriers, the culture can change.

Interviewer: What would happen to the established inclusion in your school if the principal (you) transferred to another district? (Probes: Would the special education children still be included? How do you know?)

CASD DSE: Well, that has happened here. If we were further along in the process, we are only in the third year of transition; I think we would not have missed a beat. If more teachers were on board and the culture was truly accepting, we would have just kept rolling along. However, I think those who are not 100% committed to inclusion probably tried to test the waters and see if this thing was going to go on with a new principal. Those who challenged it are finding out that the new principal understands the vision of inclusion and is supportive of the transition. So, although we wavered a little, I know we will see progress as time goes on.

Interviewer: What is the most important factor you would attribute to the success of the inclusive practices in this school?

CASD DSE: Collaboration and team work. None of us can do this alone. We have to listen to one another and realize that we are not always right. It is also

important to know that mistakes are OK. We only learn through mistakes, and then we can do a better job the next time around.

Interviewer: How important was the principal's role in managing the change to inclusion? Explain.

CASD DSE: I think the principal's support is key to a successful transition. I can help out and share my ideas, but the principal is there everyday – it is his school. The teachers look to the principal for guidance and support. If he were to say he disagreed with inclusion, well, let's not go there.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

CASD DSE: Change is hard. Not everyone is always going to be on the same page all the time – change takes time...time to work with individual people...time to experiment with new approaches and teaching techniques.

E.1.3 Calvert Area Middle School Special Education Teacher #1

Interviewer: Let's start by looking at your survey answers. On this one, "All special needs children should be included in the regular education classroom." You disagree. Would you expand?

CASD SE 1: I believe that there are children because of their intellectual limitations, need a different type of curriculum and if you're always going to include them in the regular classroom, you're not going to be able to provide them

with that curriculum. Especially when you talk about kids who are in, what we call, life skills situations.

Interviewer: “I enjoy working in an inclusive environment.” You didn’t pick any.

CASD SE 1: Well, I think the inclusive environment depends a lot on the interaction between the regular education teacher and the special education teacher. In some situations, the ideal situation, what we think of when we say inclusion, it’s wonderful. But when you walk into a classroom everyday and you know that the children are not welcome, that you are not welcome, it’s tough and it effects your motivation.

Interviewer: Do you find – you’ve worked, technically as far as the transition in inclusion, for two years but you did a lot helping kids before that – it wasn’t called that, it was called mainstreaming.

CASD SE 1: Right.

Interviewer: Where do you feel welcome and where don’t you?

CASD SE 1: And I want to make it clear that I truly believe that I’m welcome – it’s not just a personal thing. Truly I don’t feel welcome in the science classroom. I also look at someone like (regular education teacher) – I have the utmost respect for (regular education teacher, I truly do, but I don’t think that she had a repertoire of how we would work together and how she could utilize me or where my role...do you understand what I mean? Like I’ve sat in the back of her class and done nothing. There were a lot of things – and I would say to her, even if I would correct papers, even if I would do something that helps you keep going, whatever. She didn’t utilize me – I

didn't feel welcome. And that isn't a personality thing. We go to lunch, we're in the same organization together and I truly like her, I respect her as a teacher. I think she's very qualified, but I just don't think...I don't know if it's right to say I wasn't welcome, or she just didn't know how to use me.

Interviewer: And that goes back to something we'll talk about more, which is professional development.

CASD SE 1: I think training on team-teaching would truly make a difference. I went to a four-day inclusion workshop at the IU. And on the last day we had different school districts come in and they showed us the progression they took...this is what our first year looked like, and this is what our second year looked like and this is our third year. And then I did some research for classes and I think if I would have known that, it would have changed my attitude in whole different way – but I didn't know that. And I really think that someone needed to say to me, "Look, it's going to be a tough year and there are things that we need to do to lay the foundation, there are certain expectations that we can have...and I saw that myself, I know, one time when I talked to (regular education teacher) about tiering instruction at the beginning of the year. I told her you know, I can take a group and you can take a group...and she was not receptive. I think had I been in that classroom for a while and we had seen it and we had developed more of a repertoire. That suggestion would have been better had I made it two weeks ago or a month ago. I think if I would have known that up front, it

would have been a little easier to go with, but I didn't know that – I didn't know what it was supposed to look like or I didn't know what the journey was going to be as we moved along and it was very frustrating.

Interviewer: On your survey, you responded that “I would prefer working in a less inclusive environment.”

CASD SE 1: That's just because I like to be in control. I like it my way. And that is something that I have to work on. But there is a lot more opportunity in the inclusion that I didn't see in the beginning.

Interviewer: So if you had to pick a number, what would you pick?

CASD SE 1: Well, I'd have to say neutral. I think you can make the best out of any situation, it depends on your attitude and my attitude was not the best in the beginning. I think I'm seeing things in a different light, now. I'm actually wanting to get out of this year and get on to next year so that it will be a whole different ball game! Just cross your fingers that I'm still in eighth grade.

Interviewer: Who needs to be the one to go in and say, “This is your role, this is your role, this is how inclusion runs”?

CASD SE 1: It has to be the principal because I can say things and people will look at me and say, “Who do you think you are?” If the principal would want to defer that to someone else, he would have to make that explicit to everyone. But definitely, because there have been some problems here and I don't know if the principal explained that to you, but there have been

some problems with some teachers. And, not everyone is receptive towards inclusion and not everyone thinks it's a good thing. Some people just don't want to do it. And when you're up against that and the principal's attitude is, "You two work it out." But I think there are times when somebody has to step in and say, "Hey, this is what we're looking at. This is how this is to be played out." And then if you want to play it out your way, that's fine, but there has to be a path. You know some things we do because it's the law and that's fine, but everybody has to be clear that they have a stake in this. It is their responsibility too.

Interviewer: Do you think that the culture of this building is one that embraces inclusionary practices or not yet?

CASD SE 1: Not yet – I have just heard some very disturbing things that sometimes I'm amazed at the people that have attitudes that I would have never guessed. I'm just blown away. I've had a teacher say, "This kid is in my classroom. This kid can't do any work. I give him work and a special ed teacher has to give him all the answers." I've even said, OK, I'm not trying to be nice, "If you're asking a child every day to do something that they cannot do, why are you continuing to ask them to do it?" And I just, that's the way I feel. If you're going to sit down, I've even had this discussion with an aide. If you're going to help a child and do so much for a child that their work *appears* to be as good as everyone else's, that's counterproductive also. Because a lot of the teachers have the attitude when the child walks in the room and the inclusion teacher follows them in it's the inclusion

teacher's responsibility to get them up to par and they are all going to be up to par. It doesn't work that way. Sometimes we're looking for – maybe instead of learning ten things they are going to learn five. They are still learning those five and you have to accept that. And some people just do not do that. It has to be that way; you can't just continue to ask someone to do something that they cannot do.

Interviewer: Whose idea do you think it was to start inclusion here?

CASD SE 1: Um, we're going to go back – I would say (a past elementary principal). She was the one who pushed it and worked on it for a long time. She was out at one of the elementary schools.

Interviewer: So when she left, it appears that the philosophy continued.

CASD SE 1: Somewhat. But I would say at the middle school, it started with our last principal. I don't think that (a previous principal) ever wanted to do inclusion. He was never involved in it.

Interviewer: If the principal would change again and the new principal did not have a vision of inclusion, would the teachers say, "Great, now we can go back to normal"?

CASD SE 1: Normal? I think we'd go backwards.

Interviewer: Do the teachers team teach?

CASD SE 1: In order to make inclusion successful, it is important to work as a team, meet as a team and plan as a team. Even if they would meet once a week, once a month, to talk about every single included student. Like a SAP [Student Assistance Program] thing. See that's what I was thinking too

because, and this gets to be the difficult thing just for me because, if you take someone like WR. I'll go to one class and they'll say, "Oh, he's doing great! He's doing wonderful!" Then I'll go to another and they'll say, "He comes in. He puts his head down. He's doing nothing." So what's happening here? In math, he's like I'm not doing math, I'm going back to learning support. In English, he's like; I don't want to do this report. Just as a threat, I told him if he doesn't do his report, he would have to go back to learning support English. He said, "No! I'm not doing that! I don't want to go back!" What's in that kid's head? What's going on that he's working for one teacher and not another. Or CM, if you directly confront him, then it's going to be an issue. And I see him in two different classes. In one class, he's always in trouble in the other class, there are times he does nothing but he's not creating a disturbance. That teacher is working with him in a completely different way.

Here's the other thing about the team too –and I've seen this with the special education staff – there's a general attitude of I'm going to help my kids. And I've even had aides and teachers say, "Well, my kid wasn't in class so I didn't go today." I've told them – I used to have the aides job description. The last one said, "Do what the teacher directs you to do." Some of the aides have complained, "They (the teacher) asked me to work with this kid and this kid is not special education." I don't think that's a good attitude – I don't think that's productive. You're there to do what

you need to do. A lot of times our aides get left out of the loop in one sense when you're talking about what's your job, but in the other sense, we rely very heavily on our aides because sometimes they see kids that we don't see. So there has to be some way to get them into the foundation of the education rather than as an afterthought.

Interviewer: The aides' role in inclusion might be a good place to start.

CASD SE 1: That's right. You know, I've had some teachers come to me and say, "My aide doesn't do this..." And I've told them, "You have to tell them. You have to be very explicit." You have to keep in mind that an inclusion teacher or an aide might go into six different rooms in a day and what one teacher wants might not be what another teacher wants. If I'm doing what you want and I'm thinking, "OK, that's how it works," and then I go over here and this teacher's not happy and then she's complaining to somebody else...you have to say, "This is how I want things done." It was funny because when I first started in (a regular education social studies teacher's) room, we set up little baskets saying, "Papers to be graded." "Papers already graded, already recorded." And she's like, "How do you know how to do this?" It's because I've already done this, I've worked like this for twenty year. But you cannot put someone in a room and expect them to know how to communicate. I'm like, "Where are your hall passes?" I don't even get things like that. It's just stupid stuff that can be very difficult.

I think too, that even the kids, like I started in (a regular education English teacher's) room late – I go to (the regular education English teacher's) room now – but at first the kids were like, saying to me, “Are you studying to be a teacher?” You know, stuff like that. Then I was doing this writing project with them and going through the whole thing. And they were saying to (the regular education English teacher), “Are you going to take over teaching again?” They didn't quite understand my role and I think we overlook that sometimes where kids don't understand. They'll say to me – this is no lie, they'll raise their hand, and I'll say, “What do you need?” And they'll say, “I need to ask (the regular education English teacher) this question.” I say, “No, you can ask me.” But they don't understand either. So, as we go through inclusion, those are some bumps we may not have later on but it's funny. The funniest thing is when they say, “Are you an assistant teacher?” I went into one classroom where the substitute thought I was an aide.

Interviewer: Your number 32, “The principal listens to suggestions from his or her staff regarding ideas about inclusion.”

CASD SE 1: Well, the principal and I had a little go around. I don't know if he mentioned that. There have been teachers that you say, “This child needs this type of adaptation.” And the teacher says, “No.” And I mentioned to the principal a few times, “You need to discuss that with people.” And he was like, “Whatever you two work out is whatever you two worked out.” But that happens with some of the aides and they'll suggest an adaptation

– it can be something as simple as wanting the child to write on note cards. I will say, “Let them write on a piece of paper,” and the teacher will say, “No.” And I talked to the principal and I don’t think I got anywhere. So I went in and I said, “I have a union question. Who is in charge of making sure this takes place.” Then he sent it back, “(CAMS Special Education Teacher #1’s) question...” – I reminded him that union questions were anonymous. But he only sent the response to the special education teachers – see he needs to say it to everybody. He came up and we talked about it and then at the staff meetings, he would say, “I know you don’t like inclusion but you have to make these adaptations.” Well, that’s not a ringing endorsement. And I really feel that if he would start showing some positive things about this inclusion, people would be more receptive. That’s a beginning. I do feel that, there are times, I mean, when you think about a football coach, there are time when you are going to look out onto that field and say, “You know every time you throw that ball, it’s going a little out to the left and if you compensate it this way, we’re going to be right on target.” I think at times, as principal, he needs to step in. And my thing was, some of this was happening between the teachers and the aides and some of the aides don’t feel like they can say to a teacher, “Hey, you know what, you’re not doing your job.” That’s when a principal has to come in and say – I understand his point of view because he – I know he doesn’t want us running to him with every little problem and I don’t think that he needs to actually address every problem. But I do think that he

needs to light the way to where we are going so that people know what's expected of them so that they can at least go towards that.

Interviewer: Do you believe that if someone outside of this building wasn't pushing inclusion that it would continue?

CASD SE 1: No, no, I really don't. I mean you look back at the days of (a previous principal). (The previous principal) would put them in learning support whether they needed to be in there or not. Everybody was fully resource or in special education classes. I would be like, "Wait, he doesn't have math as a disability – you can't do that!" And he got really mad at me one time and everybody's like, "Would you shut your mouth! You don't want to get on his bad side." But I was like, see they were always placed in, and I had this in the elementary, the ER [Evaluation Report] would come back saying, "This child has a learning disability in reading," and then the teacher would sign off, "Yes, I agree." And you'd get to the IEP and they'd say, "I want you to take him for math." And you'd say, "I can't do that." They would be mad at me. I'd have to explain that they had just signed that they agreed with reading, they didn't sign for math. You can't do replacement services.

Interviewer: I understand that one form of professional development that is being offered to your colleagues next year is the Reading Apprenticeship. It is a four-day workshop directed at content area teachers. The idea is to train teachers to teach how to read content area pieces.

CASD SE 1: I think that would be really good. I don't see a whole lot of teachers teaching the students how to read social and science books. I've talked to the students in my Study Skills class about this. You read a social studies book a lot slower than you do *A Year Down Yonder*. We talk about some of the strategies that we teach the students in elementary. We teach them that if you don't know a name, just use the first initial. Mr. Y, Mr. X, Mr. Z. But if they do that in social studies, they are in deep trouble. You can't use that strategy in certain subjects. I saw that at the beginning of the year when we were learning about the explorers. They wanted to bleep over those names and I had to help them learn the names. They probably should have learned that in sixth grade. I do see that some of the strategies are not the same and we need to teach them the strategies.

Interviewer: Do you believe you are supported by the administration?

CASD SE 1: I think that if there were more administrative support, we might be further along. You have to be positive about it.

Interviewer: So, the principal often needs training as well?

CASD SE 1: Yes. But I think we still need to push inclusion. I got into this debate with a regular education teacher. I told them to check out the test scores – inclusion works. If you walk into my classroom, you can see the difference between the kids who are included and those who are not – the transformation is amazing.

Interviewer: Are they more positive?

CASD SE 1: Not only are they more positive, a lot of them have better self-esteem, they are more willing to work, their test scores are going up immensely, and I've talked to the teachers about that. We keep a kid on grade level for years and years and don't understand why they are confused in the regular room – they need the foundation that the other students have. They have never been included before – they have always been in learning support. We stick to a skill until they learn it and end up skipping twenty other ones. So when they lack simple things – like fraction, there is a big gaping hole. A time goes on and these kids are included for their classes, the holes will not be so big. I don't think it will all go away but some of it will.

Interviewer: I understand there has been a change in leadership, but try to answer the following questions to the best of your ability. How was the principal's vision regarding inclusion shared with the staff?

CASD SE 1: I know our previous principal had a strong vision and I know that the principal and I communicated that vision. I'm not sure that the past principal communicated it to other people though. But then again, I think that when the previous principal started inclusion, when any individual goes through a change, there is a certain level of anxiety. We viewed things through that anxiety and it might not accurately reflect what is going on. When we started inclusion, people were terrified. That kind of clouded everything else that was going on. Remember, we went from (a previous principal) who said, "Put those kinds in the basement," to the

next principal saying, “No, they belong in your room.” That was future shock for a lot of people and I think it clouded how things went.

Interviewer: Do you think the change in leadership has had an impact on the transition? Would it be different if the last principal had stayed?

CASD SE 1: No, it would be totally, absolutely different. My personal opinion is that a school will never be any better than its leadership. If there wasn't that push, we would just be going backwards.

Interviewer: Is there an emphasis on valuing differences rather than conforming to the status quo?

CASD SE 1: They [the teachers] all expect them to conform. That's the biggest handicap we have right now because so many teachers think, “OK, they're all just going to be at this level.” I've talked to people about tiering assignments and they just look at me like, “Have you lost your mind.” I tell them this would be great if it were a little more structured.

Interviewer: Tell me about some of the professional development you have participated in.

CASD SE 1: I did a four-day inclusion workshop at the intermediate unit, the governor's institute.

Interviewer: What was the one at the IU like? What was the focus?

CASD SE 1: Each day had a new topic. The one day, they had a man speak – he didn't give the presentation they thought he was going to give. Some of it was very good; they talked about data-driven decision making. I took a class this semester on community and political leadership. The professor, she

sits on the due process board, she discussed several cases. Through her, I found that we are very behind the times. I talked to her about differentiated instruction and she said, “You can’t tell me that’s meeting the needs of each individual student!” Sometimes I can’t even get these people to do differentiated instruction and you’re telling me that’s not good enough! It was interesting because it really opened up my eyes a lot to see things through different points of view. Because you do get into a community and you start to assimilate their attitudes and beliefs and then you get an outside influence and you look at it through different eyes and you’re saying, “Wait, you know she has a point there.” That was a good one. All my nieces and nephews on my side of the family have learning disabilities. My nephew is in college and he goes to California State. He was in a program that was mandatory – they would help him study. My niece has a learning disability and is going to college – she goes to Edinboro. My other niece is at Slippery Rock. So I see that through that point of view. Then I see – on my husband’s side, they’re all gifted education. It’s kind of like the gambit. I also have friends who have kids so I look at it through different eyes. I have so many people that have learning disabilities. My brother has a learning disability and they just bumped him through school He was in fifth grade three times and it was like, “Just get him out of here.” He was perfectly willing to do that. They put him in Vo-tech. In that day and age it was you know, “You can work with your hands and you’ll be fine. Get out of here.” When he got out of

school, he couldn't read and had to go back to night school. So I take all these things into consideration and I look at them and I know other people don't always see that because they are not directly exposed to it. I take *en loco parentis* very seriously. I adore my child, if someone was doing that to my kid, I'd be flipping. Somebody loves this child – somebody thinks this child is totally fantastic.

Interviewer: How many classes do you team-teach?

CASD SE 1: Science, math, two social and one of English – that's actually five inclusion classes.

