

ABSTRACT

Rex Ivan Howard. THE IMPACT OF STATE AND FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS UPON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION IN JOHNSTON COUNTY, NC, HIGH SCHOOLS. (Under the direction of Dr. Charles L. Thompson) Department of Educational Leadership, June, 2012.

As student accountability models have become the norm in the United States, first in individual states such as North Carolina and then throughout the nation with No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the implementation of inclusion as a curriculum delivery model for students with disabilities has been explored.

The purpose of this study was to examine how the establishments of state (ABCs) and federal (NCLB) accountability systems have influenced the ways and/or the degree/extent inclusion has been implemented in Johnston County, NC High Schools. This study examines four periods of time: (a) prior to PL 94-142, (b) after PL 94-142 until the North Carolina ABCs, (c) the ABCs, and (d) the present which includes the ABCs and NLCB. Institutional Theory and Street Level Bureaucracy Theory were used to examine and explain the data collected about the implementation process.

Administrative documents and data were collected and examined. Interviews with key personnel in the district were conducted and include superintendents, the chief academic officer, directors from the exceptional children's department, as well as principals, assistant principals, regular education and exceptional children's teachers. It was found that prior to the ABCs of North Carolina inclusion was not used as a method to instruct students with disabilities. After the ABCs were enacted, inclusion was introduced in Johnston County. The initial usage of inclusion was sparse, involving few students and teachers. Self-contained and resource classes were the preferred methods to educate students with disabilities. As No Child Left Behind became a law, more inclusion classes were used.

While the use of inclusion increased with No Child Left Behind, it was found that an audit by the U. S. Department of Education that reemphasized the highly qualified teacher provision of the law has been the driving force that has caused schools to use inclusion as the preferred method for the educating of students with disabilities. A comparison of data with the aforementioned theories shows implementation of inclusion more completely follows the tenets of institutional theory.

THE IMPACT OF STATE AND FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS UPON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION IN JOHNSTON COUNTY, NC HIGH SCHOOLS

A Dissertation

Presented To the Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Rex Ivan Howard

June, 2012

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank Johnston County Schools for allowing me to conduct this study and access data, documents, and personnel needed to complete the study. I would like to thank Dr. David Siegel, Dr. Hal Holloman, and Dr. Sandra Warren for your input, and your questions that took thought and effort to answer to make this study better. Finally, a special thank you goes to Dr. Charles Thompson, who chaired the dissertation committee. Your persistence in helping me see this study and the research process in general with different eyes has been crucial to the completion of this study. The many emails, phone conversations, and meetings have been invaluable to this process. I cannot thank you enough for your patience, insight, and direction.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to my loving wife Amanda, and our four wonderful children: Andrew, Jared, Caleb, and Rachel. Thank you for your loving patience through this entire process.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Need for Study

From the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (1965) to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001), legislators and educators have worked to improve educational opportunities for all students. The first legislation aimed at improving education for students with disabilities was PL 94-142, the Education for Handicapped Children Act (EHA) passed in 1975 (National Education Association, 2002). A major idea behind PL 94-142 is that students should be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (Kluth, Villa, & Thousand, 2002).

How to educate every student in the LRE is a challenge that has confronted every school district since passage of PL 94-142. The federal mandates of current legislation, NCLB require that increasing percentages of students achieve grade level proficiency each school year through 2014, when all students will be required to be proficient as measured by yearly state testing. States, with the approval of the United States Department of Education (USED) (2011a), set standards of proficiency beginning with the 2007-2008 school year. To ensure that the proficiency of all students is properly tracked, the USED has established subgroups of students for which schools are accountable. The subgroups include ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, and English language status. Students must also receive their education from highly qualified teachers as determined by the state and federal government (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2008a). One way to meet these multiple mandates and demands is by using inclusion methods of instructional delivery with students who benefit from additional assistance beyond normal delivery methods. Although the implementation of inclusion for students with disabilities was well-studied in the era before accountability, less is

known about the implementation of inclusion since the advent of state and federal accountability measures. Knowledge about the implementation of inclusion at the high school level is particularly sparse. This study will address the gap in knowledge about the implementation of inclusion in high school settings for students with disabilities.

Inclusion is the educational practice of identified students receiving educational accommodation and modifications in their regular classes (Carpenter & Dyal, 2007). According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2008a), the amount of time a student spends with non-disabled peers is used to determine the degree to which the LRE is established. This LRE determination is known as the continuum of services. A student who spends at least 80% of the day with non-disabled peers would be classified as being on the regular continuum; students who spend between 40% and 79% of their educational time with non-disabled peers would be on the resource continuum; and students who spend less than 40% of the school day with non-disabled peers would be classified as separate (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2008b). While students are being served on the resource level can and do sometimes receive inclusion services, the majority of students who are inclusion classes are being served on the regular continuum. This study will focus on students on the regular continuum who receive the regular curriculum in inclusion classes. The practice is used in many different schools and classes, and few schools or districts implement inclusion the same way (Banerji & Dailey, 1995). The courts have ruled in several cases that inclusion meets the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004), a reauthorization of PL 94-142. Two different tests, developed by the fourth and ninth circuits, have been used to determine whether the application of inclusion meets the mandate of an education in the LRE (Yell, 1995). A more detailed discussion of the legal definition and status of inclusion will be offered in chapter two.

In the 1990s, several states passed measures aimed at making schools accountable for the learning of their students (Sass, 2010; Texas Education Association, 2004). Beginning in 1996, North Carolina instituted the School-Based Management and Accountability Program, better known as the ABCs of North Carolina. A principal feature of the ABCs is assessment of reading and math skills in grades three through eight, and writing in grades four and seven. In the 2005-2006 school year, field testing in science for grades five and eight began. These grades are now tested annually in science as well as reading and mathematics (Davis, Leak, & Fabrizio, 2006).

The high school model was implemented in 1997, testing five core high school subjects and writing in grade ten, in 1998, five more EOC tests were added (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2011d). The model recognized schools whose students were found to be proficient on End-of-Course (EOC) tests and rewarded teachers by paying bonuses to teachers of schools where the overall proficiency met predetermined percentages. State appointed assistance teams can be assigned to schools whose students are considered not proficient based upon EOC test scores (Davis et al., 2006).

Statement of Problem

With the implementation of the ABCs in 1997, the emphasis was placed on school wide accountability. The ABCs measure schools by grades or subject areas to determine proficiency. Proficiency, for a high school student, is defined as the ability for a student to score a Level III or higher on an end-of-course test (EOC). EOC tests scores run from Level I to Level IV. Level III is considered to demonstrate basic mastery of the course material. Level IV indicates a superior level of content mastery, while Levels I and II indicate an inconsistent mastery of content demonstrated by students. The levels are based on raw scale scores (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2012a). The ABCs accountability model includes performance and growth

components. Performance is measured by the percentage of students in a school whose test scores are at or above Level III. Growth is a measure of progress a student or group of students make from one year to the next. Statistical formulas are used to calculate growth (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2012a). Every student who takes a particular test is combined in a single proficiency score for that grade or subject area. Thus, higher performing students can mask the performance of lower performing students. Schools whose students fail to meet their growth goals and who have less than 50% of their students test at above grade level are designated as low performing (The Common Sense Foundation, 2007). The Common Sense Foundation reported that some schools were recommending more students for exceptional children's evaluation and placing them in classes that would exempt them from EOC tests, a practice that further obscures the performance of students with disabilities. Students who fail EOC tests can be retained and also become candidates to drop out of school which is also a serious concern (Cole, 2006).

The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the most far-reaching reauthorization of ESEA in history, added two important components that went above and beyond what the ABCs required of schools. The first component required proficiency measurements of students divided into subgroups by gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES), students with disabilities, and limited English proficiency. All schools must test a minimum of 95% of students in each subgroup in the school to be in compliance. The other component requires that schools make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward 100% proficiency by the year 2014. These new guidelines prevent schools from hiding low achieving students and make both the students accountable for their work and the schools accountable for the students (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2008a).

With the demands of both ABCs and NCLB, along with the pressures of EOC testing how do schools meet the needs of all students, especially students with disabilities? The manner most commonly used to answer this question is an inclusion education model for students with disabilities. This model can take on several forms such as modeling, co-teaching, joint planning, and coaching, all method used in inclusion classes (Mills, 2004). A discussion of the various methods of inclusion will be provided in chapter two.

North Carolina schools have used inclusion to educate students with disabilities since the 1980s (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2006). Johnston County Schools, the North Carolina district in which this study was conducted, continues to use inclusion in its schools in grades six through twelve. This study focused solely on high school implementation of inclusion and its use with students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) to meet their educational needs and give them access to the general curriculum. Johnston County's emphasis on inclusion in its high schools is primarily in its English and mathematics classes, although some high schools provide inclusion classes in all core areas (English/language arts, math, science, and social studies).

Purpose of Study

In the evolution of federal and state policy environments pressing upon NC educators, we have seen a shift from (a) the process-oriented mandate in IDEA to the (b) outcome-oriented, school-wide pressures of ABCs, to (c) NCLB's focus on outcomes for subgroups within schools and its sanctions for schools that fail to make AYP toward 100% proficiency. Moreover, these "shifts" function as a series of policy environments that nest like a set of Russian dolls (see Figure 1). IDEA mandates that students should be educated in the LRE. Inclusion is a method to meet this mandate. Within that, the ABCs create incentives and sanctions for school

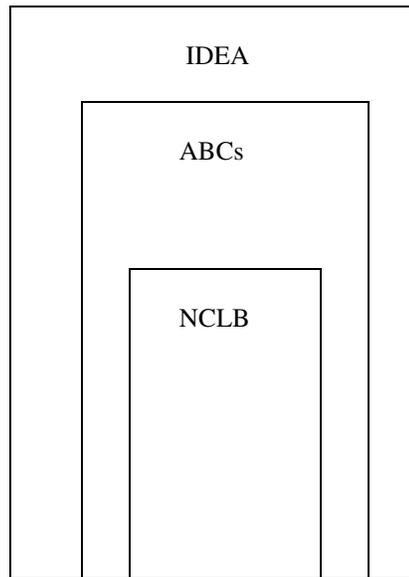


Figure 1. Illustration of how shifts in accountability measure nest like “Russian Dolls”.

performance. Within both IDEA and the ABCs, NCLB exerts further pressure for AYP for subgroups by ethnicity, SES, and disability status. Determining how these pressures affect the implementation of inclusive practices at the school level is the purpose of this study.

Significance of the Study

For the purpose of this study, inclusion will be defined as the practice of regular and special education teachers working together in the regular classroom to teach and provide exceptional children's services to meet the mandate of educating student in the least restrictive environment with highly qualified teachers. Students who are on the regular and resource continuum are included.

Research demonstrates that inclusion can be a useful method in helping students with disabilities (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2012b; Weiner, 2003). In inclusion classes, Weiner (2003) stated, "Both special and general education students can achieve academically as well as or better than their counterparts in non-inclusion classes" (p. 17). As noted previously, inclusion is widely used in Johnston County Schools. Yet as 2014 approaches, and the mandate to have all students demonstrate 100% proficiency, one subgroup that stands out in terms of its difficulty in achieving proficiency is the subgroup of students with disabilities. Johnston County schools that fail to meet AYP always have students with disabilities as one of their deficient subgroups (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2012b).

Inclusion is a method of instruction delivery used in Johnston County Schools, including its high schools. Research demonstrates that inclusion can be a useful method in helping students with disabilities become more successful in their educational endeavors. If inclusion can indeed prove effective in educating high school students with disabilities, why is inclusion

not a mandated practice? Why does a local school district not adopt inclusion as its policy to meet the educational needs of its students with disabilities? Is this lack of inclusion policy the product of the difficulty of effective learning measurement, or a lack of funding to effectively implement this practice? Perhaps the answer lies in the evolution of the implementation of inclusion in response to the changing policy environment described above. If so, this evolution may prove instructive for other school districts across the state and nation.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how the establishment of state (ABCs) and federal (NCLB) accountability systems has influenced the ways and/or the degree/extent inclusion has been implemented in Johnston County, NC High Schools. This dissertation will address the following questions:

- To what degree and in what ways was inclusion implemented prior to state and federal accountability systems (prior to 1996)?
- To what degree and in what ways was inclusion implemented after the establishment of the ABCs of North Carolina but before the passage of NCLB (1996 to December 2001)?
- To what degree and in what ways was inclusion implemented after the establishment of both the ABCs of North Carolina and No Child Left Behind (December 2001 to June 2011)?
- What do the answers to the above questions tell us about the impact of accountability upon the implementation of inclusion?

Overview of Methodology

These questions will be addressed by collecting several types of administrative data and documents concerning Johnston County High Schools. In addition, interviews with regular and special education teachers, as well as site administrators and system administrators will be conducted to gather qualitative data. Student and teacher assignment data will be gathered relative to the timeframes previously mentioned.

Johnston County and its high schools are of special interest as a study site due to their expansive growth. Johnston County is located adjacent to Wake County, which houses the North Carolina state capital, Raleigh. During the 1990s, Johnston County was the fastest growing county in North Carolina (ePodunk, 2007). As evidence of this growth, in 1998 Johnston County had 26 schools; by 2010 Johnston County had 43 schools (Johnston County Schools, 2012; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2012b). Another example of the growth the district has experienced - from 2000 to 2005, high school students identified as specific learning disabled more than doubled, going from 230 students in the 1999-2000 school year to 536 identified students in the 2005 – 2006 school year (Beyond 20/20, 2005).

With extraordinary growth in the county, and the additional students with disabilities that would accompany that growth, educating these students is a topic of concern and is the basis of this case study.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations surrounding this study include relying on recollection of persons in specific positions during the time being examined. As explained in chapter two, recollections from people involved in a particular work tend to gravitate toward positive memories and sometimes do not coincide with other sources of data. Gaining access to documents demonstrating

implementation and use of inclusion was limited. A major delimitation is data collected will only be from Johnston County high schools. Thus, while the findings may be suggestive for other districts, they will not be able to be generalized in any rigorous sense.

Federal and State Mandate Regarding Students with Disabilities

As stated previously, the state of North Carolina began to hold teachers and students accountable in the classroom with the passage of the ABCs of North Carolina in the 1996 -1997 school year. The high school accountability model would be introduced the next school year. While no specific guidelines were given for students with disabilities, until the 1999-2000 school year a student could be removed from an EOC course without penalty at any time. Beginning with the 1999-2000 school year, a student had to be removed from a class prior to ten days of class for semester classes, or 20 days in year-long classes (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2011d). This absence of a cutoff for student removal could be used to remove students thought not to be capable of performing well on an EOC test.

NCLB introduced subgroups of students, students with disabilities being one of those subgroups, and school districts were required to test 95% of all students in a subgroup to be in compliance with the law. This aided in the prohibition of student removal from EOC classes.

The Impact of Accountability upon the Implementation of Inclusion

Prior to the ABCs or NCLB, inclusion was not used as a method of curriculum delivery for students with disabilities in North Carolina. In Johnston County high schools, the use of inclusion began around the time of the introduction of the ABCs. Data shows that the use of inclusion was not great and did not impact many students. Greater emphasis was given to inclusion after the passage of NCLB. More students received services in an inclusion setting; however, the overall number of students impacted was small. An audit conducted in 2009,

dealing with highly qualified teachers providing content instruction rather than exceptional children's teachers provided content instruction, has brought the largest increase of inclusion classes. This is discussed further in chapters four and five.

Research Organization

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter one has introduced the federal and state mandates regarding the education of students with disabilities, the question of how accountability has affected the implementation of inclusion, and the general methodological approach of the study. It also details the research questions and limitations of the study. Chapter two is a review of the literature about inclusion, best practices, and the evolution of both federal and state laws regarding student accountability and the education of students with disabilities. Chapter three contains details of a discussion of the research design and methodology. Chapter four will present the findings. Chapter five will offer further interpretation, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize prior research on the implementation of inclusion in order to (a) clarify what is already known and with what degree of confidence, (b) help conceptualize the phenomenon under study (the implementation of inclusion) in more detail and more clearly, and (c) situate the present study at the edge of accumulating knowledge about the implementation of inclusion. First, I will present a brief history of inclusion education, including a review of key court cases that have been vital in establishing the legality of inclusive education. I will also describe successful inclusion strategies based on existing research. Next, I will review existing research on the implementation of inclusion before and after the institution of state and federally mandated test-based accountability systems. In addition, I will present two theories that will be used to deepen understanding of the dynamics involved in the implementation process: Institutional Theory and Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory. I will discuss how the empirical research supports and/or disputes these theories. I will also use these theories to frame hypotheses concerning what I found as the research proceeded. The present study focuses especially on contrasts between the implementation of inclusion before and after the implementation of accountability systems, and to the degree that existing research permits, I will highlight these contrasts.

History of Inclusion

To remind the reader, inclusion is the practice of providing students with disabilities services in the regular classroom, enabling them to be educated with their peers in the least restrictive environment. Inclusion models began to be used in the mid-1980s. The impetus for this movement was the Regular Education Initiative (REI), which was a push to get general education interested in special education concerns (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995). Inclusion was used in

order to give students an opportunity to be educated with their nondisabled peers (Murawski & Swanson, 2001). In 1990, when PL 94-142 was reauthorized and became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the mandate to educate each child in the least restrictive environment was reemphasized and strengthened. Inclusion was now seen as the best method for meeting this mandate (Banejri & Daily, 1995; Daniel & King, 1997). Daniel and King pointed out that PL 94-142 was not the only law to address the teaching of students with disabilities in the regular classroom. In 1986, PL 99-457, the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments expanded the ages of children eligible to receive services to as early as three years old and took them to 21 years old (Howell, 1998). In 1990, PL 101-476, the reauthorization of PL 94-142, which is now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), expanded the types of disabling conditions covered by law to provide an integrated educational experience for students with disabilities (Howell, 1998). In 2004, IDEA was reauthorized again and updated to align its mandates with the mandates of NCLB (Blau, 2007).

Inclusion not only includes the receiving of services in the classroom, but also includes assessment. The assessment of students receiving inclusion services is critical to the evaluation of the inclusion program (Elliot, McKeivitt, & Kettler, 2002).

Services that students receive for both instruction and assessment while in inclusion classes include accommodations and modifications. Elliot et al. (2002) define the accommodation as a change in the way the assessment is administered. Examples of accommodations include students receiving extended testing time, having tests read aloud, and allowing students to mark in test booklets and having someone transfer the answers to the answer sheet on behalf of the student. Elliot et al. continues by defining modification as a change in the content of the test or assessment. Examples of modifications are reducing assignments, such as

reducing the number of homework problems assigned or reducing the number of multiple choice responses on a test.

As laws regarding students with disabilities have impacted testing, the manners in which some students with disabilities are tested have changed. The 1997 reauthorization of IDEA caused North Carolina to develop alternate assessments for students who could not take a standard multiple-choice test (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2003). Two different assessments were developed to allow students with disabilities to fulfill the requirement of IDEA that all students participate in statewide and local testing programs (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2003; 2009d).

The North Carolina Alternate Assessment Portfolio (NCAAP) was developed for students who have a serious cognitive deficit. IEP teams and EC teachers could develop goals for students based on competencies found the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2003).

The North Carolina Academic Alternate Assessment Inventory (NCAAAI) was developed for students who did not have serious cognitive deficits, but who are not able to participate in the regular multiple-choice testing program. The NCAAAI was adaptable to a student's particular need: reading, mathematics, and writing. These assessments were designed for students who may have learning disabilities in specific areas rather than cognitive delays (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2003).

As NCLB further impacted accountability standards, the manner in which students with disabilities was assessed. The evaluation of students with disabilities evolved and the NCAAP and NCAAAI were abandoned for the NCEXTEND1 and the NCEXTEND2 (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2009b; 2009c). The NCEXTEND1 is designed as a

performance based assessment for students with serious cognitive disabilities (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2009b). The Extend 1 selections can be read aloud to the student (an accommodation) and flash cards with the question and answers may be used as well (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2009b)

The NCEXTEND2 is intended for students who are working on grade-level achievement but are having continued difficulty in making progress in the same time frame as their non-disabled peers. The NCEXTEND2 includes shorter reading passages and fewer answer choices than the regularly administered EOC tests (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2009c).

Beginning in 2008, the state began to examine its curriculum and testing programs. The process is referred to as Accountability and Curriculum Reform Effort (ACRE). This process is scheduled to run through the 2012 -2013 school year. The national movement to adopt educational standards has been incorporated into this effort and as a result, North Carolina has adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (Office of Governor Bev Perdue, 2010). Along with the CCSS is the adoption of the Essential Standards (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2011f). The CCSS is a more rigorous curriculum of mathematics and English/language arts that require higher order application of knowledge and high-order skills (Office of Governor Bev Perdue, 2010). The Essential Standards link science, social studies, the arts, and career and technical education to the CCSS (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2011b).

