A Descriptive Multiple Case Study of Three Elementary Schools in Project Homecoming, the Inclusion Program Within the Dallas Independent School District

Sharron A. Caraker
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Andrews University

School of Education

A DESCRIPTIVE MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN PROJECT HOMECOMING, THE INCLUSION PROGRAM WITHIN THE DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Education

by

Sharron A. Caraker

August 1995
"A DESCRIPTIVE MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THREE ELEMENARY SCHOOLS IN PROJECT HOMECOMING, THE INCLUSION PROGRAM WITHIN THE DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT"

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To Mom who is here in spirit and kept asking when I would be finished so she could be here in body
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Finally, I would like to thank Bonnie Proctor who was very helpful in pointing out my formatting, syntax, and key-boarding errors throughout this process.
ABSTRACT

A DESCRIPTIVE MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN PROJECT HOMECOMING. THE INCLUSION PROGRAM WITHIN THE DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

Sharron A. Caraker

Chair: Bernard Lall
Title: A DESCRIPTIVE MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN PROJECT HOMECOMING, THE INCLUSION PROGRAM WITHIN THE DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Name of researcher: Sharron A. Caraker

Name and degree of faculty chair: Bernard Lall, Ph.D.

Date completed: August 1995

Topic

The focus of this study was the actions, policies, and procedures used in the successful implementation of an inclusion program in three elementary schools participating in Project Homecoming within the Dallas Independent School District. I was interested in how these actions, policies, and procedures affected the different groups within the schools—students, parents, certified staff, and non-certified staff as well as. The data gathered in this study should be useful to other school districts in the process of developing an inclusion program in the elementary school.
Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the actions, policies, and procedures needed to implement a successful inclusion program.

General Methodology

This study is a descriptive multiple case study of three of the elementary schools that are a part of the Project Homecoming in the Dallas Independent School District, Dallas, Texas. I reviewed documents associated with the "Homecoming" Project and conducted interviews and observations. The school administrators and program administrators were interviewed. "Homecoming" teachers and support personnel within the participating schools were interviewed, as well as students and their parents. An interview guide was formulated. The case study was piloted at a private school involved in the implementation of an inclusion program.

Results

After the first year of implementing the program there were very few actions, policies, and procedures at the District level. The schools participating in the program did not implement any specific actions, policies, and procedures relative to Project Homecoming other than establishing school planning teams and including special-needs children in the regular classroom. The attitude of the staff and the commitment of the local school building administrator were contributors to the success of this program after the initial implementation. The District was unable to carry through with extensive training and support services from the central office.
Conclusions

Before implementing an inclusion program, school districts should be sure that all populations of the school community are committed to inclusion. The district should also be sure that funding is provided for staff development and support staff.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With the decision of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954), the Supreme Court ruled that school segregation denied equal protection to all school children. This decision set the stage for emerging concerns about segregated education and equal opportunities for all students, including students with disabilities (Patton, Bierne-Smith, & Payne, 1990). Justice Earl Warren, in delivering the opinion of the Court in this case, said that education is perhaps the most important function of the state and local governments. Compulsory school-attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in our armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today, it is a principal instrument in awakening our children to cultural values, in preparing them for later professional training, and in helping them to adjust normally to their environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he or she is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

Legal victories, relating to equal opportunity for handicapped students.
progressed through three stages: access to education, accurate classification, and appropriate instructional programs (Morsink, 1984). The legislation passed during the 1960s and 1970s provided the requirements and partial funding for the education of handicapped students. In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act focused attention on disadvantaged students (Patton et al., 1990). The Vocational Rehabilitation Act, Section 504 Act, passed in 1974, focused on the handicapped children in elementary and secondary schools. This legislation required that the states provide full educational opportunities for all handicapped children. Children not receiving services, at that time, were given top priority, and regular classroom placement was to be used wherever possible. This act also provided for due process procedures to be used in protecting the rights of handicapped children (Hasazi, Rice, & York, 1979).

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was passed by a majority vote in both the House and Senate. This law became known as P.L. 94-142. This legislation provided the funding for the 1974 law. P.L. 94-142 promised free and appropriate education, which included special education and the related services necessary to meet the needs of handicapped children. This law further required that the child be placed in the least restricted environment, an individual education program be used, and that due process and a nondiscriminatory evaluation procedure be provided (Morsink, 1984).

Public school programs today must serve the handicapped and regular education students. Since the passage of Public Law (P.L.) 94-142 (1975), principals have been asked to assume additional responsibilities for administering special
education programs within their schools (Davis, 1989). Today, more handicapped
students are being integrated into regular classes for all or part of their educational
programs. Interpreting and complying with federal, state, and local guidelines with
regard to special education is not an easy task for a building administrator.

Public Law 101-476, the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 1990,
guarantees all students between the ages of 3 and 21 four rights and two protections.
The public agency providing services to a handicapped student must provide:

1. A free and appropriate public education that meets the unique needs of each
individual student

2. An education in the student’s least restrictive environment (The amount of
time a student with disabilities spends with a student without disabilities is determined
by the handicapped student’s individual needs.)

3. Related and other supportive services provided in order to assist a student
with disabilities to benefit from educational services

4. A complete, non-discriminatory educational evaluation prior to receiving
special education services (The student must also be re-evaluated at least every 3
years.)

5. PROTECTION 1: An individualized educational program (An IEP must be
developed jointly by the school and the student’s parents or guardian. It must be
designed to meet the student’s unique needs and it must be in effect before special
education services can be provided for the student. It also must be reviewed yearly.)

6. PROTECTION 2: Due process procedures (Parents must give their consent
and approval throughout the educational process. If a parent does not give his or her
consent for special education services, a student cannot be denied regular education services. If the school and the parents are not able to agree as to the services needed, each has the right to a due-process hearing. The parents can also request a due-process hearing if they feel that the student’s rights have been denied.)

The act also requires that each state develop an annual plan that describes how the state and each school district within the state will comply with the requirements of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act.

In two recent cases, The Board of Education, Sacramento City Unified School District v. Holland (E.D. Cal. 1992) and Oberti v. Board of Education of the Borough of Clementon School District (D.N.J. 1993), the judges ruled regarding the placement of special education students. Both suggest that parents are able to go to court and force reluctant school districts to include their special students in a regular class, no matter what the cost.

The U.S. Circuit Court Judge Edward R. Becker wrote in his opinion of the case, that we construe IDEA’s mainstreaming requirement to prohibit a school from placing a child with disabilities outside a regular education classroom if the child can be educated satisfactorily in the regular education classroom with supplementary aids and support services. He also wrote that if educating the child outside the regular education classroom is necessary for the educational benefit of the child, the district may still be violating IDEA if the district has not made sufficient effort to include the child in programs with non-disabled children whenever possible. The Third Circuit Court of Appeals made it clear that the burden of proving compliance with IDEA’s mainstreaming requirement is placed upon the school district, not the parents of the
special-needs child.

**Purpose of the Study**

During the past 35-40 years, there has been an integration, to varying degrees, of special education students and regular education students in many school districts. This integration or inclusion of special education students into the regular education programs within a school can bring about a wide variety of administrative problems. In this case study, I sought to describe the actions, policies, and procedures that aided the implementation of a successful inclusion program in the Dallas Independent School District.

The three elementary schools that were studied became part of "Project Homecoming" at different times in the development of the program. Rolling Acres Elementary became a "Homecoming" school in the 1990-1991 school year. Mountview Elementary became a "Homecoming" school in the 1991-1992 school year, and Savannah Elementary joined the program in the 1992-1993 school year. By choosing schools that were deemed successful by the district and entered the program at different intervals, I thought that there would be a better indication of the actions, policies, and procedures that were prevalent from the beginning of the program and were still being used by the schools at later times. The use of these actions, policies, and procedures would have been successful over time.

Dallas Independent School District defined the success or the effectiveness of a Project Homecoming school in relation to the project's goals by determining if the participating school was able to accomplish the following four goals:
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Dallas Independent School District defined the success or the effectiveness of a Project Homecoming school in relation to the project’s goals by determining if the participating school was able to accomplish the following four goals:

1. **Goal 1** is to place all students on the campus they would attend if not handicapped. The **Performance Indicator** is the number of students placed off of their home campus for special education.

2. **Goal 2** is to increase the time that students with handicaps spend with the same age peers in regular education settings. The **Performance Indicator** is the percentage of students with moderate and severe handicaps, traditionally self-contained students, participating in available options with the same age peers.

3. **Goal 3** is to improve the overall academic performance of each campus. The **Performance Indicator** is the percentage of students taking and passing TEAMS/TAAS and the amount of time that the students spend in regular education, as well as a reduction in the number of self-contained versus resource room placements. This information may be gotten from the ARD Committee reports.

4. **Goal 4** is to increase the effectiveness of special education services. The **Performance Indicator** is that the TEAMS/TAAS scores from each school year beginning with 1989-1990 were compared. This was later changed because the
District thought that it would take a longer period of time for the TEAMS/TAAS scores to reflect an overall increase. The District used the Project Homecoming survey taken in May, 1991 as an indicator of the effectiveness of the special education services.

This study has the potential to also identify those policies, procedures, and programs that did not positively aid in the implementation of a successful inclusion program within the Dallas Independent School District.

**Problem**

I was not able to find another study centering upon the administrative actions, policies, and procedures involved in developing a successful inclusion program within an elementary school. In studying the inclusion programs of these elementary schools in the Dallas Independent School District, it is believed that identifying the actions, policies, and procedures that are present in each of these successful inclusion programs, and hold true over time, would benefit other school districts in their quest to develop successful programs of inclusion. The actions, policies, and procedures could have been instituted by the district or the school itself. The data gathered in this case study will be useful to other school districts in the process of developing an inclusion program at the elementary level.

**Importance of the Study**

If we can determine what actions, policies, and procedures have been implemented in order to make an inclusion program successful, we have the potential to alleviate the stress of students, teachers, staff members, parents, and administrators.
who are in the process of beginning the program and those already involved in an inclusion program. School districts across the country would be interested in knowing what actions, procedures, or programs were present during and after the implementation of a successful inclusion program.

**General Methodology**

This dissertation is a descriptive multiple case study of three of the elementary schools that are a part of Project Homecoming in the Dallas Independent School District. The schools participating were selected by using information supplied by the school district. I was interested in studying schools that had been judged to be successful using the criteria set forth for Project Homecoming as defined on pages 5 and 6.