Interviewer: How many special education students are in the inclusion classes that you are in?

CASD SE 1: In math, there's about six, social – one period there's twelve the other there are two, but both have disabilities in math only. I think that we need to share information with the new teachers. I have a few suggestions for next year. Number one, we were sending out the adaptation checklist sheets. (A past principal) I think, came up with them. Well, this would be nice, this would be nice. Well, teachers just took them with a grain of salt, some even threw them away. I think it's more important that they number one; they know from the very beginning, "OK, you need to focus on this person or focus on that person." Some people did not get their adaptations sheet out until, you know, we fought about it. Teachers would say you know, "I didn't know who these kids were." Second, I think it's too hard for me to look at my role this year and go through fifteen IEPs, see what

those adaptations are and get something up. This should be done at the end of the year so that next year, because let's face it; some of those kids are new to me. I don't know who they are. I don't know their little in's and out's – you can call the parent and the parent is receptive – those are some of the things that make a difference not just give them short answers. So I think if we all passed on this information at the end of the year – that's means more work and some of the teachers are not going to do it. I look at some of the things we talked about with the high school. I look at CG – we all know she has issues but this year she has grown and developed friendships. She's in the Art Club, KH is friends with her – they exchanged pictures. You would not believe how much that child has changed this year. If she backslides, that can really have an impact on her academics. So those are the kinds of things we need to know at the beginning of the year so we can help her develop friendships, encourage her, whatever because that is what kept her going academically more than anything else this year. You need to know those kinds of things and you don't translate them into an IEP. We have whole discussions, like I'm going to read a test to a child – I had this discussion with my professor – I might say to the kids, “Do you want me to read it?” They might say, “No.” She said if it's in the IEP then it's not an option. So if you're telling me I can't give them the option, then I have to leave it out of the IEP. So, then what do I do? It is very open to interpretation in a lot of ways. In A's I

write it as an option for the one year – if she wanted to use her science book during the test it was an option.

Interviewer: You have seen some really positive things through inclusion.

CASD SE 1: There are kids that you can just sit in here and listen to them read and say, “Whoa, how did that happen!” I do a lot of fluency and it all comes together through inclusion – they are in the regular classroom and they are forced to do different things. I just really think inclusion has a lot of benefits.

Interviewer: Is there anything you want to share that I haven’t ask you?

CASD SE 1: No – well I would say the only thing, because this happened to me personally – it was an eye-opener to see how long the journey takes and I think that was comforting. It made me feel better to see that we weren’t just jumping in. (The regular education social studies teacher) and I did jump in – I knew that would happen because (the regular education social studies teacher) and I are friends on a personal level too. I can say things to her and she can say things to me. I was kind of shocked at the resistance that I got from other teachers. Don’t get me wrong, I’m not naïve, but the amount of resistance – I was surprised at. You look at (a regular education English teacher I worked with last year), too. I don’t think that she resisted as much as didn’t know where to go. I just thought, everybody just had this vision and we’ll all work to conform our visions and we could take it from there. I didn’t realize that some people had no clue what was going to happen – that was a little bit different. I did a research project – it was

like a three year transition – they said the entire first year, all they did was share research with their teachers they had their teachers develop a vision – what do you think our vision should be? I think that when you allow people input into the vision, you provide them with ownership. And when you provide them with ownership, they’re more invested in what they do. I think that was what was missing in our program – but I don’t think that it is too late. I think we can sit down and say; there are a lot of things that are good here, not just discipline. One of the neat things about inclusion – I go into (the regular education social studies) class and we do a lot of things – we mix it up a lot. They are excited because we do a lot of things, we do projects, for the regular kids who we tend to overlook when we talk about inclusion – it’s beneficial to them as well. I just feel like that’s been a positive. I’ve had kids say, “Wow, I like being in (the regular education social studies class) class because we are always doing a project or whatever...” Our focus is not always on the inclusion kids or just on the regular education – they are all having fun!

Interviewer: Closing

E.1.4 Calvert Area Middle School Special Education Teacher #2

Interviewer: What are your feelings about inclusion?

CAMS SE 2: I like it – there are parts of it I like and there are parts of it I don’t like. I do like it because it gets the kids involved with the regular education teachers. One of the biggest assets to it all is the kid's, the learning support

kid's, behavior. **That** has, to me is a godsend because when they are in the regular education, they don't act as goofy or misbehaving as the normally would in the regular, self-contained learning support environment. That's what I have noticed about inclusion that I like.

Interviewer: What are the drawbacks?

CAMS SE 2: Well, there's several. One, they feel that, sometimes the learning support students, they don't say it but they communicate through their facial expressions – it's too fast for them, they want it slowed. They want it slowed down. Probably another thing is feeling out of place – but in a way, that's better for them because they need that new experience. They have been accustomed to staying on one type of setting and really, in one sense it is easier in the learning support setting because we cater across the board from the lowest to the highest functioning. In regular education, it's all sustained and they maintain it (the requirements) the same for everyone. That to me is an advantage to the learning support kids – even though they don't think it at the time, but if they get a C in a hard and rewarding class – it is better than an A in an easy class – that's how I look at it. And they need that experience – that exposure.

Interviewer: What type of environment do you feel is best for the special needs kids?

CAMS SE 2: It's not bad what we have right now – of course, I believe we need to modify it and adapt it. Of course you can ask me how we do that. Sometimes I'm thinking of pulling out that may not be effective. If a kid wants to be pulled out it might be his or her reasoning, "Oh, man, I got out

of this.” Instead of, “Oh, I’m going out into a resource room where (CAMS Special Education Teacher #2) is going to help me to work.” Of course they use ploys like, “(CAMS Special Education Teacher #2), did you see that movie or hear that music.” I’m like, “No, no, don’t go there.” I know they are trying to digress as to what they should be doing. But I’m not really asking the question – what should we do – How? I had some ideas about that – pulling out – and not only just that, sometimes, not in the same room...let me get to this part...if we pulled them out or took them to the back of the room and worked one or two or three...they don’t say it, but sometimes I get this feeling that subconsciously they know (CAMS Special Education Teacher #2) is learning support and subconsciously they are thinking, “Why do I have to be the one? Sometimes what I’ll do is take one or two of the regular education with the special education. And I do some peer tutoring or peer teaching. I’ve done that in my inclusionary social studies class with three students. If I get a bright one who doesn’t think anything about it – they are very open-minded and don’t think anything about it. They are willing to help the other kids. Its personalities, how receptive are they to the environment, the instruction, the peer tutor, and if they are willing to learn. You kind of get a feel for it as the year goes on. One of the biggest things that I’ve noticed, more of a challenge is the attitude and psychological needs as opposed to the academic needs. Let me clarify that. I wish we could have a psychologist, not just our one school psychologist (who does all the

testing), but a psychologist to be able to work with these kids. Because a lot of times, it's their attitude which leads to their misbehavior that pushes them not to learn at all. They'd rather fight. It's not fighting with me personally, but they will fight with other kids because they don't want to deal with the problem at hand – whether they don't know how to read well enough they don't know how to work a problem good enough...so instead of doing it in a positive note – OK, how can I get help to do this...get one-one one instruction, they manifest it through negative behavior. Sometimes I wish we did have a psychologist so that kids like HJ – that kid's a pain in the butt, but I think she needs psychological help. She may be getting it but I don't think she's getting enough of it. It's difficult to help them when their basic needs are not being met at home.

Interviewer: Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

CAMS SE 2: It's interesting that you say that, because that is exactly it! Sometimes I think the emotional well-being is more important than the academics. The kids will fight us tooth and nail – they will daydream and think about fifty million things other than their schoolwork.

Interviewer: That's right. What do you think is your principal's interpretation of inclusion?

CAMS SE 2: It's what we are doing now. He is receptive although I've never really put it to the test. The past principal allowed us, and I know the new one would do it too. It is providing, within the framework – anything that would help the learning support students to be successful...to succeed academically,

emotionally and psychologically. I honestly believe you cannot separate those other two from the purely educational needs of the child. In this time, I think it's a whole package.

Interviewer: Do you think that we should include kids because it is mandated by law?

CAMS SE 2: No.

Interviewer: What are your reasons for inclusion?

CAMS SE 2: My reason for inclusion is so that students will be able to fit into and to function in society as a whole. Just like our mission statement says, to be able to function in a community, to be able to give to a community, if they don't learn that now, in these years, junior high or middle school, they'll go through life being selfish, non-caring, or intolerant as well as indifferent to people's needs. They will only care about their little world. I've been to a lot of places and seen a lot of different people who don't care about anything – this place does.

Interviewer: What are some of the things in this district that have been done to facilitate the change to inclusion?

CAMS SE 2: Well, one of them was our past principal, her policies and procedures. As principal, **she** had an open mind and an open heart and she was willing to effect change by listening to other people, i.e. to (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1, to another special education teacher who teaches sixth grade) and to other people besides learning support teachers – to regular education teachers to find out how we can improve our program. But in this particular case, she allowed us, whether we succeeded or failed,

she allowed us to try. That's what I liked most about her as principal. I'm not saying our current principal is that way; this is only his first year.

Interviewer: Do you think things that were put in place previously, by the last principal, have continued to be implemented?

CAMS SE 2: It has been a transition. It isn't a fallback, but maybe just a transition because the policies and procedures that were put in place are continuing to be implemented because everyone is on the same page. The programs are continually being evaluated and improved. We might be taking things slower. I honestly believe there's not a fallback, but a transition because the two principals are different people. There's always going to be some of that with the changing of the guard until the current principal gets his feet wet. Then things will start rolling again. But the good thing about it, even though from an outsiders viewpoint it may seem like it's not, but it's still going. We need to figure out where we want to head – there are so many things we can do, we just need to all understand where we want to be. We have to learn how to be successful at what we are doing.

Interviewer: How was the vision shared to move on to inclusion?

CAMS SE 2: The past principal spoke to our current principal. She talked to the special education department chairperson and so forth, the regular education teachers and the learning support teachers, and I think more verbally. I think it was always discussed and a shared vision was created. It was cooperation and a gradual change. We are all a team and we did it as a team. I truly believe that.

Interviewer: Do you think additional training on team building would help the transition?

CAMS SE 2: I don't know and here's why...because you are dealing with a lot of teachers who have individualism or autonomy and they want to do it their way or the high way and I've been exposed to many of them who I seem to clash with. They have to understand that there are different ways to do things. I'm not saying that they are not open-minded, but it seems that they have a way of doing things and they are comfortable doing it that way – it is their comfort level. If someone is not in their comfort zone, then they feel maybe threatened. Maybe that's a poor choice of words...feel uneasy because it has worked in the past and it can still work. But change isn't easy – the only thing you can count on is change and that's what we've done. That's why sometimes, our regular education teachers will nod their head in agreement but they really don't always agree with inclusion – maybe they think it slows them down, but I've seen some of the regular kids that are worse than the learning support kids. Once again, it boils down to willingness...here's where our principal can help us out. He could use a general positive tone instead of, "We have to do it this way."

Interviewer: Do you think there has been too much emphasis on, "This is the law and we have to do it," instead of saying, "This is what's right"?

CAMS SE 2: No, no, I don't think so. In general, it's not that some of them don't get it, it just that it changes their world and they don't want their world to change. But the only thing you can count on is change!

Interviewer: How do we deal with that stress involved with the change?

CAMS SE 2: Meetings don't help – people will put on their game face. I'll tell you one way maybe – you call on a few people who you know will do the program – those who are voluntarily willing to do it – where the principal tells the staff, "I'm going to back the special education department because it is good for the students to be included and it is the law. Now, it's your job to promote the program."

Interviewer: Do you have team meetings?

CAMS SE 2: Where do we find time? Some are not willing to stay.

Interviewer: What about time at in-service days?

CAMS SE 2: What would need to happen is that someone would need to be responsible. There would have to be an agenda and follow through. Someone would have to make sure things were followed through on.

Interviewer: Who should be that person who is responsible for the follow through?

CAMS SE 2: The principal. It's not that people are deliberately noncompliant, they just don't always see follow through. Sometimes (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) doesn't think she is supported by the principal. She thinks that sometimes he isn't supportive but I honestly think he is – he lets you try anything. Like I said, as long as it's legal and legitimate! But I've never put it to the test.

Interviewer: That takes us into relationship building. How do you establish those collaborative relationships?

CAMS SE 2: It boils down to trust – just because you are the authority figure doesn't mean you can't go to someone and say, "Hey, I need your input." But it boils down to trust. – Help me out here and vice versa.

As a building, I don't think we interact well with the exception of one group of people – the sixth grade teachers. It could be because of personalities – they have always impressed me because they worked as a team and made things happen. Sometimes there is jealousy because people think, "Who is (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1)?" But someone needs to take charge. I don't think we interact as well as people outside the building think. We can do better.

I do think team meetings could be effective. We just need someone to lead them in the beginning to show us how it is to be done, what is to be accomplished...someone to oversee them at the beginning. When we talk about team teaching, I think personalities play an important part. I work with (a regular education English teacher) – we get along, but I don't consider it team teaching. An example, it was so hot in class today – she wouldn't let me turn the lights out – it's her room – it's her way. It didn't bother me, but I know it is her room. I don't want to step on her toes. It's

not working out in her room. It needs to be more cooperative. I just want to get these kids to do better.

Interviewer: Do you think you have received enough training in team teaching?

CAMS SE 2: I think I need more training but I'm not sure in what. It could be very simple. I've mentioned this to (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1). You want to get to the point where you are on the same page with your team teacher. I want to establish that constant link between learning support and regular education. I think I can do that. I want to deal with practical applications like SRA that I have been researching. That's where the principal gives us the leeway to try different things that are based on research.

The preparation takes a lot of effort and is time consuming but that's what is needed for everything to take off. That's where this team effort comes into play. I see too many individualists. You need a supportive ally – at least if I help you, that's two out of six. Then we will get another one and another one. If it works and we present it to the principal, he will support us. Getting people on board is the key.

CAMS SE 2: There is one thing I want to add...this is going to be difficult for me...I know you are open-minded. I mean no harm. Our leadership here at the district must lead. I think a lot of us are wavering because it is uncharted waters. Not that we are not capable but we are not sure what to do...other than that we are doing inclusion. We are on murky waters.

Interviewer: Do you think that may have to do with the transition to a new principal?

CAMS SE 2: The principal left us and we felt lost. Now we need someone to lead us in the inclusion again. You know who felt it the most – (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1). Other teachers didn't say it directly to her but didn't listen to her because the leadership had changed. If you really want it to work, you have to be brutally honest. For it to work, for us to be successful as a team, we have to be honest; otherwise, we will not grow. We need the help of the Assistant Superintendent to make this work and the principal will make it work. Everyone grows and learns through their mistakes.

Interviewer: Is there anything you want to share that I haven't ask you?

CAMS SE 2: The support of the principal and the Assistant Superintendent is key for inclusion to be successful – we all need that.

Interviewer: Closing

E.1.5 Calvert Area Middle School – Regular Education Teacher #1

Interviewer: What are your thoughts about inclusion?

CAMS RE 1: I like inclusion. I think a lot of people are intimidated by it or don't understand the whole concept of what's behind it but personally, I've seen children that would not do well in a setting if they were put in a small group of students who were the same quality of learning style and things like that. They wouldn't do as good if they were not put in a classroom where they can see kids doing much better. They have models and they have expectations. Whereas if you would put them in a group where the kids were the same as them they would have none of that. They would not have the modeling. They would not have anything to look up to, nothing to strive for. So that's manly the reason that I think inclusion works so well.

Interviewer: Do you think inclusion is successful here in this school?

CAMS RE 1: It depends on which classroom you are in. I don't want to be a smart aleck but in here it is successful because I have people who are working with me that understand where I am going. I work with (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) and (my instructional support aide). All three of us know where we are going with this, what the purposes are. I have had people in here where it didn't work as well. It's the team and whether people are working together believe in the entire inclusion concept that is the school's concept.

Interviewer: Do you think that the people you are working with this year believe in inclusion more than those you worked with last year?

CAMS RE1: Yes. I didn't have..., like, last year, it worked. But it didn't work as well.

Interviewer: What training did you have to prepare you for inclusion?

CAMS RE1: Well, the best thing that I ever did was taking a course over the Internet. It was Lee Canter. It was on involvement strategies. I think that has been one of the major keys of my success this year as opposed to last year. I mean I understand what it takes and all that stuff. But they gave such good ideas about how to get all of the students involved, not just the kids who are normally going to do for you. I saw kids that would put their head down on the table for everybody else get good grades for me.

Phyllis Learner out of Indiana Wesleyan - she was in the videos and she worked with Lee Canter. She is phenomenal in showing how to do inclusion and showing how to get all of the students involved in what you are doing.

Another thing that helped me with this was when I was down in North Carolina; we had three things going on at the same time: year-round school, regular school and team teaching. So I was exposed to all of that and I saw that team teaching worked well – and I saw it flop.

Interviewer: When you were in North Carolina, did you receive training on team teaching?

CAMS RE1: Let me think – no. But I was trained in academically gifted and I would say that helped me with inclusion because they teach you how to get the gifted kids involved in the regular classroom because that is really the same thing. Because gifted is special education and they teach you about the special ed and the learning disabled in that program because some gifted kids are learning disabled or have special needs.

Interviewer: What type of environment do you think is best for special needs students?

CAMS RE1: Are you saying in addition to inclusion? You don't want special education kids who are always on the high end necessarily – that shouldn't be the deciding factor – you just want capable students, those who want to learn.

You don't group kids high-end verses low end – you group so they are on a similar level so they can challenge each other. When I was in North Carolina, we did Success for All; it was not the computer Success for All, but the reading Success for All. In that you are trained to put them in pairs but you put them in pairs with one kid just a little bit lower than the other one. People that are against Success for All, will say that once they get to high school, the testing won't go up. But if you think about it, you get them all reading. You have more kids testing. And your tests don't necessarily have to go up in the high school. If you get them up in the middle school, you are basically raising their reading level so the high school students are reading age-appropriate and they can be successful. If you get them in the middle school reading, at least they will be willing to

try in high school. With some of the kids, if you don't do something in that middle school area, you are going to lose them. I don't agree with the findings of that later end but that's because they are trying to dispute that later end.

Interviewer: How does your principal facilitate the inclusion process?

CAMS RE1: He does a nice job supporting you with your ideas and he will let you go where you want but I don't think he pushes anyone enough. Right now, it's, I mean, I'm not saying he's doing a bad job; I don't think some of the teachers understand. They may understand but they are not willing to work with the kids or the team teacher and he needs to push them to that point.