The CCSS have been adopted by 50 states and territories in the United States (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). The purpose of these standards is to ensure that all high school students are prepared for post-secondary education and work-force success (Common

Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). This is to ensure that all students regardless of where they receive their education learn the needed skills and possess the essential knowledge to be competitive in a global economy (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012).

The CCSS includes with core standards essences that allow IEP teams to develop plans for the education of students with disabilities (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2011e). While most students will receive instruction from the CCSS, the essences will allow for student who traditionally have been assessed using alternative assessments to have their learning and testing on grade level and aligned with the CCSS (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2011b).

Legal Foundation of Inclusion

There have been many court rulings that have addressed the constitutionality of inclusion. Some of the cases, with the year(s) settled, are as follows: *Daniel R.R. v. State Board of Education*, 1989; *Board of Education v. Holland*, 1992, 1994; and *Oberti v. Board of Education*, 1992, 1994 (Osborne & Diamattia, 1994; Yell, 1995). These cases set forth the determining factors for the effective use of inclusion education in the regular classroom versus using a separate setting to educate disabled students (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994; Yell, 1995). In both the Daniel R. R. and Holland cases, the courts set forth guidelines to determine whether a school district had truly provided an education in the least restrictive environment possible.

The fifth circuit ruled in the Daniel R. R. case that the following questions must be answered favorably to pass the first prong of the test. First, can a free appropriate public education (FAPE) be achieved in the regular classroom with the use of modified assignments, and supplementary aids and services? If regular classroom placement with services provided has not been considered, the school would fail the first prong of the test and would violate the

student's rights. A school does not have to go to extraordinary lengths in its attempt to fulfill this prong of the test, but must make more than token gestures (Yell, 1995).

Other questions must be addressed to fulfill the first prong of the test. Does the student receive educational benefit from being in the regular classroom? The school must determine whether the student can understand the important elements of the curriculum in the regular classroom. Does the student benefit socially? Is the regular classroom detrimental to the student's individual needs? What effect does having this particular student in the classroom have upon the other students in the class, and does the student take the majority of the teacher's time due to his or her behavior? A team writing an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that can answer each of these positively would need to place the student in a regular classroom in an inclusion setting (Yell, 1995).

If any of these questions could not be answered positively, the second prong of the test would be addressed. The second prong of the test asks "Is the student as inclusively educated as possible?" If the student is not capable of learning in regular classes for any of the discussed reasons, the IEP team would explore if the student could be placed in regular classes for non-academic subjects such as music, art, physical education, as well as recess and lunch. If these concerns have been met, the mandates of IDEA have been met. The state and school system in which the Daniel R. R. test was developed was found to be in compliance with IDEA (Yell, 1995).

The *Board of Education v. Holland* test, commonly known as the Rachel H. test, was developed by the ninth circuit and addressed education in the least restrictive environment. In this case the court considered four factors to determine whether the mandates of IDEA were met. The first factor considers whether the student benefits educationally from the regular classroom

setting in the presence of supplementary aids and services. The school's responsibility would be to demonstrate that a more restrictive setting would be more beneficial for the student in question. The second factor is to consider the nonacademic benefits of the regular and special education classrooms. Can the student develop the social and communications skills needed in each classroom? The regular classroom is to be given preference to the special education classroom. The third factor to consider would be the impact of the particular student's presence in the classroom. Would the student's presence be a detriment to other students in the classroom due to behavior and other issues that would distract or monopolize the teacher's time? The fourth factor is cost. Does educating the student in question in the regular classroom place an undue financial burden on the school and school district? The answers to this question determine the fulfillment of IDEA regulations. In this case the school system was found not to be in compliance with IDEA (Yell, 1995).

In *Oberti v. Board of Education of the Borough of Clementon School District* the court ruled that a segregated special education class was not the least restrictive environment for a student with Down's syndrome. The court further ruled that the school system has an obligation to consider placing students with disabilities in general classrooms with the use of supplementary services and aids before looking for other alternatives. Schools must maximize general education opportunity for all students, and it is the school's responsibility to demonstrate that a student's disabilities are so severe that placement in the general classroom does not serve the student's needs (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994).

Successful Inclusion Strategies

Early successes with inclusion models, where students with disabilities have demonstrated content mastery, were found where a strong commitment to inclusionary practices

exists. There are several key components to successful implementation of inclusion. Some of these components include the following: collaborations between general and special education teachers, the development of appropriate curricula, featuring meaningful and concrete applications of the content to be learned, and strong administrative leadership, as evidenced by positive attitudes toward inclusion and resource allocation (Hornby, 1999; Richardson, 1998; Sailor & Roger, 2005; Thousand, Rosenberg, Bishop, & Villa, 1997). Among students with specific learning disabilities (SLD), students served in an inclusion environment achieved higher course grades in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies than did SLD students served in pull-out teaching models (Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002). Klingner, Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, and Elbaum (1998), also reported that SLD students demonstrated improvement in the areas of reading and math, the improvement in reading being measured as significant. These studies were done with elementary students, the most frequently studied group of EC students. Mastropieri and Scruggs (2001) examine effective teaching skills referring to them as SCREAM variables. SCREAM variables are structure, clarity, redundancy, enthusiasm, appropriate pace, and maximum engagement. It was reported that using the SCREAM variables greatly improved learning for students with disabilities.

Another inclusion strategy that has proven helpful is peer assistance; effective communication between regular and special education teachers to share teaching strategies is important in the process of successful implementation of inclusion. A team approach to the educating students with disabilities is seen as a key component to success. Team members can include regular education teachers, special education teachers, parents, department chairs, and administrators (Appl, Troha, & Rowell, 2001). Peer assistance is the pairing of regular education students with students with disabilities in a one on one arrangement as well as group learning.

One of the most promising and productive approaches to inclusion is the practice of collaborative teaching (Carpenter & Dial, 2007; Cole, 2006). Individual Education Plan (IEP) teams work together to determine the best services, supplementary aids, accommodations, and modifications to best serve the individual student. The IEP team consists of regular and special educators, administrators, specialists, parents, and students (Carpenter & Dial, 2007). Carpenter and Dyal further reported that in the IDEA collaboration model, the principal supports meaningful professional development to implement successful strategies. Principals are also responsible for considering the needs of students, size of the class and disabilities of the students within the class. The content area, the experience and effectiveness of the classroom teacher, and the supplemental services to be delivered to students must be considered as well.

Collaborative teaching can take on several different styles of instruction. The Appelbaum Training Institute (2005) defines six methods of inclusion teaching. The Collaborative Team method involved 50/50 approach with both teachers teaching equal parts on the lesson. There is the quarterback-team approach where the regular education teacher is the leader or “quarterback” and the other teachers are the “team.” The quarterback provides the instruction and both teachers provide support to the students. Parallel teaching is a method in which both teachers carry out separate agendas at the same time. The pull-out system involves the removal of selected students for part of the instructional day. The push-in method has the special education teacher coming into the classroom for a portion of the instructional period. The final identified method is the teacher follows student model, where the teacher follows specific students to each class to provide support.

Additional research has yielded other methods used in inclusion classrooms. Idol (2006) reports the use of two models in addition to cooperative (co-teaching) and the pull-out method:

(a) consulting teaching services, where the special education teacher consults with the regular education teacher to provide strategies, accommodations, and methods; (b) instructional assistants, paraprofessionals who assist students with disabilities in their classes. Holodick (2008) reports two additional models of inclusion to those previously mentioned: (a) Station teaching model, students rotating between the regular education and special education teacher to receive specific predetermined amounts of the objectives being taught during the day's lesson; (b) Shared teaching allows both teacher to plan and make decisions about what is to be taught and to divide the teaching duties between them to allow for both teachers to deliver instruction and assist students with lesson comprehension.

Other strategies that have merit in the classroom are peer tutoring and priming. Peer tutoring is a form of cooperative learning in which students tutor each other and share the knowledge and strengths with each other (Farlow, 1996; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001). Farlow also promotes the practice of "priming" or pre-teaching materials to inclusion students to give them foreknowledge and familiarity with specific material to be covered in class.

Before Accountability: Barriers to Successful Implementation

In the years before accountability systems were adopted, research also identified barriers to successful inclusion implementation. Daniel and King (1997) pointed out that there are those who oppose inclusion as a "one size fits all" approach that does not specifically address the individual student. Fuchs and Fuchs (1995) point out in some cases exceptional children's programs have become so large and segregated from the general classroom that they become a school system unto themselves. Students in this type of setting are not connected in any way to the general classroom or curriculum. Fuchs and Fuchs add that two systems, regular and special education have run separately for so long, that regular education teachers do not know how to

integrate special needs students into their classrooms. Lipsky (2005) agrees that the dual system of regular and special education operates to the detriment of students. Daniel and King also cite as a problem that some educators see inclusion simply as a cost cutting measure; placing students with disabilities in regular classrooms costs less than specialized instruction in a separate setting.

Mastropieri and Scruggs (2001) report another barrier to the implementation of inclusion at the high school level is the necessity of specific content area knowledge for both student and teacher. An example cited is the concern of a high school chemistry teacher over the weakness of special education students' skills in algebra. These skills are needed for successful mastery of chemistry content, but they are not taught in a chemistry class. Another problem is the pace at which high school classes take place. Teachers have responsibilities to cover the entire curriculum in their respective classes in a relatively short period of time and special education students typically have trouble with this pacing (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001). Others feel that gains in student attainment, improved self-esteem, social acceptance, and increased racial integration are more the products of other factors in education, rather than inclusion (Hornby, 1999). Another barrier to the implementation of inclusion is the lack of research in the area. Mastropieri and Scruggs point out most research that has been conducted in the implementation of inclusion is in the area of elementary education. Existing research regarding the use of inclusion in high schools has occurred primarily during the post accountability era and will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Extent of Implementation Prior to the Accountability Movement

The movement to use inclusion methods in teaching began in the 1980s (Partners in Education, 2008). In the 1993-1994 school year, the USED reported that 43.4% of identified students with disabilities were served in a regular classroom setting (Ludwigsen & Vanderpoel,

2000). The USED reported that in the 1999-2000 school year 95.9% of all students with disabilities were served in the regular school building with 47.3% receiving services outside the regular classroom for less than 21% of the school day (United States Department of Education, 2002). Even in inclusion settings students do leave the classroom to receive accommodations such as small group instruction, and testing in a separate room. This time an EC student spends outside the regular classroom receiving services is part of the 20% of the school day that students on the regular continuum spend outside the regular classroom. As discussed previously, students who are in the regular classroom for greater than 79% of the school day are considered to be on the regular continuum. The percentage of students in the regular school buildings remained the same (95.9%) in 2004, but the percentage of students who received services outside of the regular classroom for less than 21% of the school day increased to 52.1% (United States Department of Education, 2006b). The 4.8% increase indicates that more students are being educated in the regular classroom post-NCLB. For this increase in the percentage of student receiving services in the regular classroom to take place, an explanation could be the use of inclusion.

Implementation Post Accountability

As mentioned earlier, prior to the accountability movement, there is little research dealing with inclusion in high school settings. There has been an increase in research on inclusion in high schools as states along with the federal government have championed accountability in education. One motivating factor is the concern for students with disabilities themselves. Mark Holodick (2008) reported that the drop-out rate for student with disabilities was more than two times greater than that of regular education students. The drop-out rate is enough to cause educators to look for better ways to educate students with disabilities in hopes to help these

students earn high school diplomas. One way that students with disabilities are to receive help is their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Holodick believes that the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA promotes co-teaching, a method of inclusion, by requiring the presence of a regular education teacher in an IEP meeting. The reauthorization also requires that the IEP demonstrate how the student is to benefit or have access to the general curriculum. McKee (2011) added that the parents and advocates for students with disabilities feel that inclusion is the best way to educate all children with disabilities.

McKee discussed the differences between inclusion models of an elementary school versus that of a high school. She lists five reasons an elementary model of inclusion cannot be effectively used in a high school setting: (a) The culture of a high school, when compared to an elementary school is impersonal, hurried, hierarchical, and competitive. Students are compared with each other in nearly all aspects of school life and those are the “best” are more valued. In contrast, elementary schools are more balanced, placing more emphasis on community, sharing, and working together. (b) Most people see young people with severe disabilities as needing training that is far different than their non-disabled peers. They see the needs of disabled students as needing daily life skills, e.g. transportation, work skills and habits, and being able to care of oneself. These needs are seen as more vital than time spent with non-disabled peers. All students in elementary schools spend some time in life skills training. (c) Many educators believe that the only acceptable goal for students in academic classes is the pursuit of academic content knowledge. Socialization and other benefits of high school classes are not seen as important. (d) The fast pace of high school classes and the methods high school teachers used to transmit knowledge also present difficulties for students with disabilities, such as note taking, memorization, and objective testing. This high pace of instruction is in contrast with elementary

models that are more supportive and allows for errors and rewards effort. (e) The final factor making an elementary model of inclusion difficult to use in a high school setting is scheduling. High schools classes have defined periods of time, and students will have several teachers. Elementary schools are more likely to have one teacher teaching several subjects and time restraints are not as great a factor (McKee, 2011). These factors make implementing inclusion in high schools more difficult than in elementary schools. Holodick (2008) states that while parents and educators have been proponents of inclusion, there is little in the way of data to support its success in high schools.

With the passage of state accountability measures, such as the ABCs of North Carolina and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), inclusion education has taken on greater importance. With the passage of NCLB, the focus is on accountability for outcomes for students with disabilities rather than simply on the students having access to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. In other words, NCLB makes schools accountable for student achievement results rather than accountable for simply procedural compliance (McLaughlin & Thurlow, 2003).

North Carolina was one of the first states to implement testing in order to measure both student learning and the school's effort to cover the standard course of study. Carnoy and Loeb (2002) reported that North Carolina's testing and assessments of its students and schools during the period of 1994-1999 were seen as some of the most strenuous measures in the country. Students who attended schools in states with strong accountability measures, such as North Carolina, demonstrated improving scores in mathematics on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Carnoy & Loeb, 2002). Carnoy and Loeb suggest that the presence of higher standards contribute to the higher scores.

Many of the same strategies for inclusion are now used as they were used prior to the implementation of NCLB. However, the frequency with which these strategies have been used have increased greatly (Rea et al., 2002). This increase in inclusive strategies in classrooms and schools has stemmed from the need to fulfill various demands. These demands include better curriculum delivery for exceptional children, social equity, and cost reduction (Rea et al., 2002). The new legislation, particularly the new federal legislation, presents new challenges to the education of exceptional children. Ratcliffe and Willard (2006) and Cole (2006) report that parents of exceptional children and other advocates believe that NCLB has had the greatest impact on the education of students with disabilities since PL 94-142. NCLB has changed the way educators work with students with disabilities because of the accountability that schools have for achievement by each individual child (Carpenter & Dial, 2007; Cole, 2006; Ratcliffe & Willard, 2006). This improvement and increased achievement can be attributed to common planning and increased communication between general and special education teachers and inclusive teaching methods such as co-teaching (Rea et al., 2002). As mentioned earlier, the U.S. Department of Education reported the percentages of students served in the regular classroom and received a portion of their services outside the classroom for less than 21% of the school day are at all-time highs (United States Department of Education, 2006a). Dr. Martha L. Thurlow (2004), Director of The National Center on Educational Outcomes, stated that students with disabilities have met the higher standards that NCLB dictates. Dr. Thurlow stated before the Committee on Education and the Workforce, House of Representatives, “We know how to educate all children, including those with disabilities, if we have the will to do so.” There is nationwide evidence that more students with disabilities are taking and passing rigorous courses and state prepared exams (Thurlow, 2004). Many states have documented increases in the

number of students enrolling in and being measured as proficient in the chosen courses (Thurlow, 2004). This phenomenon has not been observed in Johnston County Schools, where greater numbers of students with disabilities are participating in state sanctioned testing and are being measured proficient, however the number of students with disabilities that are testing proficient is below that of their non-disabled peers. While high school students with disabilities have yet to reach the proficiency levels of their non-disabled peers, they have consistently surpassed the state average percentages for students with disabilities across the entire state (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2012b).

The uses of inclusion education methods along with strong leadership in an era of increased accountability appear to have produced positive results for many students with disabilities. Included in this strong leadership is a commitment to provide time for planning, training, and resources to teachers involved with inclusion (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001). This commitment to planning, training and resources has not occurred without difficulties and controversies. The passage of NCLB, while praised for making schools and teachers accountable for each student, raised other concerns. Some of these are with the curriculum presented to students and with those who present the curriculum. Cole (2006) stated that critics of NCLB report that the effect of the law narrows the curriculum, meaning that what is taught has been reduced or narrowed to only what is to be tested. Other concerns are the making “scapegoats” of exceptional children by blaming them for school’s perceived shortcomings (Cole, 2006). The high stakes nature of testing of students for the sake of determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) places a great deal of pressure on both teachers and students because of the NCLB mandate that all student reach proficiency by 2014. In addition, there are concerns about dropout rates as well as high retention rates of exceptional children (Cole, 2006).

Another cited problem with NCLB is the mandate that all classroom teachers be “highly qualified” in the field in which they teach. This requirement creates problems for those who work with students who have disabilities. The law requires that teachers be highly qualified in each area in which they teach. Yet with the broad subject areas that exceptional children's teachers deal with, certification in every area is nearly impossible (Ratcliffe & Willard, 2006). In North Carolina, to be deemed highly qualified in a specific content area, a teacher must have passed a licensure test in the content area, hold a degree in a particular content area, or have a minimum of twenty-four (24) semester hours of course work in the content area. Considering the cost of licensure exams and additional course work, most teachers are not willing or do not have available resources to become highly qualified in all four core areas (English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies).

In response to the demand for accountability, states have adopted a variety of measures used to demonstrate student achievement and compliance. As of 2002 these measures included achievement test scores (32 states), drop-out rates (13 states), student attendance (17 states), expenditure and use of resources (3 states), graduation rates (8 states), student behavior, discipline, truancy, expulsion, and/or suspension (6 states) and transition to post-secondary education, or employment after high school (4 states) (McLaughlin & Thurlow, 2003).

In North Carolina, the number of students with disabilities who are deemed proficient based on their test scores is rising (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2012b). While North Carolina educators report positive outcomes with the use of inclusion practices, the apparent conflicts between IDEA and NCLB still seem to be the largest barrier to improved student learning and achievement.

Perhaps the biggest barrier is that IDEA requires the IEP team to decide upon goals for exceptional children as well as upon an appropriate assessment of those goals. However, NCLB states that a team approach is fine as long as the school reaches Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based upon a standardized assessment (Cole, 2006). Until the 2010 – 2011 school year, no North Carolina alternative assessment met the federal standard to be counted toward AYP. Student taking alternative assessments were counted as non-participants in the AYP calculations (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2009a). In the 2010 – 2011 school year the NC EXTEND1 and NC EXTEND2 tests were aligned with the North Carolina standard course of study sufficiently to be counted toward AYP (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2011c).

Despite the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 to more fully align IDEA with NCLB, (United States Department of Education, 2007) some feel that more needs to be done. Ratcliffe and Willard (2006), and Cole (2006) suggest that any reauthorization of NCLB should require an alignment with IDEA to best benefit all students. As an example, Ratcliffe and Willard advocate for the consistent application of student modifications, in the classroom as well as in testing. Cole contends that NCLB should be reauthorized to reflect a growth model for improvement, rather than a pre-set standardized passing score for each grade level.

Cole (2006) notes that North Carolina along with Tennessee participated in a pilot program that includes a growth model. Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year, North Carolina began using a growth model for AYP purposes in a pilot program approved by the USED. This model was applied after all other statistical methods and safe harbor had been applied to a schools' proficiency targets. The model determined a baseline for all non-proficient students, using the third grade pre-test since this is the first year students enter the accountability

model. A growth trajectory is calculated from the pre-test score that will allow the student to become proficient in four years. Each year students must reduce the difference between their scores and their four year proficiency mark by 25%. If the student can accomplish this, he or she will be counted as proficient for that statistical year. At the end of the four years, the student should have completed the growth trajectory and be on grade level. For students who enter the state after the third grade, meaning that they have no third grade pre-test, the baseline is established on their first end-of-grade test. The growth trajectory then calls for the gap to close by 33% that year, and for the student to be proficient in four years, using year one as a baseline (United States Department of Education, 2006a). In 2008, the provisions for any state choosing to use a growth model to determine AYP were written into regulation. Currently, North Carolina is one of 15 states to use a growth model to determine AYP (United States Department of Education, 2011a).

Another positive measure taken by North Carolina that could produce higher numbers of students being measured proficient is the decision allowing a student's first opportunity to retest on an EOC or EOG test to be calculated as part of AYP. Prior to the 2008-2009 school year, only the score of the first attempt of an EOC or EOG was allowed to be used in AYP calculations. The state did allow schools and LEAs to count students proficient if their test scores were a level II that was within one standard error of measurement (SEM) of the set Level III score. Effective with the 2008-2009 school year, if a student takes a retest on an EOC or EOG, the higher of the two scores (test or retest) can be used in AYP determinations. The use of Level II score within one SEM of the set score for Level III has been discontinued (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2009a).

