THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

Beginning with the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 and continuing through the passage of No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 and the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, legislation has significantly impacted the quality of education for students with disabilities. Many improvements, including the right to a free and appropriate public education within their least restrictive environment, have aided the academic success of students with disabilities. However, with the introduction of high stakes testing there has been increased pressure to succeed placed upon both the students and the teachers. Beyond unrealistic academic expectations, other factors including the lack of adequate teacher training, teacher attitudes, stigma, and teacher self-efficacy, have all contributed to less than satisfactory success rates for students with disabilities. The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between general education math and English/language arts teachers' expectations for students with disabilities and the students' performance on the Indiana state standardized assessments. A Pearson correlation analysis was completed at the .05 level of significance. Approximately 555 students were identified as meeting criteria for this study and 87 teachers. The tools that were used to collect the data for this study included teacher self-evaluation data and the Indiana state standardized test called ISTEP+. The results from the study indicated there was no significant relationship between these two variables due to the low variability on the teachers' self-evaluation tool. Future research should be completed looking at the other factors that influence student performance on the state assessment such as student behavior, student stress level, student self-efficacy. Additionally, possibly using an alternative tool or an alternative evaluator for teacher expectations may be considered.

Keywords: students with disabilities, expectations, stigma, self-efficacy

Copyright Page

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EACHA)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Individualized education plan (IEP)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

With the creation of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EACHA) in 1975, children with disabilities were guaranteed a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017). This legislation was later revised to be called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As more legislation has been created to protect the educational rights of students with disabilities and their families, the expectations for these students continues to remain the same. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 held the standard that students with disabilities would reach 95% achievement in the areas of math and English/language arts by 2014 (Agunloye & Smith, 2015). Unfortunately, for this group of students, this standard was not met, and now educators are being held accountable for the students' lack of mastery in these subject areas.

Background

Since the creation of IDEA in 1997, students with disabilities have made significant educational advancement in the areas of test scores, high school graduation rates, and postsecondary entrance rates (Shogren, McCart, Lyon, & Sailor, 2015). There are many factors that have influenced these improvements, but several resources conclude that these areas of growth can be contributed to the inclusion of students with disabilities within the general education classroom. Because students with disabilities are being included more within the general education classroom, these students have access to grade assigned academic standards, and they are given opportunities to work on those areas of weakness. With the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, the federal government has required that students with disabilities be given the opportunity to participate in the standards-based

curriculum similar to their general education peers. With more students with disabilities being placed in mainstreamed classrooms, the performance of these students on these high stakes tests is being closely monitored with possible ramifications for schools if the students do not demonstrate significant growth from year to year.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2019), during the 2016–2017 school year, approximately 760 students with disabilities at the high school level took the Indiana state assessment for grade level standards, and of these 760 students only 8% were able to pass the assessment. This statistic is alarming and should cause educators to question their classroom practices and expectations for these students who are placed in their general education classrooms. As ESSA outlines, these students are to be learning grade level standards while receiving the appropriate accommodations and modifications laid out in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Prior to the creation of Public Law 94-142 of 1975 or EACHA, students with disabilities had no legislation that allowed them to receive a free, public education. In fact, according to Spaulding and Pratt (2015), at the time many school districts claimed that these students were unable to be educated. This terminology not only was applied to students with IQs below 50, but also students who demonstrated mobility issues or blindness (Spaulding & Pratt, 2015). Due to these disabilities, parents were left wondering how their children would be educated. Some of these students were placed in specialized private schools, others were placed in public schools but within segregated classrooms, students with more severe disabilities were institutionalized, and, finally, some parents chose to keep their children at home (Spaulding & Pratt, 2015).

In 1972, the United States Congress recognized that this segregation of students with disabilities was a problem. The statistics that supported this problem were staggering: 1.75

million children were not being educated at all, 200,000 had been placed in institutions, and another 2.5 million students with disabilities were receiving an inadequate education (Spaulding & Pratt, 2015). Congress determined that these children should not be isolated or neglected and decided to create EACHA in order to improve the lives of these students.

With the passing of EACHA, students with disabilities were given a variety of education rights under the act. The major principle under this act stated that any school district that was receiving federal dollars would be obligated to provide a free and appropriate education to all students with a disability. Not only were students with disabilities given this right, but the legislation also stated that these students would be evaluated in order to create an appropriate IEP that would meet the individual needs of the child. This particular legislation also resulted in these students being placed in the general education classroom to the maximum extent possible, while at the same time providing the student with the necessary assistance and aides to remain in this least restrictive environment. Under this legislation, parents were also given the right to disagree with the educational placement of their children within the public school setting (Shogren et al., 2015).

Following the passage of EACHA, the education of students with disabilities slowly improved. Over the years amendments were made to EACHA with the intent to continue to improve education for students with disabilities. During the 1980s, Congress amended EACHA to reflect services for the youngest child, modifying the age range from 3–21 to birth–21 (Kim, Zhang, & Sun, 2019). Then in the early 1990s EACHA saw a name change; it became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and continues to be referred to as IDEA today. Closing out the 90s, IDEA was revised to support students transitioning from school to adulthood (Kim et al., 2019).

As IDEA continued to be amended, the accountability for students with disabilities remained of concern to Congress; the amendments of 1997 emphasized the importance of these students making progress in their academic abilities (Kim et al., 2019). With the passage of the NCLB of 2001, schools were forced to shift their focus to student achievement for all students, not just the average students. Schools were now held accountable for student performance across a variety of subgroups. These subgroups included students living in poverty, students from a variety of races or ethnic backgrounds, and students with disabilities. These differing subgroups were expected to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and schools risked failing grades if few students passed the state standardized test (Garver, 2017).

As Congress began to realize that students with disabilities were not demonstrating AYP, IDEA was reauthorized in 2004 to reflect that students with disabilities should be given an opportunity to be exposed to grade level standards within the general education classroom as much as ethically possible (Villegas, 2017). With this mandate, schools were now required to move to more inclusive classrooms, which meant placing special education teachers in the general education classroom. Although these types of educational settings now provided more educational opportunities to students with disabilities, this population of students continued to demonstrate very little mastery in regard to performance on state standardized tests. The reasons behind this poor growth can be blamed on a variety of factors, but ultimately, the responsibility lies with the educators (Nash & Winstone, 2017). One possible contributing factor to such low achievement for students with disabilities is the low expectations that general education teachers have for this group of students. These low expectations can be attributed to lack of teacher training (Kumar, 2016), poor teacher attitude (Vaz et. al, 2015), the stigma associated with a disability (Shifrer, 2016), or teacher self-efficacy (Hernandez, Hueck, & Charley, 2016).

The theoretical framework behind this idea of teacher expectations for students with disabilities can be found in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory. Bandura believed that individuals could successfully complete a task no matter what obstacle stood in their way (Hodges, 2017). This belief was referred to by Bandura as self-efficacy. Bandura believed that the achievements of students could be predicted at a higher rate by the student's self-efficacy rather than the student's previous achievements. This finding is essential for teachers because it supports the idea that a teacher can change a student's perceptions (Hodges, 2017). Bandura believed that an individual's self-efficacy beliefs originated from four different sources. These four sources included an individual's past performance, the influence of others socially and behaviorally, and the individual's emotional state (Hodges, 2017). In light of Bandura's social-cognitive theory, it is imperative that teachers see the importance of their role in holding high expectations for students with disabilities.

Problem Statement

Numerous studies have been completed that examine various teacher influences on student achievement, but not many studies have specifically examined a teacher's own expectations for students with disabilities and the relationship these expectations have on student academic performance on state standardized tests. Hernandez et al. (2016) and Kumar (2016) both examined the attitudes that teachers had towards inclusion. In these studies, the researchers examined whether there was a difference between general education teachers' and special education teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The studies did not investigate the academic performance of the students with disabilities within their classrooms; they only examined the idea of students with disabilities being included in the general education classroom.

In another study Agunloye and Smith (2015) examined the effect of inclusive education on student academic performance in math and English/language arts. The study was conducted over a two-year period in a middle school setting in which the performance of all students on high-stakes testing was examined. Although student performance on high-stakes testing was utilized throughout the study, it examined the effect of inclusion on student performance and did not consider the teacher's expectations for students with disabilities.

Cameron and Cook (2013) explored the teacher expectations of students with mild and severe disabilities who were placed in their general education classrooms. The purpose of the study was to examine the goals and expectations that general education teachers had for their students with mild and severe disabilities who were placed in their general education classes. The findings from this study showed that these general education teachers only expected these students to gain social and behavioral skills.

A final study that has examined the influence of teacher expectations on student academic performance was the Missett, Azano, Callahan, and Landrum (2016) study. The student population for this particular study only examined one student who was identified as twice-exceptional. Twice exceptional students can be described as students who demonstrate high academic ability but also have a disability that affects their learning. The findings from the study showed that the teacher focused solely on the student's weaknesses instead of challenging the student academically.

The impact of inclusive education has been examined at length. Teacher attitudes towards this practice have been considered. Teacher expectations for students with more severe disabilities and students identified as twice-exceptional have been utilized in studies; however, students with more prevalent disabilities, such as a specific learning disability or mild cognitive

delay, have not been utilized in studies related to teacher expectations and the impact on student academic performance. Students with more prevalent disabilities are more likely to be in inclusive classrooms; therefore, research should be conducted investigating the relationship between teacher expectations and student performance on state standardized tests in regard to this population of students.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between the expectations of general education teachers for students with disabilities who are placed within their inclusive classrooms and the students' academic performance on the Indiana state assessment entitled Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+). The variables in this study included the students' test scores on the standardized assessment and the teachers' self-perceived expectations for students with disabilities who are educated in the teachers' respective classrooms. The population studied was general education English and math teachers who had students with disabilities within their general education classrooms. The individuals in the study were located in a large school district within the state of Indiana. The researcher investigated the possibility of a relationship existing between the general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities and the students' performance on state standardized tests.

Significance of the Study

Because there is an increase of students who are being identified as having a disability and more of these students are being placed in general education classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2019), general education teachers must maintain a high level of expectations for these students to ensure that all students are given the ability to demonstrate academic growth in the

areas of math and English/language arts. A study conducted by Tindal and Anderson (2019) examined the growth of students with a learning disability over a three-year period. These students received their instruction in the general education classroom and demonstrated adequate growth over the timeframe in regard to their performance on the state assessment.

The idea of teacher accountability on state assessments is a controversial topic; however, it has strong implications for society now and in the future. In order to ensure that society continues to show growth economically, it is imperative that students are able to demonstrate a certain cognitive skill level which can only be demonstrated by high-stakes testing (Hanushek, 2019). Because high-stakes testing plays a major role in society, it is important that teachers hold high expectations for students with disabilities in order to ensure that they are being challenged and exposed to grade level standards.

Data from the U.S. Department of Education supports the idea that more students are being identified with a disability. With federal mandates from ESSA, the requirements for these students continue to demand that these students demonstrate appropriate academic growth in relationship to their non-disabled peers, which in the end means students with disabilities be exposed to the general education curriculum to the highest standard possible. Not only are these students with disabilities exposed to the same curriculum, they are also expected to show adequate growth on state standardized assessments. Consequently, the teachers have a daunting and stressful task. First, teachers are involved in high-stakes testing not only for their general education students but also for their students with disabilities. Secondly, because students with disabilities are expected to participate in these high-stakes assessments, these students are expected to be included in the general education classroom setting. Because general education teachers have these two factors working against them, it is imperative that general education

teachers hold high expectations for students with disabilities in order to ensure that these students are progressing towards the accountability standards set forth by ESSA and IDEA.