I reviewed documents associated with the "Homecoming" program. Those interviewed included: (1) the current project coordinator and the previous coordinator for the "Homecoming" program, (2) the previous Director of Special Education and key persons involved in the planning stages of the project, (3) the school administrators, (4) one teacher at each grade level within each building who is a "Homecoming" teacher, (5) the support personnel serving the children in those classrooms, (6) handicapped and non-handicapped children from each of those classes, and, if possible, (7) those children's parents, and, finally, (8) the school secretary, head custodian or cafeteria manager from each school.

An interview guideline was formulated for each group to be interviewed. The interview questions were presented to a validation team consisting of a special
education director, a building administrator, a teacher, a certified and non-certified support staff person, a student, and a parent in the private school implementing an inclusion program.

The case study was piloted at St. Bavo's Elementary School in Mishawaka, Indiana, which is involved in the implementation of an inclusion program. I observed this elementary school, which has been involved in an inclusion program for a year. The principal, selected staff, and students were interviewed. The data collected were evaluated in the manner set forth in chapter 3.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined according to their use in the present study:

1. **Least Restrictive Environment:** All handicapped children will be educated with their non-handicapped peers to the extent that they will benefit (PL 94-142).

2. **Mainstreaming:** Section 1412(5)(B) of IDEA requires that states provide procedures to ensure that children with disabilities are educated "to the maximum extent appropriate" with non-disabled children in the regular class setting. Special services are not provided within the regular education classroom for a mainstreamed student. The supports and services needed are provided in a setting which is segregated from the regular education setting.

3. **Public Law (PL 94-142):** The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975). This federal law ensures the provision of a free and appropriate public education for all handicapped children.

4. **Inclusion Program:** The commitment to educate each child, to the
maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend (Rogers, 1993).

5. **Project Homecoming**: An inclusion program within the Dallas Independent School District that seeks to return all of the special education students residing within the boundaries of selected school zones back to their home school.

6. **Self-Contained Special Education Class**: A class in which the teacher is assigned to the same teaching station, and the students receive more than 3 hours per day of special education instruction (Texas Education Agency, 1979, p. 49).

7. **Special Education**: The provision of a continuum of child-centered educational and supportive services in combination with those provided in the general school program in order to meet the needs of handicapped students (Texas Education Agency, 1979, p. 2).

8. **IDEA**: Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (1992) originally enacted as the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA). It was created by Congress to assist states in providing children with disabilities with a free and appropriate education. Under IDEA, local school districts and states may be sued by children with disabilities (or their parents or guardians) if the school fails to provide a free and appropriate public education (Data Research, 1993, p. 1).


10. **Content Mastery**: The goal of a content mastery program is to enable students identified as learning disabled to learn in the mainstream of their educational
setting. This program provides: guidance and assistance for classroom teachers instructing students having special-needs; educational supports for students using strategies which enhance their learning style; teachers trained in these strategies staff the resource center to provide these support services; and the assurance that the resource center staff and the classroom teacher share common goals, objectives and content for each student participating in the program. Most students in this program remain in the regular classroom setting for the instructional part of the lesson and then may seek assistance during independent practice if they are having problems understanding the lesson presented (TEA, 1990, p. 3).

11. **Resource Room**: A separate primary educational setting for students with special-needs. In this model students would remain in the regular education setting and then go to resource for language arts or math when the rest of the class was receiving instruction in these content areas (TEA, 1990, p. 19).

**Research Questions**

It is important to discover the actions, policies, and procedures that aid in creating an inclusion program within an elementary school because the nation is moving towards an educational system that is more inclusive. In order to address these issues, I chose to conduct a descriptive, multiple case study of three elementary schools—deemed to be successful—in Project Homecoming in the Dallas Independent School District using the following research questions.

1. What were the actions, policies, and procedures carried out at the elementary schools involved in instituting an inclusion program?
2. How do the actions, policies, and procedures instituted by the administrative staff of an elementary school influence the success of an inclusion program?

3. How are the teachers influenced by the actions, policies, and procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

4. How are the certified staff members influenced by the actions, policies, and procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

5. How are the non-certified staff members influenced by the actions, policies, and procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

6. How are the students influenced by the actions, policies, and procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

7. How are the parents of the students influenced by the actions, policies, and procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

Summary

This research was conducted because I was not able to find another study that centered upon the administrative actions, policies, and procedures involved in developing a successful inclusion program within an elementary school. I am hopeful that the data gathered in this study will be useful to other school districts in the process of developing an inclusion program.

If we determine what actions, policies, and procedures have been implemented in order to make an inclusion program successful, we have the potential to alleviate the stress of students, teachers, staff members, parents, and administrators who are in the process of beginning the program and those who are already involved in an
inclusion program. School districts across the country would be interested in knowing what actions, policies, and procedures were present during and after the implementation of a successful inclusion program.

This descriptive multiple case study was completed in three schools currently a part of Project Homecoming in the Dallas Independent School District. I was interested in identifying the actions, policies, and procedures needed to implement a successful inclusion program. Interviews, observations, and a review of documents were used to gather data in this study.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Discussions of Inclusion

Striving to increase the amount of time handicapped children spend with their own age peers in a regular education setting is a goal of a successful inclusion program. The needs of all students can be met through the instructional methods and strategies implemented within the regular education classroom. The movement towards a more unitary system of education requires a fundamental change in the way differences among people are viewed. An integration program requires that the entire community adapt.

The Supreme Court ruled in the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) that school segregation denied equal protection to all school children. This decision became important to those individuals concerned about segregated education and equal opportunity for all students including students with disabilities (Patton et al., 1990). Albert Shanker (1995), President of the American Federation of Teachers, disagrees with this thinking. He does not believe that "separate but equal" applies for full inclusion. He believes that African American children were excluded because of the color of their skin, not because of their ability to function in a classroom. He does not believe that putting a blind child in a class so that he or she can learn Braille.
or excluding emotionally disturbed students from a regular classroom because they
would be a disruption to the other students, is an infringement of the child’s rights.
Shanker stated that we need to discard the idea that a regular classroom is the only
appropriate placement for a disabled child and get back to the idea of a continuum of
placements based upon the severity of the child’s handicap.

Special Education Laws

The federal government has passed several laws since the Brown decision that
have impacted education and special education more specifically. Table 1 details
some of the major laws passed since the 1960s.

Court Cases Affecting Special Education Programs

Several court cases have impacted the direction of special education. One of
those cases was Hobson v. Hansen (1967), which challenged the tracking of students
in the Washington, D.C., school system. The District used tests to determine on
which track the students would be placed. The tests were said to be primarily verbal
and culturally weighted and therefore inappropriate for a large portion of the school
population. Once a child was placed in a track, it was difficult to change placement.
Judge Skelly Wright said that this practice was illegal and a violation of the equal
protection clause of the U.S. Constitution. He ordered the district to stop the
practice.

Diana v. Board of Education (1970) also dealt with testing and placement
procedures. This case was settled out of court and resulted in changes in the policies
Table 1

**Major Special Education Laws Passed Since 1960**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Elementary and Secondary Education Act</td>
<td>Focused attention on disadvantaged students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation Act Section 504</td>
<td>No handicapped person can be excluded because of handicap from any program receiving federal funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Education for All Handicapped Children (PL 94-142)</td>
<td>A public education must be provided for all children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>PL 98-199</td>
<td>Emphasized transitional programs for secondary students and authorized parent training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>PL 99-457</td>
<td>Extended provisions for children ages 3-5 and discretionary programs for children under 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Individuals With Disabilities Education Act</td>
<td>Autism and traumatic brain injury now included the definition for disabilities and adds new related services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and procedures for the identification and assessment of students in special education in the state of California.

A landmark case in establishing the right to education for special-needs students was the *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (1971). The plaintiffs in this case charged that they had been denied free access to public education because they were retarded. The court decision stated that all children can benefit from education and have a right to it. The court ordered the state to begin teaching retarded children within 11 months after the case was decided.

The court ordered that the plaintiffs in *Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* (1971) be enrolled in a publically supported school immediately. Their education had been denied, deferred, or delayed by the school district up until this time (Mann & Sabatino, 1973).

**Recent Court Cases Regarding Inclusion**

Several recent cases have addressed the pros and cons of inclusion. Inclusion involved placing a child with a disability into a regular education setting and bringing the support services to the child, rather than moving the child to a segregated setting (McCarthy, 1994).

The courts have ruled on the side of school districts when they stated that a child can be served more effectively in a segregated setting when there seemed to be a conflict between what is the least restrictive environment for a child and what is an appropriate program for a child. An example would be that of a hearing-impaired
student who needs a special program of instruction with other hearing-impaired children. In *Barnett v. Fairfax County School Board* (1991), the court upheld the placement of a profoundly hearing-impaired child several miles from his home instead of his neighborhood school because the district offered a centralized program at that location that better served the interests of all students.

In 1983, the decision of *Roncker v. Walter* stated that if a segregated facility is considered superior, a determination must be made as to whether the services that make the placement superior could be provided in a non-segregated facility. The court should consider if the child would be disruptive in a general education setting and also consider the cost differences of the two settings.

In today's educational environment, the cost factor appears to be very important, and courts have upheld the practice of districts having centralized special education services. In *Schuldt v. Mankato Independent School District* (1992), the court ruled that the district did not have to make accommodations in a neighborhood school for a spina bifida student in a wheelchair when there was a centralized program that could accommodate the student's wheel chair.

The decision of *Daniel R.R. v. State Board of Education* (1989) said that the court must first decide whether or not the child can be educated in the general education classroom with supplementary aids and services. If this is not possible, special education services must be provided and the child mainstreamed to the fullest extent possible. The court also decided that the schools are not required to supply every conceivable supplementary aid and service to keep the child in the regular class. They also declared that the regular class teachers are not required to devote all or
most of their time to one child with disabilities or to modify the regular education
curriculum beyond recognition.

**Oberti v. Board of Education of the Borough of Clementon School District**
(1993) is a decision that favors inclusionary practices. The court ruled that school
districts have an obligation to place a child in a regular class setting with
supplementary aids before exploring other placement settings. It is the school
district's responsibility to show that the student's disabilities are so severe that
mainstreaming the child with supplementary aids would not be a benefit to the child.
School districts must consider the least restrictive environment first when deciding
upon placement for a child. A segregated placement cannot be considered only
because a regular education placement would require modifications of the curriculum.
The court stated that inclusion is a right, not a privilege, for some students with
disabilities.