The requirements of highly qualified teachers and defining and focusing upon student performance has caused schools to look for ways to more effectively deliver the regular curriculum to all students, especially those with disabilities. The use of inclusion classes is the way that has been chosen to accomplish this within Johnston County high schools (Johnston County Schools, 2011b).

The Effects of Accountability

The research reviewed above deals with the movement for greater accountability in schools. The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA, the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), required that disabled students participate in the same general curriculum as non-disabled students. Since the passage of NCLB, the percentage of disabled student spending more than 80% of their day in a regular education classroom has risen from a pre-NCLB rate of 46% to a rate approaching 80% in 2006 (Lewis, n.d.). In order to meet the mandate of 100% proficiency by 2014, North Carolina set proficiency benchmarks for the percentage of students testing as proficient. The percentage of students that must reach proficiency level for the school to be considered successful has risen in increments every three years. The benchmarks will continue to rise until they reach 100% in the 2013-2014 school year. The state has seen the need to strengthen the standard course of study to raise the level of student learning (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2006). These revisions impact teachers and students because both groups have to learn what parts of the curriculum are needed to be presented more in depth for students to be considered successful.

Impact of Inclusion

Giagreco (1997) reported that positive outcomes from the use of inclusive education methods have included a greater awareness of surroundings by the disabled students. Greater

skill acquisition was noted among students in the regular classroom. Raised academic expectations, new relationships, and greater enjoyment of school for students with disabilities were also reported. Students without disabilities reported greater appreciation for human diversity and increased responsiveness to others in need with and without disabilities. Teachers reported that disabled students were able to follow and contribute to classroom conversations, and that their ability to participate increased as more time was spent in the classroom. Regular education students demonstrated greater acceptance of disabled students, and tending to gravitate towards them in the classroom. Teachers also reported that they felt that they had become better teachers, and more capable planners (Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, & Schattman, 1993). Salend and Duhaney (1999) reported that a study conducted with elementary school students divided into three groups: (a) full inclusion, (b) combined services (inclusion, and selected resource services), and (c) pull-out or resource services, resulted in the students receiving the combined services had significant gains in achievement over the students enrolled in the other two models.

Factors Not Considered in This Study

The focus of this study is the implementation of inclusion in the education of students with disabilities. Other factors that have not been considered and affect students with disabilities are how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 have impacted student access to the general curriculum (McLaughlin & Thurlow, 2003). Another factor that has been neglected is the amount of time students with disabilities spend in the regular education classroom (Malmgren, McLaughlin, & Nolet, 2005). These factors add layers to IDEA and the challenge of educating all students.

Theoretical Perspectives

As a guide in conducting this case study, I relied on two separate and distinct theoretical perspectives, institutional theory and street-level bureaucracy. The theoretical perspectives were used a pattern or template in which to measure or compare data collected in the study. These comparisons will be displayed and discussed in chapters four and five.

Institutional Theory

According to Scott (2004), institutional theory “considers the processes by which structures, including schemas, rules, norms, and routines, become established as authoritative guidelines for social behavior” (p. 2). A major theme of institutional theory addresses how organizations will adopt policies and practices that look remarkably similar to one another despite a range of differing circumstances, such as resources and size. Burch (2007) attributes this similarity in policy and practice to the need to establish legitimacy for the organization. Burch also states that these policies and practices reflect the rules and structures of a wider society.

This idea of the institution adopting policies to give itself legitimacy and reflecting the wider view of society can be seen in the adoption of No Child Left Behind. Several states, such as North Carolina and Texas, had already passed legislation mandating great accountability from its public schools before the federal NCLB legislation was enacted, and these states served as models for NCLB. This mirroring of prior legislation to further legitimize the current legislation is referred to as “structural isomorphism” (Burch, 2007).

Scott (2008) refers to three areas that are vital to institutions. These three areas Scott refers to as “three pillars of institutions” are the regulatory, the normative, and the cognitive-cultural. Scott uses each of these “pillars” to demonstrate important aspects of institutions. Scott

discusses the basis of legitimacy in the regulative pillar as legal sanction, meaning that the institutional procedures became what they are due to law or rule. The normative pillar would receive legitimacy by being morally governed, or by doing what is seen as decent or right. The cognitive-cultural pillar receives its legitimacy through doing what is culturally recognized and supported (Scott, 2008).

Hanson (2001) applies Scott's three pillars of institutions and further applies them to educational organizations. The regulative pillar consists of the rules, laws, and legal mandates that are in place that influence policy and procedure. Examples of the regulative pillar would be legislation such as P.L. 94-142 that must be adhered to because it is law. The normative pillar includes the unwritten rules of an organization, what is considered appropriate, the "way things are done around here." Hansen uses the example of coaches teaching sportsmanship over winning at all cost to explain the normative pillar. In terms of educating students with disabilities this pillar would include procedures for placing students in classes, and the student makeup of those classes as well. The cultural-cognitive pillar comes from the aspects of the organization that are taken for granted, such as the traditional image of what a "good school" looks like, for example having a clean physical plant, well behaved and orderly students, and classrooms with desks in straight lines facing the front of the room, with the teacher at the head of the class. Examples of what an inclusion class "should" look like would include both the regular and special education teachers moving around the room helping all students, the two teachers alternating between teaching and monitoring, and the class being divided into two groups and each teacher working with a group.

Oliver (1991) states that institutional theory can explain how organizations adapt to stresses placed upon the organization. She refers to these actions as strategic responses. She

lists five strategies with their corresponding tactics: acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, and manipulation. Due to the nature of public schools and their dependence upon local, state, and federal dollars, the last two responses of defiance and manipulation are rarely seen. Acquiescence is the acceptance of the laws, rules, and mandates imposed upon an organization, and the conformity that comes with that acceptance. Compromise, as the name suggests, is an organization doing only what is necessary to be compliant in the face of what appear to be conflicting demands within the organization, or between conditions in the organizations and the mandate placed upon the organization. Avoidance appears when an organization attempts to hide its nonconformity or tries to escape from rules and expectations associated with the demands placed upon an organization. Example of these three strategic responses as it pertains to inclusion education could include: (a) exact adherence to the IDEA definition of LRE and using inclusion for every student (acquiescence), (b) using the IEP team recommendations to place students in one of many placement options in a continuum of EC services (compromise), or (c) a school or district that either does not serve students with disabilities at all or chooses to serve them in only one manner that does not address the student's individual needs (avoidance).

In this case study, institutional theory will be used to determine how much the procedures in individual high schools mirror one another in dealing with inclusion and exceptional children, and how much these procedures give legitimacy to the institution (individual school). An additional interest will be to determine how the schools show compliance to the accountability legislation -- in Oliver's terms, whether they (the schools) acquiesce or compromise.

The thought of organizations responding to stress and keeping in mind the need for legitimacy of its structures, will help with the understanding of organizational learning. Hansen

(2001) names five ways that organizations learn: copying, learning from personal experience, learning by observing, grafting on carriers, and sensing the external environment. The first three organizational learning styles are self-explanatory. Grafting on carriers is the seeking out and hiring of persons with specific skills that the organization needs. The final method of sensing the external environment involves seeking out better methods for the organization by searching scholarly articles or attending seminars to receive training. Hanson's explanation relates very well to how high schools and school districts in general operate. Schools frequently copy what others are doing, learn and adapt from personal experience, hire personnel with specific needed skills, and train employees and help them obtain certain skills. These methods of learning were used as inclusion became popular, and examples of the learning process, particularly sensing the external environments through staff development, will be discussed in the findings.

Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory

The conceptual framework of street-level bureaucracy first surfaced about forty years ago with one of its major proponents being Lipsky (1971). This framework emphasizes the "street-level" bureaucrat, or person or persons who are at the implementation level. In education, teachers work most closely with students and would implement new policies and procedures; thus the teachers are the street-level bureaucrats.

Street-level bureaucracy theory came as a result of researchers attempting to understand the implementation of policy, particularly of governmental programs of the 1960s. deLeon and deLeon (2002) noted that among researchers there was a division of opinion on the most effective implementation strategy between top-down (management led) or bottom-up (worker led). Those who saw top-down as most effective viewed hierarchal leaders as the group who had the authority to implement policy. Lipsky (1971) was one who recognized the importance of and

need to involve the people who would implement the policy and dubbed them “street-level bureaucrats.”

Lipsky (1971) states that three conditions of stress imposed by the work environment result in responses that impact the manner in which policy is implemented at the street-level. The first condition is inadequate resources. Such examples would include crowded classrooms or a lack of technological resources in the school or classroom. Threat and challenge to authority is another stress that influences implementation. Such examples would include the teacher’s fear of losing control of the classroom discipline, or having particular methods or programs being dictated to the classroom teacher. The final stress condition is a set of contradictory or ambiguous job expectations. This condition can be especially true of teachers who work with exceptional children. There is a dichotomy between the expectations of NCLB and IDEA in how students with disabilities are to be evaluated. NCLB requires that each student be evaluated by some type of state prepared and approved assessment. In North Carolina this assessment would be the End of Course (EOC) tests. IDEA would allow the student’s IEP team to set forth how the student is to be evaluated which would not necessarily mean using the EOC testing. This is evident as North Carolina struggles to develop testing for its Occupational Course of Study (OCS) program that complies with NCLB mandates concerning testing. Many factors have played a part in this struggle; however the biggest factor is an audit that took place in 2009 that called into question the way high schools in North Carolina use EC teachers to deliver curriculum to students with disabilities. This will be discussed in much greater detail in chapter four.

The amount of influence that supervisors have on street-level bureaucrats -- in the case of schools, the influence that principals and central level administrators have on teachers -- depends

upon what pressures in the forms of sanctions or rewards these supervisors can produce. Principals can have input on what is considered acceptable practice through observation, evaluation, and teacher assignment. Central level administrators can regulate and require compliance through deadlines, paperwork, training and other meetings. Principals and central level administrators can be seen as street-level bureaucrats as well, as legislation comes down from the state, or mandates from the U.S. Department of Education.

As legislation, policies, and mandates come down from the federal and state levels, the interpretation of these laws, policies, etc., become layered due to the various levels these mandates pass before reaching the student level. This could be compared to light passing through a prism. Each level in which laws and mandates pass would be a prism for the light (law, mandate, etc.) to pass through and subsequently bend. The bending of light would represent the level and the degree to which the original law or mandate was changed or altered. Institutional theory would predict that an organization, (state DPI, LEA, School) would react to such mandates by adopting procedures and structures that look similar to each other (school to school or district to district) in order to give these changes legitimacy. Using the prism metaphor, light (laws and mandates) might be most greatly affected (bent) at the top level of the institution, perhaps the state's interpretation of the laws or mandates. These laws and mandates could also be affected again by those in authority at succeeding levels of the organization. Street-level bureaucracy theory would predict that the biggest deviations from the mandates would come from the street-level, meaning teachers and principals and how they interpret and apply what they are asked to do. Again using the prism metaphor, the greatest bending of light would be at the street level, or in other words how the teachers interpret or apply the laws or mandates given. These two theories, institutional theory and street-level bureaucracy, will be

used to examine the implementation of inclusion in Johnston County, NC high schools and broaden the lens of the research by identifying evidence of the pillars of institutional theory and the stresses placed on street level bureaucrats in the implementation process.

Elements of both institutional theory and street-level bureaucracy can be applied in research surrounding the implementation of inclusion. The legal rulings that are interpreted by proponents of inclusion to promote inclusion would represent the regulative pillar found in Scott's work in institutional theory (Hanson, 2001). Established inclusionary practices and procedures used in daily classroom settings as sanctions by the faculty of a school could be viewed as the normative pillar, or the way inclusion is implemented. The personal beliefs that are held about the educating of students with disabilities would represent the cultural-cognitive pillar, where the accepted methods of implementation of inclusion are seen as what is "good" about inclusive education. Of course, it has not always been this way. As IDEA became the law, a paradigm shift among teachers was required. Teachers more than likely did not instantly integrate students with disabilities into their classrooms. There would be great resistance to this idea of putting students with disabilities in classes with their non-disabled peers. Eventually, as teachers' attitudes change, sometimes through attrition, and as new practices prove effective, this paradigm shift takes place.

Street level bureaucracy comes into play into how teachers and administrators deal with new laws and the mandates these laws present. The presence of new laws and the guidelines that would be presented to educators (teachers and administrators) would meet resistance, especially if these regulatory changes require doing more for their clients (students) without an increase in resources or make their jobs more demanding or stressful.

Street-level bureaucracy theory predicts that bureaucrats would find a way to serve students while also finding a way to be compliant with existing legislation. As accountability measures are added as a mandate through legislation, these new measures would add stress to the jobs of teachers. The ABCs required student's proficiency to be measured and thus schools were judged as proficient or non-proficient based upon student performance. As teachers became adjusted to what the ABCs required, NCLB was passed. NCLB increased the accountability for teachers by grouping the students into subgroups based on demographic similarities such as race, socioeconomics, and students with disabilities. Schools were then required to demonstrate proficiency among subgroups. Few additional resources became available due to the new legislation and would have caused teachers to resist the changes. Change to adapt the new law would be slow, but as teachers find ways to meet the needs of students the teacher would adapt and become compliant. Teachers would become more proficient with inclusionary classroom methods and as a result become compliant with the new legislation.

These theories could explain the manner in which inclusion has been implemented. For example, as new laws and regulations came into effect the regulative pillar would shift to accommodate the change in law. Slowly the normative and cultural – cognitive pillars would shift also to reflect the change in the regulative pillar. These changes would also impact the street- level bureaucrats (teachers and administrators) and how they function with students. There would also be some resistance to change and attempts to cling to how things had been done in the past. These two theories, institutional theory and street-level bureaucracy theory, both would predict resistance to the change in laws requiring more accountability for both students and schools. Both theories would also predict conflict between parties as to how and what changes should be implemented. Both theories would also predict gradual adaptation to the

stresses of new laws and mandates. Street-level bureaucracy would predict that these adaptations would come from the bottom up, beginning with teachers, while institutional theory would predict these adaptations would come from multiple areas and take in consideration many different inputs, stresses, and pressures.

Conceptual Frameworks

Using these theoretical perspectives and prior research, I have formulated a complex set of predictions about the evolution of inclusion in response to changes in the policy environment, beginning with the passage of P.L. 94-142. To communicate the prediction in a clear way, I created a series of diagrams, complemented by explanatory text. Figure 2 portrays the dynamics of inclusion immediately following the passage of P.L. 94-142 (forerunner of IDEA).

The diagram on the previous page applies to the first few years after P.L. 94-142 (IDEA) was passed and its implementation was initiated. This new legislation brought new mandates for the education of students with disabilities. However, the preexisting ideas and procedures of how to best educate students with disabilities were still prevalent and in use.

The new legislation's mandates calling for students to be educated in the least restrictive environment were mostly procedural. The new mandates were compliance oriented and required that schools demonstrate the procedures were being followed.

Consistent with the idea of the regulatory pillar of institutional theory, the new regulation and accompanying case law are hypothesized to have placed additional pressure and constraints upon district administration as policies were made and administered concerning students with disabilities. These new policies placed new pressures on school principals and teachers at the school level. Preexisting norms and beliefs about students with disabilities from the pre-IDEA era would also impact policies and practices concerning student and teacher placement. These

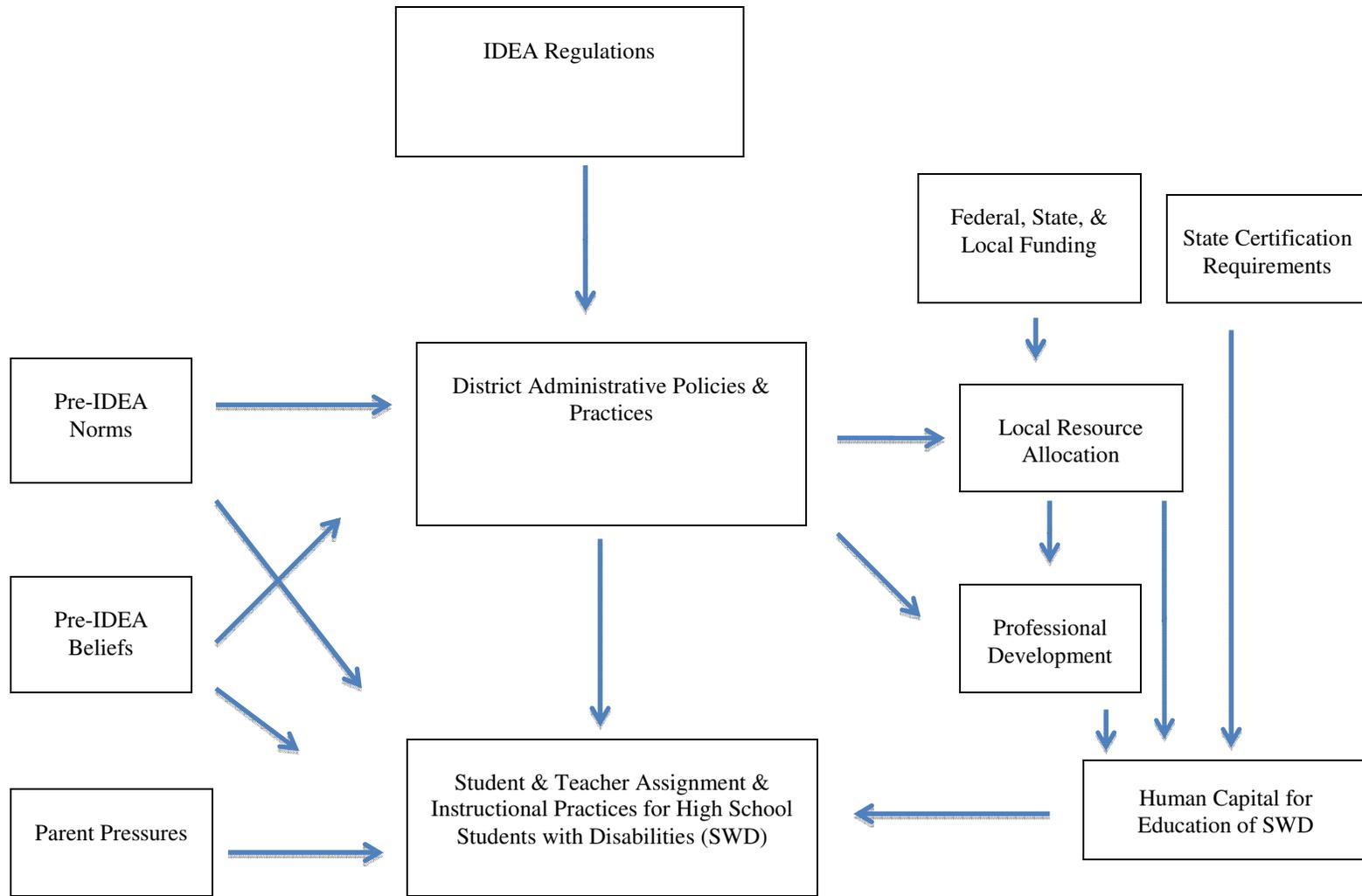


Figure 2. Main factors affecting the education of high school students with mild to moderate disabilities during the IDEA era.

norms and beliefs, also influences in the decision making process, would be expected and would be consistent with the normative pillar and cultural cognitive pillars of institutional theory.

Another factor that research has shown to affect assignment and instructional practices for students with disabilities are pressures from the parents of disabled students (Holodick, 2008). The final factor hypothesized to affect assignment and instructional practices for students with disabilities is the teachers' level of knowledge and skills to educate students with disabilities – the available “human capital.” The available human capital is itself hypothesized to be shaped by resource allocation, professional development, and state certification requirements.

Consistent with street level bureaucracy theory, principals and teachers are hypothesized to be under stress from inadequate resources, conflicting job expectations (which include IDEA-influenced district administrative policies and practices, as well as prior norms and beliefs) and lastly challenges to their autonomy from district administrators and parents.

Consistent with institutional theory, it is hypothesized that principals and teachers gradually work out practices that enable them to survive the conflicting pressures highlighted by institutional theory and street level bureaucracy theory and that these new norms and beliefs that are formed in the process will be more consistent with IDEA.