Interviewer: Do you think full-inclusion should be restricted or will there ever be full inclusion?

CAMS RE1: I'll tell you another issue with this whole thing. It's who is working with whom. There are too many people who don't get along with one another. I know that I have worked with people that I don't necessarily get along with. You have to find who is going to be good with whom and stick with that. You also, if you get the opportunity to hire someone, you have to make sure that person is one who is going to be able to work with others. You almost have to see it to believe it because out of the mouth it's easy.

Interviewer: Do you think the culture at the school has changed whereas students are more accepting of having the special education children in the classroom or do you think the regular education students don't want the special education students in the classrooms?

CAMS RE1: The kids that are in my class that are included, I don't think the other kids even know they are special education, I don't think they even have a clue.

I think if you have that outlook – that they are all the same and don't differentiate, they are just there – you can't make them seem different. We have quite a few who are not special education but low level – (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) and (my instructional support aide) work with them the same as the special education. Even the kids who are bright, if you give them the kind of activity, you are pushing them to their appropriate levels. You can still say, "That's nice, but I expected more out of you," – and I say stuff like that to all of the kids. I challenge them all. My student this year that I picked for the eighth grade award is an inclusion student. He did more to improve himself than anyone else.

Interviewer: How did the principal relay the vision of inclusion when this all started?

CAMS RE1: See, I think the past principal was a little bit more strict when she introduced it. She said, "Look this is the law. It doesn't matter whether you want to do it or not." I think when there was a switch, the principal said it but it wasn't as strict... "This is what we are doing." He did say, "You know you have these people in your room whether you like it or not you've got to work with them – there isn't anything we can do about it," – that kind of thing but I think you have to go beyond telling the teachers these are the people in your room and it doesn't matter if you like it or not. You have to give them some kind of guidance or ideas. I think a lot of

people are lacking – they are like, well “What do I do with them?” They lack experience – not so much years teaching, just experience being close to kids who are in special needs situations and they are used to teaching a certain way. They are thinking, “What do you want me to do with this extra person (teacher) in my room?”

Interviewer: Do you think the attitudes will change as inclusion becomes more predominant?

CAMS RE1: I think you’re always going to have teachers resist. It would be nice to say they will be for it but there will always be people against it – there will always be barriers.

Interviewer: What additional types of training do you think the teachers need?

CAMS RE1: I think that if you give them some training outside of this school and show that you are vested in it then you will have more success. The reason that I say outside of the school is, I love (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1 and another special education teacher) to death and they are doing a really great job, but they’re colleagues. Some people are not willing to listen to their colleagues. But if you throw somebody in there who is a good speaker and from somewhere else, I think they (the teachers) would be more receptive. We’ve been there and it has worked to a certain point but I think this school right now, where we are going, we need someone from the outside.

Interviewer: Do you think that the training is received best when it comes from the building level principal or central office?

CAMS RE1: I don't think it really matters – I just think it's (outside facilitators) the best way to do it. I need someone who is interesting, who seems to know what they are doing. I don't think it matters if it comes from the principal or central office, but it has to come from the administration because I don't think the rest of the faculty will take it serious unless they see administration as a whole is taking it seriously.

Interviewer: Do you think district-wide is more successful as opposed to building level?

CAMS RE1: I think district-wide would be more successful because then you're involving more buildings – more people will be on the same page. And if you get the elementary on board then those kids will be used to an inclusion setting and when they come in here they won't be shocked at what's going on.

Interviewer: Do you think the relationships between the teachers and their peers have changed because of inclusion?

CAMS RE1: Well, I think you get to see a lot more people in action and you have a clearer view of what is actually going on in your school. Personally, I would like to go into more of the classes and see what they're doing so that I would have a better idea of what is really going on. The only time I really get to do that is subbing (covering a class). You really don't know though if they are throwing something at you that they would normally do

or are they throwing garbage at you because they're not here and they're afraid you can't handle their lessons.

Interviewer: Do you believe the philosophy of inclusion has been shared by the administration?

CAMS RE1: I think that the principal and central office administration have a philosophy and they understand where we need to go and I think that some of us understand it and some of us don't.

Interviewer: How do you convey that vision?

CAMS RE1: Well, you have to start somewhere. We started it here with two teachers. And we got things going. I think the past principal did what was best to get things going. You have to start somewhere and you have to start small. The past principal affected a core and that's what you have to do when you're changing something. You can't change everyone immediately, right? You're never going to get everyone. But the past principal did affect a core of us and hopefully that core will spread.

Interviewer: Have you facilitated professional development?

CAMS RE1: A little bit – not too much. We've continued with (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) and all. We have had training in differentiated instruction and teaching of reading in the content areas through our in-service and Act 80 days.

Interviewer: How many inclusionary classes or team-teaching classes do you have?

CAMS RE1: I have two team-teaching classes.

Interviewer: Do you and the special education teacher plan cooperatively?

CAMS RE1: Yes.

Interviewer: How often do you meet?

CAMS RE1: At least once a week, we're always together. It's easy with us because we both have the same philosophy and drive.

Interviewer: How has that relationship and philosophy been with other teachers with whom you have teamed?

CAMS RE1: I worked with other teachers who didn't mesh the same. It's just you can't have somebody come into your classroom when they haven't done any planning with you and they think they are familiar with the curriculum and topics but what they do is sidebar everything. It's almost like sabotage – you learn to think you have been sabotaged.

Interviewer: Do you think your status of being highly qualified as a social studies teacher comes into play there?

CAMS RE1: That even comes into play with my special education team teacher. She'll say something and I'm like... (No, No – hand signals)...but with us planning together, I can at least give her some guidance. At the same time, she gives me a lot of ideas as to how to set things up. With the other teacher last year, it was just come in and fill in the blanks. When I happened to shut my mouth, he'd open his. Then he didn't always show up for class – he'd go somewhere else and say he was working with another student. You feel abandoned. At least if he was there, I could have him work with struggling kids. That was something where I felt I had

nowhere to go and I had too many kids in there – I felt like I wasn't getting anything done.

Interviewer: Scheduling can be an issue.

CAMS RE1: The only thing I didn't like about the way things were scheduled this year was, and this is like after, an after thought, you can't know until you do it, I thought this way too. You want them all together so that when the special education teacher is in here with me that I have the support. But what you really want to do is break them up as much as possible and keep your numbers low. And even if the special education teacher isn't in there, she can still support me with that kid.

Interviewer: If you were to estimate when you thought this building would be totally done with their transformation to inclusion, how long do you think that whole transformation would take?

CAMS RE1: To get everybody on board, the majority, I think that would be at least another two years.

Interviewer: How much do you know about Gaskins? You put neutral on your survey.

CAMS RE1: That's another thing – you know you hear the word and you know what it means on the surface. All I really know for sure is that if a child is severely disabled and the parents want the child in the regular education classroom, I don't really think you have a leg to stand on if you don't want them in there. I think that's what they said. Right?

Interviewer: It doesn't have to be that extreme. Let's say that you have a child that has cerebral palsy and the parents want that child in the regular education

room. And you make every accommodation that you can to make that child successful. But there are certain things you can't do to make that child successful – like changing a trachea or feeding the child. You personally should not be responsible for that child. If they need more than the dist can give, we can go to due process and the district can give evidence of all that they are doing.

CAMS RE1: Even if they would put the life skills kids in my classroom, I think I could do inclusion. As long as they don't throw me some kid who needs nurses and stuff like that I would have to do all that stuff. I wouldn't have to do that, would I?

Interviewer: No. The school district would have to put the necessary nurses in place. Gaskins says that the school district would have to put an aide or nurses in the classroom because it is not your responsibility – you and I are not trained to do such things.

CAMS RE1: Would the district be responsible?

Interviewer: For the most part.

CAMS RE1: I think that's an issue there. It's not affecting the teacher as much as the district. Like if you don't give the kids the opportunity ...a lot of the kids who have a disability like Downs do all right in the classroom. You don't know if you don't try.

Interviewer: If the district is doing things right, you have nothing to worry about. If the district is doing what is right for the child you are OK.

Interviewer: On your survey, you left a question blank. It states, “I do not believe the federal government should mandate changes.”

CAMS RE1: Well, if they are not mandating the changes then how are you going to have any changes? Because people don’t like change! They won’t do it unless you push the issue. If you want them to sit on their rear end and be happy the way things are, then that’s what they are going to do. But if you change the law and insist that they change, then you’re going to get some action out of it. A lot of people think that they’re doing the right thing but that doesn’t mean that they are doing the right thing. So if the law says, if it’s strong enough to make it a law, they need to be doing it.

Interviewer: Is there any additional information you’d like to share that I haven’t asked?

CAMS RE1: I think we’ve pretty much covered everything.

Interviewer: Closing

E.1.6 Calvert Area Middle School – Regular Education Teacher #2

Interviewer: How long have you been teaching in an inclusive environment?

CAMS RE2: I even had trouble trying to decide that because I thought back – I’m thinking I’ve had contact with at least support teachers for about four years.

Interviewer: And before that, the special education students were kept separated?

CAMS RE2: Right. Will the district still be in compliance even though it may take longer than we first expected?

Interviewer: Yes, you are moving in the right direction. What are your feelings about inclusion?

CAMS RE2: Well, I tried to think back to when we first started and I would get really positive feedback from three teachers in particular. Whenever I had (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) as a support teacher, or (two other special education teachers) for that first year before she went down to Life Skills, that was really a good experience because they would say to me, “Now, here’s the child’s needs and let’s talk about adaptations, and what’s required in the IEP...” I didn’t really know much about that because when you only have one course in college – it was a real learning experience for me. They made it very pleasant because they kept us on track. Each one of those teachers would have a weekly report system – that made it very easy. Their weekly reports didn’t stop there. I could count on them to contact a parent when I felt uncomfortable; perhaps they knew more background or additional information or stories to activate the parent. I could also count on them to always be available if the test needed to be read aloud or if a child had fallen behind in homework or needed additional support in a writing assignment. They would pull those kids and it was done. That was really a wonderful introduction for me because those people really did their job and went above and beyond the call of duty to make that successful for all of us and that was really a nice experience. Now from there, the next step was, I ended up getting some of the aides. That’s a very big responsibility because some of the aides are

very active and responsible for the kids. My best aide has been (an instructional support aide). (The instructional support aide) would always look up the kids in the morning and follow whatever plan (the special education teachers) would ask her to do. She would take extra time out of her schedule to do that. Then she would come to me and ask, “Is this what you wanted?” She was a wonderful go-between. But you don’t get that with every aide either and so I think the experience for other people may be a little different. But, I think for me, I had wonderful response, particularly from (the instructional support aide).

Interviewer: So would you say the combination of the people is important?

CAMS RE2: It is extremely important, extremely important. When you hear other people talking, they may say, “I’m not getting that.” So the lack of trust builds up the resentment. As the years went on, whenever I would have to seek out some of the learning support teachers to find out if this was even a learning support student in my room and that was (a special education teacher). And (this special education teacher) has never really followed up on anything I’ve ever inquired about. I’ve been very happy to see how well she worked on the 4Sight Committee. She’s a knowledgeable person. But in her capacity, I’ve never had her support me with, I’m thinking through the years, JS, with his emotional support, BE when I go right through these and I have two right now. I didn’t have an IEP – now I know that we have to be really careful about those, those are confidential. But my goodness, you really need to know – I didn’t even know if he had

adaptations. She said, “Well, he really doesn’t have many adaptations – he does so well.” SR, this year, I had two learning support kids – I had eighteen last year.

Interviewer: Who teaches the other seventh grade reading?

CAMS RE2: (A special education teacher), the kids who are not at grade level for seventh grade reading, go to her. They are not included for reading or math. They are included for science and social. SO I don’t have an aide, I don’t need an aide this year – I only have two kids.

SR is the other one. SR came to use from (another school district) and she is a little waif. She needs more support. She does not do homework. I’ve called the parent. The mother is not cooperative They keep saying they are moving out of the district – in fact they are supposed to be moving this week. She was supposedly to be home schooled for a year. It’s an ugly situation and I don’t believe enough has been done to service that child. She’s a cooperative kid but I see her one period a day and she’s gone. Her attendance has been poor and she hasn’t received much support at all. And she’s in with (a special education teacher) for other periods during the day because (the special education teacher) will say, “Well, I’ll catch her later.” Right now she has a 38% for me this nine weeks – she’s been out a lot I almost feel like this year because of those two instances, I’ve had less contact and less support from her.

Interviewer: Is that because (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) has gone to the eighth grade team?

CAMS RE2: Yes, is this a time to talk about my experiences from last year?

Interviewer: Yes, go ahead.

CAMS RE2: I was really nervous – I even wrote to you about that. I was really nervous when we had an influx of nine kids into period nine last year. (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) came along with them and I ended up with twelve IEPs in there. I had two gifted kids. I had another learning support – I ended up with nine more. I didn't know if I could manage that many IEPs with all the adaptations. Some people had adaptations for writing, some had to have the test read to them, some people needed additional time, and some people had to have fewer responses on the test. There were so many adaptations that I was overwhelmed. I shouldn't have been because I should have had more confidence because of my previous experience with (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1). (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) really came in and went the extra mile. She did not take over my class. She did not direct my lesson plans. But she was a wonderful person for input. She came weekly for planning for that class. She taught it at least once or twice a week. And when she wasn't teaching, she wasn't just sitting in the back of the room. She came on time and she sat with the kids – she would rotate among them because in a cooperative setting it was nice that I could put one of those kids at each of the teams. She kept that whole thing up and running and it was a very enlightening

experience. (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) said that she really saw a big difference in the second half of the year with almost all of the kids because they could bring their strengths to the team setting. After I had written to you about how well it was going and when (the superintendent) came – I had no idea – he actually showed up at the door – I said to him, “You know, we’re opening with these five discussion points today.” I said, “We’re on discussion point two. I want you to stand here and see if you can pick out the kids with IEPs.” And he only picked out two – I think that’s absolutely amazing. It was the best possible scenario for me to say, “Look what happens when we put our kids in the least restrictive environment. Look what we can do. Look how they are blooming. Look how they can bring their oral skills – maybe they can’t write a response. But it doesn’t mean that they are not logical thinkers that they can’t analyze, that you can’t go through task analysis with them and break things down and see them improve. It helped the regular education kids because some of the regular it kids loved being a mentor. It helped them understand that these kids are not stupid because that stigma is lifted. They gained respect for these kids. Even the lowest kids I was amazed, when you give them a chance, what they are able to do. Now, (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) helped also in correcting their tests because I would go to her expertise and say, “Now I need you to look at this – this isn’t standard English, this is not employing all the conventions for the regular seventh grade – but (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1), what

is this looking like for improvement? What do you see happening here?”

And she would help me adapt the grading scale. That was a big help for me because I didn’t want to just give fake grades. That’s happening in some classes right now and I think that’s disappointing because I don’t think that’s servicing the kids either. We have some teachers now who give them C’s regardless. If they get a very, very low grade – I know we don’t just want to fail kids who are trying – but what about the learning support kids that really are earning on their own, a B, Should they get the C just because they are learning support? No. How are you going to show kids coming from learning support classes into the regular class that if you really work, you can make it?

Interviewer: How do you think we can change that?

CAMS RE2: Well, I’ve been thinking about that a lot too. Even the people who are around me, the people I see in my department the reading department, plus other people that we run into – and being on 4Sight has been real interesting this year. I think a lot of it – I think it’s funny you mention preparation – I don’t think we were really prepared enough. It’s one thing to know the legislation, but think that we have not tapped the moral obligation that our teachers should have to every individual child. We are just looking at it as a legal matter. Rather than saying, “If this were your child, what would you want for your child in the educational experience?” I really believe, when we look at our staff, even the grumpy people, I think that at some point they had a pure motive for going in. I don’t think they

all just wanted a summer off. And through these three years of teaching or getting into a rut – we don't always access that – it's not always available to us. And so, in the preparation, now that we know where the legalities are, I think we need to do more to talk about team building and ownership in it because our regular education teachers do not feel they own this. They feel it is a restriction that was imposed upon them – not everyone, but I think the overlying response really is, "This is a pain in my butt. SO I'm just going to let them worry about this." Even when I was getting ready for 4Sight this year, when I was a on the committee, I said, "I really think we need to have some humor in this and talk to people about honestly, when are you going to worry about our PSSA scores. And along with that, "Are you going to worry about this when pigs fly? When hell freezes over? ...and people were laughing and we said, you know when Mellow doesn't go through – I'm not going to retire – I guess I have to worry about this. They really need to think about that because it's the same with inclusion – we do need to worry about this now and it's a moral obligation rather just a part of the law. If we have more team building and ownership in it, maybe we can have more enthusiasm for the program. I really have been disappointed, not in (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) and (a regular education English teacher's) presentations, but we had not enough variety in our in-services this year. Just to always keep putting out these strategies for whatever; in this case it happened to be they learned it in their course, redesigning our instruction. I think it's really

important but our attendance was so low – the moral is sort of down right now. It was sort of disappointing to see how many people were out of the middle school on in-service days. They just sort of blow that off. I don't know if it can be done through departments, but there are some people having negative experiences with a couple of the people on the learning support staff and that's – that drives some of the attitudes down as well. When some people are not showing up like the learning support staff cannot think, "Whoopee, I don't have to do any planning anymore, I just have to sit in the room." We've got a couple people that think that way. How do you change that? Is that something that administration – you don't have enough time – you've been in that position where you were the assistant principal or the principal, do you have enough time to go running around to see if everybody is where they are supposed to be?

Where's our own integrity to this? Then you get a few more negative things turning up from that. That was even bad last year and this year.

Interviewer: Is there trust amongst the teams?

CAMS RE2: The trust is not there right now. You know, it's been wonderful even working with (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #1) in eighth grade and I talked to her – she's a wonderful advocate for kids. She has worked very hard to be more organized and be the teacher that the district wants her to be. She and (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) – there's another team thing there. Not everyone wants (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) in

the room and that's a shame because we don't want to give up ownership. (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) is not about that anyway. If someone sees (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) in that role, they are not giving her a chance to bring in her expertise. She is not a person to grandstand or take over.