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessment?

RQ2: What is the relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) math general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the math Indiana state assessment?

RQ3: What is the relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessments?

RQ4: What is the relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) math general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the math Indiana state assessments?

Definitions

1. *Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)* – A measure that is utilized to determine student academic achievement on standardized tests annually (Haretos, 2005).
2. *Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EACHA)* – Legislation that was created to promote the education of students with disabilities, and it mandated that school personnel

and parents collaborate in developing the student's special education programming (Yell & Bateman, 2019).

3. *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* – Legislative reform that gives individual states and school districts more authority in determining the achievement standards for all students (National Council on Disability, 2018).
4. *Free and appropriate education (FAPE)* – A mandate in IDEA that states that students with disabilities receive a free, public education that meets the standards of the state in which the student lives and conforms with the student's Individualized Education Plan (Yell & Bateman, 2019).
5. *Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+)* – A criterion-referenced state assessment in the state of Indiana that measures student achievement of the state's academic standards in the subjects of English/language arts, math, science, and social studies (Indiana Department of Education, 2018).
6. *Individualized Education Plan (IEP)* – A document that outlines a student with disabilities' present levels of performance, educational placement, specially designed instruction, learning goals, accommodations, and related services (Calhoon, Berkeley, & Scanlon, 2018).
7. *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* – A legal mandate that requires that all students with disabilities be educated in their least restrictive environment with typical peers to the maximum extent possible (Klehm, 2014).
8. *Least restrictive environment (LRE)* – The educational setting where students with disabilities can receive individualized instruction with their typical peers (Calhoon et al., 2018).

9. *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* – Legislation that promoted fair and equal educational opportunities for all children to reach proficiency in all academic and achievement standards. All students with disabilities, with the exception of the most severely disabled, must take state standardized tests (Klehm, 2014).
10. *Students with disabilities* – A student who has undergone an educational evaluation, and it has been determined by the case conference committee that the child has a disability that negatively impacts the student's educational performance. These disability categories include intellectual disability, hearing impairment, speech or language impairment, visual impairment, emotional disability, orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities (Center for Parent Information & Resources, 2017).
11. *Teacher expectations* – The inferences that teachers make about a student's potential achievement as based upon the teacher's prior knowledge about the student's past and present academic and behavioral performance (Timmermans, de Boer, & Werf, 2016).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The literature review for this quantitative correlational research study begins with a brief history of special education legislation. It then examines the theoretical frameworks for this research, which are Bandura's social cognitive theory and Weiner's attribution theory. The chapter then examines the chronological history of the influence of teacher expectations on student achievement. The chapter finally closes with the four influential factors impacting teacher expectations for students with disabilities. These include lack of teacher training, teacher attitude, stigma of the disability, and teacher efficacy.

Special Education Legislation

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EACHA) of 1975 was landmark legislation that provided more rights for students with disabilities. This legislation guaranteed all students with disabilities the right to a free and appropriate public education within the least restrictive environment. Revised in 1994, EACHA became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was enacted which led to academic accountability for all students. With NCLB, schools became more accountable for how all students were performing on state-wide standardized tests, including students with disabilities. The standard set by NCLB was that all students would be proficient in English/language arts and math by 2014.

According to NCLB, it was envisioned that students with disabilities would make 95% achievement on their state's respective state accountability measure (Agunloye & Smith, 2015). As the expectations for academic achievement increased, starting in 2001, the expectations for students with disabilities also increased. Schools began to focus on accountability, an increase in

the amount of learning standards, and high-stakes testing for all students (Wilson, Kim, & Michaels, 2011). Students with disabilities were expected to meet these standards, and when NCLB was implemented, teachers and administrators began to look at the placement of students with disabilities and the impact these placements had on students meeting these standards. In order to meet the proficiency standard in NCLB, initially many schools began placing students with disabilities in least restrictive learning environments. Then in 2009, the Race to the Top initiative began, which called for schools to ensure that all students were being educated by highly effective teachers (Jones, Buzick, & Turkan, 2013). Although these teachers were highly effective in content delivery, this did not mean that all these teachers were effective at the differentiation of content and assessments, which is necessary when students with disabilities are placed in general education classrooms. This principle of students with disabilities being placed in inclusive classrooms was also repeated in the most current legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed in 2015.

As students with disabilities were increasingly assigned in general education classrooms, government officials were expecting students with disabilities to continue to meet the same academic expectations as their non-disabled peers. Although government officials had these expectations, this did not mean that general education teachers shared these same sentiments. The purpose of this study was to determine whether higher teacher expectations of students with disabilities within inclusive English and math classrooms across Grades 3–10 increase student academic performance as measured by formative assessments.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), during the 2014–2015 school year there were 5,825,505 students with disabilities who were receiving services within the public education system throughout the country. Of these 5.8 million students, 62.6% of these

students were receiving 80% or more of their education within the regular education classroom. That means that 3.6 million students were being educated in an inclusive environment and were being exposed to grade-level academic standards.

Even though such a large number of students with disabilities were receiving a majority of their education at the same level as their typical peers, it does not guarantee that these students are as successful or meeting the standards in ESSA. Many times, the teachers' attitude or expectations for these students can determine the amount of success students with disabilities will experience within the inclusive classroom setting (Willis, 2007). Research has shown in this area that a teacher's attitude towards a student with a physical, emotional, or intellectual difference correlates with the student's ability to be successful in the inclusive classroom (Bialka, 2017). A teacher's attitude not only affects the present class, but also the whole school day, school year, and can even have a direct impact on the student over their entire school career (Weinstein, 2002).

Theoretical Framework

Social-Cognitive Theory

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Albert Bandura developed the social-cognitive theory. In his theory, Bandura emphasized the notion that an individual's own behavior is directly impacted by an individual's own influence over the situation. For example, a student may be more inclined to read a book of their own choosing than a book that is required. Social-cognitive theory suggests that an individual's behavior, personal beliefs, and environmental influences are continually reinforced meaning that all of these factors are influential in dictating the learning environment for students (Font, Garay, & Jones, 2016).

According to Ferrari, Robinson, and Yasnitsky (2010), there are four components to Bandura's social cognitive theory that influence the independence of individuals. These four components include "intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness" (Ferrari et al., 2010, p. 109). As Bandura continued to study and add dimensions to his social-cognitive theory, he began to see the impact of self-reflectiveness on individuals and coined the term self-efficacy. Harrison, Rainer, Hochwarter, and Thompson (1997) defined self-efficacy as an individual's perceptions of his or her ability to establish and implement a variety of actions to impact a performance significantly. Bandura felt that individuals' behavior could be predicted by their personal belief system, hence the idea self-efficacy (Pajares, 2003). Bandura described self-efficacy as something that is not merely an influence on an individual's psychological functioning, but also as something that people reflected back into their own social networks (Ferrari et al., 2010).

According to Pajares (2003), there are four sources that influence an individual's self-efficacy beliefs. The most powerful source of an individual's self-efficacy is "mastery experience" (Pajares, 2003, p. 140). Within this source of self-efficacy, if individuals perceive that they were successful at a task, then their self-efficacy beliefs will rise, but if individuals perceive the task as a failure, their self-efficacy beliefs will decrease. The second source of individual self-efficacy beliefs is through other individuals' experiences (Pajares, 2003). Through these experiences, individuals will make comparisons to other individuals which will influence their personal beliefs. A third source of influence for self-efficacy beliefs is the verbal and nonverbal messages as well as "social persuasions" that are received from other individuals (Pajares, 2003). These social persuasions can be positively influenced by encouragement or negativity impacted by individuals whom the teacher respects, such as colleagues, mentors, or

supervisors (Desombre, Lamotte, & Jury, 2019, p. 40). Finally, the physiological state of individuals can impact their self-efficacy beliefs; this relates to a person's ability to handle stress and anxiety (Pajares, 2003).

A teacher's self-efficacy is vital to a student's learning experience because a student cannot be forced to learn and, specifically, to learn well. While all four components for self-efficacy are important, the third source (verbal and nonverbal messages as well as social persuasions) impacts teacher expectations for students with disabilities the most (Pajares, 2003). The messages students perceive teachers are sending to them about their academic potential, both positively or negatively, can impact their academic performance. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, and Hoy (1998) found that the efficacy beliefs of teachers positively correlated to their classroom practices as well as the academic progress of their students. Self-efficacy encompasses the principles that people have their own beliefs about their abilities and characteristics and use these beliefs to guide their behavior, which in turn determines actions and efforts in a given situation (Grusee, 1992). Pajares (2003) concluded that the self-efficacy beliefs of students were related to student motivation as well as student performance and achievement.

According to Bandura (1989) an individual's self-efficacy beliefs define how much energy, effort, and work the individual is willing to put into a task and his or her ability to persist through any difficulties that may arise. Therefore, if teachers believe strongly in their ability to educate all students, they will be more willing to persevere through challenges, and in turn students will identify this devotion to overcoming these challenges. Bandura concluded that an individual's behavior and performance were impacted by their expectations and self-perceptions, along with their goals and physical structures (Grusee, 1992).

Attribution Theory

In 1979, Bernard Weiner applied the concepts of attribution theory to the idea of teacher expectations and the relationships they play on student academic performance. Based on the principles of this theory, a teacher's attitude towards his or her students, including students with disabilities, can predict the students' academic and behavioral outcomes. For example, when teachers assume that students actively choose to participate in school-appropriate behavior or not, they are more likely to reject the student if they deem the behavior inappropriate (Brophy & Evertson, 1981). Conversely, Cook (2004) found that if a teacher believes a student's success is wavering on the verge of success or failure and the teacher feels his or her own effort is likely to encourage success, then the teacher is more likely to intervene because the student's performance is beyond the student's direct control.

Weiner (2000) identified two different categories within the attributional theory related to motivation: intrapersonal theory and interpersonal theory. Within the intrapersonal category, individuals assess their own influence upon which achievement was gained; in the interpersonal theory, the individual looks at the causes of another person's achievement (Woodcock & Hitches, 2017). Upon examining these categories in regard to students with disabilities, the intrapersonal category causes more negative self-concept for these students. Students with disabilities have the tendency to blame their lack of ability on their lack of academic achievement and their successes on external influences such as luck or the task being too easy (Woodcock & Hitches, 2017). The interpersonal category also poses a negative impact on students with disabilities due to the influence of teacher responses towards these students. Clark (1997) found that students with disabilities received more sympathy from their teachers and teachers became less frustrated with these students in situations of failure in comparison to their

non-disabled peers. These types of responses by the teachers suggest that the student has a lower ability, which in turn can influence the student's self-confidence, enthusiasm, and belief in themselves (Woodcock & Hitches, 2017).

Cook (2001) utilized the attribution theory to examine the impact of teacher expectations on students with severe disabilities. His findings suggested that teachers possess lower academic and behavioral expectations for students with more severe or obvious disabilities due to the nature of the disability compared to their expectations for students with mild or not-so-obvious disabilities (Cook, 2001). Because of these more severe disabilities, teachers are less likely to attribute the lack of the students' success on themselves, but instead blame the student's disability for lack of student growth. These findings suggest that when teachers believe they have little impact on the academic and behavioral outcomes of students, the teacher is less likely to acquire ownership for the student's outcomes.