The next diagram refers to the time immediately after the implementation of the ABCs of North Carolina (see Figure 3). Many of the issues facing educators were similar to the pre-IDEA days, with the exception that all parties involved had adjusted to the demands of IDEA and the changes that IDEA required. The major adjustment with the ABCs model was the shift from

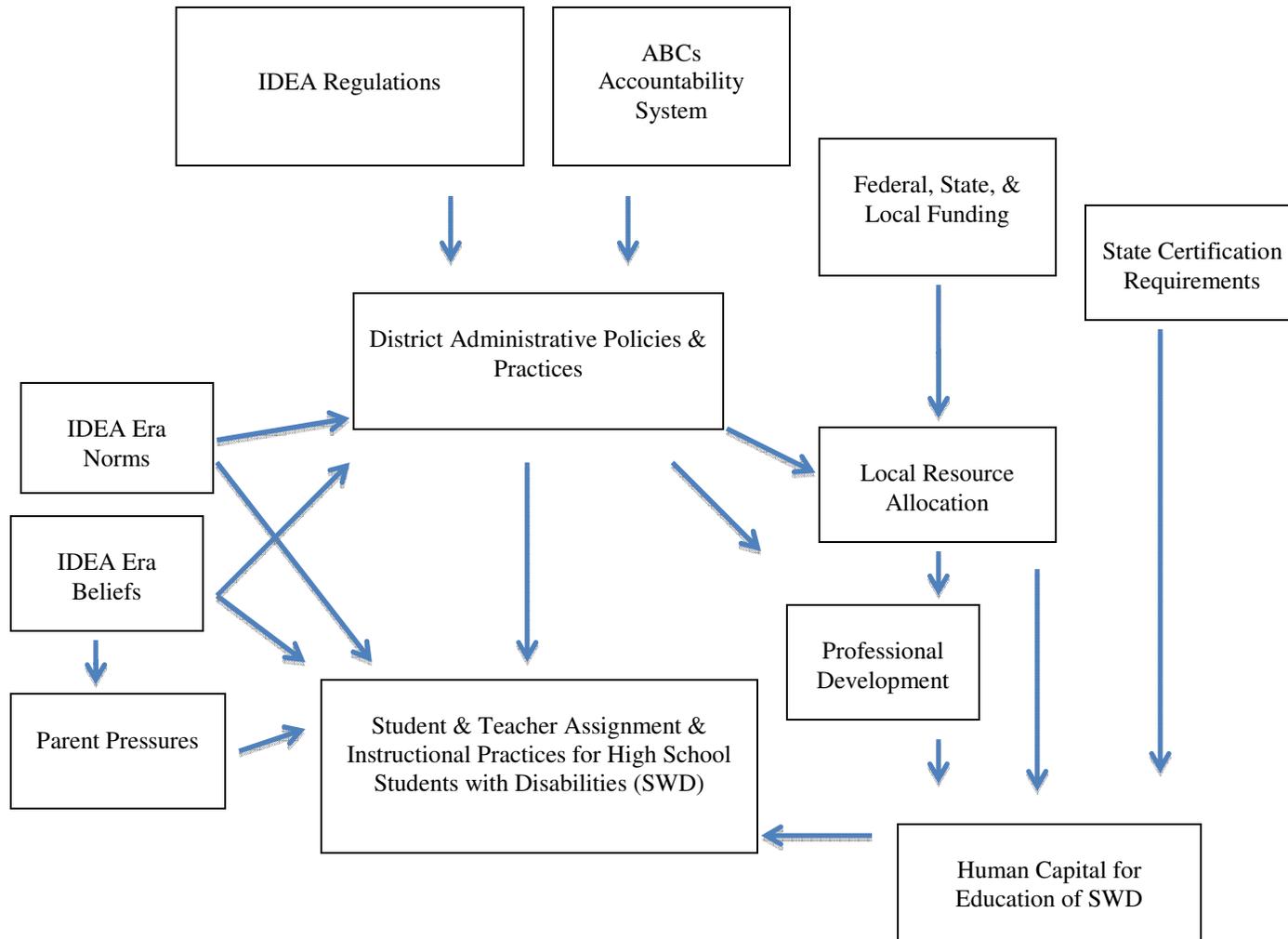


Figure 3. Main factors affecting the education of high school students with mild to moderate disabilities during the ABC era.

compliance being the key component to an accountability model of test scores being the major component of policy. The diagram on the previous page depicts the factors impacting the education of high school students with mild to moderate learning disabilities in the first few years of North Carolina's accountability model (ABCs). The ABCs was the first legislation to introduce the idea of student and school accountability and focused on outcomes rather than compliance.

This accountability model added to the policy environment affecting students with disabilities without removing any of the pressures or constraints of IDEA. The accountability model is consistent with the regulatory pillar of institutional theory, in that the new legislation placed additional pressure on district administrators as policies were developed and implemented in their respective districts. These new policies in turn impacted principals and teachers in their efforts to provide educational services to identified student with disabilities. The existing norms and practices that were in place prior to the introduction of the ABCs and the resistance to changing these norms and practices by principals and teachers would be consistent with both the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars of institutional theory.

These changes in the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars would apply pressures upon teachers and principals. Managing the "human capital," the teachers' level of knowledge and skills to teach students with disabilities would also apply pressure, particularly to principals and central level administrators. The available human capital is further shaped by factors previously mentioned, resource allocation, professional development, and state certification requirements.

As with the previous scenario of the introduction of P.L. 94-142, the introduction of the ABCs would, according to street level bureaucracy theory, create stress for principals and teachers due to inadequate resources and challenges to their authority and autonomy.

Institutional theory would also hypothesize that the principals and teachers would adapt their policies and practices to meet the new mandates. It would further predict that new norms and beliefs would be formed that would be more consistent with the ABCs. These norms and beliefs would align the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars with the regulatory pillar in institutional theory.

The final diagram (see Figure 4) depicts the factors that influenced the educating of student with mild to moderate disabilities during the time immediately after the implementation of No Child Left Behind. Again, all parties have adapted to the demands of the ABCs, and the assessment changes that NCLB brings with it pertain to the high achievement of identified sub-groups. All parties eventually will adjust to these mandates, but the process of change is slow.

The diagram on the previous page depicts the early years of the implementation of NCLB. NCLB further intensified the focus on student and school outcomes rather than mere compliance with procedures. NCLB added to the policy environment affecting the education of disabled students without removing any of the pressure or constraints of IDEA or the ABCs.

As with the introduction of IDEA and the ABCs, the regulatory pillar of institutional theory would hypothesize that NCLB would introduce new pressures upon district administration as they make and administer policies dealing with the education of students with disabilities.

Again, as previously mentioned, these new policies place stresses upon the principals and teachers who will implement these policies. Parent pressures also are a factor with which principals and teachers must continue to contend. Under the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars of institutional theory, the norms and beliefs that were in place for the ABCs would persist into the NCLB era. Human capital will remain a key factor due to the need for experience and expertise in the teaching of students with disabilities.

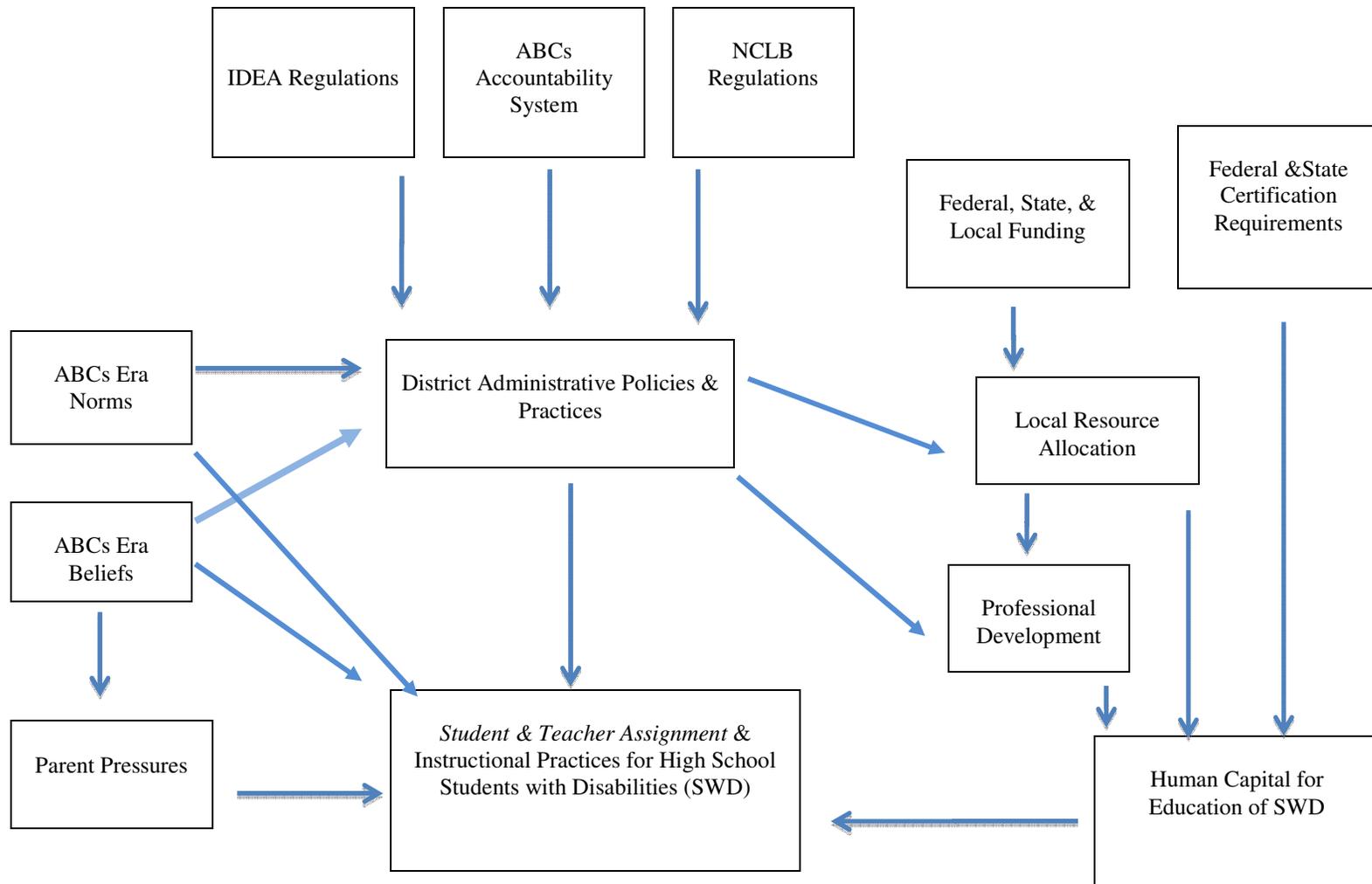


Figure 4. Main factors affecting the education of high school students with mild to moderate disabilities during the NCLB era.

Street level bureaucracy would hypothesize that principals and teacher would be under stress with NCLB as they were under IDEA and ABCs, namely, inadequate resources, threats to their authority and autonomy, and contradictory or ambiguous job descriptions.

Consistent with institutional theory, it is hypothesized that principals and teachers gradually develop practices that enable them to survive the conflicting pressures highlighted by institutional theory and street level bureaucracy theory. Furthermore, these norms and beliefs become more consistent with NCLB.

As NCLB and its requirements have become the norm, we see that all involved parties conform to the mandates of NCLB. Teachers, administrators and other persons or groups that have a vested interest have made and are making the necessary adjustments to comply with NCLB. As new information becomes available, shifts and adjustments will be made to be compliant with the legislation.

Summary

The movement to make inclusive education a part of the regular classroom has been a gradual one. Beginning in the 1980s, the use of inclusionary practices has expanded to meet the needs of a wide variety of students with disabilities. Inclusion is considered a way to meet the mandates of P.L. 94-142 through the most recent reauthorization of IDEA. There are many methods and teaching styles that have proven successful in teaching students with disabilities.

The passage of the ABCs and NCLB has had considerable impact on the education of students with disabilities. The ABCs require that all students be subjected to testing to determine proficiency. This testing not only determines the proficiency of students but schools as well. The proficiency results of these tests and the accompanying school classification are published each year in the form of school report cards .NCLB requires states and local education agencies

(LEAs) to be accountable for all students educated by public schools in the United States. Each designated subgroup must be proficient in order for the schools and LEAs to meet the mandates of AYP. The overall result has meant that more students with disabilities have had the opportunity to be in regular classes and continue to receive special education services without being pulled out or segregated. According the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2011c), there has been an increase in the number of students with disabilities who are considered proficient. This is true in Johnston County, where students with disabilities are not only seeing increases in the number of students proficient, but the performance of students with disabilities is surpassing the overage average for students with disabilities in North Carolina (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2012b). This increase suggests that LEAs and schools are making greater efforts to provide quality educational services to all students and that parents, teachers, administrators, and students may be working more diligently to ensure that not only does each student have access to the curriculum, but that students also are successful in learning the curriculum.

Prior research suggests that many of the teaching techniques used in inclusive education have remained constant from the pre-NCLB to post-NCLB timeframes (United States Department of Education, 2006b). The number of exceptional children served in the regular classroom increased greatly after the passage of NCLB (United States Department of Education, 2006b).

Conflicts between the requirements of NCLB and IDEA remain. IDEA requires compliance with its regulations concerning the services provided to exceptional children. These requirements include the IEP team making decisions about how the student will receive the intended curriculum, how the student is to be tested, and finally how the student is evaluated.

NCLB requires proficiency through testing to achieve AYP. North Carolina has attempted to resolve the differences between NCLB and IDEA. First, the growth model is designed to help students gain proficiency and schools reach AYP without penalty. The state's decision to allow the retest scores to be calculated toward AYP will also help both students and schools reach proficiency and AYP goals. While these concessions on the part of the state will prove helpful, they will not totally bridge the gap that exists between NCLB and IDEA. How this gap will be bridged remains to be seen; however, there exists some settled aspects of these topics and some aspects left to be researched.

IDEA is specific about the expectation that every student with disabilities has the opportunity to receive a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The practices and teaching techniques of inclusion can be successfully used to meet these educational expectations. IDEA also requires that a team of parents and educators, along with other experts, come together to decide how to best educate each and every child with a diagnosed disability. NCLB, on the other hand, requires accountability through testing to provide a measurable sign of learning and academic growth. This approach of being dependent upon testing can run counter to the team evaluation approach of IDEA. The information provided from EOC testing has been used to identify students that could benefit from testing accommodations (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2010).

What remains to be seen and thus is left to research is how inclusion has evolved to meet the educational needs of students in Johnston County high schools. Both federal and state accountability measures will impact how and to what degree inclusion is implemented in the classrooms of Johnston County high schools. I want to know how the state, local school district and individual schools interpret legislation and how these interpretations have molded the

delivery of curriculum to high school students with disabilities. Whether the implementation process has been consistent with the predications of institutional theory and street-level bureaucracy will also be examined. Chapter three will introduce the methods that will be used to determine how inclusion was implemented in Johnston County high schools and how the process followed the aforementioned institutional theory and street-level bureaucracy theory.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

To remind the reader, this study focused on the implementation of inclusion particularly for students identified as specific learning disabled (SLD). The questions addressed in this dissertation are as follows:

- To what degree and in what ways was inclusion implemented prior to state and federal accountability systems (prior to 1996)?
- To what degree and in what ways was inclusion implemented after the establishment of the ABCs of North Carolina but before the passage of NCLB (1996 to December 2001)?
- To what degree and in what ways was inclusion implemented after the establishment of both the ABCs of North Carolina and No Child Left Behind (December 2001 to June 2011)?
- What do the answers to the above questions tell us about accountability upon the implementation of inclusion?

These questions were addressed using qualitative methods of inquiry. The product is a case study focusing on the implementation of inclusion in Johnston County, NC, high schools from the mid-1990s to the present, emphasizing changes that appear to have been occasioned by the introduction of North Carolina's own outcome-based accountability system and subsequently by the provisions of No Child Left Behind. These SLD students are pursuing a diploma that will enable these students to attend a two or four- year college or university. As of 2009, this diploma track is known as the Future Ready Core; previously, from 2000 to 2008 these students

would have been in the College/University Prep or College Tech Prep diploma tracks (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2012c).

This method was chosen because of the nature of the research questions themselves. The questions I asked cannot be answered through statistical analysis of quantitative data, but only with rich contextual narratives that must come from interviews and artifacts – by using qualitative methods of research. I examined what is occurring within the education of students identified as SLD in Johnston County high schools at the present time with state and federal accountability measures in place and then explored how implementation has evolved from the early beginnings of inclusive education in the mid-1990s. The focus of the study is on how inclusion has been implemented and where the majority of the implementation decisions have been made.

Research Design

In essence, I have reconstructed the history of inclusion education in traditional high schools in Johnston County, NC Schools, a bounded system within which the inclusion approach to the education of students with disabilities has been implemented. For the purpose of this study, I will define a traditional high school as a high school designed to meet the academic and social needs of adolescent students in grades nine through twelve. A traditional high school in this sense is not a magnet or charter school, nor is it an alternative school designed for students who struggle with behaviors outside of the alternative setting. The definition also excludes high schools designed to either assist students in the endeavor of getting ahead in college, such as early or middle college high schools.

According to Creswell (1998), a case study can explore a bounded system over time in detail and in-depth study using multiple sources of data that are rich in context. Gall, Gall, and

Borg (2005) state that case studies are used to provide thick descriptions. The study in this case is bounded by school system. Only current and former employees of Johnston County Schools have been interviewed and administrative data and documents from the specified school system were used.

Picciano (2004) states that legal and policy issues are prime examples of topics that can be explored qualitatively. Picciano does caution that the availability of sources and interview sources can be limited due the length of time that has passed. So much time has passed since PL 94-142, the ABCs, and NCLB have been enacted that the recollections of those working within the parameters of these pieces of legislation have dimmed. Picciano also recommends that quantitative data be used to support the qualitative findings. This particular study relies little on quantitative data, since the topic is the implementation of inclusion rather than the effectiveness of inclusion. The process of a qualitative study will allow for the inspection of artifacts related to the evolution of inclusion. Through the examination of artifacts from both district and school documentation, I uncovered changes in the implementation of inclusion as a method of curriculum delivery. I examined administrative documents -- the guidelines used, memos clarifying processes, and procedures for the implementation of inclusion -- through the four time periods in which the research questions are concerned: (a) before IDEA, (b) after IDEA but before North Carolina's ABC's of Public Education, (c) after the ABCs but before NCLB, and (d) after NCLB. I also examined documents such as master schedules from individual schools that demonstrate how each school implemented inclusion, and I have looked for similarities and differences in the implementation process across four time periods Example of master schedules can be found in Appendices D and E.

Historical reconstructions have been used to piece together a mosaic of recollections, artifacts, and other sources to illustrate how certain events occurred or how participants felt about their involvement with specific events. Siddie Walker (1996), in her work entitled *Their Highest Potential*, uses historical reconstruction to address an African-American community's ties to the segregated school that the local children attended and the high regard in which the school was held. As Siddie Walker noted, historical reconstruction is vulnerable to selectivity and distortions in informants' memory as well as gaps or distortions in the documentary record. These incidents or selectivity and distortion in addition to elapsed time that is always the case with historical reconstructions requires the researcher to check statements made by interview subjects to see if written records coincide with the subjects' memories. Siddie Walker speaks of the influence of nostalgia when informants recall the past. They look back upon the past fondly and think of it in more positive terms than of the present. Siddie Walker also stresses the need to compare the recall of informants to documents from the time period. The comparison of interviews requiring recall and historical documents from the era being questioned can give the researcher insight into the reliability of the recalled interviews.

This dependence upon interviewee memory suggests the need for multiple sources of data and the need for careful cross-checks of the data derived from different sources in order to develop a valid account of the events that have led to the implementation of inclusion education as it is in the present in Johnston County high schools. This was indeed the case, and available documents, while in some areas of the study were sparse, proved to be enlightening. Persons being interviewed did tend to remember their experience with inclusion as being more frequent and wide spread than other data sources suggest. Data sources for this study were gathered from past Johnston County Schools (1994) employee handbooks, exceptional children's program and

procedure manuals, state and federal education policy regarding students with disabilities, exceptional children's headcount numbers as well as master schedules and school improvement plans from the selected high schools.

The methods used in this study have included an analysis of federal and state law as well as administrative documents pertaining to state and local policy concerning both inclusion and accountability. Federal and state laws have been analyzed to determine what changes to the education of disabled students were mandated by which entity and when these changes were to take effect.

As an aid to this research, I have used institutional theory and street-level bureaucracy theory as mentioned in the chapter two. I interviewed key persons within the school district, both past and present, and reviewed artifacts and looked for evidence of the structural isomorphism Burch (2007) spoke of, as well as organizational structures that give the institution legitimacy that Oliver (1991) referred to (institutional theory) and bottom-up implementation (street-level bureaucracy). Elements of both theories were found in the implementation process. A further discussion of the application of theory to the data will follow in the findings chapter. As federal legislation that has been passed regarding the educating of students with disabilities has gone into effect, some of the components of inclusion have been patterned exactly to meet these requirements and have mirrored institutional theory. Policies will be in place that gives the district legitimacy. Other aspects of the law will be given more to local interpretation and will be adapted to local need. These adaptations come at the school level; these adaptations have been compared with the tenets of street-level bureaucracy theory.