CAMS RE2: You know what else; we don't have grade level meetings. We used to. How am I going to respect what a person is doing if I don't really know what they are doing? Wouldn't it be nice if I knew what someone else was doing and tried to build upon that? (A regular education English teacher) and I actually tried this year to share vocabulary lists. Even that made a difference because this year we had every seventh grader which has never happened before. When kids would say, "We're learning that in English." Then they would say to her, "That's what (CAMS Regular Education Teacher #2) is talking about." I'd think, "Hello, that is what we are supposed to be doing, but we've never done that before." It is really important. It would be a place where you could work out some of those gripes. You could give suggestions.

Interviewer: How do you think that could be successful?

CAMS RE2: Wouldn't that be done at In-Service where you had a leader who could maybe do a team building activity to lead that. The team building activity, then steer clear of a gripe session, because that's nonproductive – heck, we do that in class all the time. SO can't we as professionals find time or a general worksheet where we follow a worksheet and have a final result in

the end? We have done that in the past where you turn in a worksheet at the end. It takes a sensitive person to lead something like that – you have to know where the landmines are. You don't want that to blow up in your face. You know how they say; an expert is someone who travels fifty miles to give you a speech? We use our staff – I don't ever want to give you the impression that they are not capable, but sometimes we need outside people.

There has been heated discussion even in the sessions. It's like there is animosity that has come up. I told the people who I usually sit with that I can't sit in the front anymore. If I hear (a high school English teacher) complain one more time that she can't give a student a pencil. I think, what's your job here, your mission, just to make sure that they have a pencil? It's the same thing that comes up every time. How do these facilitators handle these grips time after time? I'll tell you what; (CAMS Special Education Teacher #1) was more patient than I ever would be. It was always about those little things – bringing a book – I don't know how many times you can say it.

Back to the grade level meetings, if we had something designed where we shared the good news – we could share the successes of working in a cooperative group, like this is what we've learned. Don't you think that they would at least try?

Interviewer: In order to make the grade level meetings productive, it would have to be the same kind of approach as the departmental meetings, they have to be put into the calendar. People have to be required to go.

CAMS RE2: Subconsciously, people think it must be pretty important because it is in the calendar.

Interviewer: Do you want to continue department level meetings and grade level meetings?

CAMS RE2: What about even once every nine weeks and do a planning for the nine-weeks? We are so disconnected. The only other seventh grade teacher I see is (a seventh grade regular education teacher). (A regular education math teacher) is down the hall, but because she teaches seventh and eighth grade classes, we rarely see each other.

Interviewer: How was the vision of inclusion shared?

CAMS RE2: I'm trying to think back. It came first, the idea of inclusion for me, understanding what was being presented at In-Services. And then certainly, it was always positively enforced by the principal. I always thought it was a natural progression, I never thought it was a big leap and I didn't feel pressured either. We didn't really all of a sudden go into a different mode. Those little steps going into the reports, having more input from the learning support teacher, understanding the requirements, that was done at Faculty Meetings. Then always checking up on how the progress was – I remember a lot of updates and understanding. Even when the special education department chairperson gave an after school session

– that one whole year we spent, understanding structure and the implications of an IEP. Clear guidelines, what our role as a regular education teacher what our role was. It was so gradual; I can't really put a timeline to it. I can actually say I remember the In-Services, the administrative discussions, the seven and a half hours was an important time – when we gathered together to discuss inclusion.

Interviewer: Has there been follow-through?

CAMS RE2: Since I've had so few students this year, it's really hard for me to gauge that. I'm not having success. I have informed the principal of the one special education teacher I work with. She has refused to go to reading meetings. She never did go to one. She went to the learning support meetings. But isn't this amazing – the other special education teacher who teaches reading came to every meeting, the sixth grade special education teacher came to every meeting, the eighth grade special education teacher came to every meeting but one. So there was no chance for continuity there either as far as input from the learning support people and what they are doing either separately or in the content areas.

CAMS RE2: I like that our principal is straight-forward. Some are annoyed that he is so blunt with things, but I like his style. He has done a really good job this year. The first year is the hardest, sometimes it's like flying by the seat of your pants, but he is really trying and has done well.

Interviewer: What do you think about the relationship between the faculty and the administration regarding inclusion?

CAMS RE2: I had a very hard time even answering that question on the survey. I know how I feel about it. The people that I admire who teach around me, I know that they are on board and will go the extra mile, but I don't think overall that it is really accepted or that people are making an effort. I think a lot of it is done in name only so that it looks good on paper. It pains me to say that.

Interviewer: Maybe that is a place to start to fix it.

CAMS RE2: And maybe that's part of the change, whether it's a church or another organization in business or if it's in education, change brings out the adventure in some people and it brings out the "digging in of the heels" in some personalities.

Interviewer: What do you think it's going to take administratively, on behalf of the principal, to make inclusion successful?

CAMS RE2: Well, I don't think just having a heavy-handed approach works. I think that they need to be more visible to any learning support teacher that has not been in the right place at the right time so that we eliminate that problem. Also, visiting classrooms – dropping in more often. Now, how you free up that time, I don't know. Because, I know that they are not just sitting in their offices having a doughnut. There are days the assistant principal looks like she is frazzled at the end of the day because of all the junk that comes up. I don't know that we have enough administrative manpower to really pull that off – or whether the department chairperson

could assume some of that responsibility. I know that contractually there's a problem there with the union duty so maybe that's not a possibility.

Maybe we need to even administratively find a way to drop names, say student's names over the PA system...I think it's important to acknowledge publicly the accomplishments of different teachers – that you spread it – say what kids are doing. The computer teacher put pictures of the 4.0 students and framed them – that is raising the academic awareness. They are going to put them in the trophy case. Aren't those the kinds of positive things we want administration to notice – the kids notice it – so that at every level it infiltrates down. So many times as an administrator, there are so many things that you have to try and correct, maybe taking a more positive approach would be helpful. We could even have positive local news on the morning television program.

Interviewer: We've talked about the building and the support, how do you think administratively the change in culture could be facilitated?

CAMS RE2: Let me just ask something that's connected vaguely to this but it will tell you where I'm coming from. Is the district moving at all to teachers having to include in their evaluations a professional portfolio?

Interviewer: The state requires non-tenured teachers to complete a portfolio.

CAMS RE2: Now I want to tell you why I bring this up. A neighboring school district went to it last year. This is their second year requiring it. It has to be presented at your conference on your observation. When my husband

started his, I said, “I’m going to start mine because we’re going to have to do this sometime.” You know what; it was a learning experience for me. I was really glad that I now have a professional portfolio. It really does give you a chance to, not that I’ve taught forever, because I’ve already told you I’ve taught fifteen years, I actually made it during my fourteenth year. It gave me a chance to re-examine and sort of tie back to my original thirst to be a teacher. I think everybody needs that time for self-evaluation.

I remember griping whenever the contract went through and how we don’t value teachers for having a master’s and they have to wait an extra year – I think that is detrimental to our district. I think that we are not valuing and getting people to get a master’s in their field and so they are not having to take those extra courses and not having the exposure to people who are helping you build your pride and the program you do. I think that really tears us down and I think that when I was griping that year, it almost made me sour on my own position. I had to have my own affinity to get over that. I could feel myself slipping into that, “Let’s just get it over, come to work and get your paycheck.” I had to work hard to get passed that. I promised myself that when I was to that point I would quit, but because of that portfolio and seeing how much more there is to be done I haven’t done it all yet. It gave me a chance to be excited again. And I think there are a lot of people here in that same sort of boat. They’re in a rut. There’s not a chance for self-evaluation there’s not a requirement to do it – you

know examine your life...that's sort of a hard position to be in. I've grown to really like (the seventh grade social studies teachers). I think he's an intelligent man. I think he's a good coach but it really saddens me that he's that bright and won't take one step to be a great teacher. I believe he could be a great teacher. He does so little but I think that (the seventh grade social studies teacher) could be accessed to get on board if he felt a team mentality. I think he feels isolated in a way – whether that's self-imposed or whatever. How do you take an intelligent man who has a passion for a sport who can apply that whole team approach to learning? We're not talking about taking a million courses. We're not talking about doing a whole lot. What do you do? Just think how that would affect the kids because they all respect him. I wrote him a letter after I went to the final game this year. I said to him, "In all honesty, you reach kids I could never reach. You have a responsibility to them." I really meant that, but I didn't mean just on the court. You know, he hugged me – he came and hugged me. I thought, "Now there's much more to this man than just being an Italian King in his grandmother's castle." We have such a challenge here because we have so many talented teachers but we are not utilized yet. How can we do this? We need to somehow get someone who is going to bring us together. I think that the superintendent's speech at the beginning of the year did a lot to refocus me. I was really impressed. I can still remember some of the phrases she said. I love the people I work with – with the exception of just a few people – how many people can say that?

With all we have, I think that we can be the district we have that vision for.

Interviewer: Closing

E.2 NEWPORT AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

E.2.1 Newport Area Middle School – Principal

Interviewer: What are your feelings about inclusion?

NAMS Principal: I think inclusion can be very positive if it's done in collaborations with the two teachers in the room. In our middle school, I have a content teacher and a special education teacher within an inclusion setting. In inclusion setting, let's say we have 25 kids to a room; we can fill the room with probably 8 – 10 special needs students. So I think if they team teach, and they approach it in the same philosophy and outlook for the students, I think it's productive for those students. I think if the two teachers aren't on the same page, I think it's not as productive as its set up to be. If they just push the inclusionary teacher to the side maybe, or make her just check papers or say, "Hey this is my room..." you know if they feel it is some sort of invasion, then it's not as productive for the students. They're not getting the approach.

Interviewer: Are there any particular types of disabilities that should or should not be included? What is your philosophy on that?

NAMS Principal: I think that I have – my mainstreamed students are very capable. I have not encountered, at least in the five years that I've been here, somebody that is so low functioning, that inclusionary has not been beneficiary. My only example that I can think of – even in technology education, tech ed, there are some students with large motor skill manipulation. We would always – the teachers would work well together. They would always pull together to come up with an alternative project. Because I was fearful for the power tools - But in an academic setting, with academic needs and learning, without manipulation, I don't think we've encountered a student. If we do, I really think, our teachers would be perplexed to come up with an alternative plan. They're very caring that way. Most of my unified arts, even an art teacher, a student was color blind and she (the teacher) was more worried than the special ed teacher about how can I give this child something. So I think that's a sense of, "Wow, this must be connecting. How can I teach this child something?" Not that she didn't make the flowerpot, or ceramic pot. How can I teach this child something? Maybe if they can't do a color wheel, maybe they can do something else.

Interviewer: What would you say if the number of students who are included?

NAMS Principal: In the building, I have 900 children. 110 are special needs. Inclusionary is probably, I'd say, 50%.

Interviewer: Is there any particular course that they are always included in or never included in?

NAMS Principal: They are always included in Language Arts and social studies. We have pullout for math and science. They have inclusionary for science, I apologize. Their math is not inclusionary. One that is a tough spot, maybe it's unique to the middle, or our school, but it has always been a problem that we can't understand is health. We do health in grades six, seven and eight. I'm sorry, sixth and eighth and a half year in seventh. Our health teachers and our inclusion teachers – they need to work together. They are not passing with successful grades. They are teaching circulatory system, the nervous system, and the skeletal system – high-level things. Guess what guys, let's draw a picture of the body and trace it. They are not getting the big words and that's really bothering, that's troublesome. That is something I'm working on fixing. Inclusionary health is the trouble spot.

Interviewer: That's interesting.

NAMS Principal: It is and it drives me nuts. It is bizarre because health should be fun and about being healthy – let's not smoke, how do you eat healthy, healthy, nutrition, lifestyle, and movement. And they're getting very in depth. And that's what my health teachers think they need. Well, right now, we have obesity on the rise – we need to learn how to walk – daily walking, daily eating, not to take three helpings of fries in the cafeteria. I think they think I'm trying to water it down and they get upset with me. I explain that I want the students to have lifelong healthy habits, I want them to be health, I want them to be alive by the time they are 18. So we have two different

perspectives on our health. I think our health is just too high. I don't think those inclusionary kids are getting anything out of it. And I think sometimes – I have six health and phys ed teachers – and I think the determination for them to teach them the systems.

Interviewer: How many special education teachers do you have?

NAMS Principal: I have 13 special education teachers.

Interviewer: Do you have other classes like life skills?

NAMS Principal: Yes, I do have life skills, autistic support and emotional support.

Interviewer: Are they included as well?

NAMS Principal: Um, yes they are included. They are all included – I'll tell you what, most are included except life skills. Even my health – sometimes it's not on the board so to speak, but I'll have a health teacher visit their room and work with them. I only had one handicap that was a wheelchair student that was in total, full inclusion. Next year is my first experience. We are going to have a girl who is in sixth grade that is progressively going blind. It is going to be a challenge for all of us. In the high school we have blind students, but it's going to really be – we are going to put it to the test. We'll try it – we'll put her in some inclusionary and if she has problems, we'll have someone come in. The specialist is going to have to learn Braille. It is trying and heartfelt. That will be an experience.

We had two deaf students who transferred from Ohio and the parents thought they should go to a special school. I told them, "We can handle it

– just try it.” They were shocked. I’m more one to keep them and not send them out until the very end. We have some children who are alternative (alternative education) – I tell them, let’s try.

Interviewer: Tell me about some of the things you have done to promote inclusion in your building.

NAMS Principal: We have conducted workshops presentations with the special education department and a few different content areas. Let’s say social studies or language arts or science. So that they can see – “Hey, these are some inclusionary practices that I can use in my classroom.” I work with my special education director to try to come up with some new ideas that help the teachers become excited and encouraged so that they are not overwhelmed. Because if it’s accepted well, then the students will benefit. If you don’t have a teacher who is for it, then they are not going to sell it to the students as being beneficial from my perspective. We try to encourage them to be creative. Not inclusionary fits every teacher and every special education teacher. If you and I were in that capacity – how are we going to best benefit the student by teaching these standards in science and maybe another pair does it by a totally different approach in social studies. But as long as those two team teachers work together, it is successful. I think something I’ve always tried to do is sit back and try to match the teachers. For each team, I have one special education teacher assigned to the team. If I’m creative enough, matching personalities with their strengths and weaknesses, then I can get a better blend in the

classroom. It doesn't always happen. Maybe I have – I know I have one person who is so close minded, he treats his spec ed teacher like an aide – this is my room, these are my overheads, this is the way I've done it for thirty years. That's when I have to go and talk to him and explain that it's not done that way and offer support. You have to give it a chance, I'm not telling you you're going to love it, but you have to give it a chance. Those children need to be successful. One of our obstacles, I think here, is some of our veteran staff. If that kid didn't pass then he (the student) didn't do well. They are not of the mindset that all children can be successful. I have a few teachers who almost, this is going to sound horrible, who pride themselves on the number of students who have failed. That just breaks my heart because, you know what, you really failed them. They are the ones who are going to be adults someday. They are going to take care of us someday, and they are going to take care of you! That's the way I look at it. I love the children. I'm the one who is tough on discipline – I suspend them. But those kids don't act like that for us (the administration). When you think about the bigger picture, it's about treating them with kindness. Some of my worst kids are the ones I would take home. If I don't help them, they are only going to learn that hatred.

Interviewer: Were they already doing inclusion before you came here?

NAMS Principal: Yes. I just kept the process going. I want to say in 2000, I think it got very active – that is when I was in the high school. We have just kept encouraging them to be creative. Some teachers would probably be happy

if I said just forget it. Trying to get them to buy into the state – the old days of send off the special education kids into a separate wing are long gone. Now the location of the rooms – they have the best rooms in the building the money is no object, assistive technology and what not. Those are the children though that are most rewarding and that flourish in the inclusive environment. If some of our children didn't have inclusion, I don't think they'd connect. Some of our inclusionary teachers – they help the students who are the A students. I think it really gives some of those A students, the ones who have to get an A, a different perspective on life because everything has been great for them. They've worked hard and they've earned it but they see, Wow, there are other people who are not as functional as I am or have the gift that I have. Sometimes that human factor is what I like most. They are caring and loving to the other students. I'm not saying they are never cruel – they are learning not to be cruel and to be accepting.

Interviewer: Do you think that Gaskins and federally mandated changes have helped or hindered the change to inclusion?

NAMS Principal: I think they have helped. They scare teachers. When they first hear that (the Gaskin's case) they are fearful. I think it's the fear of what happened. They think I could have done that or someone could have taken me to court. But I look at the teachers like a pizza pie. If you just look at the tip, you get a narrow view. Some people came into teaching because of summers off, some for the paycheck, some for the love of children. That's

where you get to the crust of the pizza – when you see the bigger picture and the implications.

Interviewer: How do you facilitate the change process?

NAMS Principal: Change is inevitable but if you don't change and learn and grow, why do you come to work everyday. One of my big speeches – some people love it and some people hate it is, "Do you like children because you're beating them up here everyday? Because if you don't like children – maybe it's time for you to go. Now that can be someone who has been here three years, ten years, or thirty years. Maybe it's time for you to look in the mirror. You're not a nice person. Do you like children? That's a tough conversation because they think you are righteous and you're here to get rid of them. No, do you like children? You can work with computers or something - you're a very intelligent person. Maybe you can work in a bank and go work with money – maybe working with children is not the career for you. If you are not going to focus on the child, what good are you doing here? Who cares if I can lecture about Shakespeare if I don't like children, if we can't relate? You have to like all children, not only the girl with the bow and the beautiful white dress and the Baby Gap clothes. Everybody is someone child. My perspective changed when I had our daughter. I want people to be kind to her.

Interviewer: When you designate your teams, do they come to shared values or rules?

NAMS Principal: Some teams decide and submit their ideas to me. In the summer, I review it and share my ideas.

Interviewer: As you change from a self contained environment to an inclusionary environment, what are some of the things you have done or plan to do to facilitate that process?

NAMS Principal: I think getting into those rooms to supervise a little is important. It is important to observe and watch what's happening to see what I can do to implement this whole positive change. To do some talking with both teachers – I don't want to say survey – but get in and have some open dialogue to see what is working see how we can shape it to see how it benefits the children not to just say we've done it on paper. Talking to the kids, that's a big part of it – the kids will tell you. Are you learning anything? What's going on in there? The kids will say, "You know we sit there and check papers." Then maybe, "Come visit my room!" I'm like great! Come see what we're doing. To me that's a sign that things are ok.

Interviewer: Do you schedule the kids? How do you go about scheduling the inclusion students?