Related Literature

Early Research

Before researchers began looking at the impact of teacher expectations on student performance outcomes, researcher Robert Rosenthal formulated a hypothesis to "unconscious experimenter bias" (Blank, 1993, p. xi). At the conclusion of his 1956 research study, Rosenthal was required to justify his findings in regard to each of his three groups performing differently on the pretreatment ratings. Rosenthal insinuated that in some minute way whether it be by tone of voice, mannerisms, behaviors, or just environment, the researcher was able to impact the performance of the subjects, even though the groups of subjects were assessed in the same way (Weinstein, 2002). Due to Rosenthal's findings, he was able to make significant contributions to

the idea of expectancy effects, the major finding being how his research can impact the classroom teacher (Weinstein, 2002).

After Rosenthal's findings in his initial study, a principal by the name of Lenore Jacobson reached out to Rosenthal about the possibility of implementing a study solely based on teacher expectations. In 1968, these two teamed up to conduct the study within Lenore's elementary school. This became the first study of its kind where a principal and researcher joined together to conduct research. The study was entitled *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (Weinstein, 2002). The study began by administering a nonverbal intelligence test to all of the students within the school during the month of May. During the following year, 20% of the students were chosen randomly as students who would be considered the academically gifted (Weinstein, 2002). Teachers were notified that these students would demonstrate more academic growth in their learning over the next year than the other 80% of students (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Because these students were selected randomly to represent the students who would grow the most, any differences that existed were only from the teachers' perspectives (Rosenthal, 1993). At the conclusion of this study, the students who were identified as the academically gifted performed better on the same test than the other students (Weinstein, 2002). As a result of this study, the researchers concluded that students' performance were affected by false-positive teacher expectations. This was called the *self-fulfilling prophecy effect*. The self-fulfilling prophecy effect was aptly named because it found that any expectations about potential achievements could possibly come true (H. de Boer, Bosker, & van der Werf, 2010). As the results from the *Pygmalion* study became more widely known, more research was completed in the areas of teacher expectations and the principle of the self-fulfilling prophecy effect.

In their study, Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) randomly chose a student group titled the "growth spurters" (p. 16) within their respective classrooms, and their teachers were notified who these specific students were. The students' IQ scores were obtained prior to the start of the school year, and then again eight months later at the end of the school year to see what amount of growth occurred (Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968). By telling the teachers that specific students were the growth spurters, Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) were hoping to influence the teachers' expectations for those specific students. Their findings from this study indicated that these students within the growth spurters group made more significant gains ($F = 2.13$, $p = .07$ level), regardless of their IQ score, than those students who were not chosen for the group (Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968). Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) concluded that the teachers' expectations had an effect on the students' performance.

In 1978, Rosenthal joined forces with Rubin and conducted a meta-analysis of 345 experimental studies related to interpersonal expectancy effects across a variety of settings. In their study, Rosenthal and Rubin (1978) created eight domains and the impact of "interpersonal expectancy effects" (p. 378) on these domains. This study showed that 39% of the studies demonstrated that expectancy effects were impactful and of this 39%, 29% pertained to learning (Rosenthal & Rubin, 1978). Specifically, in the domain of person perception, the effect size was medium ($d = 0.55$, $r = 0.27$; Rosenthal & Rubin, 1978). Klehm (2014) noted that Rosenthal's affect-effort theory proposes that if changes occur in teacher expectations of the academic performance of a student then two things will occur: first, the attitude the teacher shows towards the student, and second, the amount of effort the teacher puts forth towards actually teaching the student. Therefore, if the teacher has positive expectations for the student, then the teacher will more likely demonstrate a more positive attitude towards the student and apply more effort

towards the student's learning. Upon review of these studies and more, Hattie (2008) found a large effect of teacher expectations on student academic achievement (d = 0.43) which ranked 58th of his more than 250 influences on academic achievement.

Not only do self-fulfilling prophecy effects exist, but Rubie-Davies, Hattie, and Hamilton (2006) categorized another type of expectation effect that exists: *sustaining expectation effects*. With the sustaining expectation effects, teachers expect the student to continue to achieve what was previously established and may ignore any evidence of change within the student's performance. Furthermore, the researchers identified two types of self-fulfilling prophecy effects: Golem effects and Galatea effects. Golem effects were characterized as effects that are undesirable and negative (for example, teachers having low expectations for students which hinder a student's academic achievement). Consequently, if teachers expect less from students with disabilities, the teachers will provide negative or different assistance to these students, which ultimately means the student may not perform well (Weinstein, 2002). Galatea effects are those effects that are positive and anticipated, which in the end increase student academic achievement. In order to promote Galatea effects, Brophy (1982) recommended that teachers should emphasize a student's current performance and not his or her past performance, provide individualized instruction with informative feedback and not evaluative, avoid comparing students with other students, and inspire students to achieve instead of shielding them from failure.

In 1983, Brophy argued that student characteristics also influenced the bias of teachers' expectations. These student characteristics included a students' socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age, and motivation (H. de Boer et al., 2010). Rubie-Davies et al. (2006) identified a student's gender, social class, diagnostic label, physical appearance, language style, personality, social

skills, siblings, name, and parents as being additional factors that influenced a teacher's expectations.

When Madon, Jussim, and Eccles (1997) controlled for the student characteristics of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and age, they came to two conclusions. First, there were stronger self-fulfilling prophecy effects for low-achieving students, and secondly, positive expectations increased student achievement over time, more than negative expectations decreased achievement. Furthermore, researchers found that when a teacher is asked to assess their students, those students they believe to be the most capable and best behaved receive better grades than those students who are not as capable academically or behaviorally (Morales & Zafra, 2013).

Brophy and Good (1974) also argued that teacher expectations can impact student achievement directly and indirectly. They can impact achievement directly through the curriculum to which the student is exposed by the teacher. In other words, if the teacher feels the student can handle a more difficult concept, then the teacher will expose the student to the concept; if not, the student will not receive the exposure. Indirect influence can be characterized as the behaviors that the teacher emulates, and the student is able to react to it. For example, if a teacher tends to call on particular students to read or answer more difficult questions, this would be considered indirect influence in regard to teacher expectations. Throughout their study, Brophy and Good conducted observations looking for these two types of influences and how they impacted student academic performance. The observations that were conducted demonstrated that teachers tended to praise the high achieving students more, provide more specific feedback, and continued to provide more scaffolding to these higher achieving students when they failed. Students who were held to higher expectations initiated more in-class

interactions and were treated more positively by their teachers than those students who were not held to the same high expectations (Klehm, 2014). In regard to those students who were identified as low, the teachers were more susceptible to ignoring these students' responses and moving on when the student provided an incorrect answer than a student who was identified as being a high or average achieving student (Brophy & Good, 1974).

According to McKown and Weinstein (2008), two major paths exist that expose students to the type of expectations that the teacher has towards the student. First, if teachers expect more from a group of students, then the teacher is more inclined to provide a better quality of instruction towards this group of students than to the students in which the teacher expects less academically (McKown & Weinstein, 2008). Secondly, students are capable of perceiving what the teacher expects from them which in turn can motivate the student to achieve only what the teacher is actually expecting (McKown & Weinstein, 2008).

Not only does a teacher's present judgments and actions towards students with disabilities impact the student's academic performance, but also the student's past can influence the teacher's attitude toward the student. Rolison and Medway (1985) concluded in their study that classroom teachers lowered their expectations for students based upon the student's previous disability label and the student's previous performance in school. Dusek and Joseph (1983) reviewed more than 20 previous studies that found when teachers review a student's cumulative file, the teacher's expectations for that student is influenced.

Numerous research studies have been conducted examining the impact of a student's ethnicity on teachers' academic expectations for students. Rubie-Davies et al. (2006) conducted a study in New Zealand that examined this concept of low teacher expectations for students of varying ethnicities and found that New Zealand teachers demonstrated lower expectations for

students who were from the Maori ethnic group than students from other ethnicities. This group is considered the natives to the country, equivalent to the Native Americans of North America. Because the teachers' expectations aligned with the Maori students' classroom performance and achievement, this would serve as an example of a sustaining expectation effect.

Two other studies also found a relationship between a teacher's expectations for students and the student's race. Jussim, Eccles, and Madon (1996) examined the relationship between a student's race and the teacher's perceived expectations for growth on the student's respective state assessment. The results indicated a positive relationship (r = .77) between the teachers' perceived expectations for African American students' performance on this assessment (Jussim et al., 1996). McKown and Weinstein (2002) conducted a similar study examining the likelihood of teacher expectations for African American students affecting the students' performance on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills assessment. The researchers collected the students' prior year's performance on the assessment and then collected the students' score for the current year (McKown & Weinstein, 2002). At the beginning of the year of the study, the researchers had teachers in first, third, and fifth grades rank-order their students based on the teachers' expectations for the students' end of the year achievement (McKown & Weinstein, 2002). At the conclusion of the school year, the researchers determined that as the grade level increased, the likelihood that the teachers' expectations for the African American students would affect the students' progress increased (McKown & Weinstein, 2002). For example, in first grade the Pearson likelihood ratio was x^2 = 0.53, in third grade x^2 = 5.54, and in fifth grade x^2 = 10.41 while p < .05 (McKown & Weinstein, 2002). Although these two studies link race with lower teacher expectations, the studies support the notion that teacher expectations can drive student academic performance for better or for worse.

Social class is another characteristic that has been studied and found to impact teacher expectations for student achievement. In their meta-analysis study, Dusek and Joseph (1983) found that a student's classroom behavior, physical appearance, race, and social class impacted the teacher's expectations on the student's academic achievement. Another meta-analysis study that was conducted by Baron, Tom, and Cooper (1985) concluded that when given equivalent achievement, teachers' opinions of White, middle-middle class students were more positive than those for Black, lower-class students.

Recent Research

One possible predictor of a student with a disability's success in the general education classroom is the general education teacher's attitude towards this student and his or her potential performance. According to Odongo and Davidson (2016):

> Attitudes guide and influence people's behaviors in their daily lives. A teacher who believes that inclusion is unfair to typically achieving students may act in subtle (or not so subtle) ways that negatively affect students with disabilities in that classroom. It may be that the presence or absence of positive attitudes and a sense of commitment to principles of inclusion can tip teachers toward making or avoiding efforts to effectively teach students with disabilities. (p. 5)

If a teacher portrays the attitude or perception towards students with a disability that they are not capable of performing to the same standard as their typical peers, then those students with a disability will be more likely to perform at the level to which the teacher believes they can achieve instead of the level that the students are being pushed to achieve.