Inclusion was strongly endorsed by the 1994 case **Sacramento City Unified
School District v. Rachel H.**, when the court ruled that this moderately retarded
student, who had been attending a private school for 3 years, must be placed in a
regular second-grade classroom with support services. The district argued that the
cost would be prohibitive, and the courts upheld the decision to place the child in a
regular classroom setting. Rachel's father stated in a keynote speech before the
Colorado Inclusionary Conference (1995) that the case was very costly for the family
but they firmly believed that Rachel belonged in a regular class setting. Several of the
board members and school administrators have been replaced because the district
believes that too much money was wasted trying to prevent Rachel's participation in a
Attributes of Inclusion

Inclusion is the practice of providing educational programs for students with special needs in an environment that offers maximum contact with other children in their school (Fritz, Miller, & Williams, 1993). Inclusion does not mean the elimination of self-contained special education classes. The process does provide various options for handicapped children. The school districts' continuum of services range from placement in a regular education classroom to the most restrictive special education placement. The placement depends upon the needs and capabilities of the individual student and the availability of appropriate services. Part-time integration may also be a consideration as a placement option (Hasazi et al., 1979).

Segregation and Feelings of Inferiority

When regular class placement with supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved, special class placement is appropriate (D’Zamko & Hedges, 1985). Over the years, the separation from the regular education environment has given the handicapped individual a feeling of inferiority. Interviews with disabled adults have revealed horror stories of events that happened when they were in the school environment. These authors further suggest that the prejudice that brings about the feelings of inferiority may be reduced by frequent contacts between regular education and special education students. In a society that places a great deal of emphasis on exterior beauty, importance must be given to our sensitivity or lack of sensitivity to
the student who does not reflect the ultimate standards of physical appearance (Lipsky & Gartner, 1989).

**Movement Towards Inclusion**

Linda Davern (1992) related that districts are moving from a segregated approach of educating special-needs students to a more inclusive environment in which all students are recognized regardless of their disabilities. She postulates that the reason for this shift may be that students need role models throughout the day, not just for a limited period of time. If we expect special-needs students to develop appropriate social skills and communication skills, they may need to be surrounded by positive role models for longer periods during the school day.

**Segregating Special-Needs Students**

The segregation of special-needs students affects the regular education students. Children learn a very powerful lesson when other students having diverse needs are separated from the mainstream of education. Students may develop feelings of intolerance in regard to individuals who have diverse characteristics. Classrooms that are segregated do not reflect our society as a whole. It would be an improvement for future generations to have a society that welcomes unique individuals as neighbors, co-workers, and friends regardless of their learning, physical, or emotional characteristics.

It is interesting to note that according to federal law the term 'special education' means specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents or guardians, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. (Section 1401 (a)(16) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1990)
Dr. Tucker (1993) stated that special education, at least under federal law, is defined as a form of instruction, not as a place.

**Pros and Cons of Integration**

**Models of Inclusion**

Wendy Dover (1994) chose nine educational models to be used in planning integrated programs. The models are listed as follows:

1. **Full Inclusion**: Special needs students are placed in regular education classes. The special educators provide support for the regular education teachers on a consultation basis.

2. **Collaborative Model**: All staff members work together to meet the needs of the student.

3. **Supported Instruction Model**: Special educators go into regular education classes to provide support services.

4. **Social Mainstreaming Model**: The special-needs students are placed in a regular education classroom but they are not required to complete class assignments. The placement is made to allow the special education and regular education students to interact socially.

5. **Home Class Model**: The special education students participate with a regular class homeroom in opening and closing activities during the school day.

6. **Resource Model**: The special educators provide instruction and support for students having learning difficulties. The support is provided outside the regular classroom.
7. **Non-academic Model:** Special-needs students participate with regular education class for non-academic subjects such as music, physical education, and art.

8. **Mainstreaming Model:** The participation of special education students in a regular education class depends upon the behavior and performance of the special-needs student.

9. **Self-contained Model:** Children labeled as special education students spend 100% of their school day in a self-contained class.

These models can be used by district planning teams in deciding how inclusion will be implemented within their schools. The models are not all inclusive, but they have been used in other districts.

Those in favor of mainstreaming or inclusion agree with the right of handicapped children to experience a free and appropriate education. Controversy arises with the implementation of this educational process. Proponents of integration support their position on social academic grounds. The separation and exclusion of special education students from the mainstream of education result in stigmatization and hamper their social and academic interaction with regular education students. Children having special needs and those in the general education setting are more likely to develop a mutual understanding and respect for each other as they are introduced to individual differences. The regular class may provide greater motivation and opportunity to learn (Hasazi et al., 1979). Dr. Tucker (1993) said that every person in the world needs an education that is special. Every child needs an education that is specially designed to meet his or her specific needs.
Traditional Delivery System

In the traditional educational delivery system, the teacher has the sole responsibility for all of the children in the class. The teacher is the dispenser of knowledge and is very limited in his or her ability to address the diverse needs of an entire class. In schools where all children are included, the professionals, parents, and administrators are all working together for a unified system of education for all children (Schattman & Benay, 1992). In a non-traditional school where all childrens' needs are being addressed, the teacher is no longer the dispenser of knowledge but a facilitator in the educational process. The entire community becomes a resource for each child’s education.

Benefits of Inclusion

An inclusive school environment provides several benefits for all students. They will be better prepared for life in a diverse society. Because of the diversity, the students learn to be more tolerant and understanding of others valuing humankind regardless of their diverse characteristics. Dr. Brian McNulty (1993) raised the question as to whether schools can value diversity as an asset rather than a deficit?

Goal of Inclusion

The long-term goal of a successful inclusion program is the full inclusion of all students. In a school in which full inclusion occurs, there is a strong "sense of community" throughout the entire school. The curriculum and methods of instruction are adapted to meet the individual needs of all students. Supplemental aids and support services are in place to assist the teachers in meeting the needs of all students.
Parents involved in an inclusive school are very active in every aspect of the school (Schattman & Benay, 1992).

Schools having successful inclusion programs also have staff members who are concerned about the spirit of cooperation and caring exhibited by the school personnel and the community as a whole. Teachers are interested in transforming their classrooms from highly competitive environments to very cooperative classrooms. Students and teachers are working together to help everyone succeed.

Under our traditional delivery system, our message to students was that we did not tolerate variations within the system. If the students were different, we would try to fix the students to make them fit our system. If a student did not fit, then we removed him or her from the class. Our emerging system of inclusion encourages an acceptance of diversity. Schools are beginning to ask how our system needs to adjust to meet the needs of our students. The inclusion process lets the students know that they are unique and valuable as individuals (Davern, 1992).

Opposition to Inclusionary Practices

Several organizations do not think that broad-based inclusionary practices are beneficial to all students. The American Council for the Blind, the Commission on the Education of the Deaf, the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders, the Council for Exceptional Children, and the Learning Disabilities Association do not endorse full inclusion for all students.

These organizations recognize that full inclusion may be a long-term goal and not an immediate goal for some children. They view special education classes as a
path to reach the long-term goal (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995).

**Myths of Education**

Myths are associated with regular education and special education services. One myth describes two distinct groups of students. One group consists of those students who meet the requirements of the norm, and the other group consists of those who deviate from the norm. In reality, students are a combination of physical, social, intellectual, and physiological characteristics. All students are unique.

The second myth proposes that special education students need individualized instruction. All students, not just special education students, could benefit from individualized instruction. Finally, some educators erroneously believe that there are two distinct groups of instructional methods. One set of methods is used for the regular class, and the other group of methods is used for special education students. In reality, instructional methods for students having special needs do not differ fundamentally from those being used with the regular education population (Beeres & Knoblock, 1987).

In schools in which students have been fully included, special education services are defined as support services, not as a placement. The primary placement for special education students is in the regular education class with appropriate support services. Classrooms in which students are successfully included are ones in which cooperation and collaboration are fostered and developed by the total school staff. The role of the regular education teacher becomes that of a facilitator of learning and not a dispenser of knowledge. Classrooms that promote diversity and inclusion often
use strategies such as: cooperative learning; peer tutoring; Circles of Friends; and other strategies for group problem solving and conflict resolution. These strategies are beneficial to all students, not just one group of the school's population (DISD, 1989b).

Call for Reform

Lawton (1991) related that the National Association for State School Boards called for an end to the differentiation between regular and special education services. It suggested that special education should be reformed along with general education to form a unified system of education that does not discriminate between the needs of handicapped students and general education students.

The Study Group on Special Education within the NASBE also reported that labeling children was ineffective because the label does not define the services needed by the child, nor does it define the best educational setting for the child. This system encourages the development of an educational program to teach a label rather than developing the educational program to meet the individual needs of the child. The process of giving undue importance to a label can be as discriminating and damaging as providing programs based on race or gender. The study also called for the integration of special-needs students into the regular education program to the greatest extent possible. The study group did not mean that all students can be successfully integrated. It still believes that a wide continuum of services should be available to students. The group also wrote that all children can learn in an environment that values the diversity of students' talents and provides adequate support to teachers and staff as they work together to bring about student success (Lawton, 1991).
James Comer (1988) stated that our society and our schools have changed. Schools have ignored the affective domain by focusing solely on academic changes. He believes that we have neglected the crucial relationships that students need in order to grow and learn. According to Comer, in today's society, many of our students are doomed to failure.

Attitudes Toward Special Education

In many areas, special education has occupied a very marginal position. This has been seen in the placement of special education classrooms within the regular school and the placement of a special school within the community. Special education has traditionally been located away from the mainstream. In Mr. Newbury’s (1989) district, in a rural county in Wales, the most recent special school was placed on the very edge of the town between an electricity sub-station and a canal. This marginal status has extended to those working in the special education field. This stigma has begun to change because of the growing expertise of special educators. This expertise has also been viewed as an indication that the regular education teachers lack the skills necessary to successfully work with disabled students and that special education teachers are the only ones qualified to fill this void.