NAMS Principal: I go through it with my guidance department. We divvy up the department. Then I actually look at the sections. The last two years, some of our, let's say problematic children who are reading below grade level. We also use PSSA data. We are trying to look at the basic and below basic and trying to group them. I've changed the basic reading and I've grown with the children each year. I've grouped a person each year and put it up for bid. (The teacher's union is strong. Positions must be posted each year. Teachers are able to bid on their positions.) Trying to keep the children on

different teams and keeps that progression going – I try to match them with the teacher who will help them the most. Sometimes at an IEP meeting, I feel I side with the parent. For example, why is he still reading so far below grade level? What data can you give me to support his progress? Scheduling and trying to look at the groups we have is important. One of the goals I have for the teachers, like for the eighth grade, is to prepare the students for high school. It is important to show what they are learning.

Interviewer: Would you say that, the special education teachers, the regular education teachers and the administration, because of the transition to inclusion, there is more of a collaborative relationship?

NAMS Principal: I'd say yes.

Interviewer: And how was that developed?

NAMS Principal: I think over time with dialogue between all three parties. Just to gauge how are we doing, how are we not doing? And then even crossing that bridge, when maybe the union says, "This is not working, or why don't we have this here?" Well this is why we don't. I think we've bridged different objectives where we don't agree and discuss how we can make it better. Not just because a certain teacher wants to have the low group in seventh grade or because people position themselves like, I'm a stick in the mud – how do we grow with the child. That's the more important goal. I think the three of us work together – it's not just we assign them and say just do it –

that builds resentment. Then that resentment is just alive and they will take it out on the kids, I think.

Interviewer: Would you say that the majority of the staff in your building is supportive of inclusion?

NAMS Principal: I would say yes. Of course, I have some complainers, but the majority is supportive.

Interviewer: So with the inclusion, is there a shared value to promote student achievement?

NAMS Principal: Yes, yes there is. And I think by promoting student achievement they're (the teachers) aware of those student's ability levels with regards to their IEPs and benchmarks and how do we show progress. I think myself and the special education department subject leader have drilled that in – read the IEP – let me say that again, read the IEP. You're responsible to know where they are, where they need to be and where they should come out. They may not hit that, but we need to show some progression. How do you show learning? It's hard on paper. But you need to show progression. What have you done to help? I think keeping in mind all of those benchmarks and goals, their pre and posttests – how are we getting the data. Right now we are in the very early stages, but we are trying to learn to use the data. What does it mean to them? How does this help you? I'm learning too. I value the child – to me that PSSA is a snapshot data. I don't think I put such high emphasis on it as I do that we are learning together. How can we use that data in the classroom?

Interviewer: If you were to leave this school district, do you think inclusion would stay?

NAMS Principal: Oh, yes. I think it is a practice that they are trying to improve upon. I think they are just trying to embrace it and incorporate it each year with a new approach. I don't know how we would make those children successful without inclusion. I think they would miss –

Interviewer: Who do you think is the driving force behind inclusion in this school district?

NAMS Principal: The Director of Special Ed along with the subject leaders in the building and the principals at each building working with them facilitating and supporting the process.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you can think of that has attributed to the success of the program or challenges that you have faced?

NAMS Principal: I think that the special education department leader is a key element. They can change yearly. I think that person has to be a strong leader in inclusionary practices because they will have 13 – 14 men and women to lead.

Interviewer: Since you have been here, how many special education teachers have you had to work with?

NAMS Principal: I've had three. The new one put in unopposed so she got it. Sometimes it is a constant battle – depending on the person who is the department head.

Interviewer: Closing

E.2.2 Newport Area Middle School – Special Education Teacher #1 and Regular Education Teacher #1

Interviewer: How long has your school district been including special education students in the regular education classroom?

NAMS SE 1: About seven or eight years.

Interviewer: How was that vision shared with the faculty?

NAMS SE 1: If I recall, it wasn't any ...

NAMS RE 1: Was it (a previous principal)?

NAMS SE 1: It was (a previous principal). We've gone through about four principals, five principals, since that time. He was the principal at that time. Before that, we were just special education teachers. Everything was self-contained. We were just sort of out there on our own. We weren't put on any teams. When the middle school went on teams, it was just me with other special education teachers. We were just kind of separate. Seven or eight years ago they did put it into place. They didn't put us on the team. Now instead of just meeting with other special education teachers, we meet with the regular education teachers daily.

Interviewer: Daily?

NAMS SE 1: Yes, we have a team meeting every day. And actually, it's more as part of the school. We were always part of the faculty but now we are more together. The other students on the team get to know us more because otherwise, we'd just have contact with the support students in our small

five to ten classes. But now we are out there more – which I think also helped the kids who were in our classes, kind of remove that stigma of being in special education. You know, they're in this room less; no one knows who I am because they never see me throughout the day. But now that I'm on the team, it helps.

Interviewer: So do you team-teach?

NAMS RE 1: We do inclusion with social studies and science and I'm the social studies teacher that he comes in with.

NAMS SE 1: One period.

NAMS RE 1: One period a day.

NAMS SE 1: I do another class period with another teacher for science, one period a day. Those would be the two classes where we have the inclusion.

Language Arts, math – we still have support and pull out classes for. We don't have an inclusion setting for those two classes.

Interviewer: Do you think you'll ever go that route?

NAMS SE 1: Probably, but it all comes down to staffing.

NAMS RE 1: And everything... physical space.

NAMS SE 1: Like math I think especially would be very helpful we'd have instructional assistance and help in there and I think it's been good, but it's nothing consistent. It just kind of worked out that way.

NAMS RE 1: My one math class, it worked out that way. So when she can, she comes around and helps. So I had seven of them in there and now we're down to five. But that, when she's not there, it's a big difference. Because, it's a

small class, but without the extra pair its difficult. Like when I say get the book out, open to page..., where's your homework...that kind of thing – so she's a big, big help, but it's not all the time.

Interviewer: How long has your principal been at this school?

NAMS RE 1: Third year.

NAMS SE 1: Yes, this year.

Interviewer: So, you were already including at that point?

NAMS RE 1: It started out in sixth grade, and then they moved it up to seventh and eighth.

NAMS SE 1: When they started, they first did it in sixth, then they moved it to seventh then they moved it to eights. So that First group went the whole way through. They didn't do it school wide to start, they did one grade at a time and added one each year.

Interviewer: Have the teachers received training on inclusive practices?

NAMS SE 1: Very little.

NAMS RE 1: Very little.

NAMS SE 1: That's one of the frustrating things.

NAMS RE 1: This is my first year doing inclusion and thank goodness he's (NAMS SE #1, her team teacher) as good as he is as good as he is...because... this is my first year. I've taught Language Arts before and this year I'm teaching math and social studies. So...we trade inclusion class – they rotate them every year.

NAMS SE 1: Next year she won't have them. The other teacher who teaches social studies will.

Interviewer: How many students are in your school?

NAMS RE 1: 903

NAMS SE 1: 903, plus.

Interviewer: How many special education students are there?

NAMS SE 1: 40 – 50 per grade level. There are three teams in each grade level. Each team has a support teacher on it. Those teachers have anywhere from 10 to 15 kids. We try to make that as equal as possible amongst the teams. This district has put a lot in our contract in regards to special education teachers that most districts do not.

Interviewer: What does it say?

NAMS SE 1: For the support classes, the pull out classes, we have class size limits like twelve in there. For a regular education class without any support – if there's not a support teacher in there, like it's not an inclusion class, it's like her math class they can't start the year with more than five support kids in it – it can go up to seven as the year goes on. Is that correct?

NAMS RE 1: Yes, but I thought it was higher than that because I should have had somebody.

NAMS SE 1: You should have had somebody.

NAMS RE 1: I had seven to start.

NAMS SE 1: You started with five but you added two that got identified.

NAMS RE 1: Right – that were added to the list.

NAMS SE 1: Right, so they can't – if they would try to put an eighth kid in there, another support kid, they would have to put a support teacher in there.

Interviewer: How long has that been in your contract?

NAMS SE 1: Initially, it was just a solid number of five, no more than five. That was five or six years ago now. We just got a new contract and they upped the numbers. But originally, it was no more than ten in a support class and no more than five (special education students) in a regular education class. Then they did up it slightly with our contract we got this year. Most school districts don't have anything like that.

Interviewer: Does your school district have a policy in regard to inclusion?

NAMS SE 1: I don't think it's anything set in stone. It's based on the individual kid and their IEP team and it's their decision. I mean, the sixth grade, when we get our kids from fifth, most all of the kids are put in inclusion – we don't know them that well. So they're either in a regular education science or they are in inclusion. We always at least start we put them all in there because we don't know what we are getting it's a regular ed class, they are doing all the same stuff with just adaptations but as they move to seventh and eighth – the kids who are doing best they usually move out of the inclusion setting and are just in the regular ed room.

Interviewer: Still with backup support?

NAMS SE 1: Still with support, but not with a teacher in the room. They still have it (inclusionary support) for those who are not as high functioning after sixth grade. Higher functioning kids just go into a regular education class.

Interviewer: When you're in the classrooms working in the inclusionary environment, is a team-teaching scenario or is it a support scenario?

NAMS SE 1: It isn't really set for the school – it's just kind of each individual and how they work it out. Since I've been doing it, I've been more support. I'm fine with that. You know, science and social studies, the regular classroom teacher knows a lot more about those subjects so I have no problem with that – just sit back and helping the students. There are teachers that find it tough. They don't like just being a helper so some do the team-teaching approach but it depends on the personalities. Some people can't help not being in charge.

NAMS RE 1: Of course, I always say, "You want to step up, you can step up." We have fun. Sometimes we banter back and forth and the kids enjoy it.

Interviewer: As you started to include more and more students, what are some of the things that the district did to help facilitate that process, the district or the principal?

NAMS SE 1: We really have not had a lot of in-service on it. Speakers, early on, but there really has not been anything since that time. It has gotten better just based on our experiences, I guess. Particularly on what works and what doesn't – it's really just trial and error. You know, it's obvious, if you have been working with a certain teacher for a few years then, like the science teacher I'm working with – we have been together three or four years now – and we do well. But there really has not been a lot of focus during in-service on focusing on inclusion training.

NAMS RE 1: At one time, way back, everybody had to take ADAPT training to learn how to adapt tests and so. That was real important and everybody had to take it. I depend on the support teacher to know how to do something or how to grade it differently. It (the training) was so far back I really don't remember it.

NAMS SE 1: They had started, just earlier this year and I think it's still being talked about for next year too – as far as differentiating instruction. They've talked about that but once again there hasn't been a whole lot of training or anything.

Interviewer: How many professional development days do you have built into your calendar?

NAMS RE 1: Eleven.

Interviewer: How are the days designated?

NAMS SE 1: We only have two or three for clerical.

NAMS RE 1: Some of it is useless. Some of the times they give you choices but they're not always the best choices. Everybody has to go someplace in the morning and somewhere else in the afternoon and that's so difficult. You can't hit them all.

NAMS SE 1: A lot of the time is spent on textbook adoptions and curriculum. There really has not been much done on inclusion.

Interviewer: Do you think the teachers would be receptive and additional training beneficial?

NAMS SE 1: Yes, but it depends on how they do it. If it's just somebody up there talking to us – no.

NAMS RE 1: Well, even to go observe and see how other people do it would be nice.

NAMS SE 1: To look at other models.

NAMS RE 1: Right, because all we know is what we do.

NAMS SE 1: Right

NAMS RE 1: We never get a chance to go out and see what other people are doing. If we could visit other places, then we could bring it back.

NAMS SE 1: In a lot of cases, too, you know they did this in-service six or seven years ago and a lot of those teachers are gone. I know in the special education department, there has been a lot of turnover too. It would be good if they did review it and go over it all again.

Interviewer: In the survey you completed for me, I had mentioned the Gaskins case. The Gaskins case is about a Down syndrome boy who wanted to be included in the regular education program instead of being in a placement or a self-contained classroom. His parents sued the district and the state and won. Now Pennsylvania school districts are required to place the child in the regular education classroom to the greatest extent possible. Do you think that the settlement will have an impact here?

NAMS SE 1: It already has to a certain extent. Inclusion works for the majority of our students but there is always that group that doesn't really fit in there are a couple – two, three. It's just not the best place for them. But we cannot get the support classes for science and social studies. They just won't go for it.

Interviewer: The administration?

NAMS SE 1: Yes. It also comes down to staffing – you know having the teachers to teach it. That's part of all of it – they are trying to keep our number of students in the pullout down so that when the state comes in we're where we are supposed to be. And it has had other effects in like health class – that's another class where we could probably use some support but...trying to keep our numbers down, percentage wise,

NAMS RE 1: They go into gym class they go into art then there's no help. There's no support teacher.

NAMS SE 1: I say staffing, but we do have 12 teachers in support I think that's high as compared to many other schools but we still need more support to meet all the needs of all the kids.

Interviewer: Does your administration facilitate professional development?

NAMS SE 1: It usually comes from Central Office. (A central office administrator) is in charge of staff development. She's actually in charge of the curriculum development.

NAMS RE 1: I don't know that the principals have any input into that. We don't – no one has asked us.

NAMS SE 1: As far as special education, (the NAMS Director of Special Education) is the Pupil Services Director. He'll send stuff for us too depending on what's going on in special education.

Interviewer: If your principal were to leave, do you think you would maintain the inclusion status that you have now?

NAMS SE 1: Yes.

NAMS RE 1: It is pretty well embedded into the system. Don't they have to have it if someone would come in?

NAMS SE 1: Yes. There's really no way to get rid of it. It's just there are too many kids. We also have serious space issues in this building so that would also be a factor. It's a problem.

Interviewer: That concludes my questions. Is there any additional information or comments that you would like to share?

NAMS SE 1: The biggest thing – as long as the teachers go along with it – it will work

NAMS RE 1: At the beginning it was just jammed down everybody's throat.

NAMS SE 1: There were not a lot of happy teachers when we first put this thing in place.

Interviewer: And now they have become accustomed to it?

NAMS SE 1: Yes, it's a reality that's not going to change.

NAMS RE 1: And again it depends on your support teacher. How much they do and how much they help.

NAMS SE 1: It would be very easy to go in there and not do a whole lot.

NAMS RE 1: Right.

NAMS SE 1: That does happen. That's the down side. If they're not doing what they are supposed to do then the regular education teacher has to do it and they're not as qualified. I don't consider myself as qualified as the special education teacher.

Interviewer: How do you do scheduling?

NAMS SE 1: We work with guidance to try to spread the needs of the kids as evenly as possible amongst the teams. Just so it's not one teacher has all the problem children.

NAMS RE 1: When the kids are going to be mainstreamed, you do have some input on who they are going to go to. Right?

NAMS SE 1: Not really – the guidance counselor does that. Our guidance counselor was a support teacher at the high school for years and years, so that helps too.

Interviewer: Closing

E.2.3 Newport Area Middle School – Special Education Teacher #2

Interviewer: How long have you been teaching special education?

NAMS SE 2: At Newport, I've been here since 98–99. Previously, I was at (a private school), which is a school for severely emotional support. I taught 8 – 12 or 9 – 12 at one time.

Interviewer: That's a good experience.

NAMS SE 2: It was wonderful. It really was. When I got the position here, it was hard to even leave there because we did a lot within a year. It was amazing.

Interviewer: It's great to see the students grow.

NAMS SE 2: Oh, I know. I mean we just started teaching behavioral skills in August. We didn't even start teaching academics until November. Really, it's all behavior management. I did that for a year and then I came here. And I came into the seventh grade. I was sixth for a year. Then I was seventh and eighth. We're on teams. And I was basically on two teams

before they made one a full team. I did like two positions for two years – seventh and eighth. This is my fourth year as just seventh grade.

Interviewer: What do you prefer?

NAMS SE 2: Well, I liked the seventh grade. I liked the eighth grade also, I did. I was on two teams at that time and it was so hard being two teams. For those two years, I was in four inclusion classes and one pull out class. That was hard because you're working with four inclusion teachers. And I've done, I've worked in probably eight different inclusion. My first year here, there was no inclusion. Social Studies and science was pulled out. And then the next year is when they started inclusion.

Interviewer: And how did they implement inclusion? Who implemented the program?

NAMS SE 2: We've had a lot of different principals. (A past principal) was here. (Another past principal), then we had an interim substitute principal – he came at two different times and then we had (another past principal) – he's still here at Central Office. Then NAMS Principal was at the high school when she first came.

Interviewer: Was she a teacher?

NAMS SE 2: No, assistant principal. I don't know if it was two years even that she was over there.

Interviewer: How did they introduce the idea of inclusion?

NAMS SE 2: Well it was talked about and I think it was at the high school before it was here, definitely. And then, it came about the same way, at first it was your Social Studies and your Science classes and then one class for every team.

You know there was only one social, one science. Because you know each teacher teaches five classes and it would be one of the science and one of the social classes. And when it was introduced at first, I went into sixth grade and I think there was a lot of trial and error when we kind of came in and I had the same teacher – he was a – because sixth grade, everyone teaches one social studies, and he was the teacher who did the science and social studies. I think that was the year, or the next year, I think that he retired. The next year was his last year. It was unbelievable. But it was one of my most extreme, classes, or group of IEP students and that was the year that I was in sixth grade and the next year I did seventh and eighth so I had some of them for three years.

Interviewer: Did you like that?

NAMS SE 2: Well, sometimes when you get a new group of kids, you take a month or so to figure out what they need. I was able to place them earlier. The inclusion was a challenge where it was more so, come on turn the page open your book, what are you doing. Sit down, over here. I just walked down the aisle. You know, come on over here, and focus over here – that's what I thought it was. I started to get a little more involved when we started to do more projects with the social studies. I felt, that it wasn't working – you know, I was pulling out a lot because of the disruptions. But that was the year I had a lot more emotional disturbances and ES kids and some non-ES kids who had a lot of behavior problems. So I spent – I thought, “Oh, OK, inclusion is just great – this is what I'm doing all day?”

And then, the next year, I hit it where I was doing four inclusion classes and they're all different teachers – two in seventh grade and two in eighth. So that was really interesting because I was completely co-teaching in one. I planned, she planned. We knew each other in high school and we teacher together now. We made extra time to plan – you have no time to plan. But we made extra time so I knew everything she was going to do. I got more involved with it and I was teaching more. It worked out really well. There were times she worked more with the support kids and I taught the class. We really experimented. I taught full units, she would put in grades or she would pull different kids. We just did whatever worked. But that was only two years. And now we're back together. It's nice because I can teach.