Idol (2006) completed a program evaluation of eight schools, four elementary and four secondary schools, and the impact that inclusion had on a variety of factors outlined within the

study. Two factors that were closely examined throughout the duration of this study included the impact of inclusion on statewide testing performance and the number of students being exempt from taking the statewide exam. In six of the eight schools, over a four-year period, the schools made obvious improvements in student test scores (Idol, 2006). In the other two schools, the average scores remained about the same. In all of these schools, a conscious effort had been made over the four years to include students with disabilities within the general education classroom with more consistency than what had been done prior to the study (Idol, 2006). Over the duration of this study, the school district that was utilized had initiated a more consistent policy pertaining to students with disabilities being exempt from state testing and possibly taking an alternative test (Idol, 2006). As more students were included in the state assessment, participants of the study feared the schools' overall performance score would drop significantly, but this was not the case (Idol, 2006). For all of the schools except one that were involved in the study, the overall lowered percentage range was from a 3% to a 7% drop, with the worse impact at the exception school with a drop of 27 percentage points (Idol, 2006). This supports the idea that students with disabilities should be given the same opportunity to pass these high stakes tests as their nondisabled peers because the impact on the school's overall performance is minimal.

General education teachers' academic expectations for students with disabilities can be influenced by a multitude of factors. The research completed by Corwin Visible Learning (2019) " synthesize[d] findings from 1,600+ meta-analyses of 95,000+ studies involving 300 million students" (p. 1) to determine what impacts student achievement the most. Hattie (2008) concluded that there are over 250 influences on student achievement across all grades, including postsecondary, as well as across educational settings. These influences fell into nine categories: classroom; teacher; student learning strategies; teaching strategies; technology, school, and out-

of-school strategies; student; curricula; home; and school (Hattie, 2008). Of the more than 250 influences Hattie (2008) studied, four are appropriate for further discussion: the teacher's lack of training, the teacher's attitude, the stigma that comes with a disability label, and the teacher's self-efficacy.

Lack of Teacher Training

Many times when general education teachers are given a classroom that includes students with disabilities, these teachers complain that they are not trained to work with these students (Kumar, 2016). "An effective teacher must have a positive attitude towards all types of children. A teacher with the right attitude makes a lasting impact on the students' enrollment and their learning" (Kumar, 2016, p. 2). Odongo and Davidson (2016) and Hernandez et al. (2016) both confirmed when teachers receive more specialized training, information, and experience in working with students with disabilities, these teachers are more likely to have a positive attitude towards inclusion within their classroom setting than when these teachers do not receive this specialized training. This leads to the first reason why general education teachers typically have lower expectations for students with disabilities. Research has found that the amount of training a general education teacher has received regarding special education influences these teachers' expectations for students with disabilities.

The amount of experience that a teacher possesses also impacts the quality of expectations in which a teacher holds for students with disabilities. According to Desombre et al. (2019), Bandura argued that mastery experience is the most influential experience that anyone can possess. Cook (2004) utilized a quantitative approach when questioning teachers to designate a student for one of the four following categories: attachment, concern, indifference, and rejection. The attachment category was described as the category in which a teacher could

choose to keep a student for an additional year, simply because the teacher enjoyed having the student (Cook, 2004). The concern category was identified as the category in which the teacher could devote more attention to a student due to the level of concern for the student. The indifference category was designated for the student whom the teacher would not be prepared to discuss with a parent in an impromptu conference. The final category, rejection, was relegated for those students that a teacher would choose to have removed from their classroom if possible (Cook, 2004). The teachers in this study were inclusive teachers; they could choose any student from their class regardless of disability label or lack thereof. In the classrooms without any special education support, 29.9% of students nominated for the rejection category were students with disabilities; 31.4% of students with disabilities were chosen for the same category by teachers with less than 11 years of teaching experience compared to only 12.2% by teachers with more teaching experience. The results from this study indicated a large number of students with disabilities being chosen for the concern (24.3%), indifferent (20.0%), and rejection (22.9%) categories (Cook, 2004). The researcher concluded that the more experienced the teacher is, the less likely the teacher is to include a student with a disability in the rejection category than teachers with less experience (Cook, 2004).

Bialka (2017) conducted a case study and chose three preservice teachers and examined their experiences with individuals with disabilities prior to entering a classroom. Of the three participants chosen for the study, one of them had no experience in working with individuals with disabilities. All three of the participants were placed in an inclusive classroom and were required to work one-on-one with a student with a disability at least once during the time of the study. At the conclusion of the study, the participants' attitudes and expectations towards inclusion and students with disabilities were evaluated. The individuals with experience in

working with individuals with disabilities came away with favorable expectations towards inclusion and students with disabilities. However, the individual who had no prior experience in working with individuals with disabilities continued to have negative feelings toward inclusion and students with disabilities going as far to express that these students should not be included in the general education classroom but instead should be educated in a separate special education setting (Bialka, 2017).

General education teachers need to receive training on the various disabilities and their characteristics, the behavior problems that accompany the various disabilities, and the most effective instructional practices for students with disabilities. In doing so, this will be proactive for general education teachers because it will provide them with the knowledge and understanding needed to improve the academic outcomes of these students (Karal & Riccomini, 2016). Many of the preservice programs that educate and license educators fail to provide adequate training for general education teachers in regard to misbehavior and strategies for teaching students with disabilities (Tsouloupas, Carson, & MacGregor, 2013). DeSimone and Parmar (2006) found that preservice education programs required their students to take only one class in regard to special education and these students spent less than 16 hours in an inclusive classroom setting.

One way to ensure that general education teachers receive more training concerning working with students with disabilities is to require more hands-on experience than special education teachers in the undergraduate portion of their degree completion. When general education teachers received more special education courses and the amount of hours spent working with students with disabilities increased, general education teachers had improved instructional practices and better attitudes towards inclusion and students with disabilities

(Mahar, Terras, Chiasson, Chalmers, & Lee, 2010). Teacher preparation programs need to provide their candidates with evidence-based practices and to promote collaboration and co-teaching practices between general education and special education teachers (Alfaro, Kupczynski, & Mundy, 2015).

Teacher attitude. One of the most important factors determining the success of inclusion and the success of students with disabilities in any school setting is the teachers' negative attitude towards the concept and the students with disabilities (Melekoglu, 2013). Many research studies have "linked teachers' instructional practices, as well as teacher attitudes" with student academic achievement, especially in the inclusive classroom (DeSimone & Parmar, 2006, p. 99). Vaz et al. (2015) stated that teacher attitudes and expectations serve as substantial obstacles to the effective implementation of inclusion within the classroom and the equal involvement of all students. DeSimone and Parmar (2006) explained that instructional practices are linked to a teachers' beliefs about learning and students with disabilities. Other factors also impact a students' performance, such as state and local district policies in regard to curriculum, instruction, and assessment of students with disabilities, but ultimately, teacher attitude is instrumental in the impact it has on student performance within the inclusive classroom (Willis, 2007).

When discussing the topic of inclusion for students with disabilities, many teachers have a positive attitude towards the concept and appreciate the benefits of inclusion for all students. These benefits include the opportunity for friendships, improvement in social skills, acquisition of behavior skills and work ethic, collaboration, and social awareness (Hernandez et al., 2016). Furthermore, it was found that teachers were more accepting of students with less severe disabilities, physical disabilities, or sensory deficiencies than those students who exhibited more

severe disabilities such as a moderate cognitive delay, severe autism, and/or emotional disabilities (Odongo & Davidson, 2016). Although these skills are beneficial to all students, the type of disability a student has can ultimately influence the teachers' attitude toward inclusion, no matter the benefits involved (Sharma & Sokal, 2016). A. de Boer, Pijl, and Minnaert (2011) concluded that teachers held a negative or neutral attitude towards having students with disabilities within their inclusive classrooms. Upon interviewing 70 teachers within the state of Ohio, Cook, Tankersley, Cook, and Landrum (2000) found that when teachers were asked to identify students about whom they were worried or students who should be removed from the classroom, teachers often identified students who had a disability.

Morales and Zafra (2013) assessed the relationship between teacher expectations and student academic performance. There were 193 students who participated in the study and ranged in age from 11 to 16. These students were administered the *Attitudes and Social Cognitive Strategies Questionnaire* (1998), which assessed the students' social attitudes within their social environment, and the *Trait Meta-Mood Scale* (2004), which examined the students' emotional intelligence. The *Attitudes and Social Cognitive Strategies Questionnaire* (1998) was composed of nine components: social sensitivity (α = .75); help and collaboration (α = .70); security and firmness within the relationship (α = .65); prosocial leadership (α = .75); dominance (α = .65); aggressiveness-stubbornness (α = .67); anxiety shyness (α = .72); apathy-withdrawal (α = .70; Morales & Zafra, 2013). The Trait Meta-Mood Scale (2004) was composed of three components which reflected the individual's "Index of Perceived Emotional Intelligence" (Morales & Zafra, 2013, p. 83). The reliability for each component was as follows: attention (α = .90); clarity)α = .90); and repair)α = .86; Morales & Zafra, 2013). The Cronbach's alpha for each component was as follows: attention (α = .80); clarity (α = .72); and repair (α = .80;

Morales & Zafra, 2013). Using a Likert scale, the teachers in the study were questioned about two components of their students. The first related to the student's ability to adapt to the educational curriculum and the other was the teachers' expectations for the students' academic performance (Morales & Zafra, 2013). In order to assess the students' academic performance, the researchers used the students' performance on required standardized assessments in the required subject areas. The results from this study showed that the students who performed below average academically throughout the duration of the school year were valued significantly less than the other students ($p < .00$) by their teachers at the beginning of the academic year (Morales & Zafra, 2013).

Numerous studies have agreed that the impact of teacher relationships on student performance and engagement is vital for academic achievement to occur. Walkey, McClure, Meyer, and Weir (2013) conducted a study in New Zealand that examined the type of expectations that teachers had for students within their classes and the students' motivation to perform at a high academic level. In the study, the students completed a self-report survey in which the students rated their objectives towards their learning and performance on the nation's standards-based assessment (Walkey et al., 2013). This self-report survey required the students to indicate the highest level of schooling the student expected to complete. The instrument also asked the students to rate motivational levels as well as the social influences on their education (Walkey et al., 2013). The rating levels on the 16 items included two intrapersonal ratings of "Doing My Best" ($\alpha = .83$) and "Doing Just Enough" ($\alpha = .70$) and two social ratings of "Teacher Affiliation" ($\alpha = .54$) and "Peer Affiliation" ($\alpha = .54$; Walkey et al., 2013). The same survey instrument also evaluated student characteristics for their individual performance on their best and worst assessments by having the students rate what influenced their performance the

most (Walkey et al., 2013). Influential factors included three related to the student's ability such as effort, task difficulty, and luck, and three other factors related to social influences such as family, teachers, and friends (Walkey et al., 2013). The findings from the study found that students who indicated that they were "Doing My Best" indicated a strong positive correlation (r = .63) between their best effort and their relationship with the teacher. In contrast, those students who reported that they were "Doing Just Enough" (r = -.58) to perform academically, reported a more negative relationship with the appropriate teacher (Walkey et al., 2013). This supports the idea that teacher relationships can impact student achievement; teachers must actively demonstrate and communicate to students their high academic and behavioral expectations and show that they care about student learning.

In his meta-analysis work, John Hattie (2008) completed 229 studies involving over 355,000 people. Hattie (2008) found that the teacher-student relationship had a large effect on student achievement (d = 0.72), ranking 11th out of his 250 influences. Through this work, Hattie identified eight variables impacting the teacher–student relationship and their respective effect sizes. These variables and their respective effect sizes included the following: non-directivity (d = .75); empathy (d = .68); warmth (d = .68); encouragement of higher order thinking (d = .60); encouraging learning (d = .48); adapting to differences (d = .41); genuineness (d = .29); and learner-centered beliefs (d = .10; Hattie, 2008, p. 119). Hattie (2008) went on to describe classrooms that emulated these traits as "person-centered" (p. 119) classrooms. Although this work is not specific to students with disabilities, the work strongly supports that a positive relationship or attitude towards students can significantly impact student achievement.