Regular and special education teachers have collaborated to relieve the regular education teacher of the responsibility of teaching the children functioning at the bottom of the class. The pressure to succeed on standardized tests and very large class sizes encourage teachers to keep classes more uniform (Lipsky & Gartner, 1989).
Special education has been undergoing change. One of the major areas in need of change has been the teacher-training programs. University training programs seem to be based on student deficits and not teacher deficits (Morsink, 1984). There has also been separation at the college and university level between the special education and the regular education faculties. The teacher-training programs in universities and colleges have a direct effect on teachers' perceptions of learners and their roles as teachers. Separate programs for special education teachers encourage a distorted view of students and teachers throughout the educational system (Aserlind & Browning, 1987).

The Attitudes Toward Handicapped Individuals

The attitudes of non-handicapped individuals toward persons with handicaps are important to the ultimate success or failure of an inclusion program. Being comfortable and open about a disability is the first step toward change. Using the process to bring about group change is the next step. The ultimate goal is to adapt the environment so that each student, whether disabled or not, can participate in the program (Kilburn, 1984).

This author (1984) stated that two components are essential in changing negative attitudes and increasing awareness. It is important to have individuals who are disabled to act as their own advocate. It is also important to provide structured opportunities for handicapped and non-handicapped individuals to interact. If both groups are interacting and communicating, attitudes toward change are more likely to be positive.
Administering an Inclusion Program

Two overriding trends in special education reform are (1) the movement to integrate students with severe disabilities and students with low incidence disabilities into the regular education classrooms and (2) to retain students with mild and moderate disabilities in a regular class placement instead of placing them in a pull-out program. This movement has paralleled the general education reform movement, which has focused on improving curriculum and instructional techniques. The reform movement has concentrated on regulatory waivers, site-based management, shared decision making, and categorical program resources in the general education program. The interpretation of existing laws along with the reform movement has resulted in school districts establishing programs to move toward a unified system of education (Sailor, 1991).

Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Issues for Successful Integration

Broad-Based Support

The Texas Education Agency (1988) states that four issues are important in administering a successful integration program. The first issue is to be sure that there is a broad base of support for the program. All levels of administrative staff, teachers, support staff, support services, parents, students, school board members, and the community need to have the knowledge, commitment, and resources to ensure the effectiveness of the integration process. Administrative support is a critical element to the success of any inclusion program. Administrators should be fully convinced that the integration program is a good idea before they can convince the community, staff,
and parents of the benefits of inclusion.

The Texas Education Agency (1988) also suggests that there be a district-wide task force to assume the leadership role in developing programs to educate the community, staff, students, and parents in communities beginning an inclusion program. Community support, including school board members and legislators, is similar to administrative support. It must be developed and maintained. A good method to acquire community support is to increase its knowledge of children with handicaps. This can be accomplished through visits to schools having successful integration programs, and making available effective in-service and awareness programs for community members.

Staff support can be achieved through successful communication and effective in-service programs. One method of easing tensions is to have special education administrative staff substitute in the regular education classes. This would enable the general education teacher to visit a classroom already successfully integrated. The regular education teacher would then become familiar with the concept of inclusion and begin to eliminate fears (Berres & Knoblock, 1987). Regular education and special education teachers need to develop respect for each other's skills (TEA, 1988).

Some regular education teachers have had little or no experience in providing a general education curriculum to meet the needs of all students. Modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of each individual student may be viewed as an overwhelming task. The problem can be made less intimidating by teachers, parents, classmates, therapists, and administrators working together to overcome the problem (Stainback & Stainback, 1992).
The support of the regular education students is important to the success of integrating students with disabilities in a regular education classroom (Newbury, 1989). Awareness programs are very helpful. It also has been found that the buddy system has been very helpful in making a new student feel comfortable in the classroom. These programs should be continued beyond the initial days of integration. The physiological, social, academic, and physical adjustments of all students must be taken into account when preparing the awareness programs (Berres & Knoblock, 1987).

Appropriateness of Service Delivery System

The appropriateness of the service delivery system is the second issue to consider in administering an inclusion program (TEA, 1988). Factors such as transportation, the location of the classes, the climate of the school, and the community in which the child's education occurs need to be considered.

Effectiveness of System Change Strategies

The third issue to consider in administering an inclusion program is the effectiveness of the system's change strategy. The district administrators can help facilitate the change by assisting local building administrators and staff to address problems and negative attitudes that may arise (TEA, 1988).

A successful system change should include a task force with specific goals and timetables for integration. The task force should appoint a person to serve as coordinator for the integration efforts. A needs assessment should be conducted to
address staff acceptance, the service delivery program, the placement of classrooms, and building accessibility. Comprehensive staff development programs, based upon the needs assessment, should be initiated, and open lines of communication between the regular and special education teachers must be established (Biklen, 1985).

Acceptance by the Community

The final issue to consider is the acceptance of the program by the parents and the community (TEA, 1988). Administrators must anticipate the negative feelings of the community and have a specific plan of action to counteract these fears. Parents should be involved in the planning process. Programs should also be initiated that allow the parents to visit their child’s school prior to the beginning of an inclusion program. As quality programs are established, many of the parental fears will disappear.

Collaboration

Schools beginning a program of integration or inclusion often use the teaming approach to enhance problem solving, planning, and program implementation. Teaming provides staff members with a support system. The teams share responsibility with parents. The relationships between home and school allow parents and professionals to work together to meet the child’s needs. Collaboration is a powerful tool to use for problem-solving techniques. A team approach produces more ideas than one individual is able to produce. Teaming allows all populations to work together for the good of the children. Each group—administrators, teachers, parents and support staff—is working together interdependently to build programs to educate
all children together (Schattman & Benay, 1992).

**Parallel Plans for Moving Towards Inclusion**

Arceneaux, Rivers, and Sharpton (1991) suggested that there are seven elements of a quality plan for moving toward inclusive education. This plan parallels that which TEA established (1988). The authors also believe that key district personnel must be involved in the planning process. The students' family members should also participate in the planning and implementation process. The strategies and goals for the program must be developed by the local community. Curriculum strategies and management must include providing support services for the teachers and students across the age levels and disability categories. They also state that sufficient funding must be available and that programs be instituted to provide training for all staff.

**"Homecoming" in Vermont**

In 1983, 26 local schools in the state of Vermont began an inclusion program known as "Homecoming." This model was developed to help teachers, related service providers, and administrators to educate all students in their least restrictive environment. "Homecoming" enabled all of the students labeled as mildly, moderately or severely retarded, multi-handicapped, deaf-blind, autistic, behavior disordered, or emotionally disturbed to be included in the regular class. The project began with 77 students (Thousand & Villa, 1990).

The "Homecoming" model in Vermont utilized a building-based planning-team. An educational specialist provided the consultative service in the form of in-service
training, consultations with the school staff, and technical assistance to assist the planning team and the school staff in providing services to challenging students. Teachers who participated in inclusion programs in school districts throughout the state of Vermont found that through collaborating to integrate students they had more input into the educational programs in the district. They also had a greater comfort level in asking for materials, and technical and emotional support from colleagues to educate the more challenging students. There was also a tendency to utilize the expertise of staff in their buildings rather than to look elsewhere for assistance.

The benefits to the different populations participating in this planning-team approach to educating challenging students were numerous. Students obviously benefit by being afforded the opportunity to attend their neighborhood schools with children they may know. They also benefitted from taking part in an educational program that allowed all children to learn together in an environment where the diversity of each individual is valued.

Teachers reported that the joint planning and collaboration required to successfully integrate students offered them more of a voice in the planning of educational programs within their districts. The ability to request materials, technical assistance, and support in general from other staff members in planning the educational programs for these challenging students was rewarding. The collaboration and team planning gave them access to the talents of both regular education staff members and special education teachers. The expertise of each teacher was unique and now was more readily sought.

Parents reported that they were very satisfied with their expanded participation
in their child's educational program. Administrators reported that there was a more
efficient use of resources. The school district benefitted from the reduction of
duplicating services in special education and regular education. The administrators
were also pleased with the increased support shown by staff, teachers, and families.
Each group was more understanding of the roles and needs of others.

Several Elements Present in a Successful "Homecoming" Model

Several elements must be present in a district in order for the "Homecoming"
model to be successfully implemented according to the districts in Vermont. Those
districts agree that there must be administrative commitment and instructional staff
commitment. The staff must work as a team and collaboratively plan programs to
meet the needs of the students. The staff should also have access to the training and
the support services necessary to plan programs for challenging students.

Administrative Support

The first step in implementing the "Homecoming" model in the Vermont
school districts was to determine the level of commitment of the administrative team.
The superintendent, special education director, and building administrators needed to
be fully supportive of the concept. If they did not believe that all children could be
educated together, no one else would support the project. The Vermont districts
began the process by returning special education students who had been placed on a
contract basis for services in other facilities and other districts back to their home
districts. The educational consultant for the state education agency worked with the
district administrators in implementing this process. The policies and procedures of the districts were also reviewed to determine if they are a deterrent to the "Homecoming" model.

The district's administrative staff was concerned about the education of all children in an inclusive environment and returning all of the students in the district back to district facilities. Administrators demonstrated this commitment by participating in the problem-solving sessions for students with intense needs. They also provided the funding necessary to provide in-service training identified as necessary for staff members to successfully implement this model of inclusive education.

It was necessary not only for the administrative staff to support the project, but the instructional staff members must also be willing to support the program. They did not all have the same level of commitment for the project, but they were willing to implement the program in the school. The district's administrative staff was available to present programs that addressed the concerns of instructional staff. Staff from the state education agency offered informative presentations that helped address the concerns of the instructional staff. Arrangements were also made for staff members to visit districts that have successfully implemented inclusion programs and to have staff members from these districts come to the local district and speak with the instructional staff.

**Collaboration Among Staff**

Collaboration among staff members was necessary for the successful
implementation of the "Homecoming" model of inclusion. The planning team assessed each student's needs and collaboratively planned an individual program. The team identified the team membership for each individual student. They also identified the educational needs and strengths of each student and considered the specific settings, activities, teaching styles, and materials available for the students' current and future placement.

This cooperative teaming process was found to be present in the schools who were most successful in the inclusion program in Vermont. They demonstrated that "two heads are better than one."