It was hypothesized in chapter two that comparing the data collected to the principles of institutional theory would demonstrate that each time the level of compliance and accountability

increased, such as the case when PL 94-142 was enacted, then the ABCs and NCLB changes would occur in the regulatory pillar. These changes in the regulatory pillar would be met with resistance, but they would eventually cause changes to the normative and cultural–cognitive pillar as the changes became more universally accepted. It was also hypothesized in chapter two that, using street-level bureaucracy theory to examine the study’s findings, the principals and particularly the teachers would be the “street-level bureaucrats” and would adapt to the changes in accountability to allow them to best serve their clientele, the students, in the face of limited resources, challenges to authority, and ambiguous job descriptions.

Timeframes

This study is an “archeological” reconstruction in the sense that I began with the present state of inclusion in Johnston County high schools and worked back in the past to determine how the school system arrived at its current point. There are four timeframes examined in the study. In chronological order they are as follows: first is the timeframe prior to the passage of P.L. 94-142 to determine the level of service, if any, that students with disabilities received. This piece of legislation predates the implementation of inclusion; however, without this legislation inclusion would not have been entertained as an educational method. Next is the period after 94-142 but prior to the implementation of the ABCs of North Carolina in the state’s high schools in 1997. The third time period was the time from the beginning of the ABCs of Public Education until the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. My study of this time period has focused on the impact of the state’s accountability measures. The final period of time includes the passage of NCLB to the present time. The purpose of investigating the first two timeframes has been to sketch the practices of educating students with specific learning disabilities. The two recent timeframes were examined how inclusion was implemented in the face of state and federal

accountability measures and is in much more detail, especially regarding students identified as specific learning disabled.

A brief history of each time period is offered based upon the data collected. Areas examined have included student assignment, teacher and administrative roles, teaching strategies, staff development, and changes brought on by accountability legislation. The most intensive attention was given to time just prior to the ABCs of North Carolina and throughout the ABCs of North Carolina and the time period of NCLB, because of the impact these two pieces of legislation have had on inclusion and its implementation.

Choice of Setting

The setting for this research is three traditional high schools within the district. “Traditional schools” will not include Johnston County Middle College, Johnston County Early College, or South Campus Community School. The former two schools serve high school students at Johnston Community College. The focus of the Middle College is to serve students whose interests lie outside of traditional curriculum and perhaps want to start earlier on their college experience as well. The Early College serves students beginning in the ninth grade who intend to have an accelerated college experience and graduate in five years with an Associate’s degree or two years of college that are transferable to a four-year institution and a high school diploma. The other excluded school, South Campus Community School, is the alternative high school in Johnston County, serving students who have demonstrated difficulties in traditional high schools with regard particularly to behavior and/or attendance.

The names of the traditional high schools in Johnston County are as follows: Clayton High School, Cleveland High School, Corinth-Holders High School, North Johnston High School, Princeton Middle/High School, Smithfield Selma High School, South Johnston High

School, and West Johnston High School. Three of these high schools, Cleveland, Corinth-Holders, and West Johnston, all have been opened since the passage of NCLB and were not considered in the study. The three selected for the study were Smithfield-Selma High School, South Johnston High School, and Clayton High School. These high schools were selected due to the areas these schools serve. Smithfield-Selma High School is a high school serving the towns of Smithfield and Selma. These two large towns are adjacent to one another and represent the largest population in the county. South Johnston High School is a rural high school serving a large, mostly agricultural area of Johnston County. Clayton High School serves another large town whose attendance area is a bedroom community of the capital city, Raleigh, North Carolina. These three schools represented a manageable sample yet a sufficiently broad view of how inclusion has been implemented in Johnston County, NC.

Institutional Acknowledgment

Permission was granted from the school district by Dr. H. Edward Croom, Jr., superintendent, to conduct this research. Documentation of Dr. Croom's approval can be found in Appendix C. A brief description of the data collection and interview processes will be provided. Approval was obtained from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). These documents are in Appendix A.

Data Collection

As mentioned earlier in discussing the research design, three types of data were sought for each timeframe the study includes. Data from all three sources, administrative documents, administrative data, and interviews, were collected simultaneously as the study proceeded.

"Administrative documents" included guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education, such as directions for which students should be placed in inclusion classes and in which subjects,

as well as instructions dealing with the selection of regular education and special education teachers for inclusive settings. Recommendations concerning planning time, teaching methods, and reporting policies were of interest. Administrative data on student placement included exceptional children's head count numbers, master schedules, and other similar documents. This data was examined to determine how many students have been placed in inclusion classes as compared to both the total number of exceptional children and the total number of students.

The following measures were taken in order to collect the administrative documents and data previously mentioned:

- I obtained available exceptional children's headcount numbers that contained the numbers of students who meet the criteria of the study. I obtained available master schedules from the three high schools. I also gathered available documents from the state Department of Public Instruction as well as directive memoranda from Johnston County Schools that address procedures for any aspect of the exceptional children's program.
- I worked with the Exceptional Children's Department of Johnston County Schools, the Office of Technology Services, and the data managers of the three selected high schools to collect data and documents.
- To gather this data, I first contacted those in charge of the departments and offices mentioned previously and also worked with the secretaries charged with the maintenance of these records and documents.

The last area of data collection is interviews conducted with Johnston County Schools' personnel. Interviews were conducted with teachers and administrators who have dealt with both regular and special education. Interviewees were selected based on their experience

with inclusion and with teachers, experience in the high schools being focused upon (Clayton, Smithfield-Selma, or South Johnston). I interviewed five key central level administrators using the interview questions found in Appendix B. These persons were the superintendent, the chief academic officer, the executive director of the exceptional children's department, and the director of the exceptional children's department as well as a former superintendent of the district. I interviewed four current or former site level administrators (principals) using the predetermined interview questions. I interviewed three current or former assistant principals who have been in charge of curriculum and instruction at their respective schools. These persons will be referred to as APIs. I also interviewed at least two regular education teachers and two special education teachers at each selected school. These teachers were current or former teachers and were chosen because of their experience with inclusion and availability. I interviewed a total of twenty-two persons for the study. The number of interviews, along with the number of documents and artifacts collected, has provided a reasonably sound picture of the impact of the implementation of inclusion in Johnston County high schools. The interview questions will be listed later in this chapter, as well as in Appendix B. The listed questions were asked of all interviewees; follow-up questions were asked when needed in such areas as student assignment, teacher roles and instructional approaches to ensure proper coverage of each topic.

Personal experiences and perspectives were gathered from central-level administrators, site level administrators, and teachers through interviews. Interview questions were scripted along with suggested follow-up topics prior to interviews taking place. Each interviewee was asked the same six questions with follow-up questions being asked for clarification and further information and depth as needed. The interview questions and follow-up topics are listed in Appendix B. Each interviewee was apprised of the benefits and risks of participation in the

study and his/her signed informed consent was obtained prior to each interview. These interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

Data Analysis

Administrative data was analyzed in the areas of student placement, services given to exceptional children, and scheduling of students with disabilities. The interviews were coded and analyzed to broaden the understanding of how and why inclusion was implemented in the school district. Other areas of focus not previously mentioned for the interviews were student assignment, administrative mandate, inclusion methods, other student assignments as well as differences in time period, looking for how and to what extent inclusion was being implemented.

The analysis of artifacts consisted of searching for guidelines from federal, state, and local sources that address the specific use of inclusive classroom practices and the dates of implementation of these guidelines. Another area of data analysis dealt with student placement documents. Exceptional children's head count numbers, master schedules, and other similar documents were examined to determine how many students have been placed in inclusion classes as compared to both the total number of exceptional children and the total number of all students. Yearly changes in the percentages of students involved in inclusion classes were monitored to look for trends in usage of inclusion over time.

Finally, tables were developed to represent major themes within the findings concerning inclusion implementation. These tables have been used to clearly identify data collected and statements made during interviews that correspond to the frameworks of institutional theory and street-level bureaucracy theory and the many aspects of inclusion in a high school setting. Used were three levels of summary tables: level one aligned interview questions with the most frequently answered responses along with illustrative quotes that sum up the general IDEAs

expressed. There is a level one table for central level administrators, site level administrators and teachers. These tables were used to illustrate the impact on inclusion and the students served through inclusion education. Table 1 is an example of a level one table that was used.

Level two tables were used to align interview questions, a synopsis of statements for each of the three groups interviewed (teachers, principals, and central administration) and align the findings of the administrative data and administrative documents. Table 2 is an example of the level two summary table.

Level three tables summarize the findings and compare them with the components of institutional theory and street-level bureaucracy theory. Aspects of the data that do not align with institutional theory or street-level bureaucracy theory have been pointed out and discussed as well. Table 3 is an example of a level three summary table.

After the interviews were transcribed, these interviews were combined and summarized by question or follow-up topic. Illustrative quotes were also used to support the summary of interviewee responses. These summaries were completed using Level I summary tables. The interviews were summarized by position. There were Level I summaries for regular teachers, exceptional children's teachers, site-level administrators, and central-level administrators. Two regular teachers, two exceptional children's teachers, a principal, and assistant principal responsible for curriculum were interviewed from each school. A former superintendent, the current superintendent, personnel from the exceptional children's office, and the chief academic officer from the central-level administration were interviewed for this study.

The interviews were then compared and contrasted by position and also compared and contrasted against the data and documents that have been gathered. The data was compared using a Level II table.

Table 1

Level I Summary: Most Frequent Answers by Position

Question	Responses (Categorized)	Illustrative Quotes (By Category)
In broad terms, what are the district's current policies on the use of inclusion in the education of high school students with disabilities?		
To what extent has any of this been influenced by the requirements of NLCB? That is, were the policies different before NCLB was instituted, and if so, how did they change in response to NCLB?		
On balance, has NCLB improved the implementation of inclusion, made it worse, or left it pretty much the same?		
If you think back to the time when the ABCs assessment and accountability system came along, did that change the district's policies on inclusion in any way? If so, what were the policies like before the ABCs and how did they change after the ABCs came along?		
On balance, did the ABCs improve the implementation of inclusion, make it worse or leave it pretty much the same?		

Table 1 (*continued*)

Can you tell me anything about the way that students with disabilities were educated before IDEA came along? How were the district's policies different back then? How did they change in response to IDEA?

Table 2

Level II Summary: Synthesis of Responses by Area of Responsibility

Questions	Central Office	Principals	Teachers	Documents	Administrative Data
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In broad terms, what are the district's current policies on the use of inclusion in the education of high school students with disabilities?

To what extent has any of this been influenced by the requirements of NLCB? That is, were the policies different before NCLB was instituted, and if so, how did they change in response to NCLB?

On balance, has NCLB improved the implementation of inclusion, made it worse, or left it pretty much the same?

Table 2 (*continued*)

If you think back to the time when the ABCs assessment and accountability system came along, did that change the district's policies on inclusion in any way? If so, what were the policies like before the ABCs and how did they change after the ABCs came along?

On balance, did the ABCs improve the implementation of inclusion, make it worse or leave it pretty much the same?

Can you tell me anything about the way that students with disabilities were educated before IDEA came along? How were the district's policies different? How did they change in response to IDEA?

Table 3

Level III Summary: Comparison of Collected Data with Theoretical Perspectives

	Consistency or Inconsistency of Changes with Predictions of Institutional Theory	Consistency or Inconsistency with Predictions of Street Level Bureaucracy	Changes Not Predicted by Either Theory
Changes Occasioned by IDEA			
Changes Occasioned by ABCs			
Changes Occasioned by NCLB			

The final step in the synthesis of collected data was to compare what was found in the interviews, documents and data to the theoretical perspectives of institutional theory and street-level bureaucracy theory and how the implementation of inclusion was affected by the implementation of IDEA (PL 94-142), the ABCs of North Carolina, and then NCLB. Changes that occurred in the implementation of inclusion due to factors not predicted by either theory were documented. This summary was completed using a Level III summary table.

Due to the specific nature of this study, questions about external validity may not be relevant. That is, the findings of this study will not necessarily generalize to other cases of inclusion implementation. The study contributes to the accumulating case literature on the implementation of inclusion and thus to the development of more knowledge that can be generalized, but I have not attempted to generalize from this single case taken by itself. Internal validity -- determining whether the study measure what it purports to measure -- will be established through triangulation of the data (Tellis, 1997). Inferences from interviews, documents, and administrative data have been cross-checked against each other.

Researcher's Role

The researcher is an eighteen-year education veteran with twelve years of administrative experience, nine of which have been in Johnston County Schools. The researcher has observed and worked with the inclusion process for the past nine years and has provided staff development in the area of inclusive class teaching techniques.

As an employee of the school district being examined, I took great care to provide anonymity for those participating in the study where possible. This was done in order for the study participants to feel at ease and give them the ability to speak freely about their experiences. I recognize several key points that must be taken into consideration. First, as an employee of the

school district being examined, I am an “insider” who will have more access to people or documents than an outside researcher might be given. As such, the need for confidentiality is greater, and I have given this great attention. I have been careful not expose participants to unnecessary risks, such as discussing interviews conducted with others within the district. I recognized the potential that exists for others to view the findings as a negative reflection upon the district.

This study represents how accountability measures impacted the exceptional children’s programs, particularly students identified as SLD in Johnston County, NC. Another key point will be that as an employee of the district I have some biases that I had to set aside. I had to “step back” at times when examining data to see what is truly being represented rather than what I may want the data to represent.

Conclusion

Upon completion of the aforementioned data collection from available sources, I have presented my findings in chapter four in order to represent how inclusion was implemented and how the process has developed over time in Johnston County high schools. The trends, conclusions, and questions for future research will be discussed in chapter five.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

To remind the reader, four research questions were posed:

- To what degree and in what ways was inclusion implemented prior to state and federal accountability systems (Prior to 1996)?
- To what degree and in what ways was inclusion implemented after the establishment of the ABCs of North Carolina but before the passage of NCLB (1996-December 2001)?
- To what degree and in what ways was inclusion implemented after the establishment of both the ABCs of North Carolina and No Child Left Behind (December 2001 to June 2011)?
- What do the answers to the above questions tell us about accountability upon the implementation of inclusion?

In the sections that follow, I present my findings concerning these questions in turn.

Interview Participants

Interview participants came from all three focus high schools, Clayton High School (CHS); Smithfield-Selma High School (SSS); and South Johnston High School (SJHS). Central level administrators were also interviewed. Table 4 lists the interviewee by position and gives an overview of their experience and time working in Johnston County Schools (JCS).

Research Questions

Question One

To what degree and in what ways was inclusion implemented prior to state and federal accountability systems?

Table 4

Interview Participants by Position

Position	Experience
Superintendent	30+ years. Superintendent in three LEAs
Chief Academic Officer	30+ years. Supervised curriculum in JCS for 10+ years.
Executive Director of Exceptional Children's Department	30+ years, EC teacher, program specialist, director, and executive director. All in JCS
Director, Exceptional Children's Department	30 years, EC teacher, program specialist, and director. All in JCS
Principal CHS	40+ years, teacher, coach, assistant principal. 12 years as principal at CHS.
Math Teacher CHS/ Assistant Principal CHS	15 years. Teacher, assistant principal, and principal at CHS.
English Teacher CHS	20+ years. Teacher, coach, assistant principal and principal, primarily in JCS.
EC Teacher #1 CHS	15+ years as teacher. Most of these years spent at CHS
EC Teacher #2 CHS	14 years as teacher, assistant principal, current middle school principal. Every year in JCS
Principal SSS	30+ years in JCS, currently a middle school principal in JCS.
Assistant Principal SSS	10+ years as teacher, assistant principal, and currently high school principal in JCS.
Math teacher SSS	10+ years as teacher.
English teacher SSS	3 years as teacher.
EC teacher # 1 SSS	10+ years as teacher all in JCS. Has worked with scheduling EC students
EC teacher # 2 SSS	10+ years teaching

Table 4 (*continued*)

Principal SJHS	25+ years, teacher, director, principal, central level administrator mostly in JCS.
Assistant Principal SJHS #1	25+ years as counselor, assistant principal, director, and principal in JCS.
Assistant Principal SJHS #2	40+ years as teacher, coach, and administrator in JCS.
Math teacher SJHS	25+ years as teacher, all in JCS, mostly in high school.
English teacher SJHS	28+ years, mostly as a teacher at SJHS.
EC teacher # 1 SJHS	15+ years as EC teacher, 8 years at SJHS.
EC teacher #2	20+ years as EC teacher and coach mostly at SJHS.

Note. Interviewees consistently used the term IDEA when referring to PL 94-142 and any of its reauthorizations. IDEA is the terminology most familiar to most interviewees.

To answer this question, consideration must be given to the time prior to PL 94-142 and the time after PL 94-142. All twenty-two interviewees stated there was little in the way of inclusion prior to the initiation of state and federal accountability systems, either before or after PL 94-142 but the law did bring other changes in the education of children with disabilities. Prior to PL 94-142, not all students with disabilities attended school. Students were not entitled to a FAPE (Blau, 2007). EC teacher #2 SJHS related the following story about a sibling with special needs.

I have a sister who went through Johnston County Schools prior to IDEA. She had Down's syndrome, and her IQ was 57. My parents were told to put her away, that she would never walk, talk, etc. She is high-functioning Down's syndrome. She was in kindergarten for two years then in the first grade for two years. There was no special education in Johnston County Schools because no one else was sending their [EC] children to school. My father spoke to the superintendent about having a special class for his daughter. My father was president of local ARC (Association of Retarded Citizens) chapter. The superintendent stated that if he [the father] could find 18 kids who needed specialized instruction, he would give him a teacher. The next day the superintendent received a list of 36 students who needed specialized instruction. Two classes started immediately. The superintendent handpicked the teachers who worked with those students. None of those teachers were EC teachers. This occurred around 1968.

English teacher SJHS observed:

Prior to IDEA students with disabilities were less likely to attend school. The school system was less likely to accommodate students with disabilities (Elevators, etc). Eventually, schools began accommodated student with disabilities. (Scripting for

students in wheelchair, tape recorder) At my current school we had a student with cerebral palsy, who was wheelchair bound. The student's tests were put tests on computer but one teacher refused because the teacher thought that it was a great imposition for the teacher. The battery of student issued computer kept dying making accommodating the student difficult.

Principal SSS observed:

I think a lot of those kids prior to IDEA were left out of the loop. That was one thing we had to change our ways from in the 70s. The children did not have an opportunity in the 70s to be successful academically. Students were put into a setting, teachers taught them, and they moved along perhaps by social promotion.

Some were here and in classes and either got promoted or retained. The more severe cases were sent other places or did not go to school at all because we were not prepared for them.

Educators with 30 or more years experience in Johnston County Schools reported that students with special needs who attended school both prior to and after the implementation of PL 94-142 were housed in self-contained classes. They stated that the biggest change between the time before PL 94-142 and the time after is the number of students served, where more students with disabilities enrolled in schools within the district. Some students who were mildly disabled attended their base schools and were primarily in self-contained classes. The central-level administrators interviewed reported that students with significant disabilities were localized to one school and would complete their entire educational experience in a self-contained setting. This first began in the basement of Selma Middle School. In some cases, students identified with disabilities never attended regular classes. Math teacher SSS made the following observation

about a family member. “My brother-in-law was LD in math and was never allowed to participate in regular classes.”

EC teacher #2 SSS made the following statement about the beginning of inclusion at her school:

We did not really have inclusion in those days. We started doing inclusion in the 2000s.

I started having to go into classes. We did not know what we were doing, and needed training. Regular education teachers who were involved volunteered to work in inclusion classes.

As mentioned in chapter two, the mandates of PL 94-142 and its subsequent reauthorizations required students with disabilities to be educated in the least restrictive environment possible. The courts have held that inclusion classes meet this standard. Nevertheless, there exists no documentation that there were any inclusion classes during the time prior to accountability systems being in place. Central level administrators, principals and the most seasoned teachers reported that students with disabilities were served but usually in a resource setting, being pulled out of the regular classroom to meet with exceptional children’s teachers, or in a separate setting without interaction with the general student population.

Question Two

To what degree and in what ways was inclusion implemented after the establishment of the ABCs of North Carolina but before the passage of NCLB (1996-December 2001)?

It was during this period that teachers began to recall the beginning of the use of inclusion classes. No interviewee stated that there was a written mandate or memorandum specifying that the policy of Johnston County Schools would be to use inclusion. There was one reference to inclusion in the 1994-1995 Johnston County Schools’ Employee Handbook. It

states, “A new philosophy that is being implemented in some high schools, middle, and elementary schools is inclusion. Inclusion is collaborative teaching between regular and resource teachers to best meet the needs of all identified Exceptional Children students” (Johnston County Schools, 1994, p. 5.05). One administrator stated that while the practice was encouraged and expected, it was never mandated due to the lack of funds to pay for extra teachers if a school decided that they could not fully implement inclusion without additional teaching positions.