The findings of Morales and Zafra (2013) have been supported by later research that has found that low academic expectations for students with disabilities truly impacts the amount of

learning that is demonstrated by the student. Teachers must not only communicate high expectations to their students but also model appropriately the expectations they desire for their students. In their study, McKown and Weinstein (2008) found a link between student perceptions of their teachers and the students' academic achievement. They found that when students reported that their teacher showed favoritism to the academically gifted students instead of the academically struggling students, teacher expectations were more strongly correlated to student achievement (McKown & Weinstein, 2008).

Klehm (2014) conducted a quantitative study examining teacher beliefs or attitudes towards the ability of students with disabilities to meet proficiency on high-stakes testing, and the relationship between teacher attitudes and practices and the achievement of students with disabilities. The study was conducted in the state of Rhode Island utilizing a survey instrument entitled *High-Stakes Testing and Students with Disabilities: A Teacher Attitude Survey*, which utilized a Cronbach's alpha (α = .770; Klehm, 2014). The items on the tool were categorized to fit one of the six research questions articulated by the researcher. For the purposes of this study, the two applicable questions that were examined were the teachers' attitudes toward the ability of students with disabilities to meet proficiency on high-stakes testing and the teachers' attitudes towards the abilities of students with disabilities to learn higher level thinking (Klehm, 2014). The results from the study showed that 54% of the teachers surveyed did not believe that students with disabilities could reach proficiency on high-stakes testing, but 85% of teachers did believe that students with disabilities are capable of achieving higher level thinking.

The results from the Klehm (2014) study also provided more insight into the differences between general education teachers and special education teachers' expectations and attitude towards students with disabilities. In order to determine if there was a difference in expectations

for students with disabilities between general education and special education teachers, a multivariate analysis of covariance was used to collect data from 178 general education teachers and 32 special education teachers (Klehm, 2014). There was a significant difference ($p < .01$) between the attitudes of special education teachers and general education teachers; special education teachers had more positive attitudes toward inclusive education for students with disabilities as compared to general education teachers (Klehm, 2014). Upon further examination of the differences between teacher content areas, a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) was found between reading teachers and math teachers in regard to their attitudes towards students with disabilities learning and achieve higher level thinking (Klehm, 2014). The researcher concluded that teachers who possessed a positive attitude and belief towards students with disabilities correlated to these students' obtaining proficiency on the state's achievement test (Klehm, 2014).

The inclusion of students with disabilities is not only a movement within the United States but is also a movement internationally. Most developed countries have created methodical procedures to ensure the inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstreamed classrooms (Dupoux, Wolman, & Estrada, 2005). Multiple studies from various nations have been completed looking at the influence of teacher expectations and attitudes on the academic performance of students with disabilities. Leyser, Kapperman, and Keller (1994) conducted a cross-cultural study of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion on four different continents, including Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America, and found that teachers in Germany and the United States possessed more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities within the general education classroom than those teachers in the other assessed countries. Furthermore, the researchers found that teachers in Germany had yet to receive any additional

training on the inclusion of students with disabilities nor was it legally required that these students be included, and yet these teachers had more positive attitudes than those who were trained (Leyser et al., 1994). Teachers across the globe possess the same concern: the integration of students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible without risking failure (Dupoux et al., 2005).

Dupoux et al. (2005) examined the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion in the country of Haiti and compared these attitudes to teachers within the United States. The teachers within these two countries were administered the *Opinions Relative to Integration of Students with Disabilities* (1995) questionnaire which demonstrated reliability with a Cronbach alpha of 0.83 (Dupoux et al., 2005). This tool contained 25 positive or negative statements that were rated on a 6-point Likert scale. After multiple regression analysis was completed, it was determined that teachers from Haiti and the United States possessed similar attitudes towards inclusion of students with disabilities (Dupoux et al., 2005). There were other conclusions after analyzing specific questions. Teachers from both countries agreed with the idea of mainstreaming students with disabilities. If a teacher exhibited a more positive attitude towards students with disabilities, this impacted the teachers' overall attitude positively towards the students. Teachers who possessed more education over those who possessed less tended to favor inclusion more. Finally, teachers from both countries demonstrated a tendency towards creating a hierarchy of disabilities, choosing students for their inclusive classrooms with learning disabilities as their first choice rather than students with emotional or behavioral disabilities (Dupoux et al., 2005). These conclusions are similar to what has been concluded across a variety of studies completed within the United States (Dupoux et al., 2005).

Stigma. Stigma can be described as having a negative attitude or negative treatment of other individuals who share certain characteristics (Shifrer, 2013). These characteristics include labeling, stereotyping, loss in status, and discrimination, which manifest themselves as poor results in other aspects of an individual's life (Shifrer, 2016). In many classrooms, a student who is viewed as a low achiever is given lower expectations, but when a student with a disability is placed in the same classroom, this student is given lower expectations simply due to the label (Gentrup, Lorenz, Kristen, & Kogan, 2020). Researchers found that when teachers were shown videos or pictures of children with a special education label, these educators viewed these children in a more negative way than children who were behaving in a similar way but were not identified with a special education label (Allday, Allan, Blackburn-Ellis, & Van Dycke, 2011). According to Pit-ten Cate and Glock (2018), teachers held lower expectations and standards for the educational achievement and future educational success of students who exhibited behavioral issues than those students who did not exhibit behavioral issues. Hattie (2008) completed an analysis of 79 studies related to labeling students and the impact it has on student achievement; his findings found a large effect ($d = 0.61$). With this effect size, the concept of labeling students ranked 21st of 250 different influences on student academic achievement (Hattie, 2008).

Not only do students with disabilities face lower expectations within the classroom, but many times parents have lower expectations for their child who has a disability. In their study, Doren, Gau, and Lindstrom (2012) supported the social cognitive theory of Bandura by finding that parent expectations also influenced the educational outcomes of adolescent children and young adults. The expectations that parents held for their child with a disability varied upon which disability category the child fell under. For example, parents of adolescents who were

identified as having a learning disability held higher expectations for their children than parents who had children with an intellectual disability (Doren et al., 2012).

When an appropriate or an inappropriate stigma is assigned to a student, it can impact the student's academic performance in three different ways. First, teachers tend to provide more complex instruction to students who are perceived as possessing average to above average abilities (McKown & Weinstein, 2008). If this occurs, students with disabilities miss out on opportunities to receive this type of instruction. Second, students will identify actions by the teacher that demonstrate lower expectations resulting in the student achieving the minimal standard instead of achieving a higher standard (McKown & Weinstein, 2008). Finally, McKown and Weinstein (2008) concluded that a student may be inaccurately stereotyped for any variety of reasons; this stereotype may lead to internalizing behaviors by the student. If the student becomes concerned about this stereotype, it may negatively impact the student's academic achievement.

A prevalent learning disability that is arising in today's schools is dyslexia. With this diagnosis, students with dyslexia face a negative stigma (Alexander-Passe, 2015). Students with dyslexia often demonstrate slow academic achievement which can result in teachers possessing a negative attitude or lower expectations towards these students (Hornstra, Denessen, Bakker, Bergh, & Voeten, 2010). Hornstra et al. (2010) concluded in their study on teacher attitudes towards students with dyslexia that teachers who believed that learning disabilities were a permanent characteristic of students interacted with these students less and at a lower cognitive level. The results from this study indicate that these negative attitudes or behaviors towards students with dyslexia or other learning disabilities can affect the academic achievement of students.

Shifrer (2013) utilized the *Education Longitudinal Survey* of 2002, to determine if the learning disability label created a stigma with teachers and parents. The findings from this study showed that teachers expecting a student with a learning disability to complete some college education were 49% lower than students who did not have a label (Shifrer, 2013). Parents were evaluated as having a 50% lower expectation for their child with a disability to complete some type of college education in comparison to their non-disabled child (Shifrer, 2013). The findings from this study support the notion that students with a learning disability have lower expectations placed on them from teachers and their parents alike.

In 2016, Shifrer completed another study that examined the expectations that high school math teachers had for their 10th-grade students. In the study, the researcher used data from the National Center for Education Statistics from 2002. The data were collected using a survey of the teenagers, their parents, and their math teachers. The students were then administered a standardized math test to gather data, and data from the students' transcripts upon graduation were also gathered (Shifrer, 2016). The teachers included as participants were surveyed regarding students within their classrooms. Specifically the teachers were asked if the students' disability impacted the students' academic performance in the class, if the math teacher expected the 10th-grade student to earn a bachelor's degree, and, finally, if the student would complete a math course higher than the ninth-grade math course requirement (Shifrer, 2016). These math teachers were asked questions regarding students with learning disabilities and those without a learning disability, but the student performed similarly to those students with the learning disability label (Shifrer, 2016). Regression models and correlations were used to analyze the data. The data from the study demonstrated that 41% of math teachers felt that the students' disability was a contributing factor to the students' academic performance within their

classroom, 42% of the math teachers felt that students with a learning disability would complete a bachelor's degree, and 49% of the math teachers felt that students with a learning disability would complete a math course higher than the ninth-grade level requirement ($p < 0.001$; Shifrer, 2016). Overall, the results from this study found that teachers held considerably lower achievement expectations for students labeled with a learning disability when compared to other students with similar academic and behavioral capabilities (Shifrer, 2016).

Donohue and Bornman (2015) completed a study in South Africa utilizing four written vignettes that described students with disabilities within a made up mainstreamed third-grade class; vignettes were utilized to eliminate any possible bias towards the students' appearance. Upon completion of reading the vignette, the teacher then completed a *Teachers' Attitudes and Expectations Scale* for the student detailed in the assigned vignette. Multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the data gathered from the expectations scale. The results from this study suggested that the teachers expected the students detailed in the vignettes to make little progress in the areas of math and reading. The teachers also noted that these students would experience more social development in the mainstream classes than academic or intellectual development (Donohue & Bornman, 2015). These findings suggest that the stigma of a student with a disability, as outlined in the detailed vignettes of fictional students, can impact a teacher's beliefs and expectations for the student.

In another international study, Woodcock and Hitches (2017) researched the impact that a special education stigma has on teacher expectations. In their study, Woodcock and Hitches (2017) examined the responses of 122 British secondary school teachers in regard to questions about their frustration, sympathy, and expectations for students with disabilities. The teachers in the study were given eight fictional descriptions of eight different students that included

information about the student's ability, effort, and academic performance. Following the descriptions, the teachers were then asked to respond to four questions that corresponded to the level of frustration, sympathy, or expectations that the teacher would possess for each fictional student. Multivariate analysis of variance was used to analyze the data. The researchers concluded that the students identified as having a learning disability would have received more positive feedback and greater sympathy from the teacher than their nondisabled peers. It also concluded that these teachers expected the students with disabilities to be more likely to fail in future academic endeavors (Woodcock & Hitches, 2017). Although these were fictional descriptions given to the teachers, the study demonstrates the stigma that is associated with students with disabilities and the impact it has on the teacher expectations for student academic success.