**Educational Specialist**

The "Homecoming" model suggests the use of an educational specialist to provide assistance to districts involved in an integration program. The technical assistance can also be provided by the state education agency, the local school district's central office, or an intermediate school district. The circumstances of each situation will dictate the method chosen to provide the assistance needed. The educational specialist should have the ability to develop educational programs and behavioral interventions for special-needs students. They should also have the ability to suggest classroom modifications and adaptations for regular education curriculum so that special-needs students may function successfully in that environment. Specialists should also have the ability to provide formal and informal training and consultative services to the entire school community, including certified and non-certified staff members, students, parents, and volunteers. In other words, the educational specialist
should be an effective communicator and possess excellent interpersonal relationship skills. The specialist should also be known as a master teacher, a cooperative team member, and a family advocate.

**Placement of Students**

With the movement towards a more inclusive educational setting for special-needs students, the automatic placement of students based upon their handicapping condition is not acceptable. The school districts must document that they have attempted to place the student in a more inclusive setting and that the placement has not been successful. The reason for the lack of progress on the IEP in a integrated setting must also be documented. The district must determine the cause for the lack of progress and attempt remediation within the current educational placement. A referral to a more restrictive environment can only be made when the remedial efforts have failed.

The local school placement for students with intensive educational needs enables the student to participate in a more meaningful community training program. Shopping for groceries in a city that is not the student's usual surrounding is not as beneficial as shopping at the store up the street from where the student lives. An educational setting that is near the student's home also allows the child to have a more meaningful social life and develop a circle of friends (Thousand, Fox, Reid, Godek, & Williams, 1986).

**Attitudes of Educators**

Administrators beginning an inclusion program should work with
representatives of the total school community to focus on a vision based upon the assumptions that all children can learn and all children deserve to receive educational services in a classroom in their local school with age-appropriate peers. The school should meet the unique educational and psychological needs of the community’s children. The total school community must accept the vision and work together to build an understanding and consensus regarding the vision.

Developing the Expertise Needed for an Inclusion Program

Thousand and Villa (1990) believe that school districts need to develop and deliver an intensive educational program that educates the total community concerning the rationale for inclusive education. They must allow the staff members time to fine-tune their skills for implementing a successful program of inclusion. The community and staff must have firm commitments to the common goals.

Not every school district has all of the professional expertise and personnel needed to successfully begin an unified system of education. The district must begin to develop a professional partnership with the State Department of Education, the faculties of local colleges and universities, and the staff of other school districts who have been or are currently involved in implementing quality inclusion programs. These partnerships can be beneficial to all of the parties involved. The personnel can be utilized as presenters for in-service programs and collaborative groups can be formed to problem-solve and advocate change at the local, state, and federal levels (Thousand & Villa, 1990).
Role of Administration

Integration is successful when everyone involved is committed to it. The building administrator sets the climate for acceptance in the school. If he or she accepts the integration program with a positive attitude, the staff will follow. The principal not only affects the attitude of the staff but also the attitude of the regular and special education students (Berres & Knoblock, 1987).

Jacqueline Thousand and Rich Villa (1990) identified several roles for a principal and central office staff involved in implementing an inclusion program using a team-based model. They think that the administrators and support staff should challenge the planning team to make decisions that align with the vision and philosophy of the school. Job descriptions may also need to be re-written to reflect the collaboration that must take place within a school to make the inclusion process a success.

Addressing the Concerns of Staff Members

Natale (1993) stated that the stress of dealing with the problems within an included class can be the spark for teacher dissatisfaction, and the lack of administrative support can be the kindling fuel for a full-fledged controversy. Teaming and working together as a school staff are very important for the success of an inclusion program. As schools become more complex, good teachers will demand more from the school administrator and their profession. If they fail to get the support, they will leave.

Successful integration programs address the questions and concerns of staff
members concerning handicapped students. The staff members not comfortable with inclusion may be better served by moving to another school than being forced to work in a system in which they are not comfortable. Attitudinal resistance is not a reflection of bad teachers or bad administrators.

Benefits of Vermont's "Homecoming" Program

Parents whose children participated in Vermont's inclusion program reported an enhanced level of participation in local school activities and in planning their child's education. Administrators reported that there was a more efficient use of resources and a savings because of the reduction of duplicated services. There also appeared to be increased understanding and support among administrators, regular education teachers, special educators, related services personnel, and families of one another's roles and needs (Thousand, et al., 1986).

Regular Education Initiative

The Regular Education Initiative launched by the United States Department of Education to break down the barriers of special education and regular education has been the subject of many articles and conferences. This initiative suggested that the challenge was to search for ways to service as many children as possible in the regular education environment. The important issues of the initiative were: increased instructional time, a support system for teachers, site-based management, and new instructional approaches that encourage collaboration between regular and special education (Kauffman, 1989). Through a program of including special-needs students in regular education classes some school districts have addressed the challenge set
forth by the Department of Education.

Summary

A successful inclusion program should strive to increase the time handicapped children spend with the same age peers in regular education. This can take place in a non-academic setting, such as lunch or recess, or in a regular education classroom. Through the instructional methods and strategies implemented in the regular classroom, the needs of all the students will be met. Thus, the overall academic performance of the school will improve (DISD, 1990a).

A unitary system of education requires a fundamental change in the way that differences among people are viewed in the educational programs. A program of integration requires that society adapt—not just the handicapped student. The focus of education needs to be an effective instructional program for all students based upon the belief that improvements occur when teachers accept the responsibility for all students (Kauffman, 1989).
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Case Study Research

Case study research is usually undertaken when the researcher wants to understand a complex phenomena. This form of research is used when examining contemporary events but when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated. Besides examining documents or artifacts, the researcher utilizes two additional forms of data collection: direct observation and interviews.

There are many researchers who are not in favor of case study research for several reasons:

1. There is a concern that the researcher would allow his or her biased concerns to influence the findings (Yin, 1989, p. 21). In this study, I used three forms of data collection--interviews, observations, and documents. I also interviewed a variety of school populations from students to administrators. Observations were conducted at each school and several classrooms within each school. I also studied documents related to Project Homecoming. Through the use of multiple forms of data collection I was able, I believe, to get an accurate account of the inclusion program at each of the schools studied.

2. Researchers are also concerned that case studies provided very little basis
for scientific generalizations (Yin, 1989, p. 21). In this study, I conducted the data collection at three different schools developing three cases. Although, I did not generalize statistical information, I was able to draw conclusions and make recommendations as a result of analyzing the data collected from several sources.

3. There is also a concern that the case studies take too long and the product produced is unreadable (Yin, 1989, p. 21). My committee has continually advised me to keep this to the point and as short as possible.

I chose the descriptive case study format because I wanted to present a detailed account of the inclusion phenomena within the three elementary schools. Merriam states (1988, p. 27) that descriptive case studies are entirely descriptive and are not guided by established or hypothesized generalizations nor are they motivated by a desire to formulate general hypotheses. Descriptive case studies are used to present basic information in an area where little research has been conducted.

In conducting my own research concerning inclusion, I studied a program I was familiar with and wanted to study further. I was not able to find another study which addressed the issues I was concerned with. There were reports and articles that detailed how the inclusion program called "Homecoming" was implemented in Vermont, but I did not find a study detailing the information I was interested in knowing more about.

I did read several statistical studies dealing with the attitudes of teachers toward special education students and the involvement of general education and special education administrators with special education. One study by Carl Dixon (1988) is titled the "Regular and Special Education Administrators’ Perception of Competencies..."
Necessary for the Effective Regular Administrators of Programs for the Handicapped."

The purpose of Dixon's study was to examine the specific characteristics of regular and special education administrators and to determine whether there were significant differences between regular and special education administrators as they rate their perceptions of the competencies required for effective regular education administration of programs for handicapped students, and to determine whether the size of the school district affected the perceptions of the competencies necessary for regular administrators to effectively operate a program for the handicapped.

One hundred and ninety-eight Texas public school administrators were sampled using a Likert-type questionnaire regarding their perception of the importance of competency in 24 areas for regular education administrators who supervise programs for special education students. Twenty-four hypotheses, each having 10 sub-hypotheses, were tested using an analysis of variance. A .05 level of significance was used to accept or reject each hypothesis.

Eight major hypotheses and 34 sub-hypothesis were found to be statistically significant. The following conclusions were reached:

1. The differences between the perceptions of the regular education administrators and special education administrators surveyed regarding the importance of the 24 competency areas are differences in degree rather than differences in direction.

2. Special education administrators rated higher those competencies pertaining especially to special-needs students than did regular education administrators, probably
because of their particular and more recent training in those areas.

3. Regular education administrators in large school district rated competencies consistently higher than did administrators in small or middle-size school districts.

4. Special education administrators rated competencies higher than did regular education administrators in seven of eight hypotheses found to be significant.

I had many questions after reading the research. I wanted to know about (1) the individuals involved (2) what kind of setting each worked and (3) were there any additional comments or explanations given. I wanted more information and details about the programs they supervised. One of the studies I did read was a case study developed in an area not concerned with inclusionary practices.

I was interested in the development and formation of the report. The descriptive case studies developed by Anne Chandler (1993), were concerned with the research and development in computers and related instructional technologies for teachers at three NCATE universities. The researcher used interviews, observations, questionnaires, NCATE documents, school of education bulletins, and class syllabi and handouts in collecting data for this descriptive cross-case analysis of the programs at three NCATE universities.

Models for development, new ideas, and fresh approaches for other teacher-preparation programs were the result of the research findings. The data also supported the opinions of many educators that the delivery of instruction is changing and technology is playing an increasing role in that change. This study provides a rich description of the universities and programs studied.
Case Study Design

Merriam (1988, p. 2) states that a qualitative case study is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomenon. She goes on to state that the research focusing on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education. I chose to answer the questions from the perspective of the participants in the interview process.

Because of the nature of the study being investigated, a multiple case study design using cross-case analysis was chosen as an appropriate method of research. This methodology is appropriate for answering the questions this study addresses and also provides the opportunity for a rich description of the subject.

Merriam (1988, p. 5) offers further clarification of the meaning of the terms: research, design, qualitative, case study, and descriptive. She defined research as systematic inquiry. Merriam further states that a research design is similar to an architect's blueprint. It is a plan for assembling, organizing, and integrating information or data. It results in specific research findings.

The qualitative case-study research design was selected as the most appropriate method for this study because the subject is complex and research in this field is limited. Merriam (1991, p. xiv) suggests that a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic, descriptive analysis of a phenomenon such as a program, institution, a person, a process, or a social unit. The term "descriptive," according to Merriam (1991, p. 11), means that the end product of a case study is a rich, thick description.
of the phenomena under study.