Another teacher I was with – he taught me at the high school. It was his last two years. He had just a rough time so he wanted to come here for his last two years. I did all the bookwork for him, I did pull out, I did no teaching. He always ended class early, so I would always do review at the end because I couldn't stand it. Other than that, I was like an aide.

It takes a lot of planning. I've been working with the same teacher for four years. This year, I was on maternity leave so I came late. I didn't do as much teaching as I did before. I have a few non-readers this year so I pull out a lot more and I read to them or do different things to help them.

Sometimes, we do one lap around the building and then I summarize what

she is doing in the classroom. I have another one who is extremely learning support and extremely ES. He's just all over the place. So I'm not as much in the classroom teaching, but as far as the adaptations, I couldn't ask for a better inclusion teacher. You just have such extremes and I think it makes the biggest difference.

Like I said, I was great with the one teacher in the eighth grade, but he did his teaching and I didn't know anything about physical science. I think it was hard because he knew what he needed to teach and get done. It was still new to him though because he taught earth/space for thirty years, then he came here. He had trouble at the high school. He loved it but when we worked together, it wasn't as involved. It was like, "OK, here's today's study guide. Here's the adapted test. Go work with your students."

Interviewer: Have you had professional development on team teaching or inclusion?

NAMS SE 2: I've gone to conferences and even gone with a regular education teacher that I teach social studies with. We went to an inclusion conference for the day. We don't have too much as far as our in-services that are provided here on inclusionary practices at all. But there are so many offered outside the district and the principals encourage us to go – like some with team teaching or co-teaching or inclusion – how to make inclusion work.

Interviewer: Do you have common planning time?

NAMS SE 2: No, not with inclusion. Well we do have team planning, but it's not meant for inclusion. It can be but you're kind of doing all the other team stuff. But that's the time when I would kind of make the planning... we can do inclusion stuff.

Interviewer: If the administration was not saying to include kids, do you think you still would?

NAMS SE 2: I do, although I do see that there are some kids that just struggle immensely and I don't think they're getting anything out of it. That's sometimes where I struggle and I say, "I can't pull out all the time." But sometimes you need to do quick pullouts. You look and you think, what are they getting out of this? I'm looking at him and he's all over the place and he's in this room with 25 other kids and it's killing me. But I'm trying to keep them in the room – you know, you can't pull them everyday. I just feel like I don't think he got one thing that they talked about. I feel like I could have done something more. That still occurs, but I have it made this year. In this district, they've all been extremely cooperative. They are more involved – they get right in there. It's not just "your" children, it's "our" children. But, as a regular education teacher, you still have your twenty-four other, but now you have one class – that I have what, thirteen, support kids out of a class of twenty-four so you know, you almost have 50% special education students. .Although, they're not all extreme. But I don't always feel the inclusion class suits everyone.

NAMS SE 2: It's case by case?

Interviewer: (NAMS Special Education Teacher #1) was saying that it's contractual how many special education students you can have.

NAMS SE 2: In a class without a support teach, yes. It was five now it's going up to eight.

Interviewer: So when inclusion started around 99-00, you said it was brought in by administration.

NAMS SE 2: Yes, it was brought in by administration, but I also think it was more of just special education laws and trying to not seclude them as much – which I do think we needed it. It does wonders for self esteem. Sometimes you wonder if it's the most appropriate placement, but others I do very little for. I'm there for a lot of the students – even some that are not special education.

Interviewer: Approximately four to five years ago, with the implementation of inclusion, is that when the contract changes came about?

NAMS SE 2: Yes, that's exactly when. Because of the number of special education kids in the regular education room.

Interviewer: Do you think the regular education teachers are accepting of the special education students?

NAMS SE 2: It's really about 60/40, maybe even 70/30 that are accepting. You know, you have some that are completely accepting and open-minded. Others will say, "He won't make it in there." Some still have that mindset and it's not all older teachers. Sometimes you think its more teachers who have

been around for a long time. It's just surprising that you have even some of the younger teachers with the attitude that they think the kids don't belong. They think right off the bat, you're the special ed teacher, you make the adaptations and modifications – I'm here and I do what I do.

NAMS SE 2:

We're pushing for inclusion math. We feel we have a lot of kids who are very high functioning in our support classes. We try to make the support classes with math more ability level because it's hard. You know, I have some kids who are really bright and maybe they wouldn't be able to keep up with the mainstreamed but they excel in a small group. In with them, I have a student who can't multiply and doesn't even get multiplication so how can I even start to teach him division. He does not get it, no matter how many times I try. Then I would go to last year's teacher and I would say – why didn't you teach them division. Sometimes they just don't get the concept. Other students in that class would struggle in the mainstream while some would not. I've finally gotten them down to two groups. SO I have to teach two classes in one – that's really hard. I hate to not do it and keep the other ones behind or do I keep going and expose the students even though they may not get one thing I'm saying. That's a struggle with the math. And I love teaching math. But it is a struggle as to what to do in that sort of situation. We used to try to group them by ability levels and what we did as support teachers when we all taught math was the one who taught the support class, on the first day of school would test them, on the second day we would group them. I taught high, someone else taught

mediums, another taught low and we switched our schedules around so that they would be by ability. It was the same class period and it was nice to have them all close to ability levels. You have such a range of ability levels. We want inclusion math but we haven't gotten it approved. We have enough students who could benefit from it though.

Interviewer: What's that process like? What do you do to get the Inclusion math approved?

NAMS SE 2: Well, we present the numbers to the principal and our head of pupil services. Who makes the final decision? I want to say it's more the principal who makes it but I'm not sure. I know our head of pupil services is also involved in the approval process. Sometimes I just go to him with ideas.

Interviewer: Tell me what kind of things you have gone to him for.

NAMS SE 2: Sometimes I just go to him and say, you know, I have this student and how should I approach this, or I have this parent...these are just the kinds of things tell me what I should do – you know a lot of parent issues – I'll go to him and ask what I should do I can't stand our IEP format right now and I'll go and ask him about plugging in different sorts of things.

Interviewer: Do you use IEP Writer or anything like that?

NAMS SE 2: We have Eagles and it's just always getting something new on it. Now it's like plugging in the number of hours in special education, the number of

hours outside special education in the regular education room. It's like; I don't even know how to calculate it.

It's all because of Gaskins. We are all trying to get the number of hours down.

I have a student now who is very bright. I don't think he needs to be in all these support classes. His grades don't show he got a B from me – that's the highest he got from me – he's a B/C student. As far as his grades he is in the right placement. But I thought he could get out more in inclusion but his parents want that support. He is very bright but he is lazy. As soon as I call home, he'll do stuff. I think he should – he was mainstreamed math but he's failing so I think we're going to put him in support math next year. He would be great for inclusion – he does do a little bit but if he could get that extra one-on-one. I have an advisory base this year. For years I didn't have one – I shared or I ran I would always secretly tutor.

Interviewer: What is advisory base?

NAMS SE 2: It is homeroom. Monday's are for silent reading, Tuesday's and Wednesday's we have a lesson on character education, We have a different theme for every month – perseverance, honesty, loyalty, responsibility...and although I know a lot of these kinds need that, I also would like to use that time to get these kids reading at grade level. So I

would run around and tutor them - but that was my only time. Last year when I was pregnant, I wouldn't eat lunches – that's when I would run around and help these kids. It's hard to find that time. I think inclusion math is important. I went to (NAMS Director of Pupil Services) about that. It would be great to get this kid in inclusion math but the parents are adamant. They're afraid.

Interviewer: Do you find that often? Do you find that parents don't want the child in inclusion?

NAMS SE 2: Well, surprisingly, more than you would think. You'd think that they would want them in regular classes. Then for some it's the other way around – I have one who needs in the pullout reading and the parents don't want him there. I just got them to agree this year – I finally got them to agree to the support class for his reading. He can read fine, but he can't tell you one thing he has read after four lines. He has no idea what he read. He'll just pull out a word that he has read. He just does not recall anything. He needed the reading strategies – even though he could read, he just doesn't know one thing that he has read. Zero comprehension. He was failing but we were getting him to pass. It was way too many accommodations. But the parents were, "No, no he needs to be in with the regular kids."

Interviewer: Do you think the regular education teachers are accepting of the included kids?

NAMS SE 2: Some. You'll talk to (a regular education teacher) – she is a big promoter – loves it! She is beyond the norm. She thinks this (inclusion) is great and just wishes she could do more or have a special education class that she and I could teach together. Like teach all support kids in a class. When we did support class for science and social – we (special education teachers and students) didn't do the labs that they had or anything. These kids are dissecting and the special education kids aren't getting that opportunity. It makes a big difference.

Interviewer: How important do you think the principal's role is in the whole process?

NAMS SE 2: I think it is important, I really do. I mean, I don't know if I overuse it, but I go to her all the time on different things. A lot of times it's on different students like making sure that they are getting different things or to make sure that it's appropriate. We invite our principals to our inclusion classes a lot especially if we do different things like projects and such. But I think that, as far as the principals, they make a lot of decisions about inclusion. We're begging for a math inclusion but we're not going to get it. They have it at the high school so we're saying why can't we have it too? Even for just eighth grade. I think it would be great to have it.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you would like to share?

NAMS SE 2: I think we've covered everything.

Interviewer: Closing.

E.3 TREESIDE AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

E.3.1 Treeside Area Middle School – Principal

Interviewer: How do you personally define inclusion?

TAMS Principal: Inclusion is involving all students no matter what their strengths and weaknesses are – involving them in all programs, all facets of the school life.

Interviewer: What is the mission of the district?

TAMS Principal: The mission of South Side Area School District is to provide productive members of society.

Interviewer: What are your district's greatest strengths?

TAMS Principal: We perceive our school to be an integral part of the community. Our caring and nurturing staff is also one of our greatest strengths. If they care and nurture, the students will succeed. They are great people. For example, when there is a crisis, we all come together. A few weeks ago, the brother of one of our teachers died in an accident. There was so much love and support from the staff and the community. Everyone comes together. There was an outpouring of support.

Interviewer: What type of environment is best for special education students?

TAMS Principal: I think they need to feel they are part of the total school program. I believe that involving them with the regular education children helps provide an ideal environment. They are not set apart, they are not identified

Interviewer: Some believe inclusion is a federally mandated change. How do you feel about federally mandated changes in education?

TAMS Principal: You could argue that both ways. Sometimes the changes are good. Sometimes they are not so good. Sometimes it is the administrator's personal feelings. Sometimes mandates are needed to get people to change. Sometimes they don't properly fund mandates, but you can argue both ways. Sometimes mandates are necessary because some school districts just won't do certain thing. You have to mandate. Without getting into politics, think about local control. How can someone in Washington, DC tell someone in (Treeside Area School District) what is best for them?

Interviewer: How did inclusion begin in (Treeside)?

TAMS Principal: There was a strong interest on part of teachers. They, with administration, cooperatively decided it was best for the students. We had a lot of staff development, a lot of interaction with consultants. There was a tremendous outpouring of support for this. This is a tremendous school district. It took collaboration with administration, staff, and parents to affect this.

Interviewer: Describe the school culture since you transitioned to inclusion.

TAMS Principal: The school culture is much better. When we talk about the culture at (Treeside), it doesn't make any difference; socially economic factors do not make a difference. There isn't the peer pressure because of being economically disadvantaged. They are all at the same level. That is part of the school culture – very accepting. You don't have to wear \$150 shoes to

be accepted. Our kids are very tolerable, very helpful. Like with the physically handicapped, our kids are very kind.

Interviewer: Do you have pull out programs for children like autistic support, life skills or emotional support?

TAMS Principal: At one time, we did have autistic support, but we do not have it any more. We work that out through the IU.

Interviewer: What about the life skills and emotional support?

TAMS Principal: They are fully included but will pull emotional support for maybe a block or two in the high school or a period or two in the middle school – but they are included. For emotional support, they are always scheduled to go to that cool down room but teachers will flex that out.

Interviewer: As an administrator, how do you facilitate change?

TAMS Principal: A lot of administrators will go in and say, “We are going to make this change.” That’s not the way it works. You have to do a lot of background work. Sometimes people don’t understand that and as a result the change will fail. You can’t go in and try to change without laying the groundwork. Educators are slow to change – change came at a snail’s pace – if education were in charge of change, we’d still be driving Model T Fords. Implementation is the tough part.

Interviewer: How does principal share that vision of change?

TAMS Principal: I think you have to be a great communicator. You have to spend some time with your faculty building up a trust – sounding philosophical. They have to trust you. They have to perceive that you know what you’re doing.

Then the process takes place. Then you start feeding them bits and pieces of information. Then touch on things you are trying to put in place.

Encourage them to visit others doing well. They start to get excited and experiment. Success breeds success. They do things in their classroom and they see success – they get excited about it. The staff has to be committed.

When we tried block scheduling at the high school, the old way was there a long time. We took our time and the block was a success. Over 500 people came to see it! Came to (Treeside)! We started talking about it [block scheduling] in year two, looking at other programs. They [the teachers] bought into it. Change has to go through a process. You can't just go in and say we are going to do this – change doesn't work that way. It takes minor changes and pretty soon it all happens. You have to make people know and think they are a part of that change.

I taught a class on current events when I was a teacher. I had the kids believing they had decided what they were going to learn. They have to be a part of it for the program to be successful. We've tried scatterbrained things in education. Do this one year, something else next year, if new administration had an idea, things changed.

All the ills of society are expected to be changed through school system – wellness, obesity, drugs, and alcohol. Always the schools are responsible for changing the ills of society.

Interviewer: What does a principal do to ensure the program will stay after he has moved on?

TAMS Principal: Change is very difficult. It takes the buying in – change is not easy. There is a process you have to follow otherwise, when you leave, everything will go back to the way it was. It takes the teacher buy in to get sustainability

We are blessed at (Treeside) with a veteran staff. There is stability and buy in – they know when something has to get done. But the faculty will be only as good as the leader. You have to model for teachers all the time.

Interviewer: What type of relationship do you have with the staff?

TAMS Principal: I have always had a positive relationship, that continues.

Interviewer: Has the community bought in to the inclusive environment?

TAMS Principal: The community support is great. There is an emphasis on valuing differences rather than conforming to what is normal – philosophically very evident in what people do every day.

Interviewer: Does the staff share this value?

TAMS Principal: Yes, very much so.

Interviewer: How did the administration work together with the staff to implement the inclusive program?

TAMS Principal: There was collaboration between the staff and administration on all levels, actually even outside the staff and administration there is collaboration.

We have teams at the middle school. The administration, counselors, and teachers are all involved in constant exchange – the teachers are in and out of here all day long. The administration is visible in and out of the classroom. We are always letting teachers know they are important. The teachers have no problem bringing concerns to the administration. The team will meet. There is a tremendous amount of collaboration. Common planning is very important. I can just go to the team leader and mention that something needs to be done for a particular child and they just take care of it – very involved.

Interviewer: How many special education teachers do you have at the middle school?

TAMS Principal: There are 4 ½ special education teachers at the middle school, that includes gifted. We share one with the high school. We have 320 students. You cannot cut teachers, you need them for inclusion. You need your people!

Interviewer: What kinds of professional development has the district offered regarding inclusion?

TAMS Principal: We have a dynamic Pupil Services Director. She has done workshops on different facets of inclusion. We have a lot of in-house staff development.

Interviewer: What is your role, as principal, in inclusion?

TAMS Principal: My role is to make sure the process goes along smoothly. That people have what they need to be successful – materials, resources, staff development – all that they need to be successful

Interviewer: How will the program continue after you leave the district?

TAMS Principal: The program will be strong because the staff is very supportive of inclusion – they are part of the evolution. Administrators come and go but strong staff members will carry on – thing will be sustained.

When (a previous Superintendent) was here, she was always so careful about hiring teachers. When you hire teachers you are looking at 30 – 35 years. When you hire a teacher, they are there for the long run. Be very careful when hiring a teacher. You better get the right person

Interviewer: On average, how long have your teachers been at (Treeside)?

TAMS Principal: Most of our teachers are veterans and have been her 20 – 30 years.

Interviewer: closing

E.3.2 Treeside Area Middle School – Director of Special Education

Interviewer: What were the first steps in the transition to inclusion at (Treeside)?

TAMS DSE: (A previous Superintendent) was superintendent and (a previous Assistant Superintendent) was Assistant Superintendent when we first started moving towards inclusion. We visited Johnson’s City to see their model then personalized it to fit (Treeside). We started with the second grade

then moved to third grade the following year, and so on. The transition took eight years.

Then we brought on the school board to obtain their support and then the parents were brought on board. We even did professional development for the parents and the students. We wanted them to understand the goals of inclusion. We did a lot of PR (public relations) and we still do it. The students have peer buddies and the teachers have peer teachers.

The elementary inclusion is teacher run – the team has been together for nine to ten years.

Interviewer: Did the district provide professional development on inclusion?

TAMS DSE: Additional training was supplied. We focused on CHOICE theory. We had one of our teachers, (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #2), certified so that she could continue to train the staff – it was our way of building capacity. We also used a presenter from DT Watson. We have exposed the staff and administration to as much professional development and special education training as possible. We make sure to expose everyone to special education training – this includes custodians, cafeteria workers, aides, and cafeteria workers.

Interviewer: I understand that you are currently searching for a new middle school principal. How will you ensure that person fits into the vision of (Treeside)'s view of inclusion?

TAMS DSE: We need a cohesive team. We may need to coach him or her. We recently hired a new elementary principal. We needed to train and coach him. He wanted to send a student to (an outside placement) right away at the beginning of the year. We had to coach him and teach him to understand that (the outside placement) was a last resort. We had to work with the student and his family to try to keep him in the regular program. Even so, the student is going to (the outside placement) next year.

Interviewer: How many students are placed outside of the district?

TAMS DSE: There are currently five students at (an outside placement for students with severe disabilities). We graduate 100% of our special needs students based on their individual education plan goals.

Interviewer: Who are the crucial people involved in the transition?

TAMS DSE: We involved everyone! We have trained the maintenance workers, the custodial staff, the cafeteria workers, aides, and the secretarial staff as well as classroom teachers and administrators. They all need to be brought on board – this is a total change in the culture of the school.

Interviewer: What types of things were they trained on?

TAMS DSE: Especially with the aides, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers – we trained them on how to deescalate anger. Time for training is always an issue. We provide some release time but more often, we provide after school Act 48 opportunities that are typically facilitated by our own staff. We believe in the train-the-trainer model because it creates a vested interest in the district and our mission. Substitute teachers even need to be trained on

inclusive practices and our way of doing things at (Treeside). If a substitute does not fit in or does not understand inclusion, then it is our fault – we should have trained the person. We all also had ADAPT training through AIU 3.