Teacher self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy is teachers' opinion on their ability to bring about anticipated changes in students' learning and achievement, even with those students who are viewed as being challenging or apathetic, and has been directly related to student achievement, motivation, and student self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Teacher self-efficacy is closely tied to the other three attributes of low teacher expectations for students with disabilities. Lack of teacher training can promote low self-efficacy for teachers. Teachers who demonstrate low self-efficacy have worse attitudes and low motivation for wanting to perform their duties to the best extent possible (Hernandez et al., 2016). Teacher self-efficacy has been examined extensively along with its effects on student achievement.

One of the primary contributors to this idea of self-efficacy was Albert Bandura and his social cognitive theory. Bandura found that self-efficacy was a future-bound belief. Bandura describes a future-bound belief as a belief in the amount of proficiency an individual can expect

to devote to a particular situation, or in this case a particular student. These self-efficacy beliefs that an individual holds influences the opinions and emotions that are vital for obtaining goals and facing adversity. Self-efficacy beliefs are repetitive. When an individual demonstrates success in a particular area of performance, this creates a new set of confidence and belief in oneself which leads to better self-efficacy beliefs (Vaz et al., 2015). According to Tsouloupas et al. (2013), Bandura also believed that individuals who demonstrated a high level of self-efficacy were more resilient and persistent when attempting to overcome more stressful situations or when working with students with learning disabilities than those individuals who demonstrated a low level of self-efficacy.

The primary purpose of the Gibson and Dembo (1984) study was to develop a tool that would reliably measure teacher efficacy and provide results that indicate the effect of teacher efficacy on student learning. After a preliminary tool was developed, Gibson and Dembo (1984) revised the tool and created the Teacher Efficacy Scale, which contained 30 statements in a Likert scale format, ranging from 1=*strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*. Following the analysis from this tool, Gibson and Dembo (1984) were intrigued at the findings. The data suggested that two factors were influencing teacher efficacy: personal teaching efficacy and teacher efficacy. Personal teaching efficacy was defined as the individual teacher's belief that he or she has the skills and abilities needed to bring about students learning (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). The internal consistency reliability factor for this influence produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .78 (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). The other factor, teacher efficacy, represented the idea that any teacher's ability to improve student learning was significantly hindered by the students' family background, home environment, and parental influence (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). The internal consistency reliability factor for this influence produced a Cronbach's alpha

coefficient of .75 (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Their findings supported Bandura's social cognitive theory. They found that when teachers have greater self-efficacy, they demonstrate more patience and empathy for students who are struggling.

Self-efficacy implies that individuals strive to participate in activities and situations in which they feel knowledgeable and capable and tend to avoid situations in which they have reservations about their abilities to perform proficiently (Cameron & Cook, 2013). As such, Cameron and Cook (2013) investigated the general education teacher expectations for students with mild and severe disabilities who were placed in their inclusive classrooms. The results from the study showed that the general education teachers set social development and classroom behavior goals for these students, but not academic goals. The teachers in the study felt that the only skills they could offer these severe students were their individual strengths of teaching social development. The researchers concluded that self-efficacy was only exhibited by the general education teachers in areas they felt confident and gifted in teaching, rather than all areas, including academic goals.

Inclusion has been mandated in France since 2005, but it did not take full effect until 2013; however, just like other countries, successful inclusion of students with disabilities has had its obstacles. In their study, Desombre et al. (2019) examined this idea of teacher self-efficacy among French teachers. The researchers utilized 554 teachers from three areas of France and administered the teachers two assessments. The first assessment was a 15-item questionnaire that assessed the teachers' efficacy; the second assessment examined the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. The results from this study indicated a significant positive relationship between teacher efficacy and their attitudes towards inclusion (ß = 0.43, *SE* = 0.04, $p < .001$; Desombre et al., 2019). This study suggests that teacher efficacy towards the inclusion

of students with disabilities in general education classrooms is not only an issue within the United States but also across the world.

In John Hattie's (2008) work, collective teacher self-efficacy was found to be the number one influence on student achievement. Hattie (2017) analyzed over 60 studies involving over 3,400 students and found that teacher self-efficacy had the largest effect size (d = 1.568) among all of the 250 influences. According to Hattie, this influence involves getting teachers to think, "I cause learning," and to cause "collaborative conversation" (Hattie, 2017, para. 4) that is grounded in evidence.

Recommendations. In addition to helping students with disabilities in the general education classroom by improving the lack of teacher training, teachers' attitudes, the stigma disability, and teacher's self-efficacy, other recommendations have been made. General education teachers' academic expectations for students with disabilities can be enhanced by telling the students exactly what the expectations are for achievement, spending an equal amount of time with students of all abilities, and teaching the students the correlation between their work ethic and achievement (Hayes, 2014). These steps that encourage the student learner, coupled with improved teacher expectations, could help improve student achievement for students with disabilities.

Summary

In recent decades, legislation has been passed and amended to provide students with disabilities the best opportunity for success. Unfortunately, as legislation continues to be revised and created, students with disabilities have been faced with a host of differing expectations, not only from government officials, but, more importantly, from the individuals educating them, their teachers. Teacher expectations can have a lasting impact on any student, but especially

those students labeled with a disability. Keeping high standards and expectations for students with disabilities will allow them to see that they can learn the same content as their typical peers and encourage them to do so (Willis, 2007). By addressing the teacher's lack of training, the teacher's attitude, the stigma that comes with a disability label, and the teacher's self-efficacy, greater achievement levels could be achieved for students with disabilities (Krischler & Pit-ten Cate, 2019). Additionally, telling the students their expectations as well as spending an equal amount of time with students of all abilities and teaching the students the correlation between their work ethic and achievement will increase achievement for students with disabilities. Donohue and Bornman (2015) concluded that students with disabilities could be empowered to succeed if they were treated with love and cared for, without the immediate expectation of academic and social success. Students with disabilities pose their own unique challenges to any classroom; however, teachers need to view themselves as agents of change. That change needs to begin with the perspective that all students can learn, progress, and be successful. Student learning begins with their own perception of themselves. This perception, though internal, is externally driven largely by the teacher (Hattie, 2008). Much research has been completed on the impact of teacher expectations for students based on the student's ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and even students with more severe disabilities, but little research has been completed in the field related to students with more mild disabilities who are placed in general education English and math classes.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there was a relationship between teacher expectations for students with disabilities and the students' performance on state assessments. Data were analyzed by a Pearson correlation analysis at the .05 level of significance.

Design

The research design for this study was a quantitative correlational research design. Correlational research was utilized because the researcher wanted to determine the relationship between two variables. The purpose of finding a relationship between the general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities and the students' performance on Indiana standardized tests was to determine if teachers' high expectations for these students resulted in the students' performing at a higher level on the Indiana standardized assessment.

According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003), there are several advantages to utilizing a correlational research design for this study. First, correlational studies are beneficial when attempting to solve an educational problem. Correlational studies also allow for variables to be analyzed and the relationships that exist between the variables (Gall et al., 2003). Another advantage to using a correlational design is that it provides information pertaining to the degree of the relationships between the variables. For example, the correlational design measured the degree to which teacher expectations impacted student performance for students with disabilities. There were two variables for this particular study. The first variable was the individual student score on the English/language arts or math assessment. The other variable was the teachers' self-evaluation score in regard to the individual objectives that pertain to teacher expectations.

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessment?

RQ2: What is the relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) math general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the math Indiana state assessment?

RQ3: What is the relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessments?

RQ4: What is the relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) math general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the math Indiana state assessment?

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study were tested at a .05 level of significance. The null hypotheses for this study were as follows:

$H_0$1: There is no statistically significant relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessment.

$H_0$2: There is no statistically significant relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) math general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the math Indiana state assessment.

$H_0$3: There is no statistically significant relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessment.

$H_0$4: There is no statistically significant relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) math general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the math Indiana state assessments.

Participants and Setting

The participants for this study were drawn from a convenience sample of students in Grades 3–10 in a large school corporation in southern Indiana during the 2018–2019 school year. The district served approximately 10,500 students with over 50% of that population being low income. Of the 10,500 students, approximately 1,700 of them were identified as students with disabilities.

Students and teachers chosen for this study were drawn from 11 elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools. Approximately 555 students with disabilities in Grades 3–10 were chosen for the study. The other grades of students not chosen for the study were eliminated due to these grade levels not being assessed by Indiana state standardized tests. Furthermore, students who qualify as having only a speech or language disability were not included in the study. Only general education teachers in the subjects of math and English/language arts in Grades 3–10 were selected for this study. Because the state of Indiana only assesses all of these grade levels within math and English/language arts, these teachers were

chosen. Within this study there were 87 teachers that met these qualifications. Table 1 outlines the exact details of how many students and teachers were involved in the study disaggregated by the grade level.

Table 1

Number of Students with Disabilities and Inclusion Teachers by Grade Level

Grade Level	Number of Students with Disabilities	Number of Inclusion Teachers
3	56	10
4	78	11
5	74	14
6	97	14
7	87	14
8	85	14
10	78	10

For this study, the number of participants sampled were 87 teachers, with 35 of the teachers being elementary level teachers of students in Grades 3–5. At the elementary level, each teacher expectation score was correlated twice to each student within their classroom setting since elementary teachers were responsible for teaching English/language arts and math. The other 52 teachers were secondary teachers of students in Grades 6–8 and Grade 10; 26 teachers taught math and the other 26 taught English/language arts. Because each teacher within the study, regardless of elementary or secondary level, had more than one student's data within the study, the teacher sample size across the study far exceeded the minimum of 66 participants. According to Gall et al. (2003), "66 participants is the required minimum for a medium effect size with statistical power of .7 at the .05 alpha level" (p. 143).

Within the elementary category, there were 125 students identified as students with a specific learning disability, 17 students identified as other health impaired, 14 students identified as having a mild cognitive disability, 32 students identified as having an emotional disability, nine students identified as autistic, three students identified as having an orthopedic impairment, three students identified as having a visual disability, and one student identified as having a hearing impairment. The secondary student category demonstrated a similar demographic. There were 181 students identified as students with a specific learning disability, 48 students identified as other health impaired, 17 students identified as having a mild cognitive disability, 69 students identified as having an emotional disability, 21 students identified as autistic, three students identified as having an orthopedic impairment, two students identified as having a visual disability, one student identified as having a hearing impairment, and two students identified as having a traumatic brain injury.

Instrumentation

The instrument that was used to measure the teachers' expectations for students was the teachers' self-evaluation tool. This tool was created based on the state of Indiana's teacher evaluation rubric entitled RISE (this is not an acronym). The rubric was based on a 4-point rating scale. The four categories were as follows: 4 = *highly effective,* 3 = *effective*, 2 = *needs improvement*, and 1 = *not effective*. The state of Indiana developed this rubric using the Indiana Teacher Evaluation Cabinet. This cabinet included individuals from the state department, administrators, and teachers from the state in order to make the rubric effective in maintaining outstanding teachers (Indiana Department of Education, 2012). The RISE rubric maintains validity because of the multiple research-based tools that were utilized in its development.