**Research Questions of This Study**

It is important that we discover the actions, policies, and procedures that aid in creating an inclusion program within a school because the nation is moving towards an educational system that is more inclusive. In order to address these issues, I chose to conduct a descriptive multiple case study of three elementary schools in the Project Homecoming in the Dallas Independent School District using the following research questions.

1. What were the actions, policies, or procedures carried out at the elementary schools involved in instituting an inclusion program?

2. How do the actions, policies, or procedures instituted by the administrative staff of an elementary school influence the success of an inclusion program?

3. How are the teachers influenced by the actions, policies, or procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

4. How are the certified staff members influenced by the actions, policies, or procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

5. How are the non-certified staff members influenced by the actions, policies, or procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

6. How are the students influenced by the actions, policies, or procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

7. How are the parents of the students influenced by the actions, policies, or procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?
Selection of Schools

The three elementary schools described in this case study were selected after consulting with school district personnel. The schools chosen were selected because they were judged by Dallas Independent School District’s special education administrative staff as having a successful inclusion program using the criteria set forth by the district.

Defining Success

Dallas Independent School District defined success or the effectiveness of a Project Homecoming school in relation to the project’s goals by determining if the school was or is able to accomplish the following goals. (These goals are stated in chapter 1 on pp. 5 and 6)

Selecting Three Schools

The "Homecoming" program in the Dallas Independent School District has been in operation since 1990. After consulting with the district personnel, one school was chosen from the first group of schools selected for the program in the 1990-1991 school year. The second school was selected from the group of schools that became a part of the program in the 1991-1992 school year. The last school was selected from the third group of schools chosen in the 1992-1993 school year. It is believed that in choosing schools joining the program at different time intervals a cross section of opinions would be obtained from each population interviewed and observed.
Forms of Data Collection

Yin (1989, p. 84) focuses on six sources of evidence that can be used to collect data for case studies: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. Documentary records are important to corroborate and augment evidence derived from other sources (Yin, 1989, p. 85). Interviews are an essential source of information for case studies because case studies are about human affairs (Yin, 1989, p. 90). Observational information obtained through field visits is useful in providing additional information about the case study. The final form of data collection used in case-study research is that of physical artifacts (Yin, 1989, pp. 92-94).

I used several forms of data collection in this case study. Documents, open interviews, and direct observations were used to collect data for this study. The documents were taken from those found within the district files and those gathered through newspaper, journal and magazine articles. The observations were conducted on the campuses of the three elementary schools chosen for the study. Interviews were another form of data collection used in this study.

Research Instruments

An interview guide was developed for the individuals to be interviewed. The current project coordinator and the previous coordinator for the "Homecoming" program, the previous Director of Special Education and key persons involved in the planning stages of the project, and the administrators of the schools chosen to be studied were interviewed. One teacher who is a "Homecoming" teacher at each grade level within each building, as well as the support personnel serving the children in
those classrooms was interviewed. Two handicapped and two non-handicapped children, if possible, from each of those classes, as well as their parents, if possible, were interviewed. The head custodian, and cafeteria manager (where possible) were also interviewed.

The interview guide was piloted using a principal, teacher, certified and support personnel, and a handicapped and a non-handicapped student who all were involved in a private elementary school that is implementing an inclusion program. After the interview guide was piloted, it was shortened to include five areas for discussion. The interview guide was used primarily to gather comparable data across sites.

The interviews were audiotaped when the participants agreed and it was possible to do so. Handwritten notes were taken during each interview. Transcriptions of the notes and tapes as well as the observations were recorded in a record book that includes the dates, times, and names of participants.

Interviews

The interviews were conducted using a validated interview guide. The interview format was open-ended lasting 30 minutes to 90 minutes in length. The interviews were audiotaped when the participants consented and it was possible to do so, and hand-written notes were taken. I recorded patterns that emerged from the interviews and transcriptions, and a matrix of these topic patterns was developed and recorded in a record book that included the dates, times, names and job title or relationship of each participant. Tapes of the interviews, transcriptions, and notes are

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stored in an organized manner that allows them to be retrieved by other researchers. Samples can be found in the Appendix.

Observations

The entire elementary school was the focus of the observations. I made two or more visits to each school for direct observational purposes. I was interested in the actual operations within the schools and classrooms, especially those classrooms that include special education students; the operation of the office in relation to actions, policies, and procedures implemented for administering the inclusion program; and, in particular, the interaction of the individuals within the school community.

I was interested in observing:

1. The process by which special-needs students were included within the schools
2. The ability of the staff members, staff and administration, the staff and students, the staff and community members, the staff and parents, and those students who have been included to work together for the benefit of the children
3. The support systems
4. The actions, policies, and procedures put in place in order to implement an inclusion program

Documents

A number of documents were gathered in order to add more detail and accuracy to the description of each case. Documents used were: local newspapers, district publications, personal accounts, pictures, and in-service documents. Physical
evidence was also gathered from files within the district offices. I was interested in any documents or artifacts that related to the planning and implementation of the Project Homecoming as well as any actions, policies, and procedures that were and are in place in each of the schools studied.

Analysis of Data

Principles of Data Collection

Yin (1989, pp. 95-103) describes three principals of data collection used in a case-study design.

**Principle 1: Using Multiple Sources of Evidence:** Yin (1989, p. 97) states that the case study will be more convincing and accurate if it is based upon several sources of information. I made observations at the schools and conducted interviews of various groups within each school community. I also researched documents relating to Project Homecoming.

**Principle 2: Creating a Case Study Data Base:** A case study should try to develop a formal, retrievable database so that other investigators are able to review the evidence directly. The database increases the reliability of the study. A case-study database contains four components: notes, documents, tabular materials, and narratives.

Notes and transcriptions taken during interviews or observations must be stored in a manner in which other investigators are able to retrieve them efficiently. Case-study documents should be stored and organized for access by future researchers. Tabular materials and narratives also must be classified and stored for access. I have
written notes of observations and interviews. The interviews have been audiotaped when possible and I have tabulated the results of the interview questions and compiled a narrative of the interviews conducted.

**Principle 3: Maintaining a Chain of Evidence:** Maintaining a chain of evidence increases the reliability of the case study. This organizational procedure allows an external observer to follow the derivation of any evidence gathered throughout the study. I have kept the notes in an organized manner and all of the tapes are labeled.

A cross-case analysis was conducted. Topic patterns that emerged from the data collected were recorded. The topic patterns were used to guide the recommendations and conclusions of the research.

**Content Analysis**

Merriam (1988, p. 116) defines content analysis as a systematic procedure for describing the content of communications. This process involves identifying, coding, and categorizing the patterns of the data. The basic unit of information chosen for analyzing data in this study is topics.

**Validity and Reliability**

Three tactics are available to increase construct validity. The first is to use multiple sources of evidence; the second tactic is to establish a chain of evidence. Both the first and the second tactic are important during the data-gathering process. The third tactic is to have the draft case study reviewed by key informants (Yin, 1989, p. 42).
I addressed the problem of internal validity by seeking to find patterns of responses and behaviors gathered during the data collection. Reliability was addressed by gathering data through many sources—triangulation. Data was gathered through observations, interviews, and documents. Copies of this study were sent to District personnel, but I did not get a response. I also kept organized records of this study in three volumes so that other researchers will know what was done and why I came to the conclusions I did.
CHAPTER 4

HISTORY OF PROJECT HOMECOMING

Project Homecoming began in the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) as a result of parental involvement. The parents wanted more for their children. The Parent Advisory Committee surveyed the parents and found out what they perceived as the needs of their children. The District responded to these needs by researching and developing an action plan to address the needs expressed by the parents for their children.

As the trend for standardized testing developed and graduation requirements become more stringent, students with disabilities within the Dallas Independent School District were placed in more restrictive environments. When Project Homecoming was implemented, only 43% of the elementary school children with disabilities attended their neighborhood schools. Many students changed campuses almost every year because of the tradition of placing special education classes on a space-available basis within the district (DISD, 1989c).

The Beginning of Project Homecoming

Project Homecoming was developed to respond to these concerns and to make an organized attempt to create more inclusive schooling. The movement began within DISD in 1989 with impetus from a survey conducted by the Special Education

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Advisory Committee and a request by the Down’s Syndrome Guild to consider an
inclusive model of educating all children. The Texas Education Agency also
conducted a monitoring visit to the District in the fall of 1989. It found that the
District needed to establish less restrictive educational placements (DISD, 1989c).

The Parent Advisory Committee

Dr. Ruth Turner, Director of Special Education for the Dallas Independent
School District, met with representatives of both parent groups and two of the
members of the superintendent’s leadership council in the fall of 1989. The parents
presented their concerns to the superintendent’s representatives and the process began.
The issues considered were taken back to the Regular Education-Special Education
Interaction Committee of the Parent Advisory Committee. This sub-committee
worked to encourage more effective interaction between regular education and special
education. It conducted a parent survey on the current beliefs regarding inclusion.
One of the group’s goals was to pull together the results of the survey and the
thinking of the total advisory group. These data were submitted in the form of a
position paper to the general superintendent through the administrative channels
provided by the district.

The law requires that a full continuum of services must be available for
handicapped students ranging from regular class participation to residential
placements. The law also requires that each individual student must be placed in the
"least restrictive environment." The district provided a continuum of placement
options and developed new options as the need was identified (DISD, 1994).
An analysis of the availability of these options and the placements afforded students during 1989 revealed that the placement options were frequently not available in the student's home school. Seventeen schools did not have special education classrooms. For the most part, special education classes were found in school facilities on a space-available basis only. Only 43% of the elementary students, excluding those students who received speech services, attended their home school (DISD, 1990a).

Wide spread classroom locations resulted in long bus rides for many students. Attendance was usually in a school away from the child's neighborhood. These students have one set of friends in their home environment and were required to develop another set of friends in their school environment. Principals and teachers knew the families and siblings of their regular education students, but may not have known the families of their special education students on a regular basis. The physical distance between home and school minimized parental contact with the school staff and the support the parents exhibited for their child's program.

The analysis also showed that state reforms requiring smaller classes in K-4 grades caused space problems for all students, and this contributed to the continued practice of placing special education classes in low-enrollment schools rather than providing programs in the student's home school. The enrollment and placement trends in 1989 documented an increase in restrictive placements and a tendency to see the instructional options as rigid categories.