Interviewer: What is ADAPT?

TAMS DSE: It is a program through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. They provide professional development that focuses on models to follow for adapting instruction and assessment material. They shared a variety of models for differentiating instruction as well. Nine years ago we started inclusion and now we are nearly at 90%.

E.3.3 Treeside Area Middle School – Special Education Teacher #1

Interviewer: What do you teach?

TAMS SE 1: I work in an emotional support classroom with grades 6 – 9.

Interviewer: How long have you been teaching in an inclusive environment?

TAMS SE 1: I have been an emotional support teacher for thirteen years. I worked for one year previously at (another school district). (The Director of Special Education) and I were hired together. First (the Director of Special Education) then me. I was hired when (Treeside) brought the emotional support students back from placements like the IU and (an outside placement). We were the first to bring them back into the home district so we got to mold it. The teachers were afraid of having the emotional

support students in their classrooms so they were kept in resource rooms at first.

Interviewer: Why did (Treeside) decide to bring the students back?

TAMS SE 1: Bringing the kids back, inclusion, was done for a few reasons – one reason was financial. When they first brought emotional support back, a case worker was staffed as well. That has been phased out now, but I wish it was still in place.

Interviewer: What was the beginning steps that (Treeside) took to begin inclusion?

TAMS SE 1: The teachers had a shared philosophy with the administration. We invested in a cognitive program. We had to build relationships with the kids too – teachers had to get to know them, become invested in them and them in you – behavior and emotions came first, academics came next, like Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. The program was built on rewards.

Interviewer: Who was the Director of Special Education at the time?

TAMS SE 1: (A previous Director of Special Education) was in charge of Pupil Services at the time, she had a counseling background.

Interviewer: What was the role of the principal in the transition?

TAMS SE 1: The principal was also very supportive. There was a distinct trust. The principal acted as a sounding board. He never questioned, just supported us. The principals consider me an expert in the field. When my kids get called into the office, I get called in too. We have a very collaborative relationship.

Interviewer: I understand that (Treeside) has had three principals since inclusion started. Has that been the case with all of them?

TAMS SE 1: The principals have all been very supportive but the change in principals has been hard. (A previous principal) was here for a year, then (another previous principal). I was afraid of him because of his emotional support background but he was great. I found out his philosophy was the same as mine and the districts'. He was a former emotional support teacher so he often visited my classroom. He bonded with my students. He was more creative with discipline. He was here four to five years. Next came (another principal) – they [the principal's views on inclusion and the district's views] were worlds apart at first. He had to learn a new school and a new system. The teachers and administrative staff had to set the pace for him – he had to go through the professional development, learn about the kids and learn about (Treeside's) history.

Interviewer: How will the district support the new principal?

TAMS SE 1: It will be really hard on him if he's not an inclusion person, but we will remind him that this is who we are.

Interviewer: Do you facilitate trainings on inclusion?

TAMS SE 1: I facilitate but it is sometimes hard because the stuff seems so commonplace to me. I don't want to seem condescending. But, although my peers are in the room, they are receptive to the trainings. We have had so much change in staffing that I think we need to re-visit the professional development. But, I am not comfortable being the expert!

Interviewer: With regards to inclusion, what are some of the areas in which the district has professional development?

TAMS SE 1: We were all trained in ADAPT, But there has been an influx of new teachers who have not been trained. We also were trained on the Reality Control Theory.

Interviewer: Who does the trainings?

TAMS SE 1: At (Treeside), we believe in the train-the-trainer model. The district trains choice staff then they train rest of the staff. (TAMS Regular Education Teacher #2) is an expert on Control Theory. The district is good about sending people out to get trainings.

Interviewer: Were the new principals trained as well?

TAMS SE 1: When we got a new principal, like (the high school principal) at the high school, the district had him trained in ADAPT and SAP [Student Assistance Program].

Interviewer: How are the emotional support students scheduled?

TAMS SE 1: I come in and help schedule the kids in the summer. We look at behavior and academics. The administration has always refused to do just do luck of the draw computer generated scheduling. We use the team approach. That way everyone is on the same page.

Interviewer: How would you personally define inclusion?

TAMS SE 1: The emotional support students are involved in the regular education classroom to maximum extent possible. The purpose is to engage in the regular curriculum with all the other students. We do have a pullout

program that is based on emotions and behavior, but we encourage the students to get out there with an aide.

Interviewer: If a family moved into your school district, what would you tell them is the greatest strength of your school?

TAMS SE 1: The teachers and administrators love of children to do well.

Interviewer: Do you believe that all special education students should be included in the regular education environment?

TAMS SE 1: I have a problem with “all.” There are times when there isn’t a fit. It is sad. The gap may be too wide, their behaviors too severe.

Interviewer: Do you believe that special needs children need to be exposed to the regular education curriculum in order to be proficient on the PSSA.

TAMS SE 1: I have many thoughts on the PSSA. Most importantly, it is not at their level. We should be able to modify it to the student’s level.

Interviewer: Do you enjoy working in an inclusive environment?

TAMS SE 1: At the middle school and high school it allows the teachers and students to work with all teachers, to invest in a team approach. I receive a great deal of gratification by seeing my kids go out into the regular education environment. In sixth grade, go out for one class, seventh grade two classes, and eighth grade three classes. By the second semester of their ninth grade year, they are completely mainstreamed.

Interviewer: Do you think the teachers in this school understand the implications of the Gaskin’s Case?

TAMS SE 1: I think they do – of course, they will understand it more as time goes on. They just never questioned inclusion; they did it because they wanted to. They were like, “This is the real world.”

Interviewer: Do you believe that the special needs children should receive their instruction in a resource room?

TAMS SE 1: There are times when it is appropriate, though it is not the norm.

Interviewer: Do you think the majority of the teachers in your school agree with inclusionary practices?

TAMS SE 1: They don’t realize they can disagree! It’s the culture of the school district – it’s not an option.

E.3.4 Treeside Area Middle School – Special Education Teacher #2

Interviewer: What is your role at Treeside?

TAMS SE 2: We have a unique situation. The regular education teacher and I switched roles in our seventh grade math inclusion classroom. The regular education teacher supports me. It is a unique situation. It is nice to teach something as opposed to being the support person.

Interviewer: What are your areas of certification?

TAMS SE 2: I have a BS in elementary education and an MS in special education. I am certified in elementary education, middle level math and special education.

Interviewer: What do you teach at this school?

TAMS SE 2: I teach seventh grade learning support students in a learning support classroom. I also teach seventh grade inclusion math.

Interviewer: Have you spent your entire career in Treeside?

TAMS SE 2: No, I taught for one year in (another state) before coming here. I have been teaching for nine years.

Interviewer: How would you personally define inclusion?

TAMS SE 2: Mainstreaming learning disabled students with regular education students in their least restrictive environment with as much support as they need.

Interviewer: Tell me about your school and its mission.

TAMS SE 2: Our mission is to prepare the students to continue on, not only to succeed in high school, but secondary as well – to be a productive citizen – not only in our community but in the United States. We want them to be able to read and write. We want them to be able to go on to either a vocational school or a two or four year college - basically just to prepare them to be productive citizens

Interviewer: If a family moved into your school district, what would you tell them is the greatest strength of your school?

TAMS SE 2: The greatest strength of our program is the support that we have. I would also say the support not only from the learning support teacher and the instructional aide, but also the support that we receive from the regular education teacher. There are teachers who are not willing to accept you into their classroom and feel that the special needs students do not belong there but this is a very accepting school district – very close knit, very

small school district. We only have one teacher per subject per school level. They all have the same teachers, you are not going to get a different curriculum than some one else. You are going to be taught the same thing as any other seventh grade student or any other eighth grade student. So you are not going to be singled out. We don't think of them as your students and my students. If we break into groups, I don't take all the learning support students, I take five to six students from the class. We don't identify or specify who can be with whom.

Interviewer: Should all students should be included in the regular education classroom?

TAMS SE 2: Oh, boy, I don't like "all." I really don't think so. I would have to disagree. I don't think that inclusion is the least restrictive environment for all students. I think it does satisfy the needs of low students but there are exceptions to the rule.

Interviewer: Do you think that special needs children should be included in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible for them to be successful?

TAMS SE 2: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you believe the special needs children need to be in the regular education classroom in order to be successful on the PSSA?

TAMS SE 2: Not all students take the PSSA, some take the PASA. So they need to be exposed to what's needed for the PASA. So if they are taking the PSSA, I definitely agree that they need the exposure.

Interviewer: In what types of classes do you think special education students should be included?

TAMS SE 2: They need to be exposed to the regular education classroom – in every area that they can be in order to be successful in their future.

Interviewer: For example?

TAMS SE 2: I think it depends on the student. They should be included in the regular education classroom as much as possible. I try to included them for every core subject area if they have a special ed teacher, myself, as well as an aide...In every classroom so they have the support right there in the classroom. We make the adaptations right there in the classroom. We adapt the curriculum, the assignment, their tests, as much or as little as they need. It depends on the student. The group that I have this year is an exceptional group. They are a relatively small group. I only have six students who are learning support. Among those students – usually my students are typically low in reading and math. That's not true of these students – they are excelling in math. In fact two of the six are being recommended for Algebra next year. That's not a typical seventh grade group. Usually I have anywhere from ten to twelve students in a grade level out of 100 – 120. That can range from a second or third grade reading level on up to some being at grade level. It depends on the students.

Interviewer: Do you have a pull-out program at all?

TAMS SE 2: We have one life skills classroom. Actually it is the last year we are having it although it is a relatively new classroom. We had a group of students who were not able to handle the regular sixth and seventh grade curriculum, so we thought they were better served in a life skills classroom. It is a better placement for them. They learn more everyday skills, more hands on learning. Next year, we are not continuing that program. We also have an Autistic Support classroom but they go out too. When they go out, they either have an instructional aide or the grade level teachers available to them. I don't believe we are going to be continuing the Life Skills but it will depend on the population.

Interviewer: In which atmosphere do you prefer working?

TAMS SE 2: I have been teaching for nine years in inclusive environment. But, I prefer working in a less inclusive environment.

Interviewer: Do you think the teachers in this school understand the implications of the Gaskin's Case.

TAMS SE 2: I agree they are becoming more familiar with it but I don't think they know full. I would say our special education staff knows the full extent of Gaskins; however, I would say our regular education staff is becoming familiar with it but I don't think they have a grasp yet – it's just not relevant.

Interviewer: Do you agree with the federal government mandating changes in public education?

TAMS SE 2: There are some cases where I think that is applicable but I think too often they are there for reasons. I think that too often they are not always bad.

Interviewer: Does Treeside offer you the opportunity for professional development on inclusionary practices?

TAMS SE 2: Yes. We have, just to give you an example to elaborate on that, we have our Director of Special Education. I don't think she has ever said no to me to go to any or all workshops that are for professional development. As well as, she has given our special education staff the opportunity to share what we have learned regarding inclusion and Gaskins and some of the more prevalent cases that have come up. She has pulled the entire special education staff, gotten substitutes, to share what we have learned from workshops. I don't know of anyone else who has done that.

Interviewer: Do you and your peers facilitate?

TAMS SE 2: It is a volunteer basis. She may recommend to one of us, or ask, but she does not force us.

Interviewer: Do you think that the teaching staff enjoys the inclusive environment?

TAMS SE 2: I think they agree with the implementation because they were a part of it. I was not here. They started with one grade level, adding one a year. It was a gradual implementation. Now many [school districts] are being forced and have to do it all at once. We've had schools come to visit our program – that says something, not only for (our Director of Special Education), but for our staff and the school district. (Our Director of Special Education) is wonderful – very helpful, very informative.

Interviewer: How long has (your Director of Special Education) been here?

TAMS SE 2: She has been here probably thirteen years. This is her fourth or fifth year as Director of Special Education.

Interviewer: Does your principal value your expertise?

TAMS SE 2: (Our principal), yes, I'm not sure about the new one. (The last principal who took an administrative position with another school district] hired me so he was our former principal. I would say that I agree, maybe not strongly agree. He was supportive of inclusion, but maybe not totally there with the rest of us. Now, (our current principal), I would whole heartedly agree, or strongly agree, in all areas. I think that they [administration] like me where I am. They appreciate my expertise in special education and that's where I'll stay.

Interviewer: Is there an area you'd rather teach?

TAMS SE 2: I have a math certificate. If I wanted to go into that and leave special education, well, they would rather keep me in special education. I guess you are rewarded for doing a good job and you are – but hey... Right now, I'm definitely happy with where I am. But I don't know maybe down the road, I'd like to have options.

Interviewer: Is being the special education teacher in classroom more difficult?

TAMS SE 2: Right now, it's wonderful, but there are years when it is more trying. It is frustrating when you know they [the students] have the ability and they are not doing the work. You can't go home with them. That gets frustrating. The one thing that is frustrating about inclusion is I don't generally ever

get to meet with the quote, unquote, smart kids. I'm not in contact with them. And a lot of the students are the ones involved in extra curricular activities. I'd like to get to know all of them. That's probably one of the setbacks.

Interviewer: Tell me your thoughts about bringing in a new principal to Treeside.

TAMS SE 2: When we bring in a new principal to Treeside, hopefully it will be a smooth transition. I'm hoping that the person they hire will have the same values as, not only our staff, but our district. Really, we had a wonderful principal. We now have a wonder principal, but I don't know anything other than wonderful principals. I know there are some below standard principals but I haven't had that experience.

Interviewer: Do the majority of the teachers in your school agree with inclusionary practices?

TAMS SE 2: The majority, yes. But, you're always going to have someone that doesn't agree with it. But, for the most part, yes...especially the middle school staff.

Interviewer: Is inclusion more successful in the middle school than the high school?

TAMS SE 2: Yes, because of the scheduling and support. Every sixth grade student takes every sixth grade teacher and we have a special education teacher and special education aide to support them. The same with the seventh and eighth graders. Once you get to high school, they have block scheduling, they all have different classes. You might have 9th, 10th and 11th graders all in one class it all depends on how their schedule falls. They may have

failed a class and have to retake it...that could be any student [regular or special education student]. They only have 2 ½ support teachers and one instructional aide for all four grades. We have one per grade level for K – 8. Then in the high school, we have 2 ½ learning support teachers, 1 learning support person who is ½ day in elementary and ½ day in the high school. Plus, we have an emotional support class at the high school. I don't know how they do it. One per grade level is challenging but scheduling is important. You have to do the schedule around the students needs so you are there to support them. The special education students are kept in two groups depending on whether they are, in chorus or band.

Interviewer: Do you feel the school culture is better or worse because of inclusion?

TAMS SE 2: We communicate with (the Director of Special Education) and the staff more often because of inclusion. What works for one team does not work for another team. The principal allows us flexibility depending on the students, teachers and the schedule. Here, the principal's role is to be supportive of the staff and the students. He lets us know that it is OK to make expectations to the rules. We run like a well oiled machine!

Interviewer: Treeside has been working in an inclusive environment for many years. How do you sustain the program?

TAMS SE 2: To sustain the program, you need consistency – we have been consistent. We have added staff as needed, but for the most part, we have been consistent. If it's not broken don't fix it.

Interviewer: What role has the principal played?

TAMS SE 2: The (last principal) and (the current principal) have always been very supportive. They understand that not all students learn at the same rate. Both say they are favorable to our students. (The current principal) is a very experienced principal and he is more than willing to bend over backwards. (The current principal) was (the previous principal)'s high school principal. Whenever (the current principal) came here to Treeseide, (the previous principal) was hired and he was his mentor. Not only do you have a great person in (the current principal), but he taught (the previous principal) everything he knew. (The previous principal) is a wonderful person on his own but he will even tell you how much he learned from (the current principal).

Interviewer: Closing.

E.3.5 Treeseide Area Middle School – Regular Education Teacher #1

Interviewer: What is your area of certification?

TAMS RE 2: I am high school certified for grades seven through twelve in English.

Interviewer: If a family moved into your school district, what would you tell them is the greatest strength of your school?

TAMS RE 2: Many families are moving to Treeseide because of the inclusion program. They think “least restrictive environment” and equate it to Treeseide. We are known for educating kids as high and as far as they can go.

Interviewer: What types of programs have you received professional development in?

TAMS RE 2: All the middle school teachers were trained in the ADAPT program. We were sent to workshops. It looks at how best to suit instruction for kids with special needs.

Interviewer: Describe your inclusionary program.

TAMS RE 2: We use grade-level teams that have a common planning time for the 6th grade. The teachers went to the Butler IU and learned how to be a team, a family, how to act together. They learned how to grow, learn and be accountable. They learned how to all be on the same page and have the same expectations of all the students. Each year, each team establishes a mission. This year's mission is to make the students more accountable. The goal is to meet the kid's needs, to know what to expect from each other as a team.

Interviewer: What types of support do you have in your classroom?

TAMS RE 2: I have a teacher's assistant and (Special Education Teacher #2) as the special education teacher in my classroom. (Special Education Teacher #2) follows the schedule of her students. The special needs kids stay together but can advance too.

Interviewer: How many students are in your inclusion class?

TAMS RE 2: There are eleven special needs kids in seventh grade and four in emotional support. We emphasize Accelerated Reading and find that the [special education] students typically come up at least two grade levels during the course of the year.

Interviewer: When did you begin practicing the inclusion model?

TAMS RE 2: Our last training was ten to twelve years ago. It was on TIPS, Totally Integrated Program for Students. We have also been trained on Control Theory. The teachers fear the unknown, that's why we need professional development. It adds practicality to the training.

Interviewer: Who does the training?

TAMS RE 2: Treeside uses the trainer of trainers model. The seventh grade team was sent to the Middle School conference a few years back where we shared our inclusion model. The key is to get people out there to be trained and then to bring the training back to others in the district.

Interviewer: What support do you receive?

TAMS RE 2: You can't be a lone ranger. The team is an effective approach. We use "chunking" of materials to be taught and age appropriate skills. Right now, I am emphasizing grammar because it is age appropriate for analytical skills. It is important to **help** the students, but not to **do it** for them. Success builds upon success – the kids find their independence. They take risks because they can't refuse to at least try.

Interviewer: How would you personally define inclusion?

TAMS RE 2: Every child can achieve! Some just take more support.

Interviewer: How was the idea of inclusion presented to the staff?