The cabinet team utilized a variety of sources when developing this tool including Robert

Marzano's *Classroom Instruction that Works*, National Board's *Professional Teaching Standards*, Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teachers*, and Wiggins and McTighe's *Understanding by Design* (Indiana Department of Education, 2012). Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) completed a meta-analysis on instructional strategies within the K–12 classroom. The researchers averaged the effect sizes across a variety of research studies to determine which instructional strategies would affect student achievement across all grade levels and content areas (Marzano et al., 2001). The Indiana Teacher Evaluation Cabinet took the nine categories that had the largest effect size and embedded those strategies throughout the second domain of the RISE rubric, the instruction domain, to differentiate between effective and highly effective teachers (Indiana Department of Education, 2012).

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2016) was created to "identify and recognize teachers who effectively enhance student learning and demonstrate the high level of knowledge, skills, abilities and commitments reflected" (p. 10) in their Five Core Propositions. The Indiana Teacher Evaluation Cabinet took these five principles and utilized them throughout every domain of the RISE rubric. The following four principles assisted in development of the first two domains of the RISE rubric (planning and instruction):

> Proposition 1 "Teachers are committed to students and their learning."
>
> Proposition 2 "Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students."
>
> Proposition 3 "Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning."
>
> Proposition 4 "Teachers think systemically about their practice and learn from experience." (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2016, p. 11)

The final proposition, "Teachers are members of learning communities" (National Board for

Professional Teaching Standards, 2016, p. 11), influenced the final domain, Leadership, on the RISE rubric.

Danielson's (2011) work, *Framework for Teachers,* outlined a framework of four domains to help in the development of effective teaching practices for all teachers. The development of these domains came from the criteria utilized in the Praxis III test series that newly licensed teachers must pass. It was noted that this framework is not only applicable to newly licensed teachers but to experienced teachers as well. The Indiana Teacher Evaluation Cabinet applied the four domains from Danielson in the development of the three domains within the RISE rubric. This cabinet team combined Danielson's (2011) second domain of "The Classroom Environment," and the third domain of "Instruction" into one domain within the RISE rubric entitled "Instruction" (Indiana Department of Education, 2012).

Wiggins and McTighe (2005) developed a framework for instructional design that focused on the educational curriculum, assessment, and instruction across all subject areas and content areas. These developers emphasized a backward approach to instruction. Wiggins and McTighe urged educators to think about what it is they wanted their students to learn and how the teachers would know the students had learned it. This idea of backward design involves the teachers creating goals for their students and then designing the instruction with these goals in mind (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). These facets of instructional design were included in the development of the Indiana RISE rubric. Specifically, in Domain One (Planning) the Indiana Teacher Evaluation Cabinet accentuated the idea of utilizing data for planning and setting lofty goals for students and their learning (Indiana Department of Education, 2012). Then in Domain Two (Instruction) the RISE rubric stresses the importance of developing student understanding, checking for student understanding, modifying instruction, and setting high, rigorous

expectations for students (Indiana Department of Education, 2012).

Teachers were asked to complete the self-evaluation portion of the rubric in order to self-reflect on their own practices. Within the RISE rubric there are three benchmarks that emphasize teacher expectations for students. These three benchmarks are as follows:

Objective 1.2 "Set ambitious and measurable achievement goals."

Objective 2.9 "Set high expectations for academic success."

Objective 3.4 "Advocate for student success."

These three benchmarks from the teacher self-evaluation rubric were the only benchmarks measured in the study. The exact objectives for each benchmark are outlined in Appendix B.

These three benchmarks were analyzed in multiple ways. First, the scores on all three benchmarks were averaged for each individual teacher. Once these scores were averaged, the scores were correlated with the students' test scores who had that specific teacher. Finally, the individual score for each benchmark was correlated with the students' test scores who had that specific teacher. This was done on each individual benchmark.

The students' academic performance was measured utilizing the Indiana state standardized test called ISTEP+. ISTEP+ stands for Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (Indiana Department of Education, 2018). This criterion-referenced assessment measured the students' mastery of the Indiana Academic Standards that were adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education (Indiana Department of Education, 2018). The ISTEP+ assessment was given during April 2018, and the students who were chosen for this study were given their appropriate testing accommodations that were outlined in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The reliability of the ISTEP+ exam is differentiated by subject area and varies based on the grade level. Overall, the range for English/language arts was between 0.89

and 0.9, for mathematics 0.94 and 0.95 (Indiana Department of Education, 2018).

Procedures

Once Institutional Review Board approval was completed, the researcher initiated the study by gaining permission from the district's superintendent (Appendix C) to access the appropriate archival data. Upon gaining approval from the district's superintendent, the researcher began identifying which student's data should be included in the study. This process involved going through each student in Grades 3–8 and 10 and identifying if the student had a disability. Once these students were identified, the researcher went into each individual student's IEP to determine if the student was educated in an inclusive classroom for English/language arts and math. After the student's learning environment was determined, the student's name and grade level were added to a Google spreadsheet. This process continued until all students who met the required criteria were identified.

Once all of the students were identified, the researcher began obtaining the students' test scores on each of the two tests as well as the cut score for passing. The researcher accessed the scores utilizing the Indiana Learning Connections website. The researcher input each student's English/language arts and math scores within the same Google spreadsheet. Once this process was finished, the researcher took away all the students' names and placed numerical identifiers so that confidentiality of student information was maintained.

Upon completion of collecting the student data, the researcher then began collecting the teacher data. The researcher created a simple document for collecting the appropriate data points from the specified teachers. This document was organized by school and each grade level was identified by its respective number and content area. No teacher names were included. The researcher shared this document with each building principal to input the individual scores on the

three designated points from the teacher's self-evaluation rubric. After all the appropriate data points were collected from the principals, the researcher compiled the data into a second Google spreadsheet, and all identifying information was replaced with numerical values in order to ensure confidentiality of the teacher.

Once this data retrieval process was completed, the mean scores of each teacher for all three objectives was correlated with the students' score from their class. The Pearson correlation test was conducted using the teachers' mean scores and the students' performance on the math test, and another test with the students' performance on the English/language arts test. These correlation tests were conducted using the SPSS computer program.

Data Analysis

The type of data analysis that was conducted on the hypothesis was a Pearson correlation. The level of significance for the Pearson correlation was .05. The purpose for using this type of analysis was twofold. First, this data analysis technique, according to Gall et al. (2003), is the "most stable and produces the smallest standard error" (p. 335). Secondly, this statistical analysis was best for establishing the strength of the relationship between the teachers' expectations and the students' performance on state assessments (Gall et al., 2003). A scatter plot between the teachers' expectations and the students' performance on state assessments was created. This was utilized to determine the outliers and to determine the type of relationship that existed between the two variables. The statistical software package that was used was the IBM SPSS program (Version 28). Visual data screening took place in order to identify any missing or inaccurate data. Any data set missing a value was excluded. Once visual screening was complete, assumption testing was conducted. One scatter plot was utilized for three different assumption tests. An assumption of bivariate outliers test was conducted between the two

variables. One variable was placed on the *x*-axis and the other on the *y*-axis, which allowed for the extreme bivariate outliers to be identified. An assumption of linearity was conducted as well to identify the extreme bivariate outliers. Finally, an assumption of bivariate normal distribution test was conducted. This assumption test allowed for the cigar shaped data to be identified.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there was a relationship between teacher expectations for students with disabilities and the students' performance on state assessments. The data were classified into two different grade level sets, elementary Grades 3–5 and middle and high school Grades 6–8 and Grade 10. The data sets were also grouped based on content area: English/language arts or math.

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessment?

RQ2: What is the relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) math general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the math Indiana state assessment?

RQ3: What is the relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessments?

RQ4: What is the relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) math general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the math Indiana state assessment?

Null Hypotheses

$H_0$1: There is no statistically significant relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessment.

$H_0$2: There is no statistically significant relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) math general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the math Indiana state assessment.

$H_0$3: There is no statistically significant relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessment.

$H_0$4: There is no statistically significant relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) math general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the math Indiana state assessments.

Descriptive Statistics

Mean and standard deviation were obtained for each elementary variable is found in Table 2.

Table 2-Elementary

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	*N*
ELA Scores	423.88	47.100	208
Math Scores	426.75	55.949	208

Mean and standard deviation were obtained for each secondary variable is found in Table 3.

Table 3-Secondary

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	*N*
ELA Scores	404.71	125.667	347
Math Scores	422.80	130.691	347

Results

Hypothesis 1

Data Screening

Data screening was conducted on all variables. The researcher examined the data set for missing data points and inconsistencies. There were some missing data points related to the students' test scores; therefore, those students' data were excluded.

Assumption Testing

A Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the null hypothesis. Pearson's correlation requires that the assumptions of no bivariate outliers, linearity, and bivariate normal distribution are met. To test these assumptions, a scatterplot was created. Examination of the scatterplots show that the assumptions of linearity and no bivariate outliers are tenable.

The first null hypothesis stated there would be no statistically significant relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessment. To determine the strength of the relationship between these two variables, data were analyzed by a Pearson correlation at the .05 level of significance. Based on these analyses,

no relationship could be determined between the two variables due to the lack of variability in the teacher self-reflection scores. The researcher fails to reject null hypothesis one.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to test null hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3-5) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessment. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Hypothesis 2

Data Screening

Data screening was conducted on all variables. The researcher examined the data set for missing data points and inconsistencies. There were some missing data points related to the students' test scores; therefore, those students' data were excluded.

Assumption Testing

A Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the null hypothesis. Pearson's correlation requires that the assumptions of no bivariate outliers, linearity, and bivariate normal distribution are met. To test these assumptions, a scatterplot was created. Examination of the scatterplots show that the assumptions of linearity and no bivariate outliers are tenable.

There is no statistically significant relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) math general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the math Indiana state assessment. To determine the strength of the relationship between these two variables, data were analyzed by a Pearson correlation at the .05 level of significance. Based on these analyses, no relationship could be determined between the two variables due to the lack

of variability in the teacher self-reflection scores. The researcher fails to reject null hypothesis two.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to test null hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3-5) math general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the math Indiana state assessment. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Hypothesis 3

Data Screening

Data screening was conducted on all variables. The researcher examined the data set for missing data points and inconsistencies. There were some missing data points related to the students' test scores; therefore, those students' data were excluded.

Assumption Testing

A Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the null hypothesis. Pearson's correlation requires that the assumptions of no bivariate outliers, linearity, and bivariate normal distribution are met. To test these assumptions, a scatterplot was created. Examination of the scatterplots show that the assumptions of linearity and no bivariate outliers are tenable.

There is no statistically significant relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessment. To determine the strength of the relationship between these two variables, data were analyzed by a Pearson correlation at the .05 level of significance. Based on these analyses, no relationship could be determined between

the two variables due to the lack of variability in the teacher self-reflection scores. The researcher fails to reject null hypothesis three.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to test null hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6-8, 10) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessment. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Hypothesis 4

Data Screening

Data screening was conducted on all variables. The researcher examined the data set for missing data points and inconsistencies. There were some missing data points related to the students' test scores; therefore, those students' data were excluded.

Assumption Testing

A Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the null hypothesis. Pearson's correlation requires that the assumptions of no bivariate outliers, linearity, and bivariate normal distribution are met. To test these assumptions, a scatterplot was created. Examination of the scatterplots show that the assumptions of linearity and no bivariate outliers are tenable.