Two math teachers and two EC teachers were able to discuss being involved in inclusion classes after the implementation of the ABCs. The remaining teachers recall the use of resource classes during this time. Some of the interviewees stated that there seemed to be more flexibility in the way EC students were taught than currently exists with NCLB. Math teacher CHS shared the following observation:

Thirteen years ago when I first came here I had an inclusion Algebra I class; that class consisted of 20 to 21 students, seven or eight being EC. The EC teacher that was with me worked very well with me. We would meet sometimes during school, sometimes after school to plan lessons. This was during the time when differentiated instruction was first being emphasized. We did a lot within units to differentiate for the kids. It wasn't the higher level kids had more work; they had more in-depth work. The lower level kids did not do less work; they worked on [math] skills. We developed three different notebooks. The kids got to choose the notebook from which they worked. The notebooks represented the “indepthness” of the curriculum. We did guide the kids in the selection of notebooks, but we did not prohibit students who wanted to challenge themselves. I did

the instruction because I have the background in math and usually taught for about 30 minutes and then we both would work with the students on individual skills.

EC teacher #1 SJHS spoke about the ABCs being a beginning to better education for students with disabilities.

The ABCs began the discussion about what we could do to better help student learn. It caused teachers to become more judgmental of each other– that teacher’s scores are typically low; we expect that teacher’s score to be low again and hurt us.

While all interviewees stated that the use of inclusion has increased and became more widespread after NCLB, there were those who stated that they were involved in inclusion classes during time that the ABCs was the sole accountability policy. Principal SSS shared the following observation:

When the ABCs began in 1996, there was a greater emphasis on special education. Prior to this, students with disabilities were not in regular classes and took some form of modified exam. The reason we are doing some the things we are doing now in terms of testing is due to the ineptitude of the teaching in our state and throughout the country. The 70s are a prime example of watering down the curriculums. If you can’t pass, don’t worry we will get you a book that is a little bit easier to read. If that doesn’t work we will get you another book to read. It just basically watered a lot of things down and the expectations were not very high.

In speaking to the overall impact of the ABCs the superintendent shared:

The ABCs had impact because it gave us money for bonuses. That made it more attractive for employees to work hard and produce. An unexpected outcome of the ABCs was the focus on the entire school working together to be successful. If the school was

successful, the certified staff got a bonus. Prior to the ABCs, if you had a bad teacher, the rest of the staff would protect them and make excuses for them. When the principal tried to work on them, the staff would rally around them and protect them. That changed with the ABCs almost overnight. For example, if you have four fourth grade teachers and three are working very hard and one was not, the other teachers would approach the principal and ask for something to be done. It [the ABCs] totally did away with that “family” protection. Before the ABCs you rarely saw a principal, even at the end of the year, try to terminate anybody. After [the ABCs] I have principals coming to me in the second month of the year and say “I have hired somebody that is not getting it done; let’s get rid of them,” and we would. The staff no longer protected these people saying “We are not being fair,” or “We are picking on this person.” Suddenly they had “skin” in the game; it was affecting their pocketbook. That has been the greatest loss; the ABCs bonus has been taken away.

Many of the experienced administrators, both at the central level and at the school level spoke of the importance of the ABCs in terms of teaching all students. Most felt that the ABCs did more for the overall accountability of all students, including improving the educational opportunities for EC students. The following is a statement made by Principal SJHS, and this sentiment was echoed by several site and central level administrators: “Raising the bar by the ABCs did more to impact all students than inclusion or any other single element.”

Administrators were quick to point out that the ABCs model mirrored a preexisting accountability model that was in place in Johnston County before the ABCs “no promotion policy” was initiated. More than one interviewee stated that the Johnston County model was used as a pattern for the state’s ABCs model in this regard. In making this statement, these

administrators were referring to the promotion gateway component of the ABCs. The Johnston County Schools model, Board Policy 842, stated that a student must achieve a Level III or higher on End-of-Grade tests in grades 3 through 8 in order to be promoted. Those who did not score above the cutoff for Level III would be retained. Students would have the opportunity for remediation and retesting prior to being retained; however, the Level III or higher test scores would be necessary for promotion. High school students must make a grade of 70 or higher on End-of-Course tests with the same provisions of remediation and retesting as grades 3-8 (Erik v. Causby, 1997). One administrator stated that he had personally been involved in the design of this ABCs gateway promotion model and that the Johnston County model was used as a pattern. Administrators were vocal about the impact of the ABCs and how it was a catalyst to the improvement of education for all students, particularly EC students.

Assistant Principal #2 SJHS stated, “I think it [the ABCs] may have been the precursor to [meaning catalyst for] inclusion. It may have kicked things up a notch. Students benefit from extra teachers in the classroom, smaller teacher to student ratios.”

The Superintendent observed,

It [the ABCs] really did not change what we were doing. The ABCs [gateway promotion] model was based on the JCS [gateway promotion] model. My efforts as superintendent was to stay out front of what the state was going to do. I felt that it was important to influence what they did rather than them influencing what we did. It did not change what we were doing. One of our biggest battles in the beginning was with the exceptional children’s program and their parents. Teachers of EC students love those kids, and they want to protect them and do not want to push them. The accountability program required structure. The parents of the EC students were concerned that children

could not meet those standards. The group that made the biggest growth in the first year we had the policy [Policy 842] in place was exceptional children. I had parents and teachers come to me and say, “I would have never believed we could do this.” Our policy was already doing these types of things. [Later] NCLB added to this by adding emphasis on the individual subgroups. While we were focusing on the individual child, NCLB caused us to focus on subgroups and work toward helping them as a group meet that standard. Our plan [the JCS model] was designed to focus on the individual. The ABC model focused on schools, which were made of individuals. NCLB went further and said that not only does the school have to meet the standards but the subgroups must meet them as well.

As pointed out earlier, the JCS model for promotion standards was used as a model for the promotion gateway standard of the ABCs. Johnston County Schools had those components of holding students accountable for their performance on the EOCs in place prior to the implementation of the ABCs gateway policy. However, the ABCs assessment-based accountability system, Johnston County’s no social promotion policy, and the subsequently adopted ABCs no social promotion policy had a major impact in promoting the implementation of inclusion.

Experienced Johnston County school personnel stated that a seminal event in the development of a state wide accountability policy took place in Johnston County. An injunction was filed by the NAACP, the Legal Defense and Education Fund, Educate Our Children, a parent’s coalition, and parents of 14 students who initially failed the test. The court ruled in favor of school district, ruling that the decision about academic performance in regard to promotion is a decision that should be left to educational professionals and should not be subject to judicial

review (Erik v. Causby, 1997). The Superintendent made the following statements concerning the importance of this ruling to the success of accountability models.

That lawsuit was filed the first year we put the policy [842] in effect. It was filed by 14 parents that different groups had selected. It was filed by the NC Justice Center, a legal advocacy group that takes on cases for people who think that they have been taken advantage of. They were joined by the NAACP and filed an injunction in federal court to stop us from implementing the policy. That was held in federal court in Elizabeth City, NC. Terrance Boyle was the judge in the case. The judge ruled that what we were doing as an educational initiative was so valuable that he was not going to stop it. The group saw that it was not going anywhere and came back and asked for some things to be done. I didn't make any promises but did tell them there were some things we had planned to do, and we will do those things [to improve communication about the process and remediation for students]. We won the case, and that was critical. Had we lost that case, the whole accountability piece in North Carolina would have been killed.

And finally the Chief Academic Officer stated,

The outcome of the lawsuit was to raise the bar of expectation both in the classroom and the home. After the lawsuit the county further raised standards to making a Level III the passing grade. [Previously, a student could pass an EOG or EOC without make a Level III. What constituted a passing grade did not meet the criteria for Level III. Johnston County raised a grade of "70" to the minimum standard of Level III]. I think the ABCs model had a bigger impact on student achievement because it is based on growth rather than proficiency than NCLB.

Principal SJHS added, “In my career (25 years) that lawsuit and that transition from IKE [a later name for policy 842] to the ABCs model was the biggest change in education that I have ever seen. Because teachers knew that students and teachers were being held accountable.”

The Chief Academic Officer spoke about the evolution of accountability policies and the impact on all students in Johnston County, including students with disabilities.

Looking at the student accountability policy Dr. [Superintendent at the time] was responsible for that. He called me into this office to ask what I thought, and I told him that I didn’t think it would work. He asked to me to make it work. It raised the expectation. Johnston County did not expect enough out of their kids. It caused us to expect, as NCLB causes us to expect, that every child is going to be proficient. The policy has safety nets that NCLB does not have. We have disclaimers that are important. The Student Accountability Agreement raises expectations and has survived a court decision. The lawsuit was based on discrimination on exceptionality and race. We were able to demonstrate that teachers were more likely to retain based on those factors much more than the accountability model. Teachers were much more likely to be biased that the test.

While the court decision proved to be a boon to accountability and to the education of children with disabilities, it did not prove to increase the number of inclusion classes at that time. A review of master schedules for this time period of the three featured high schools shows that EC students were primarily educated in resource classes in a separate setting from their non-disabled peers. An example of this is found in Appendix D. The course numbers 2331NS and 2611S are both taught by an exceptional children’s teacher in a resource setting. This appears to be the norm during this period of time and the sample representative of all three high schools in

the study. There were some inclusion classes in place; however, the use of inclusion was limited, affecting a small number of students and teachers. Some interviewees remember the inclusion classes as being more prominent than other data sources would indicate. The recollections of teachers and administrators are not consistent with the documentation of the master schedules. This phenomenon was referenced in the methodology chapter as selectivity and distortions in memory and is problematic in historical reconstructions, as it is this study.

Question Three

To what degree and in what ways was inclusion implemented after the establishment of No Child Left Behind (December 2001 to June 2011)?

The question of the impact on inclusion of the introduction of NCLB is one with a multitude of varying answers. Some of the interviewees point to the legislation as being the most important element in the implementation of inclusion in Johnston County Schools. EC Teacher #2 SJHS said, “It is because of NCLB that everything is going more mainstream. We are getting away from self-contained settings in as much as possible. Before NCLB, it was left up to the individual schools and EC departments and administration to set up classes.” Math Teacher SJHS added, “I think it has made all of us step up to the plate. Before [the ABCs] we didn’t see as regular teachers a lot of these children, and it made me appreciate the fact of what the exceptional children’s department actually did, how they helped. It has made me realize across the board that we have more children with problems, labels and 504 labels than I had any idea that we had.” Math Teacher SSS added, “The policies have changed quite a bit. There are more inclusion teachers working with regular teachers, rather than having a separate setting.”

Yet some interviewees feel that NCLB is detrimental to what the ABCs and Johnston County Schools are trying to accomplish in their effort to educate all students. This feeling

among some educators was so strong as to make them incapable of speaking specifically about the legislation's impact on inclusion. Principal SSS felt strongly that NCLB undermined what the ABCs model in North Carolina had done for students.

The policies have changed due to NCLB because it is based on the Texas [accountability] model. The Texas model has a system in place to test all subgroups. One subgroup can cause you not to make AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress]. My contention has been and will continue to be the North Carolina system. It is more appropriate, more equitable. You are dealing with kids from the time they start testing, all the way through. You are dealing with their personal, individual growth, NCLB does not deal with those individual growths, they look at every subgroup, every year, it takes things in a different context, and there are different people every year. A subgroup could do very well this year, but the next year with another subgroup in the same arena, could possibly not do nearly as well. There are safety nets involved. I am a bigger proponent of the North Carolina system.

EC Teacher #1 SSS added:

It was much easier obtain [proficiency goals of] the ABCs than NCLB. Every piece of NCLB is difficult [subgroup requirements] because you can have all but one subgroup be successful, and because one group did not make it, the entire school is a failure. That part of NCLB I do not agree with it. It sheds a bad light on schools and what teachers are doing.

Other teachers and administrators saw no difference between the time prior to the introduction of NCLB and after its introduction.

EC Teacher #1 SJHS commented:

NCLB left it the same. Before NCLB, EC students were the scapegoat for low test scores. We are still the scapegoats for low test scores. One change is the recognition that EC students do not account for all low scores. Low scores run over all populations within the school.

Principal SJHS commented, “I don’t think No Child Left Behind has impacted the practice of inclusion. The practice of inclusion varies so much depending on the teacher.” Principal SSS stated, “I think [NCLB] left it pretty much the same. . . . You are still dealing with two teachers [working together].”

Among administrators, an audit that took place in 2010 was cited as having a huge impact on the use of inclusion in the classroom. The audit was conducted by the U.S. Department of Education in relation to Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the act which No Child Left Behind amended. Title II addresses how federal grant money for the improvement of teacher quality is used. The audit dealt with the curriculum that is used to teach some students with disabilities and the qualifications of teachers who teach these students. The audit stated that the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) curriculum used in North Carolina high schools for qualifying EC students is not the same curriculum used to educate general education students and as such does not meet the criteria for determining the AYP component of NCLB.

The audit also found the Praxis test used to certify EC teacher did not meet the requirements of being highly qualified. Currently in North Carolina, a teacher can be deemed high qualified in one of three ways: (a) be fully certified and /or licensed by the state, (b) hold at least a bachelor’s degree from a four-year institution, or (c) demonstrate competence in each core academic subject area in which the teacher teaches (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2011a). This final option of demonstration of competence has been interpreted as

having at least twenty-four semester hours of course work in a core area to be highly qualified in that area or passing a qualifying test, the Praxis II in a particular core area.

According to the audit, North Carolina's HOUSSE standards also did not meet the same licensure standards regular teachers are being held. HOUSSE is the acronym for High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation. Prior to this audit a teacher could be deemed highly qualified by the state using the HOUSSE process. The HOUSSE process involved peer review of instructional practices and outcomes to demonstrate proficiency in teaching a core area subject. Teachers would be evaluated by other teachers within the district to determine if they could be deemed highly qualified using the HOUSSE process.

The audit, which addressed the principles of highly qualified teachers as defined by NCLB, is pointed to by teachers and administrators as a driving force in the implementation of more inclusion classes in the district. Math Teacher CHS said, "When they took away the HQ status of many of our EC teachers due to the HOUSSE situation, it put a lot of students in inclusion classes." While few students with specific learning disabilities were involved in the Occupational Course of Study program, the Title II audit's impact on inclusion affected the broad spectrum of inclusion usage and made the North Carolina Standard Course of Study more available to all students regardless of disabling condition. The Title II audit drastically impacted schools, causing more students to be placed in inclusion classes in order to receive instruction from highly qualified teachers. EC teachers who are not highly qualified could no longer be the teacher of record in the classroom.

The Director of the EC department said this in response to questions about the effect of the audit:

Due to the Title II audit, and how it relates to highly qualified teachers, which is part of NCLB, it has made the district look at how the district is using inclusion and, as a result, is allowing more student to be in inclusion classes. The Title II audit is separate from NCLB. The Title II audit was requiring EC students to meet the same academic requirements and pass the same standards as the regular students. They were being required to be proficient on the same EOC tests as regular students. That's where NCLB really pushed inclusion to get the EC students in the classroom of the high qualified teachers. Clayton High was a school who had EC teachers teaching core academic areas. At the time these teachers were considered highly qualified by HOUSSSE standards. The result of the audit was that the HOUSSSE standard could no longer be used to make a teacher highly qualified. We would all like to have our students taught by highly qualified teachers. That's why we are proponents of inclusion. Inclusion allows an EC teacher to do what they (sic) were trained to do, which is not necessarily to teach biology. About one-fourth of all kids identified in Johnston County Schools are Specific Learning Disabled (SLD) kids with average IQs who have an area significant weakness in a particular area. We need to look at the regular curriculum for these kids. We have never had enough kids in the regular continuum according to the state.

The Executive Director of the Exceptional Children's department added,

It [the audit] has made the district look at how the district is using inclusion and, as a result, is allowing more students to be in inclusion classes. What the audit did was stop EC teachers from teaching core areas (being teacher of record). We saw a lot of EC teachers teaching core areas at South and SSS as well, but that changed earlier in those places than it did in Clayton. It became [EC teachers teaching core subjects] the big-

hearted Statute of Liberty: if you are struggling, we will help you. That was never meant to be done that way.

Finally, the Executive Director of the EC department links the audit, NCLB, and IDEA in this manner:

The district's policy refers to the state policy and IDEA in terms of LRE [least restrictive environment]. The massive change in high school in the past year was the federal Title II audit and the highly qualified teacher, and that has placed the district in a situation where they have to ensure that our students are being taught by teachers that are certified in their subject area. Our procedure manual speaks in the beginning to LRE and that is the mission of this district and the law as well as the emphasis from our office is that you always look to the regular education classroom first.

This audit has caused schools to rely on inclusion almost exclusively to provide EC students with curriculum taught by highly-qualified teachers. Master schedules have shown that Smithfield-Selma High and Clayton High rely on inclusion for almost all EC students, while South Johnston has been able to have EC teachers who are highly qualified in all for core areas and students who traditionally have been in the occupational course of study curriculum receive their instruction from those high qualified EC teachers (Johnston County Schools, 2011a). A sample page of a master schedule from the 2010-211 school year from Clayton High School is found in Appendix E. All classes are taught by teachers highly-qualified in math. A closer examination of the document shows that Course 2072C9, Foundations of Algebra has an inclusion class in section 02. In this class were 23 students, 12 of which are EC. Appendix E is representative of the master schedules during this time period for both Clayton and Smithfield-Selma.

Thus, while some teachers stated that in their view that NCLB did not impact the use of inclusion in the classroom, documents that reflected classrooms prior to NCLB and after NCLB indicate that NCLB has had a great impact on the implementation of inclusion classes. The largest impact came after the Title II audit, which had the effect of enforcing NCLB. More students are educated in inclusion classes now than have ever been, and this is due to highly qualified provisions of NCLB.

Question Four

What do the answers to the above questions tell us about the impact of accountability upon the implementation of inclusion?

As the ABCs of North Carolina came into existence, inclusion began to be used in Johnston County Schools to serve students with disabilities. In the beginning, inclusion was used sparingly, with resource and self-contained classes being preferred at the time. Some interviewees can recall working in inclusion settings; however, documents and data gathered do not support widespread use of inclusion at that particular time.

The passage of NCLB and its focus on subgroups stepped up the use of inclusion in Johnston County high schools. More students were served in inclusion classes, and there was a corresponding decrease in resource and self-contained classes.

The biggest impact on the implementation of inclusion classes, supported by data, was the Title II audit conducted in 2010. The Title II audit required the revamping of the eligibility standard for a teacher to be considered highly-qualified. This has resulted in an increase in inclusion classes and greater collaboration among teachers.

There are several important factors involved in the implementation of inclusion in Johnston County Schools. First is the establishment of classes for students with disabilities prior

to PL 94-142. This established the expectation for the education of EC students in the LRE. Another factor was the “raising of the bar” by a new superintendent. The efforts of the superintendent and school board in raising the expectations for student learning led to a district accountability model. The implementation of the district accountability model and the subsequent successful victory in court changed the mindset and expectations for all students in Johnston County. The implementation of the ABCs caused the district as a whole to begin to look at how to best serve all students including EC students. Inclusion classes were beginning to be implemented at this time: however, implementation was limited. The introduction of NCLB and the subgroups that accompanied the accountability model caused high schools in the district to implement more inclusion classes to meet the demands of LRE.

The United States Department of Education Title II audit conducted in 2010 caused a ripple effect in how EC students were educated and how inclusion was used to accomplish this education. The audit found that the standards (Praxis testing, Praxis 511 specifically, and HOUSSE certification) did not meet the standard set forth in NCLB and could not be used to deem EC teachers highly qualified. The audit also found that the Occupational Course of Study curriculum was not the same standard as the standard course of study and that all students had to be taught the same curriculum if pursuing a state diploma. Subsequent to this determination by the USED, more students are being served by inclusion in Johnston County High Schools than ever before. Of the three high schools examined in the study, Clayton and Smithfield-Selma use inclusion to educate all specific learning disabled (SLD) and Occupational Course of Study (OCS) students. South Johnston is able to educate their SLD students with inclusion and their OCS students separately because they have EC teachers who are high qualified in all four core areas. In addition, Clayton and Smithfield-Selma also use inclusion in all four core areas while

South Johnston uses inclusion in the areas of English and math only. Overall, these several factors have been the driving forces in the greater implementation of inclusion to educate students with disabilities in Johnston County.

Additional Findings Important to the Implementation of Inclusion

In addition to the answers to the research questions, other findings came to light that will continue to be important to the implementation of inclusion. These findings are important because they pertain to best practices for the benefit of all students who will be continue to be impacted by the use of inclusion classes. One area that interviewees agreed upon is the benefits for both EC and regular students being together in classes. The opportunity for peer interaction and peer tutoring is important for both groups. Interviewees stressed that the students benefit from having more than one teacher in the class. This also improves classroom management, resulting in fewer discipline problems. Math Teacher SJHS made the following statement:

As adults we try to find ways to reach students but sometimes can't get down to that level and we try to think of a different way to say it and little Johnny will tell little Suzy this is what she means in a way that they both can understand. Another thing that has been a surprise to me is that the regular education kids accept the inclusion kids, and do not turn their backs on them.

Concerning the academic performance and behavior of students in inclusion classes, an English Teacher CHS stated, "Good teachers (regular and EC) with good instructional practices can keep the same pace that a regular class can maintain. I think this applies also to behaviors. Students will rise to the occasion and adapt their behavior to the norm of the class."