This rigid interpretation of placement options and the process of identifying them with the teacher and the classroom, rather than with the student, contributed to a
tendency toward restrictive placements within the district. The level of emphasis on test scores also contributed to a tendency to see all students who did not perform well on standardized tests as the responsibility of special programs, not regular education (DISD, 1994).

The 962 parents who responded to the survey revealed a high level of satisfaction regarding their child's principal's sensitivity and knowledge about special education students. A few parents reported that principal and teachers exhibited little awareness of the special programs in their building and did not demonstrate a sense of commitment to the program.

Recommendations of the Advisory Committee: Survey Results

The committee submitted seven recommendations to begin to attack the issues brought forth:

1. A plan was developed to provide special education services to students in their home schools. Students currently served in Total Communication Classes Developmental Centers, pre-kindergarten programs, and selected programs for students classified as emotionally disturbed would be excluded from this plan. This was done by January 15, 1990.

2. The district required that all new facility planning and construction reserve space on each campus for 6-10% of their students to receive special education services. The space would also be barrier-free. This ensured that the fall to spring annual increases in enrollment would not result in excessive overcrowding. This was made effective immediately.
3. Clustered classes were maintained for the vocational training of adolescent and young-adult-age students who are transitioning into community placements and supported employment.

4. The re-opening of selected schools was explored in order to reduce overcrowding. This was completed in the spring of 1990.

5. District personnel developed additional training programs for administrators, assessment personnel, and teachers on curriculum modifications and adaptations to support the placement of special education students in regular education classes.

6. The progress of the recommendations was monitored through the School Improvement Plan and through the monitoring committee of the Special Education Advisory Committee.

7. Special education populations were considered when all requests for curriculum transfers were reviewed for approval (DISD, 1989a).

Special Education Department's Actions During 1989-1990

Survey of Schools

During the school year prior to the implementation of Project Homecoming, the DISD's special education department surveyed all of the elementary and four to six intermediate school enrollments by "home school." The survey revealed that only 15 schools served most of the students within their attendance zone, and an additional 62 schools showed a projected enrollment of 15-43 special-needs students if they were returned to their neighborhood school. The survey also showed...
that 8 schools did not serve special-needs students.

**Review of Literature**

The special education department also reviewed the literature on inclusive education. It found that the movement was largely described as a civil-rights movement and noted the benefits of growing up in a diverse society. During this time, the staff also wrote to public school districts and consultants across the nation seeking information concerning exemplary models of inclusion (DISD, 1989c).

**Establishing Staff Planning Committees**

The special education staff also established a staff planning committee that reviewed the data on each campus and recommended sites for the implementation of an inclusion program. They analyzed the implementation procedures and recommended the sites for the initial implementation (DISD, 1989c).

**Selection of Demonstration Sites**

During the 1989-90 school year, the District selected 25 elementary and middle schools as demonstration sites for the 1990-91 school year by March 15, 1990. The schools were selected because the campus administrator was perceived as willing to provide the leadership necessary to make the program successful. The faculty members in these schools had a history of working well with special education students in a mainstream setting. There was also at least one excellent, dynamic special education teacher who could serve as a consultant to the faculty. The selected schools also served a significant number of their own special-needs students, or the
addition of special-needs students in the school's attendance zone would not require major adjustments.

Parent Orientations

The district also conducted parent orientation conferences with parents of students to be affected by the inclusion process. The meetings took place by April 1, 1990. The parents were allowed to choose to stay with their child's current placement if they and the ARD Committee believed that a change would be too disruptive (DISD, 1994).

Faculty Orientations

Faculty orientation sessions were conducted during this year at each chosen site by April 1, 1990. The plan was also presented to the executive committee of the local P.T.A., and its help was solicited in the planning and implementation of the program (DISD, 1994).

Establishing School Planning Teams

A local school planning team was established at each selected site. The purpose of the team was to develop and support the implementation of the plan, which enabled special education students to return to their neighborhood school and to be integrated into regular education activities.

The membership of the team may include the principal, counselor, regular education teachers, representative parents, and special education teachers. The special education case manager and the lead special education teachers provided technical
assistance to the team in the areas of resource identification, curriculum modifications, and teacher consultation.

The District scheduled training for the local planning teams of each demonstration site during the summer of 1990. These sessions included training in the philosophy of integrated education, the role of the planning teams, and alternative models for the effective education of special students in inclusive educational settings. Three additional days of training were conducted for the lead special education teachers and the case managers of the demonstration sites.

Retaining All Identified Students on Home Campuses

The District retained all newly identified handicapped students referred during the 1990-1991 school year on their home campus. It assigned all special education students to a regular "homeroom" teacher. This allowed special education students to attend lunch, recess, assemblies, field trips, and appropriate non-academic subjects with the homeroom class. Special education students were also counted for the purpose of the pupil/teacher ratio, textbook and instructional materials, funding, and space utilization (DISD, 1994).

Implementing Project Homecoming During 1990-1991

Project Homecoming was implemented in 10 Dallas Independent School District elementary schools and 2 middle schools in the 1990-91 school year. In August of the 1990-1991 school year, 132 special-needs students came back to their neighborhood school (DISD, 1990b).
Roles of Central Office Staff and Planning Teams

Each campus designed a unique approach to implement inclusion at the campus level. The planning team on each campus was responsible for implementing and monitoring the plan. The role of the central office special education staff was to provide training and technical assistance. The local planning teams were given the freedom to decide what their goals should be and the strategies needed to implement those goals.

The central staff provided training for each campus. The training included information on a variety of models and strategies necessary for improving the total instructional program. These models served as a menu of options for the planning team. Teams of teachers developed materials to support these models. Each campus was allowed to develop its own program of inclusion (DISD, 1990a).

"Homecoming" Options

There were many options for the Project Homecoming schools to choose from when putting together their plans for Project Homecoming. The planning teams of each "Homecoming" school established their programs using these options as a basis for their programs.

1. Team Teaching and Other Collaborative Teaching Practices: If the Homecoming classes are interspersed among classes without Homecoming students this will facilitate communication between the teachers and promote the sharing of lesson plans. Another method is that the regular class teacher and the special education teacher share teaching responsibilities in the regular education classroom.
Homecoming teacher brings materials the regular education teacher may not have. The Homecoming teacher teaches the same objective in small groups and may do so using a different strategy. It is a good idea to carefully match the teachers. This is especially useful in teaching science and social studies.

2. Learning Centers: Centers reinforce what has already been learned through direct instruction. Learning Centers provide an opportunity for the students to use manipulatives. This is an excellent strategy to use for small-group activities.

3. Content Mastery: The goal of this program, in the Dallas Independent School District, is to enable learning-disabled students to learn in the mainstream of their educational setting. To fulfill this goal the program does the following:
   a. Provides guidance and assistance for classroom teachers instructing learning-disabled students
   b. Assists learning-disabled students through methods designed to enhance their style of learning
   c. Establishes a resource center staffed by teachers trained in special education
   d. Assures that the resource center and the classroom share common goals, objectives, and content for each student in the program

A content mastery program avoids many problems. The students feel less isolated from their peers; they are better able to keep up with their class. They also learn to take responsibility for their own learning, and they do learn.

4. Use of Special Education Instructional Assistants in the Regular Classroom:

The assistant could be used for many purposes in the regular classroom to help
support the regular class teacher.

5. Teaching Students Study Skills: The goal is to teach all students skills needed to succeed academically.

6. Peer Coaching: The students decide for themselves whether they want to serve as a tutor or be tutored. This is an activity in which all students can participate. Students can be the same age or cross-age grouped. Students with learning problems or behavior problems can also participate.

7. Modifications in Regular Classroom: Teams are exposed to a variety of modification techniques. The teams are also supplied with a list of exemplary programs where classroom modifications are successfully used.

8. Increasing the Acceptance of Differences: Circle of Friends is a program usually conducted by the counselor in conjunction with the classroom teachers to prepare the students for inclusion. It stresses the importance of peer support and friendship. It provides the basis for peer support and a "Circle of Friends." The new students should feel more comfortable and at ease in a classroom using this program. Students are a major under-utilized resource in schools. This program empowers the children to decide what is needed for themselves and their peers and how to achieve the goal. The circles meet once a week.

9. Social Skills Training: Teachers learn to incorporate the teaching of social skills into the regular school curriculum. They teach expectations and reinforce desirable behaviors. Teachers calmly confront and manage inappropriate behaviors. They motivate students to engage in highly successful behaviors. A program such as Skills Streaming or The Boys Town program can help students learn appropriate
behaviors to replace the undesirable ones they now use.

10. Teaching Styles and Learning Styles Consideration: Teachers can vary their approach to teaching based upon conditions and modalities through which students learn.

11. FOSS Training—Full Option Science System: FOSS is a fresh look at elementary science grades 3-6. It is a hands-on laboratory science using 16 modules for grades 3-4 and 8 modules for grades 5-6. The FOSS program was developed using the premise that children progress through recognizable stages of cognitive development. How students think determines the way they learn. The way students learn determines how instructional experiences are developed. FOSS activities are tailored to the cognitive abilities shared by a majority of students at the grade level.

12. Other: Each campus was encouraged to develop or adapt any innovative model or strategy not currently being used in an existing Project Homecoming School (DISD, 1993).

Underlying Assumptions for Project Homecoming

There were several underlying assumptions concerning Project Homecoming. These were important to the success of the program. The first was that "all children can learn together." Project Homecoming assumed that a wide range of variability exists in all populations, and those individual differences should be valued and respected. All students benefit from the opportunity to learn in an environment with included students having varied abilities and backgrounds. In order for this to be manifested, the district’s staff needs to be creative and innovative in piloting new and
better ways of doing things. Team planning and collaboration were also important to the success of Project Homecoming. It was necessary for the parents, teachers, and staff of Homecoming schools to work together to program for the needs of all students. Because the district recognized that change was hard, each campus was allowed to progress at its own pace. The District firmly believed that Project Homecoming would benefit all children and that there was no limit to what a dedicated, well-trained staff could accomplish.

1991 Staff Surveys
In May of 1991, the staff at each Homecoming school was surveyed. The school personnel were also asked to collect data from five randomly selected Homecoming students and their parents in order to assess the perceived satisfaction of parents and students. With the exception of students, all consumer groups surveyed were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with Project Homecoming. Rating options were "Extremely Satisfied," "Satisfied," "Somewhat Satisfied," "Not Satisfied," and "Not Sure".