There is no statistically significant relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) math general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the math Indiana state assessments. To determine the strength of the relationship between these two variables, data were analyzed by a Pearson correlation at the .05 level of significance. Based on these analyses, no relationship could be determined between the two variables due to the lack

of variability in the teacher self-reflection scores. The researcher fails to reject null hypothesis four.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to test null hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6-8, 10) math general education teachers' expectations and students with disabilities performance on the math Indiana state assessment. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

A Cronbach's alpha analysis was conducted to determine the reliability of the three teacher evaluation standards that were utilized within the study. The results of this analysis determined that the three standards had a moderately high reliability ($\alpha = 0.76$) so confidence can be placed in the responses of the teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between the expectations of general education teachers for students with disabilities who are placed within their inclusive classrooms and the students' academic performance on the Indiana state assessment. Unfortunately, due to the lack of variability in the teachers' self-evaluation scores, a relationship could not be determined. Because researchers have found that there continues to be problems with teachers' self-evaluation scores and student academic performance (Brophy & Good, 1974; Cameron & Cook, 2013; Cook, 2001; Klehm, 2014; McKown & Weinstein, 2008; Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968) further research should be conducted on this topic. The implications and limitations surrounding this field of education are discussed in this chapter as well as future research studies that could be completed to determine if a more significant relationship exists.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between the expectations of general education teachers for students with disabilities who are placed within their inclusive classrooms and the students' academic performance on the Indiana state assessment. The results of this study were analyzed by grade level and subject area. The study was designed to determine if a relationship existed between general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities and the students' academic performance on state standardized tests.

RQ1: What is the relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities

based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessment?

The results from the statistical testing revealed there is not enough variability in the teacher self-evaluation scores to determine if a relationship exists between the two variables. When comparing this study with the study conducted by Cook (2001), the data from this study should support the idea that teacher expectations can drive student academic achievement. Using the attribution theory to drive the research, Cook (2001) suggested that teachers possess lower expectations for students with obvious disabilities both academically and behaviorally than they do for students who demonstrate deficits in these areas but are not identified as having a disability.

Additionally, Klehm (2014) completed a study examining teacher attitudes towards students with disabilities and the students' ability to meet proficiency on high-stakes testing. The results of the study demonstrated that 54% of the teachers who participated believed that students with disabilities would be unable to reach proficiency on high stakes testing. Although the results from this specific study were inconclusive, the results from Klehm (2014) and other studies still support the notion that teacher expectations can directly impact academic performance of students with disabilities.

RQ2: What is the relationship between inclusive elementary (Grades 3–5) math general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the math Indiana state assessment?

Due to the lack of variability in teacher self-evaluation scores related to expectations for students, no relationship could be determined between these two variables. Although this study did not determine if a relationship existed, past studies reveal that a relationship does exist. In

their study, Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968) found that when teachers were informed that a particular group of students were "growth spurters," these students made more significant gains ($F = 2.13$, $p = .07$) over the course of the year than other students who were not identified in the same way. McKown and Weinstein (2002) also studied preconceived bias of student academic performance. These researchers found when students felt that their teachers showed favoritism towards the academically capable students, the teacher expectations were strongly correlated to student achievement, suggesting that a relationship does exist between these variables.

RQ3: What is the relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) English/language arts general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the English/language arts Indiana state assessments?

The results from the Pearson correlation analysis were inconclusive for the secondary grade levels as well, but past research suggests that a relationship does exist. According to Klehm (2014), Rosenthal's affect-effort theory suggests that if a teacher changes their expectations of a student's academic performance, that teacher will garner a better attitude towards the student which in turn results in the teacher putting more effort into teaching the student. Klehm (2014) also found that a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) exists between English/language arts and math teachers in regard to their attitudes towards students with disabilities and their ability to obtain proficiency on the state achievement tests. Upon completion of a meta-analysis of 250 influences on student academic achievement, Hattie (2008) found a large effect size ($d = 0.43$) of teacher expectations on academic achievement.

RQ4: What is the relationship between inclusive secondary (Grades 6–8, 10) math general education teachers' expectations for students with disabilities based on the teachers' self-evaluation tool and the students' performance on the math Indiana state assessment?

Although no relationship was able to be determined between teacher expectations and student academic achievement on state standardized tests, several studies have been completed looking at the impact of teacher expectations on student performance. In their study, Morales and Zafra (2013) assessed teachers of students between the ages of 11 and 16 to determine the type of expectations these teachers held for these students. The teachers were administered a Likert scale questionnaire that examined the teachers' ability to adapt to the curriculum and their expectations for their students' academic performance. Results from the study revealed that students who performanced academically below average were held to a lower standard that other students ($p < .00$) by their teachers (Morales & Zafra, 2013).

Additionally, Shifrer (2016) looked specifically at high school math teachers and their expectations for their 10th-grade students. The data from the students included their scores on a standardized math test as well as their transcripts. The teachers in the study were asked to consider their current students and if the students' disability impacted the students' academic performance within their class. Regression models and correlations were used to analyze the data. The data demonstrated that 41% of the math teachers felt that the students' disability contributed to the students' performance within the class.

Implications

The results from this study were unexpected. This may have been the result of the lack of variability in the teacher self-evaluation scores. The results of this study did not provide ample evidence to why students with disabilities are not performing adequately on Indiana state

assessments. General education, inclusive English/language arts and math teachers indicate that their expectations for students are high; however, many students with disabilities are not performing adequately on state assessments. Because this study found no level of significance between teacher expectations and student performance on state assessments, the district represented in this study should carefully consider what is impacting the students' performance on these high-stakes exams. This population of students impacts the district's overall academic performance grade negatively. Based on the results of this study, the district must analyze the students' data as well as the teacher's self-evaluation data to determine what must be done to improve this student population's academic performance.

Limitations

The major limitation to this study related to the teacher self-evaluation benchmark scores. Because there was little variability in the teachers' perceptions of their expectations for students with disabilities, no relationship could be determined. It is unclear why the teachers all perceived that their expectations for students are considered effective, but the students are not performing well on the Indiana state assessment. It could be possible that the teachers did not give careful consideration to the benchmarks when completing the self-evaluation rubric. The rationale behind this may be that the teachers just considered this a menial task that the district was asking them to complete. Another possibility could include that the teachers were only considering students without disabilities when examining their own expectations for students and not students with disabilities. Finally, a more lengthy self-evaluation tool that explicitly mentions students with disabilities could be utilized.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. It is recommended that a different teacher self-evaluation tool be utilized in the future when determining teacher expectations for students with disabilities. This tool should contain more items in order to provide more variability in teacher scores.
2. Another recommendation would be to utilize the evaluating administrators' scores instead of the teachers' scores. This may provide a more accurate view of what is taking place within the classroom since the score would be evaluative in nature.
3. Additional research could be completed over the course of a student's career within the school system. The amount of growth the student demonstrated from the initial assessment in third grade until the final assessment in 10th grade could be correlated with teacher self-evaluation data to determine the long-term impact on student academic performance, and if, indeed, there is a relationship between these two variables.
4. Other research could be completed utilizing standardized assessment scores at the 11th grade. All students within this district take the ACT exam as juniors, so the students' performance on this assessment could be correlated with the teacher self-evaluation tool to determine if a relationship exists between these two variables.
5. Further research should be conducted to determine if other factors such as a student's behavior, stress level, or a student's own efficacy impact the student's performance on state assessments.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

February 4, 2021

Emy Lorigan
Angela Smith

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-381 The Relationship Between General Education Teachers' Expectations for Students with Disabilities and Academic Achievement

Dear Emy Lorigan, Angela Smith:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

Category 4. Secondary research for which consent is not required: Secondary research uses of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens, if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(i) The identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens are publicly available;

(ii) Information, which may include information about biospecimens, is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, the investigator does not contact the subjects, and the investigator will not re-identify subjects;

(iii) The research involves only information collection and analysis involving the investigator's use of identifiable health information when that use is regulated under 45 CFR parts 160 and 164, subparts A and E, for the purposes of "health care operations" or "research" as those terms are defined at 45 CFR 164.501 or for "public health activities and purposes" as described under 45 CFR 164.512(b); or

(iv) The research is conducted by, or on behalf of, a Federal department or agency using government-generated or government-collected information obtained for nonresearch activities, if the research generates identifiable private information that is or will be maintained on information technology that is subject to and in compliance with section 208(b) of the E-Government Act of 2002, 44 U.S.C. 3501 note, if all of the identifiable private information collected, used, or generated as part of the activity will be maintained in systems of records subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a, and, if applicable, the information used in the research was collected subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your

protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office

Appendix B: Objectives for Teacher Evaluation Benchmarks

Objective 1.2			
Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)
At level 4, a teacher fulfills the criteria for Level 3 and additionally: Plans an ambitious annual student achievement goal.	Teacher develops an annual student achievement goal that is: Measurable Aligned to content standards AND Includes benchmarks to help monitor learning and inform interventions throughout the year.	Teacher develops an annual student achievement goal that is: Measurable The goal may not: align to content standards; OR Includes benchmarks to help monitor learning and inform interventions throughout the year.	Teacher rarely or never develops achievement goals for the class OR goals are developed, but are extremely general and not helpful for planning purposes.

Objective 2.9			
Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)
For Level 4, much of the Level 3 evidence is observed during the years, as well as some of the following: Students participate in forming academic goals for themselves and analyzing their progress. Students demonstrate that they are excited about their work and understand why it is important.	Teacher sets high expectations for students of all levels. Students are invested in their work and value academic success as evidenced by their effort and quality of their work. The classroom is a safe place to take on challenges and risk failure (students do not feel shy about asking questions or bad about answering incorrectly. Teacher celebrates and praises academic work. High quality work of all students is displayed in the classroom.	Teacher may set high expectations for some, but not others. Students are generally invested in their work but may occasionally spend time off-task or give up when work is challenging. Some students may be afraid to take on challenges and risk failure (hesitant to ask for help when needed or give-up easily).	Teacher rarely or never sets high expectations for students. Students may demonstrate disinterest or lack of investment in their work. For example, students might be unfocused, off-task, or refuse to attempt assignments. Students are generally afraid to take on challenges and risk failure due to frequently discouraging comments from the teacher or peers. Teacher rarely or never praises academic work or good behavior. High quality work is rarely or never displayed in the classroom.

Objective 3.4			
Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)
At Level 4, a teacher fulfills the criteria for Level 3 and additionally may: Display commitment to the education of all the students in the school. Make changes and take risks to ensure student success.	Teacher will: display commitment to the education of all his/her students. Attempt to remedy obstacles around student achievement. Advocate for students' individualized needs.	Teacher will: display commitment to the education of all his/her students. Teacher may not advocate for students' needs.	Teacher rarely or never displays commitment to the education of his/her students. Teacher accepts failure as par for the course and does not advocate for students' needs.

Appendix C: Approval Letter from Superintendent

January 22, 2021

Dear Mrs. Lorigan,

Thank you for taking the time to share with me your proposed dissertation. After considering the personal and system benefits of your study, I have decided to grant you permission to conduct your research using the data from [redacted]. I look forward to hearing what your results show, and how we can improve student outcomes for our students with disabilities. Good luck in your pursuit of your doctoral degree. If I can be of any more service to you, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Thank you,

Mr. [redacted]

Superintendent

[redacted]