Math Teacher SSS made this observation:

They benefit from having two teachers in the classroom to work with all students, thus making groups smaller and also giving the students the benefit of more than one teaching style. The inclusion teacher will present the same material differently than the regular teacher and there will be students who grasp the different explanation better. We have a diverse population at SSS [Smithfield-Selma]. I have a cooperative and collaborative classroom where students can feel free to ask questions, to either teacher or peers.

EC teachers reported that benefits to EC students include the social benefits of associating with a larger group of peers, having raised expectations for their performance in the classroom. Teachers also reported that in cooperative learning situations EC students benefited from the exchange of ideas and peer interaction. EC teacher #2 SSS reported that occasionally that a student was able to better explain a concept being discussed for classmates and was able to do so in language that the other students better understood. An inclusion teacher shared the following:

The benefits are tremendous, the interaction of students, some of the students don't know who is EC and who is not. Sometimes the regular student wants to leave with the EC students. Sometimes, with behavioral problems we will allow them to go out into the smaller setting. It helps the EC students, makes them not feel so different. When I did resource classes, the students wanted me to shut the door. They did not want anyone to see them in class. It helps them socially and academically.

Administrators were asked what the benefits to both regular and exceptional children who are in inclusion classes. Assistant Principal #2 SJHS said, "I think it promotes understanding for EC students that has not existed in the past. It promotes tolerance, understanding and acceptance. For the EC kid it promotes the academic rigor and expectations in the curriculum. It

makes them feel a part of our school.” Principal CHS added, “If you do it right, you have an ‘algebra’ class not an inclusion class. You don’t put labels on kids that way.”

Many teachers report that in inclusion classes that are well coordinated it is difficult to distinguish regular students from EC students. Students also have difficulty distinguishing between regular and EC teachers and will seek help from either teacher. EC Teacher #2 SSS reported that the inclusion classes ran so smoothly with instruction given by both teachers that she had regular students ask for college reference letters. She stated, “If inclusion is done correctly, students do not realize that you are an EC teacher.”

The only negative shared was a concern for higher performance students in an inclusion class. “I am not sure if the kids on the upper end of the class that could be in honors classes will benefit. I would hope that our teachers would group and pair those higher kids with the EC and struggling kids in a peer tutoring situation.”

The attitude of both administrators and teachers about the pairing of teachers in inclusion classes is evolving. In the beginning of the use of inclusion, more teachers were assigned to work in inclusion classes. All parties recognize the need to have teachers who want to be involved. A current principal spoke about his approach to assigning teachers to work with inclusion classes:

I think you have got to find people who want to be a part of inclusion; I will conduct an interview process where I will define my vision for inclusion and ask, “Are you willing to do this?” Some will say yes, some will say no, and some will say it depends on who you pair me with, and that is a valid answer. If we do not see a difference this year, then inclusion will not be effective and it will be my fault. The EC teacher should have one

more step than the regular teacher does, meaning that the EC teacher should have more techniques to help the EC students above that of the regular teacher.

Another current principal shared his thoughts:

We have a good idea about which teachers work better with lower level kids, and try to pair up teachers together considering personalities. We do not pair teacher that may not get along with each other. We do use the HOUSSE certifications to aid us in EC teacher assignment. We wouldn't take someone "HOUSSEd" in math and put them in English. We do try to cover all four core area. We do have some highly qualified EC teachers in some core areas and are able to utilize those persons. They work with our resource and occupational course of study (OCS) kids.

Teachers weighed in with their experiences of being involved with inclusion. Some teachers said that they were asked to participate; other said that they were assigned to teach inclusion classes. EC Teacher #1 CHS stated, "I think it has always been the newest teachers, and a last minute decision as to who will teach inclusion classes. It seems that the kids, who need the most experienced teachers, receive the newest least experienced teachers." In contrast, EC Teacher #1 SSS shared this belief:

I used to do it [schedule teachers for inclusion] myself. Now the department chair does it. You do not want someone who doesn't want to teach inclusion teaching them. I have spent many summers working with student services setting up classes. I have been asked about certain teachers and inclusion and have to say that I do not want my students with that teacher. All core areas are covered by inclusion.

Teachers ultimately will determine the success of inclusion classes and will have the greatest impact on students.

Providing training in best practices for the implementation of inclusion, such as co-teaching, was a topic that was controversial among interviewees. More experienced principals and central-level administrators observed that the district has offered many opportunities for professional development. Newer principals and teachers felt that the district had not done enough to offer those opportunities. Central level EC administrators felt that the offerings had been adequate, but that attendance at those opportunities was poor. EC officials point particularly to summer opportunities and the lack of a district stipend to encourage participation being responsible for poor attendance. Teachers had a different take on professional development. English Teacher SSS said, "I can think of a number of times that training has been offered in inclusion, and what happens is that I am there, but my inclusion teacher is somewhere else doing training. I think that the EC department chair should step up and say, 'This training is for inclusion, and you need to be there.' Training is not mandated and I think that it is a deficiency." There also were EC teachers who lamented the lack of participation in professional development in inclusion by their regular education counterparts.

Reviews of school improvement plans of Clayton High, Smithfield-Selma, and South Johnston that mention of the use of inclusion are varied. The school improvement plans for the 2006-2007 school year each included a statement concerning the education of students with disabilities grouping them with English language learners and addressing their needs. The following statement from the Smithfield-Selma High School plan is illustrative of all three plans:

The ESL and EC departments work diligently to make sure that the special needs of our students are met, and then coordinate with student services, the administration, and the core teacher to place our students in a setting that is most conducive to their success.

These settings include BED [Behaviorally/Emotional Disabled] self-contained, sheltered

settings, and inclusion settings. The ESL and EC departments also work very hard at equipping regular education teachers with training needed to assist students with being successful in an inclusion classroom setting (Smithfield-Selma High School, 2006).

As schools have adapted to serving students in inclusion classes, school improvement plans speak less about inclusion and more about meeting the individual needs of the student. Using Smithfield-Selma's school improvement plan again as an example of the general language used to describe services provided yields the following:

Our students are the reason why we are all here. Meeting their needs is crucial to the success of our school. When we begin scheduling students for their classes, it has to be a team effort. It is not just a student service issue. All the departments give valuable input as to the courses that need to be offered to meet the needs of all students in the school. The ESL, EC and OCS departments work diligently to make sure the special needs of our students are met, and then coordinate with student services, the administration, and the core teachers to place students in a setting that is most conducive to their success. The ESL, EC, and OCS departments also work very hard at equipping regular education teachers with the training need to assist students with being successful in an inclusion classroom setting (Smithfield-Selma High School, 2010).

Theoretical Perspectives

As presented in chapter two, Institutional Theory and Street Level Bureaucracy Theory were used as guides for this study. The findings compared with these two theories and to the hypothesized outcomes expressed in chapter two will be presented here.

Institutional Theory would predict that as new legislation was enacted -- such as PL 94-142, the ABCs and NCLB -- the regulatory pillar would be altered to accommodate the new

legislation. The findings of the study bear this out. The changes associated with PL 94-142 were mostly procedural. More students with disabilities enrolled in public schools, including Johnston County Schools, than were enrolled prior to PL 94-142. This did cause the creation of more exceptional children's classes; however, the creation of these classes complied with the legislation that students with disabilities receive a FAPE in the LRE. The application of law with both the ABCs and NCLB found high schools being held more accountable for student performance, so the shift in the regulatory pillar was more pronounced. The change in legislation in each case was met with resistance due to norms, beliefs, and parental pressures upon the schools. How and where students with disabilities were educated began to change with the legislation and eventually became the accepted practice. This acceptance would coincide with changes in the normative and cultural-cognitive pillars. Each time the legislation changed, the how, where and why children with disabilities were educated in the manner they are was met with resistance but gradually was accepted by the school community which includes administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Both the ABCs and NCLB were outcome based accountability measures, and both pieces of legislation impacted the implementation of inclusion causing schools in the study to increase the usage of inclusion as a method of curriculum delivery in the least restrictive environment.

An example of how much the normative and cultural-cognitive pillar shifted from the time prior to any accountability system to the present can be expressed through the experiences of the Superintendent.

Before I got there, JCS was not a bad system [but] there were not a lot of high expectations. There was an Eastern North Carolina mentality, what was good enough for their parents were good enough for the children. The expectation level for the kids was

low. I found out that teachers were not teaching the standard course of study and did not know what it was. I asked principals “Are you using the standard course of study?” Their answer was “What’s that?” I found out that the EOC/EOG were of no consequence in the county. The attitude was “We know better.” There were little league games going on until 2:00 am the morning of the state tests. I recommended to the board a new policy that there would be no after school activities or use of school facilities on nights before state testing. We also had a policy stating that we would provide breakfast on the day of the test. I found out that I had to focus things at the top. The leadership needed to be focused on high expectations and high achievement. The principals meetings changed and were about expectations and achievement. You can change your focus by changing what you talk about. You use what I call the bully pulpit. Some of our nation’s presidents have used it very well. When the person in charge talks about something, and says it’s important and keeps saying it, most folks listen to it.

The interviewee continued by sharing a confrontation that he was asked to intervene in between a principal and the coach of a community baseball team. This confrontation took place after the school board passed a policy that school athletic fields could not be used on nights prior to state testing. The coach informed the school that he intended to play a game the night before state testing despite the policy and the principal’s insistence that board policy be followed. The administrator went to the school and spoke to the coach, and the coach insisted he was still planning to play ball. The administrator asked, “How are you going to play baseball with eight or nine school buses that I am going to park on this field?” This ended the argument and further challenges to the board policy.

The Title II audit provides another insight to these changes. Prior to the audit, many students had the benefit of inclusion classes; however, other students were still being taught in separate settings. The audits findings in the area of curriculum and the highly qualified status of the teachers presenting the curriculum caused individual schools to adapt and make wide-sweeping changes in how they provided instruction to all EC students. Two schools in the study, Clayton High and Smithfield-Selma High, moved toward a more complete inclusion model, moving all but the most severely disabled students into inclusion classes. South Johnston High, on the other hand, had the ability to continue to serve the students in their OCS program separately because they had EC teachers who were deemed highly qualified in core area subjects and could be the teacher of record in those classes. The impact of the Title II audit has been the greatest upon the implementation of inclusion. This is not due to outcome based measures; the Title II audit was based on procedure, but the outcome of the audit was enforced by law and caused schools to align their practices with this law. These most recent changes, due to the Title II audit, have been met with resistance but are slowly changing the way things are done in high schools in Johnston County consistent with the predictions of Institutional Theory.

In applying the tenets of Street-Level Bureaucracy to the current study, several things are observed. While interviewees spoke of the struggles to meet the new mandates of both the ABCs and NCLB, no interviewee spoke specifically about the three stresses (inadequate resources, threats or challenges to authority, and contradictory or ambiguous job expectations) the theory would predict street-level bureaucrats would experience, namely threats to resources or authority or too ambiguous in terms of job responsibilities. Interviewees did state that how inclusion looks in each classroom will depend upon the teachers assigned to the classroom and that each pair of teachers would have to determine how to work together in an inclusion

classroom. This notion is consistent with the idea of workers at the “street level” adapting rules, laws, and mandates to meet the needs of the clients they serve. The recollection of interviewees did not reflect any struggles with resources, job description, or authority was noted. Little evidence consistent with the specific tenets Street Level Bureaucracy Theory was prominent during any time period in Johnston County Schools. Therefore, Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory seems less useful as a viable model to explain the findings in this study.

Summary

Prior to the implementation of any student accountability system, the education of students with disabilities focused on compliance with PL 94-142 and its subsequent reauthorizations, known as IDEA. The law required compliance but did not mandate performance measures. PL 94-142 had little effect in terms of the use of inclusion. The district complied with the legislation by enrolling student with disabilities and providing a FAPE in the LRE. The implementation of the ABCs brought the first efforts by Johnston County Schools to use inclusion to educate students with disabilities pursuing a high school diploma. The ABCs were a regulatory intervention of accountability outcomes for all students. The ABCs led to some changes in norms; however, the practice of inclusion was used sparingly and was not widespread during this time although interviewees recall its usage as more frequent than other data sources and documents would authenticate. As NCLB became law, more inclusion classes serving more students became the norm. Following the Title II audit in 2010, the number of students served in inclusion classes again increased. The audit findings stated that the Occupational Course of Study curriculum was not equivalent to the standard course of study in the state and that the methods for certifying teachers as highly qualified were not rigorous enough to meet the standards set forth by Title II of ESEA. The finding by the audit set into

motion an increase in inclusion classes so that all students could receive the standard course of study from a highly qualified teacher, and students with disabilities could receive the accommodations and modifications they are entitled to under IDEA. Initially, PL 94-142 required only compliance with its mandate of services being delivered to students with disabilities. In Johnston County the legislation did little to promote inclusion or address the quality of exceptional children's education. The advent of state and federal accountability models forced educators to find better ways of curriculum delivery for students and inclusion began to be promoted as a method to accomplish that end. As state and federal agencies have refined these models and laws along with creating ways to enforce governmental mandates, the use of inclusion has greatly expanded to benefit a vast majority of students with disabilities with many reported benefits for Exceptional Children.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This chapter will review the findings of the study and then present the implications of this study for schools and school districts. The implications for North Carolina, Johnston County as a local school district, institutions of higher learning as well as for policy and practice will be discussed. Finally the implications and possibilities for future research will be discussed.

Inclusion is a method of curriculum delivery involving the provision of special education services in the regular classroom, usually by the special education teacher being in the regular classroom to collaborate with the regular education teacher in providing these services. Students on the regular continuum (In regular classes 79% of the day or more) and the resource continuum (In regular classes from 40% to 79% of the day) can benefit from inclusion. Inclusion has been used in Johnston County high schools since the mid-1990s as one method to meet the expectation that students with disabilities receive their education in the least restrictive environment

Prior to PL 94-142 in Johnston County, some students with disabilities were served in self-contained classes in a centrally located school. The students served in this manner were students whose parents chose to send them to school. The number of students served was small and the teachers who taught them had no previous experience with working with students with disabilities.

After PL 94-142, students began attending their community schools and were served in resource or self-contained classes. Students with more severe disabilities continued to attend centrally located schools, in some cases spending their entire time in public education in self-contained classes in a single school setting.

Just prior to the state's accountability model being introduced, Johnston County put into place its own gateway accountability model. It stated that student must have a passing score on EOG or EOC tests in order to be promoted/receive course credit. This promotion policy was challenged in federal court in the first year of its existence and was upheld. This allowed Johnston County Schools to raise expectations for student performance as well as the expectations for educators in the school district. This court victory and the subsequent changes it brought about were seen as some of the most important to education in Johnston County and throughout the state of North Carolina. Most students with disabilities were educated within their community schools after the ABCs of North Carolina came into effect. Teachers and administrators recall the beginning of the use of inclusion, but examination of administrative records show that its use was on a limited basis. The number of students and teachers involved were small. The ABCs along with the district's promotion standards began to cause educators and others to reshape their thinking about the education of all students, including students with disabilities.

In chapter four a former superintendent described the impact of Johnston County Schools' own student accountability (gateway promotion) policy had on students in the district, saying that teachers and parents were surprised at the success students with disabilities experienced. Students with disabilities made the biggest growth of any group in the first year of Johnston County's policy 842.

Principal SJHS stated,

When we went to the federal lawsuit because so many children had failed because they had not met the standards, the parents sued us. When we won, all of a sudden, people across the state said we can hold these kids to high expectations, even kids who are in

inclusion; you have to have way to remediate, and allow these kids to go the summer school. That in itself had a much larger bearing on getting kids to learning and changing the way we did things because if you are going to hold the kids accountable, you have to hold the teachers accountable, than NCLB did, I think it raised the bar. The outcome of the lawsuit was to raise the bar of expectation both in the classroom and the home. After the lawsuit the county further raised standards to make a level III the passing grade.

The introduction of NCLB and its mandates for every student to be proficient and to measure this proficiency through subgroups has had an impact on the education of students with disabilities. Every administrator interviewed stated that the sub-grouping component of NCLB is good for students with disabilities and would help them receive the services they would need to be successful. The largest impact of the legislation has come in the form of enforcement of the highly qualified teacher mandates of the law. An audit that took place in 2009, outlining changes to be made throughout North Carolina in terms of how teachers meet the requirements of being highly qualified, was released and the findings changed how the highly qualified teacher mandate was enforced. Those changes have caused most schools, including those in the study, to rely on inclusion as the primary method for curriculum delivery for student with disabilities to gain access to a free and appropriate public education. Ironically, it was a procedural provision of NCLB (the highly qualified teachers provision) that exerted the greatest impact on the implementation of inclusion, not the assessment-based accountability provisions that are seen as central to the act.

The introduction of student accountability legislation has had a tremendous impact upon the education of all students, including those with disabilities. The ABCs no social promotion component along with the previously implemented Johnston County policy caused

administrators and teachers to take seriously the effective teaching of students with disabilities. Students gained greater access to the North Carolina standard course of study. This policy, particularly the district's student promotion or "gateway" component, was enforced through the courts, which aided the system in its endeavor to hold students accountable.

No Child Left Behind has also had a great impact on the education of students with disabilities. The introduction of subgroups brought attention to students with disabilities and their needs to be successfully educated. While this legislation promoted educating all students, it was the Title II audit that more clearly defined the meaning of highly qualified teachers and the changes that caused schools to adopt a proactive use of inclusion classes in order to serve students with disabilities. According to student placement records, more students are being served through inclusion than any other time in Johnston County Schools' history (Johnston County Schools, 2011a).

In summary, then, in Johnston County, (a) state and federal assessment-based accountability policies have exerted a tremendous impact on the effort to assure that students with disabilities get the same opportunity to learn the NC Standard Course of Study that other students receive, (b) North Carolina's ABCs promoted some limited use of inclusion to achieve this goal, and (c) the highly qualified teachers provision of NCLB as enforced by a federal audit greatly expanded the implementation of inclusion.

Implication for High Schools

The use of inclusion in high schools to educate students with disabilities has increased greatly particularly since the completion of the 2009 Title II audit. The interviews conducted for this study found needs in following areas: (1) professional development; (2) Co-teaching; (3) Collaboration.

Professional Development

If the broader use of inclusion is to be effective, schools and school districts will continue to face the challenge of providing high quality training on the implementation and use of inclusion practices and strategies for their teachers. The interviews completed for this study reveal that teachers feel that more training is needed. While leaders point to the amount of training that has taken place, teachers expressed the need for training. Turnover in schools, with new teachers being hired each year would require periodic repeating of the desired training. This could be done by experienced personnel working with new personnel, or as part of a beginning teacher induction; however the arrangement, the training should be provided.

Co-Teaching

Prior research suggests that training in inclusion, and particularly co-teaching is needed for successful implementation (Appelbaum Training Institute, 2005; Holodick, 2008; McKee, 2011). A lack of planning time is detrimental to the inclusion process. A director in the exceptional children's department in Johnston County stated, "The lack of planning time for regular and EC teachers is the biggest barrier to effective inclusion." Johnston County Schools began the 2011 – 2012 school year emphasizing the practice of co-teaching as the preferred method of incorporating inclusion into classrooms within the district (Johnston County Schools, 2011b).

Collaboration

The aforementioned emphasis on co-teaching as a model will require schools to provide times for regular and exceptional children's teachers to plan. Schools will also need to consider the needs of regular and special education teachers as they devise their master schedules to include planning time for these teachers to collaborate and plan lessons and strategies for their

assigned classes. Appl et al. (2001) report that communication is important to the success of inclusion. This communication could be accomplished with scheduled common planning. At times common planning is not possible, but teachers dedicated to working for what is best for students will find a way. Math Teacher CHS stated that he met with the inclusion teacher before or after school when necessary to plan together. Staff members at all three high schools reported that their schools were going to extended lunch format where students could have extra time during their lunch to seek help from their teachers. As a component of this, on days that teachers are not assigned to be available to students during lunch, those teachers have the opportunity to plan. Many regular and inclusion teachers intend to use a portion of this time to collaborate and plan.

Implications for Institutions of Higher Learning

Institutions of higher learning that have teacher preparation programs are faced with a challenge as well. Traditionally colleges and universities have trained special education teachers in techniques and strategies to aid the instruction of students with disabilities. Prospective core area teachers were taught to expect students with disabilities to work primarily with special education teacher as late as 2005 (Sailor & Roger, 2005). Currently, universities are requiring prospective regular and special education teachers to complete courses designed for perspective teachers to learn skills to prepare them to work in an inclusive classroom (East Carolina University, 2012). These courses, to be effective, need to provide both regular education teachers and exceptional children's teachers instruction in role definitions for regular and special education teachers, curriculum modification, providing accommodations, and inclusion and co-teaching models.