TAMS RE 2: The inclusion idea was top-down. (Previous Superintendent A) was superintendent, then (Previous Superintendent B), then (Previous Superintendent C), now (the current Superintendent). (Superintendent B) gave us reason to make it work – she was a visionary. In the past, we were

always curriculum driven. We shifted to student-driven, that was a cultural change. It was an intense change because it wasn't a band-aid.

Interviewer: What role did the building principal play in the change?

TAMS RE 2: (A previous principal) was principal at the time of inclusion transition. He was a building manager, not curriculum minded. He didn't lead the transition but allowed us the opportunity to do it. He believed in "doing the right thing." (The later principals), the teams had to break them in. One was more curriculum-driven and the last one had a vision for a cohesive unit.

Interviewer: I understand you are conducting interviews for a new principal.

TAMS RE 2: Yes. We use a team to pick the principal. Seven teachers picked (the last principal). They said, "We found our man." At Treeside, much comes from the ground up, there is no glass ceiling. This week, a group of teachers are interviewing the new principal

Interviewer: How are the special education students scheduled?

TAMS RE 2: The principal establishes the building schedule but allows the teachers to channel kids. The principal is great at scheduling, he does it by hand. The special needs kids are placed first to control the environment, but they can move, there is flexibility. Because of behavior issues and classroom atmospheres, you need to hand schedule. The kids need to grow and learn without intimidation.

Interviewer: How do you structure your inclusive classroom?

TAMS RE 2: I'm not into collaborative learning too much. I never put a struggler with an achiever. I put two strugglers together then they can learn from each other without feeling intimidated, or they might both ask for directions from the teacher. I put two advanced kids together and they will challenge each other.

Interviewer: How does a principal share his or her vision of change?

TAMS RE 2: Change is not something to be afraid of. Inclusion was strongly embraced because it promotes the student's self esteem through achievement. Even the kids and parents were cautious, but you have to allow them to be successful. Most of the special education kids know they can reach and attain. They will be challenged next year, and then year after year. But the more they are challenged, they achieve at higher levels. They [special education students] have a great work ethic and hold their end of the deal – no one does it for them. Inclusion helps support achievement.

Interviewer: Do you believe all special needs children should be included in the regular education classroom.

TAMS RE 2: We had a student with a head injury and brain damage. She had a full time aide and had ESY [extended school year]. Mom was in denial and wanted her in the inclusive environment. She was not receiving the best education in that environment. It was hard getting Mom to accept that she needed a more restrictive placement. Some students do need a different environment.

Interviewer: Do you think the teachers in this school understand the implications of the Gaskin's Case?

TAMS RE 2: I have no idea what Gaskin's is.

Interviewer: The Gaskin's case was filed by the parents of a student with Down-syndrome. They sued the school district and the state of Pennsylvania because they wanted him included in his home district and the district refused. The state and the school district lost. As part of the agreement, all school districts in the state are required to try to keep special needs students in the regular school.

Interviewer: Do you feel that the legislation is forcing school districts to educate special needs children in the regular education classroom?

TAMS RE 2: Forcing might be a good idea! Many teachers and school districts resist change. I don't like the force behind the PSSA. But vouchers may not be such a bad idea. We have to be good at what we do – support is key.

Interviewer: Do you believe special needs children should receive their education in a resource room?

TAMS RE 2: Only when absolutely necessary.

Interviewer: Do you believe the federal government should mandate changes in public education?

TAMS RE 2: They fund it so maybe they should get to say how it is used.

Interviewer: Do you believe the special education teachers like working in an inclusive environment?

TAMS RE 2: Not all.

Interviewer: Do you think the regular education teachers like working in an inclusive environment?

TAMS RE 2: Almost all.

Interviewer: How do you like working in an inclusive environment?

TAMS RE 2: I have a ball. I like it a lot because it is relevant and effective.

Interviewer: Why is inclusion so successful at Treeside?

TAMS RE 2: Inclusion is successful because it is part of the school's philosophy. You can't be here and there, you must be totally immersed.

Interviewer: Closing.

E.3.6 Treeside Area Middle School – Regular Education Teacher #2

Interviewer: What do you teach at Treeside?

TAMS RE 2: I teach regular education Civics and seventh grade PA History. I also have a special education background. We keep the regular and special education kids together. There are fifteen special needs kids in my classes. Three are in my fourth period and the rest are in my seventh period. We try to keep the special education kids together though.

Interviewer: How many students are in your seventh period?

TAMS RE 2: My total class size for seventh period is twenty-eight students. Some of the students in that class are not identified as special education but they have 504 plans. Three are identified in my fourth period class.

Interviewer: How long have you been teaching?

TAMS RE 2: I have twenty years of experience. All have been at Treeside except the first two. I was at (another school district).

Interviewer: How long have you been working in an inclusive environment?

TAMS RE 2: For over eleven years at Treeside. But when you really think about it, for over twenty.

Interviewer: How would you personally define inclusion?

TAMS RE 2: I would define inclusion as placing a child who has special needs in the regular education environment, in the least restrictive regular education environment and making modifications to meet their needs for success.

Interviewer: Tell me about your school and its mission.

TAMS RE 2: Yes, um – well there's a lot involved in it. Our mission as a school district is 95% of our students leaving Treeside will be successful whether it is on to a college education or, you know, some kind of trade industry, or just outside in the work force. We like to see them go onto some kind of education, as well as making them become life long learners.

Interviewer: If a family moved into your school district, what would you tell them is the greatest strength of your school?

TAMS RE 2: That all children can be successful at Treeside and we really strive to keep them from falling between the cracks. All children deserve special education.

Interviewer: Do you enjoy working in an inclusive environment?

TAMS RE 2: It's a challenge but I enjoy it. The way we work it here at Treeside it works because we have the support staff to make it successful. I was a

special education teacher for 15 years, so it makes it easier. For me to include special needs children it is easier because I know all the specially designed instruction to make it easier. But even with that, still just having the time to make modifications to make them successful is challenging at times.

Interviewer: Do you prefer working in a less inclusive environment?

TAMS RE 2: No, I think that the regular education children who are in the classes with the special needs children can learn from the students who have special needs. Sometimes we discount that saying those kids don't have anything to offer. They have a lot to offer – sometimes their work ethics are better than the regular education kid's work ethics.

Interviewer: Do you think the special education teachers like working in an inclusive environment?

TAMS RE 2: Sometimes they, the special education teachers, feel they are more of an aide than having the direct instruction. That's hard, I mean when they don't actually have the control of the classroom. For the most part, our teams really work but sometimes you have a teacher that doesn't like giving up that instruction time so you are more of a challenge for a teacher to give that up. It is just a challenge sometimes for the regular education teacher to share that instruction.

Interviewer: Do you enjoy working in a team-teaching environment?

TAMS RE 2: That makes inclusion. That's the key for successful inclusion process. We make our teams join in. When we didn't have the teams, that process was not nearly as successful.

Interviewer: How often does your team meet?

TAMS RE 2: We meet once a day, or as needed. Sometimes during the week we might meet four times or five times but we all have the same planning period. We have common planning time and that's a key element for the team process. We use it well. We went through a lot of training as a team when we first started out. We focused on building relationships as a team and agreeing on common objectives. Each of our teams functions differently. Sixth grade, their objectives are different. Seventh grade, their objectives are different. Eighth grade their objectives are different. I mean they are all cohesive to the school district, but we all handle some of the practices differently. Like for our team, we allow a student to take a retest if they have turned in all of their assignments. If they haven't they are not eligible to retest. Then we average those two tests together. Some of the other teams don't permit that retest. So it depends on who is on the team and how they handle success.

Interviewer: Who facilitated your team training?

TAMS RE 2: Initially we went through the IU process out in, what's that place on Route 8? PaTTAN, or it might be called that now. At the time it was called, um, the Intermediate Unit across Pennsylvania. It had inclusive training.

Interviewer: How long ago would you say that was?

TAMS RE 2: Probably a good fifteen years ago. We traveled to places where we observed inclusion at work. I mean they had children in wheelchairs, in beds, and they brought them into their regular classroom. We don't obviously include to that extent. But that's where we first observed the process. Psychological theory was used as well.

Interviewer: You are ahead of your time.

TAMS RE 2: Treeside has always been on the cutting edge and ahead of our time on the inclusion. You know they are always looking to advance what they can do in terms of education.

Interviewer: A lot of school districts are just beginning to include.

TAMS RE 2: Yeah, I have less time pulling kids out of the classroom than having them in the regular classroom. My first two years at (another school district), I had a full pull-out program. Then I came to Treeside and my first year and a half we still pulled out, and then we started inclusion.

Interviewer: What are some of the opportunities for professional growth that are important to inclusionary practices offered by Treeside?

TAMS RE 2: We offer, um, CHOICE Theory training and the ADAPT Process. Our special education teachers do regular training on like the Smart Board – things we can do in our classrooms to adapt our classes. They facilitate trainings on ways to adapt different worksheets and drill and practice that you are using in your individual classroom. The district does train for all kinds of adaptations in your class. There's just a number. We are sent out to trainings at different places. Anytime if there is something you want to

know more about, like Aspergers syndrome, whatever it might be – we are sent out to it, that is, if we don't have a teacher-trainer.

The one thing I will say about Treeside is that we really try to have our trainers trained. For example, I was telling you that I am a faculty member on the institute with William Glass. Not only am I a faculty member there, but I can be a trainer here. I can also oversee somebody's practicum in that process. And the district paid for all that to have me trained so that now we have a girl going through the process and I'm actually overseeing her practicum as the supervisor. So it also saves money for the school district. They don't have to have me pulled and having someone come in from the outside all the time. And it's good because we have someone right here so if they have any questions, they can be handled right away.

Interviewer: Do you believe the teachers in your school support each others differences?

TAMS RE 2: For the most part. I mean there are some who don't want to here and there, but for the most part they do.

Interviewer: What are your feelings about inclusion?

TAMS RE 2: I feel that having had the benefit of being a regular education teacher and a special education teacher, I see a lot of the negatives of pulling kids out of the classroom. When I had kids that were pulled out into a resource setting, those students inevitably would fall behind – a half a year, sometimes a year – of the curriculum. Because you can never keep up with

the pace of the regular education classroom. When I taught at (another school district), I taught 72 lessons a week. I mean I never got to every kid. But in the regular education setting you do. It is almost as if you are forced to keep up with everything. And you have that curriculum that you are trying to keep up with, while still trying to reach every component. So what I've always thought was if you give a kid something in inclusion, you can say. "Well, try your best." He may work here. But if you say to a kid, "Work to here." [pointing further down a paper], you give them that little bit extra. For inclusion, that margin would not surface unless you put them in the regular education classroom. Even if you say, maybe you can't do everything with the special needs children, include them for most of the class – the curriculum part, and pull them out for maybe something else to show their understanding.

Interviewer: Do the students use the resource room?

TAMS RE 2: Kids take their tests in the regular education room or the resource room. It doesn't matter if they are regular education or special education – if they need to come out for a test they are permitted to do that. You can't really tell them apart. We don't disallow those practices for our inclusion class or the regular education kids. Come to either resource room or another classroom.

Interviewer: Are they always staffed?

TAMS RE 2: They are staffed with either a special education teacher or an aide, sometimes both.

Interviewer: What type of environment do you feel is best for special needs children?

TAMS RE 2: I think that a balance of the two. I think they need the support of a special education teacher for their more difficult weaknesses, but they need the regular education teacher who is going to be more helpful in the classroom. You need a combination of both.

Interviewer: What are your feelings about federally mandated changes in the education institution?

TAMS RE 2: I'm more for the local autonomy. When the government starts mandating too much, sometimes they take away that local autonomy where we can have a little bit of that leeway where we can help a child who isn't as successful in a fully included classroom or maybe they are a child who needs more of a Life Skills program. Am I for including every child? No. And should the government mandate that? No. No, I think that they shouldn't. When we got into this process, it wasn't because things were mandated. We believed that, as a school district, children will be serviced best by including them as much as possible. Sometimes that means in art, music and gym and they are pulled out for their regular curriculum because they need a Life Skills curriculum because they don't have the ability to do these academic skills and also preparing them for their adult life and focusing them on science when they need their focus to be on something that is more life based. So I don't feel the government should mandate it.

Interviewer: What actions were done to facilitate the change process?

TAMS RE 2: Training, there was great emphasis on training. We sent our staff out to visit places that had already used this process to view successful programs – there were few at that time. But like I said, we traveled to Johnson’s City, we traveled to Boston. We got a team of teachers that did that [visited other school districts] and brought the practices back. And there was always an expectation that wherever we went, we would learn that process and bring it back. We started out slow. We started with third grade and worked up and made sure that was successful before adding grades until the whole district became successful.

Interviewer: Did people volunteer for the inclusion model?

TAMS RE 2: Initially it was volunteers, until it became expected that you would come on board. As we have started to hire new people, they have to have that philosophy when they get hired. You have to be supportive of inclusion. If you are not supportive of inclusion, then you might not be the best fit for Treeside. The culture of the school is more cohesive because we all know what each other feels about the inclusion process and working as a team and we have become very close, as friends, because of the team. There has been a real friendship built because of the team – even outside of school. I mean if something happens with your own personal family, the whole district knows within a day’s time and we are all calling and praying for you. It is very, very supportive.

Interviewer: How did the principal share his vision on inclusion?

TAMS RE 2: It was a mix between the administration and the teachers because really our middle school principal at that time was not supportive of inclusion. But the administration [Central office administration] did support inclusion and a lot of the teachers did so we started working with a team of seven people within the district who were interested into looking into this process. That principal eventually retired and when they brought someone else on board, he was very supportive of inclusion and had a strong background in it. The program flourished at that point. Then (another principal) became our principal, then (another principal) after that.

Interviewer: You have had three principals through the transition to inclusion?

TAMS RE 2: All who were all very supportive of inclusion and the teachers. We believe in that managing process, not where I'm the administrator, this is how it is, but in that managerial process where we are all involved in the process. We, the teachers, actually hired (the last principal). We have a team of fourteen teachers and we actually selected who we thought was the best fit for our school – in agreement with the superintendent.

Interviewer: I guess that speaks to the sustainability of the program. How has the staff been trained on inclusionary practices?

TAMS RE2: When you implement a program, the district must be continually willing to put forth the dollars to train the staff. Act 48 credit has helped with that. So people come get the training after school, it's like from 3:30 to 6:30. So like, they will come for several nights for the training.

Interviewer: How many sessions?

TAMS RE 2: Three are suggested but it varies for different things. Like the Smart Board training, which can be used when making adaptations in your classroom, includes a variety of different sessions for that. The majority of professional development centers on inclusion because we use TIPS, Totally Integrated Program, for all of our students. TIPS is a Treeside term.

Interviewer: Has inclusion strengthened student achievement?

TAMS RE 2: Yes, we have seen students with severe disabilities go on to college. One boy I had a few years back...he didn't like me as a teacher because I would make him stay back for help. I had an arrangement with his dad, he didn't care for that obviously, and most middle school kids don't. He went on to get his nursing degree and actually is going on to become an anesthesiologist. So he had a severe learning disability and was able to overcome that because we taught him to exceed those expectations.

Interviewer: How does the building level principal facilitate professional development?

TAMS RE 2: The principal accommodates the needs. Whatever staffing is required or substitutes to cover classes, he gets. He is very supportive. He has gone through inclusion training also. So, it's not just me training the teachers, they [the principal] goes through it too. They have to go through the trainings so they are on the same page. Like when you have a turnover of staff, they need to go through that too and understand what is going on. It is not looked at like a hierarchy here, it is more like we are all on the same

page, and we all work together. His involvement in the process of professional development for inclusion and understanding inclusion is critical because if he was not involved, they [a principal opposed to inclusion] might begin to believe that they have more control and could say this is the way it is going to be. We all give and take because we all have the same beliefs. Sometimes you don't always agree exactly with a person, but you are going to say, "You know, I'm willing to give up this because I think it is going to be better for this kid." You might not agree 100% initially, but then you use the practice and you can see that it works.

Interviewer: How does Treeside share in building knowledge?

TAMS RE 2: We do the professional development after school. The teachers are encouraged to go back and receive other college degrees, as well. We have always been challenged to do that.

Interviewer: What do you believe is your role in the inclusive process at your school?

TAMS RE 2: I team teach with the special education teacher. But, I don't always team teach, it varies. Like in the math class, the special education teacher does more of the teaching and the regular education teacher does more of the supporting so they kind of switch roles. Now in my class, I do more of the teaching and the special education teacher and the aide do more of the supporting just because there's more of the curriculum that I am qualified to teach. There is such a variety to the curriculum... PA History, Civics. I think it is more cumbersome for them to cover all that, whereas we are all pretty comfortable in math and reading. Some of the content in science

and social studies is more difficult for the regular education teacher [than those with specific certifications like middle level science, secondary science, etc]. I'm actually middle school certified for social studies.

Interviewer: What will happen to the established inclusion in your school when you get a new principal?

TAMS RE 2: The new principal, whoever is hired as a new principal, will have our own philosophy in mind. When we hired (the last principal), we [teachers] actually interviewed all the candidates. None of us agreed on any of the candidates because we didn't feel they fit our school. So we opened it up again for more applicants. That's when (the principal) applied. We just knew he was the best fit for us. Whoever, the candidate who will be hired will be the best fit for Treeside Middle School and that will be a person who has the same kind of philosophies. He will be encouraged to participate in trainings. We have a lot of strong leadership in terms of our school. That person will really be...this school runs even though we don't have a real principal. When (the principal) wasn't here, we ran fine because the staff knows what they are supposed to do. We don't have to call the office to say, we are sending a kid to alternative learning, we can just call alternative learning and say we are sending them.

Interviewer: What is alternative learning?

TAMS RE 2: Alternative learning is our pull-out program, a time out room. A kid goes for the day because they had a behavior issue or an academic issue. Maybe they are not performing. They will spend the day there working on

whatever they need. It is staffed by one of the teachers or an aide. Seven different people are assigned, one for each period. Students are sent for behavior or academic reasons, like refusing to perform. They stay until they are caught up. It might be a week for some kids; it may vary according to what the need is. But that kind of autonomy in your district, I think really, when a principal comes in and sees how things are handled here, they want to work here. We believe in what we are doing and we can handle the kids.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to add?

TAMS RE 2: I did cooperative learning training in your school district – that was when outcome-based education was around. I also do Choice theory. There is so much to the psychological base when we talk about what we are doing. Teaching kids is what you are doing. It's getting them to do what you want.

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