These students (prospective teachers) have not accumulated enough credit hours in a specific core area to be deemed highly qualified by NCLB standards. Arranging for them to do so will prove difficult because providing the number of credit hours necessary for teachers to pass licensure tests in core areas or become highly qualified based solely on semester hours completed is not practical with a desire to stay true to the idea of providing the graduate with the tools necessary to assist students with disabilities. It could be possible that institutions of higher learning alter the exceptional children's degree program to allow for concentrations in a particular core area so that graduates could take the Praxis test in that content area and become highly qualified.

Implications for Policy and Practice

As Johnston County and other school districts move forward in the education of students with disabilities, the question of the implications for policy and practice in the future must be addressed. These implications will be addressed by responsibility: (1) Superintendents; (2) Central office personnel; (3) Principals; and (4) teachers.

Superintendents

The superintendent could encourage the district school board to enact their own policies mandating the use of inclusion ahead of the state as did Johnston County with board policy 892 setting testing promotion standards ahead of the ABCs in the 1990s. As a result of the Title II audit, North Carolina or any of its individual districts could mandate inclusion as the method to be used to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. This would also require a commitment to fund teaching positions in order to fully implement inclusion throughout the school district.

Central Office Personnel

Mandating inclusion on the part of any governing body, whether it is state or local, will require a commitment of more funds to pay for additional teachers. In chapter four, one interviewee stated that a reason for not mandating inclusion was the lack of funds necessary to pay for the increase in teachers that would be needed to use inclusion system-wide. The increased emphasis on inclusion could also require additional funding for professional development for regular education and special education teachers. As mentioned in the findings chapter, this training would have to be mandatory for all teachers to be effective. Interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with voluntary inclusion training, stating that training was not as effective as it could be due to poor participation.

Principals

There are three specific things principals can do to improve the quality of inclusion education. First, ensure that teachers working together in inclusion setting have sufficient planning time. This could come in the form of assigned common planning or in the form an extended lunch where teachers could be scheduled with time to plan during lunch.

Second, principals can look to pair teachers who want to work in inclusion settings with students with disabilities, and work well together. Teachers who gave positive remarks about inclusion seemed to enjoy working with the teachers in which they were assigned to work.

Third, principals need to support the professional development opportunities for teachers and encourage teacher participation.

Teachers

Teachers must take advantage of planning and staff development opportunities. The planning that is done must include content, discussions about individual student accommodations and modifications, as well as each teacher's role in the classroom.

Theoretical Perspective and Conceptual Framework

The implementation of inclusion in Johnston County high schools is an excellent example of institutional theory. First, the regulatory pillar, represented by legislation, changed several times, both with accountability measures of the ABCs and NCLB and the mandates of PL 94-142 and each of its subsequent reauthorizations.

The first adjustment to the regulatory pillar was the establishment of PL 94-142. This was the first law mandating a FAPE in a LRE for each student. While Johnston County high schools had served some students with disabilities prior to this legislation, PL 94-142 opened the doors for far more students with disabilities to be educated in the public schools.

The Johnston County Schools' policy 842, a gateway promotion policy, and the ABCs of North Carolina came into place just ahead of the reauthorization of PL 94-142, more commonly known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997. Later, NCLB and IDEIA, both reauthorizations of federal legislation in 2001 and 2004 respectively, also changed the landscape in terms of the regulatory pillar.

Each piece of legislation caused shifts in both the normative and cultural – cognitive pillars. Each change was met with some resistance because these changes did not support the normative pillar or “the way things are done around here.” It took some adjustments for organizations to write IEPs, and provide accommodations and modifications for identified students. Eventually, these changes were accepted and become part of the normative pillar.

A similar pattern followed with the cultural-cognitive pillar in that those things that are “taken for granted” about schools change as well. Resistance to these changes were present, but as time progressed and people became accustomed to the changes, such as two teachers in a classroom collaborating and co-teaching together, these changes became part of the cultural-cognitive pillar.

Two of Oliver’s (1991) strategic responses were observed in this process. These strategic responses were *compromise*, where some students benefited from inclusion, while others were still being served in a separate setting in resource or self-contained classes. The percentages of students who were served in the regular classroom increased as these accountability measures and mandates federal education law came into effect. The second strategic response seen is *acquiescence*, the strict adherence to policy, was seen in a greater degree after the Title II audit in 2009. The largest percentage of students in regular classrooms as their LRE took place after the audit.

In examining the high schools in the study, Burch’s (2007) prediction of institutions organizing themselves to look like similar organizations called “isomorphism” can be seen in how each of the schools organized their exceptional children’s department, and their inclusion classes. Two of the high schools, Clayton and Smithfield-Selma, use inclusion classes almost exclusively to provide the LRE for students with disabilities. South Johnston uses inclusion with most students; however, students in the Occupational Course of Study are being educated in self-contained classrooms because South Johnston has exceptional children’s teachers who are high-qualified in core areas.

As North Carolina embraces the Common Core and Essential Standards as the state-wide curriculum for all students, this pattern will be repeated. The new curriculum will represent a

shift in the regulatory pillar. The new curriculum will meet with some resistance, and with time will be incorporated. Similar shifts in the normative and cultural-cognitive pillar will be seen and adjustments to accept these changes will eventually happen.

The implementation of inclusion did not follow a pattern set forth by the tenets of Street-Level Bureaucracy. Street-Level Bureaucracy suggests there are three stresses upon teachers (street-level bureaucrats) that impact the implementation of guidelines, in this case, using inclusion to provide services for students with disabilities. These stresses are: inadequate resources, challenges or threats to authority, and contradictory or ambiguous job expectations. As data was collected, particularly as interviews were being conducted, no incidents of these stresses were mentioned.

It is entirely possible that this study was conducted too late to find evidence of these stresses as defined by Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory. If this study could have taken place earlier, perhaps 2002 or 2003, interviewees may have spoken about these stresses, but in retrospect, these stresses did not seem as important to the implementation of inclusion as other factors.

As the Common Core and Essential Standards come into effect, teachers may experience the stresses predicted by Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory. The most logical stress to expect will be inadequate resources. The Common Core and Essential Standards have reorganized the order and sequence to many concepts taught, and the current textbooks and other curriculum materials do not reflect these changes (Common Core State Standard Initiative, 2011). Resistance to these changes will be seen here first. Time will have to pass and teachers and administrators become accustomed to the new curriculum before they become ingrained and accepted.

Implications for Future Research

In reviewing the results of this study, many other areas related to this research that can be investigated in the future. Three of these areas are: (1) The quality of inclusion education; (2) The impact that students with disabilities will have or have had on efforts to reauthorize No Child Left Behind; and (3) The impact of educating students with disabilities and the movement toward a nation-wide curriculum.

Quality of Inclusion Education

The quality of inclusion education is a topic not covered in this study that would be of interest. In the interview process of this study, the Chief Academic Officer made the following comment:

NCLB has increased the amount of inclusion that is used. I don't know if I could initially say that it improved it. The more teachers, students, etc., involved, not on a voluntary basis, have probably cause the quality to dip, but I can see it rebounding because people are coming up with creative ways to implement it. People will rise to the expectation level given. I have seen a dip but we will see an increase in improvement, and we continue to refine our process.

A study to determine the effectiveness of inclusion practices would prove fruitful to educators.

Impact Students with Disabilities Have on Efforts to Reauthorize NCLB

Another area that could be researched further is the impact, if any, on the needs of students with disabilities have had on reauthorization process of NCLB. The 2013-2014 school year is approaching and with it the deadline for all students nationwide to be on grade level. Typically students with disabilities lag behind other students. President Obama and Secretary of Education Duncan have openly discussed waivers to relieve schools of the punitive aspects of

NCLB. The USED has now mapped out a process for states to submit plans for flexibility in the application of ESEA. The plan must address an increased focus on student learning and an improvement in instruction. North Carolina submitted its plan in February of 2012 (United States Department of Education, 2011b). As the reauthorization process continues, special education students and their performance will more than likely have an effect on the outcome of this legislation.

Impact on Nation-Wide Curriculum

There is a movement to nationalize the curriculum that is taught in public schools in the United States. Another area for further research is the impact that students with disabilities will have on such an effort. The following questions will need answering: Will all students be subject to the same curriculum? If not, how will changes in the curriculum for different students be determined? Will this new curriculum also mandate the number of courses or credits needed to obtain a high school diploma? The ever present need to teach all students regardless of disability will drive all discussions of method, practice, and curriculum as we proceed into the twenty-first century, in Johnston County, in North Carolina, and throughout the nation.

As answers for these questions are sought, perhaps educators and others with an interest in education will gain understanding of how to better educate students with disabilities, and the needs of these students can be best served through legislation, policy, and practice.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office
1L-09 Brody Medical Sciences Building • 600 Moye Boulevard • Greenville, NC 27834
Office 252-744-2914 • Fax 252-744-2284 • www.ecu.edu/irb

TO: Rex Howard, Student, C/O Charles Thompson, College of Education, ECU—210 Ragsdale

FROM: UMCIRB *kk*

DATE: April 21, 2011

RE: Expedited Category Research Study

TITLE: “The Impact of State and Federal Accountability Standards upon the Implementation of Inclusion in Johnston County, NC High Schools”

UMCIRB #11-0210

This research study has undergone review and approval using expedited review on 4.13.11. This research study is eligible for review under an expedited category number 6 & 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this **unfunded** study **no more than minimal risk** requiring a continuing review in **12 months**. Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

The above referenced research study has been given approval for the period of **4.13.11** to **4.12.12**. The approval includes the following items:

- Internal Processing Form (dated 3.3.11)
- Research Proposal (received date 3.28.11)
- Informed Consent (version date 4.7.11)
- COI Disclosure Form (3.22.11)
- Letter of Support from Keith Beamon, Johnston County School

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

The UMCIRB applies 45 CFR 46, Subparts A-D, to all research reviewed by the UMCIRB regardless of the funding source. 21 CFR 50 and 21 CFR 56 are applied to all research studies under the Food and Drug Administration regulation. The UMCIRB follows applicable International Conference on Harmonisation Good Clinical Practice guidelines.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Protocol Questions

1. In broad terms, what are the district's current policies on the use of inclusion in the education of high school students with disabilities?
2. To what extent has any of this been influenced by the requirements of NCLB? That is, were the policies different before NCLB was instituted, and if so, how did they change in response to NCLB?
3. On balance, has NCLB improved the implementation of inclusion, made it worse, or left it pretty much the same?
4. If you think back now to the time when the ABCs assessment and accountability system came along, did that change the district's policies on inclusion in any way? If so, what were the policies like before the ABCs, and how did they change after the ABCs came along?
5. On balance, did the ABCs improve the implementation of inclusion, make it worse, or leave it pretty much the same?
6. Can you tell me anything about the way that students with disabilities were educated before IDEA came along? How were the district's policies different back then? How did they change in response to IDEA?

Follow up on the following topics if they are not mentioned or not adequately addressed in response to the initial broad question:

Development of IEPs
Student assignment
Selection and qualifications of teachers
Assignment of teachers
Roles of inclusion teachers and regular classroom teachers
Instructional approach(es)
Professional development
Benefits to EC and regular ed students
Inclusionary practices: mandated, or figured out on own

APPENDIX C: DISTRICT APPROVAL

20 July 2009

Dr Ed Croom
Superintendent
Johnston County Schools

Dr. Croom:

I am writing to formally request permission to conduct a case study for a dissertation in completion of a Doctoral degree in Educational Leadership.

My study will examine the impact of state and federal accountability legislation has had on the implementation of high school inclusion classes for students with disabilities. I want to examine existing data concerning the placement and services received by EC students. I also want to examine documents both from state and Johnston County on guidelines for placement of EC students.

I would also like to interview staff members throughout Johnston County concerning the implementation of inclusion. I would like to interview persons who have played a part in the EC program in Johnston County, such as directors and other central level administrators, school site administrators, regular education and exceptional children's teachers.

All precautions will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all persons involved in the study. No students' names or personal information will be used in the study. The only demographic information that will possibly be used will be identified disability and services received including class placement.

I would appreciate being granted permission to conduct this study. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rex Howard

From: Linda Wheeler Thursday - July 23, 2009 1:50 PM
To: Rex Howard
Subject: dissertation

Rex: Dr. Croom has approved your written request to interview staff members as outlined in your July 20th letter. He has requested that Keith Beamon assist you in arranging the interviews, etc.

Keith is on vacation this week and has not yet seen your request. We are forwarding it to him via courier. I am sure he will contact you soon. If not, feel free to follow-up with him. Thanks.

Linda W.

From: Keith Beamon Tuesday, September 8, 2009

To: Rex Howard

CC: Wilma Bisesi

Subject: Approval

Dr. Croom has asked that I contact you to let you know that your request to conduct a case study in the district for your dissertation has been approved. Good luck with your work. I have copied your letter of request to Ms. Bisesi and have discussed the project with her.

Keith

**APPENDIX D: SAMPLE PAGE OF MASTER SCHEDULE,
CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL 1999-2000**

Sample Master Schedule Clayton High School 1999-2000

R605-4 06/16/11		CLASS ENROLLMENT CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL										1999/00 Page						
ORDERED BY SEMESTER WITHIN SECTION WITHIN COURSE																		
COURSE	SEC	SEM	MEETING CODE	TEACHER	ROOM	CAP	GRAND TOTAL	CURRENT ENROLLMENT					SEATS OPEN					
								M	F	09	10	11		12	EX	OTHR		
1954H	H ENGLISH IV	22	2 2	0007 SHERRI PEARSON	731E	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27		
							TOTALS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27
							SEM 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	52
1955P	AP ENG IV	22	2 2	0057 ELAINE JENKINS	715E	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25		
							TOTALS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
2012S	CONS MATH	02	1 2	0034 JANET LYNCH	712E	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		
							TOTALS	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
							SEM 2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2014C	PREP MATH	22	2 2	0034 JANET LYNCH	712E	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		
							TOTALS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2210S	PRE-ALGEBRA	02	1 2	0031 SCOTT SIEGEL	711E	25	11	8	3	9	2	0	0	0	0	14		
							TOTALS	11	8	3	9	2	0	0	0	0	14	
							SEM 2	10	6	4	8	2	0	0	0	0	15	
2211S	INTROD MATH	02	1 2	0031 SCOTT SIEGEL	711E	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15		
							TOTALS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	
2213A	INTRO MATH	02	1 2	0080 KAREN RUSSELL	401D	24	16	7	9	13	3	0	0	0	0	8		
							TOTALS	16	7	9	13	3	0	0	0	0	8	
							SEM 1	20	10	10	20	0	0	0	0	0	6	
							SEM 2	27	25	17	22	3	0	0	0	0	2	
2231A	ALG IA	01	1 1	0079 CLINT EAVES	405D	29	21	14	7	16	3	1	1	0	0	8		
							TOTALS	21	14	7	16	3	1	1	0	0	8	
							SEM 1	22	11	11	18	4	0	0	0	0	6	
							SEM 2	28	20	0	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	
							0069 STACY FABRICO	404D	28	20	0	11	1	0	0	0	0	0
							0069 STACY FABRICO	404D	28	20	0	11	1	0	0	0	0	0
							0080 KAREN RUSSELL	401D	28	20	9	11	1	0	0	0	0	0
							0079 CLINT EAVES	405D	28	21	11	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
							0066 THERESA GALE	411D	28	19	5	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
							0066 THERESA GALE	411D	28	19	14	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
0079 CLINT EAVES	405D	28	17	10	7	1	0	0	0	0	11							
2312NS	ALB IB NS	01	1 1	0031 SCOTT SIEGEL	709E	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		
01	2 1	0031 SCOTT SIEGEL	709E	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0			
TOTALS	SEM 1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
SEM 2	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2343A	ALGEBRA I	03	1 3	0063 BRIAN ROACH	402D	25	27	7	20	26	1	0	0	0	0	0		
04	1 2	0004 PAN PEDIN	405D	25	20	8	12	15	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
32	2 3	0063 BRIAN ROACH	402D	25	48	15	12	17	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
TOTALS	SEM 1	50	47	15	32	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
SEM 2	25	18	5	13	17	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
2611S	ALG IB	01	1 1	0031 SCOTT SIEGEL	709E	25	10	6	4	0	3	6	1	0	0	15		
01	2 1	0031 SCOTT SIEGEL	709E	25	10	6	4	0	3	6	1	0	0	0	15			
TOTALS	SEM 1	25	10	6	4	0	3	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	15			
SEM 2	25	10	6	4	0	3	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	15			
2612EX	ALG IB EXEOC	01	1 1	0031 SCOTT SIEGEL	709E	5	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4		
01	2 1	0031 SCOTT SIEGEL	709E	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4			
TOTALS	SEM 1	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4			
SEM 2	5	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4			
2630A	ALG IB	21	2 1	0069 STACY FABRICO	404D	29	21	14	7	17	4	0	0	0	0	8		
22	2 2	0069 STACY FABRICO	404D	29	27	14	13	20	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0		
23	2 3	0080 KAREN RUSSELL	401D	29	22	11	11	11	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0		
24	2 4	0079 CLINT EAVES	405D	29	24	9	15	17	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	5		
25	2 5	0066 THERESA GALE	411D	29	26	17	9	10	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	3		
26	2 6	0069 STACY FABRICO	404D	29	19	10	9	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	10		
27	2 7	0080 KAREN RUSSELL	401D	29	22	10	12	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7		
28	2 8	TOTALS	SEM 1	203	161	85	76	111	35	11	4	0	0	0	0	42		
SEM 2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
2632A	TECH MATH I	02	1 2	0049 KEN REISING	208B	30	25	15	10	0	14	11	0	0	0	5		
03	1 3	0049 KEN REISING	208B	30	20	10	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	10		
TOTALS	SEM 1	60	45	25	20	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
SEM 2	4	2	2	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	24			

...continued

**APPENDIX E: SAMPLE PAGE OF MASTER SCHEDULE,
CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL 2010-2011**

Sample Master Schedule Clayton High School 2010-2011

SCH570R v 4.0.21	Johnston County	Page: 10
Enrollment Summary By Section (Course)		
Clayton High School	School Year: 2010/2011	Run Date: 27-Jun-2011 02:00 PM

Legend: (P) - Parent
(C) - Child
(OC) - Other Child

Course	Title	Req	Section	Teacher(s)	Tch#	Rm#	Gr	Sem/Term/Day/Per	Max. Seats	Seats Used	Counts			WHITE	BLK	HISP	ASIA	AMIN	MULT	Other			
											M	F	Sped										
20182C9	Foundations of Algebra	154	01	Collier, Valerie A	VAC	634F Room	09	1 0 0 3	32	23	12	11	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	19			
			02	Collier, Valerie A	VAC	634F Room	09	1 0 0 2	18	23	15	8	12	0	0	5	0	0	0	18			
			03	Miller, Katherine	MKK	637F Room	09	1 0 0 1	32	21	12	9	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	16			
			04	Cousins, Brooke B	BBC	636F Room	09	1 0 0 4	32	24	10	14	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	19			
			05	Miller, Katherine	MKK	637F Room	09	1 0 0 3	32	18	10	8	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	17			
			06	Rogers, Lori	LGR	635F Room	09	1 0 0 3	30	6	4	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	6			
			07	Rogers, Lori	LGR	635F Room	09	1 0 0 1	30	4	2	2	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	3			
			10	Cousins, Brooke B	BBC	636F Room	09	2 0 0 1	30	18	14	4	4	0	0	6	0	0	0	12			
			11	Miller, Katherine	MKK	637F Room	09	2 0 0 3	30	17	10	7	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	15			
			TOTAL:									266	154										
			20192C	Foundations of Advanced Algebra II	108	01	Ellsworth, Meredith	MCB	728E Room	09	1 0 0 3	32	29	17	12	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	25
02	Fairley, Barbara A	BAF				731E Room	09	1 0 0 4	18	26	14	12	8	0	0	6	0	0	0	20			
03	Ellsworth, Meredith	MCB				728E Room	09	1 0 0 1	18	24	12	12	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	24			
04	Perdue, Christina	CMP				623F Room	09	1 0 0 2	32	29	13	16	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	27			
TOTAL:									100	108													
20232C9	Algebra I	142	01	Miller, Katherine	MKK	637F Room	09	1 0 0 2	32	30	22	8	10	0	0	6	0	0	0	24			
			03	Collier, Valerie A	VAC	634F Room	09	2 0 0 3	32	30	18	12	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	28			
			04	Miller, Katherine	MKK	637F Room	09	2 0 0 1	32	29	13	16	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	29			
			05	Collier, Valerie A	VAC	634F Room	09	1 0 0 1	32	29	16	13	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	25			
			06	Miller, Katherine	MKK	637F Room	09	2 0 0 2	32	24	10	14	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	22			
TOTAL:									160	142													
20232CA	Basic Algebra	86	01	Neal, Monica	MMN	621F Room	09	2 0 0 4	20	24	19	5	16	0	0	2	0	0	0	22			
			02	Neal, Monica	MMN	621F Room	09	2 0 0 3	32	19	12	7	3	0	0	4	0	0	0	15			