Comments From Surveys
The surveys did elicit many written comments, which were recorded by Dr. Soffer (1991), the Coordinator for Project Homecoming. They ranged from very positive to very negative. The most frequently recorded responses recorded on the survey returned are listed below:

Principals: "We need to modify instruction for more kids. Expectations for 'Homecoming' need to be made for our students with extreme behavioral disorders."
Parents: "More communication needed between parents and teachers."

Counselors: "We need to build more team work between regular and special education teachers."

Others: "Regular education teachers need more encouragement to modify and to work with Homecoming kids."

Homecoming/Special Education Teachers: "We need more help with behavioral difficulties."

Regular Class Teachers: "We need more help with kids with behavioral difficulties. We need to know the specific objectives for the Homecoming kids and get help in coming up with suitable instruction or activities. One teacher suggested a traveling folder. We need to know specific strengths and needs of the Homecoming students at the start of the year and we need more communication with the special education teachers. We want some students in the regular class less time."

Student Responses: An analysis of student responses indicated that two out of every three students preferred the Homecoming situation to a non-inclusionary program. Their reasons for their preference included having more time with friends, more challenging work, and more free time. Interestingly, those students with fond memories of pre-Homecoming days cited similar reasons for their preferences (DISD, 1991b).

The Dallas Story

1990-1991 School Year

It was now possible within the Dallas Independent School District for students
with disabilities to learn alongside their peers in the general education classroom. The project included 53 schools by the 1990-91 school year. The local campus planning teams composed of parents, teachers, and administrators considered various inclusionary options and planned and implemented their individual school program.

1992-1993 School Year

During the 1992-93 school year, the District included Project Homecoming in a broader school change context. Project Homecoming was merged with the School Centered Education (SCE) program of site-based management. The SCE model was developed by James P. Comer from the Yale University Child Guidance Center in New Haven, Connecticut. It is very much a student-centered approach to education. The emphasis is on the whole child, with teachers and staff working together for the benefit of all students in an effort to build community spirit and a sense of "campus family." School Centered Education also stresses the importance of campus-based decision making involving all of the populations involved for strong community involvement.

The Texas Developmental Disabilities Planning Council provided the funds to merge Project Homecoming and the School Centered Education program as a model inclusion project. The groundwork for the merger of the programs took place during the first 5 months of 1993. The program focused on 14 schools previously designated as willing to merge both programs (Soffer, 1993).

Benefits to the District

Project Homecoming brought about several benefits for DISD. The
neighborhood school concept was strengthened because only students with disabilities residing within the local school's attendance zone were placed on his or her home school campus. DISD also realized that Project Homecoming is a more effective use of special education services, which can enhance the outcomes for all students. The faculty in schools involved in Project Homecoming promote greater teamwork and collaboration among staff in various roles in the schools. Schools implementing Project Homecoming created a better school climate because everyone in the school community was more accepting of others and their differences. This resulted in communities that are more caring and supportive of all citizens. The "Homecoming" options are as varied as possible. Students are not placed in little boxes. Instead, the program is very flexible. Homecoming programs are developed considering the needs of the students (DISD, 1993).

Training

The success of Project Homecoming depends on the extent to which the staff is committed to and participates in Project Homecoming development activities. Workshops should include follow-up sessions to help participants in their efforts to apply what they have learned. Technical assistance should also be provided in participants' classrooms to assist with implementation (DISD, 1990b).

"Homecoming" Progress Report/Plan

Changes Since Implementing the Program

In the school year 1993-94 there were 80 schools designated as Homecoming schools. That was an 800% increase from the original group of 10 schools. The
District has undergone many changes since the beginning of this project. The District reported (DISD, 1994) changes are listed as follows:

1. Site-based management has been implemented at all District schools.
2. The District has been divided into 10 areas.
3. The central office staff was de-centralized. The roles of special education staff members have been broadened. This included the support staff involved in the implementation of support for Project Homecoming.
4. There has been a reduction in the training of new Homecoming school campus teams.
5. There has been an increase in the case loads of the support staff and a reduction in technical assistance.
6. The original selection criteria for the selection of Project Homecoming schools have been overlooked as the program was broadened.
7. There is a lack of commitment and understanding on the part of special education staff concerning the vision and goals for Project Homecoming.

Results of the Changes

These changes along with the rapid growth of the program resulted in:

1. A wide range of level of success has occurred within the Project Homecoming schools.
2. The administrative staff and teachers are frustrated.
3. Questions have been raised regarding the extent to which the District is free to dismiss the inclusion program and return to a more traditional delivery of special
4. Program rigidity has increased and placement options reduced because special-needs students outside of the attendance zones of the "Homecoming" schools were being re-assigned to a "Homecoming" school.

5. The parents seem to be polarized on opposite ends of the continuum. Many were in favor of full inclusion, and others were in favor of a more traditional method of service delivery for special education students (DISD. 1994).

**Recommendations**

Using the preceding information, the following recommendations were made (DISD. 1994):

1. There is a need to establish a clear vision of inclusive schooling for all students. The courts have clearly established that most students with disabilities can and should be educated in their neighborhood schools. The level at which some students with disabilities will need to be served in special settings is an individual matter, but the primary effort should focus on attempts to support interactions with age-appropriate peers to the maximum extent possible.

2. Delay or limit the expansion of Project Homecoming until the appropriate planning and training can be re-established. Over 100 schools are scheduled to implement Project Homecoming in 1994-95. The District should postpone or severely limit the expansions in the 1994-95 school year. This would give adequate time to plan and re-establish a training schedule.

3. Consider moving all schools in the District toward inclusive education
rather than targeting selected schools. This move would eliminate the rigidity and the reduction in placement options for students who do not reside in a "Homecoming" neighborhood.

4. Use a system-wide planning procedure rather than planning by areas. Use the computer to send all students to their local home school. The home school list can be reviewed, and cluster schools can be used to accommodate students needing a more restrictive program. This system would eliminate the rigidity created by non-Homecoming schools as being the only available placement for students who require a more restrictive placement.

5. Use Project IDEAL, the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities Grant, to demonstrate exemplary inclusion practices (DISD, 1994).

**Summary**

As Dr. Randy Soffer, the coordinator of Project Homecoming during the first 3 years, wrote in an article that the potential benefits to students, parents, and the District itself were important considerations that led to the creation of Project Homecoming.

The school district itself will benefit financially and programmatically. Project Homecoming has the potential to cut expenditures by reducing the bus transportation needs. Presently 58% of elementary students are not on their home campuses. Project Homecoming makes it possible for special education services to support rather than replace regular education services. Programmatically, the school district will be better able to accommodate its regular instructional program to individual differences.
helping it to become more responsive to the needs of its diverse student population (DISD, 1991a).
CHAPTER 5

ROLLING ACRES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Overview of Rolling Acres

Rolling Acres Elementary School is located in Northeast Dallas. The school has a principal and an assistant principal. Rolling Acres Elementary is a one-story building that is well kept. Portable buildings are used to house the growing student population. It once was a school populated by children from middle-income families who resided in small, well-manicured homes. Now it is a transitional neighborhood plagued with crime. Some of the original homeowners still live in the neighborhood, but there are many new neighbors of Asian and Mexican heritage. The families of this neighborhood are interested in their children's educational program. The school is an area school for Developmental Center students and because of this the population for special education students is higher than normal. The school does offer content mastery and resource as an option for included students.

Rolling Acres was in the original group chosen as a "Homecoming" school. The staff did plan the program for the school. The principal remembered very little about the process. The assistant principal did most of the daily management during the time I was in the building. She was very visible in the halls dealing with children and staff.
First-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teachers and Classroom

The first-grade teacher has been teaching in DISD for 23 years and has been at Rolling Acres for 10 years. The class was organized. Everything including the children's personal items was neatly arranged. Many prompts were displayed for the students. One wall displayed a student-drawn mural depicting the neighborhood.

This teacher told the students completing a task to start over and do it like she told them; and asked them if they knew how to follow directions; also, because they were taking too long to finish an assignment she told them to just put it in their desks.

She said (Vol. 1 p. 1) that she did not like the fact that one disruptive student can ruin the learning process for the rest of the class. I had some difficulty leaving her classroom during the first observation. The teacher wanted to be sure that I knew all of the negatives about Project Homecoming and her "Homecoming" student. I was there only to observe her classroom not to interview her. She said that she needed additional support to provide programming for special-needs students. She also stated that teachers should be given more information about the "Homecoming" students they are expected to work with.

Students

The students interviewed (Vol. 1, p. 2) said that they enjoyed helping each other. The "Homecoming" students related that they liked going to resource and content mastery. They agreed that they were concerned about the children in the class who cannot do their work without disrupting the other students. They said that they
Parents

Both parents interviewed (Vol. 1, p. 3) stated that they liked the emphasis the school placed upon academics. One "Homecoming" parent liked the regular class placement much better than the self-contained classroom her son had been in, and she put her trust in the teacher. Both parents did express the desire to have more communication between the school and home about the program and other things in general.

Second-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

The second-grade teacher's class was clean and organized. This class was the smallest class that I observed. There were only 18 students in this group. This teacher has been teaching for 16 years and began her career as a Developmental Center teacher working with students classified as severe and profound students.

The children were involved in a process-writing exercise involving a cat and an 8-year-old child. Every student was eager to add his or her idea to the story. They all had some very creative ideas about the adventures of the characters. The students were on task and participating in the discussions. The class brain-stormed ideas and developed them as they went along. The students were going to complete the process by illustrating the story and making props so that they could present it to other classes.
The teacher was constantly walking around the room and praising the students for their ideas. The students were on task and actively participating in the class project. This was an exciting lesson.

This teacher (Vol. 1, pp. 4-5) said that she had had many discussions with the former coordinator for Project Homecoming, who thought that all students should be included, and this teacher believed very strongly that all students classified as emotionally disturbed did not belong in the regular education class. Their placement should be based on each individual child's capabilities. She told me a story about one of her students who was exhibiting some inappropriate behaviors in the restroom. Some of the regular education students came to talk with her about the behaviors, and they told her not to worry about it as they would take care of the problem. They were able to do just that.

Students

The group I interviewed (Vol., 1 pp. 6-7) were solicitous and helpful to each other. The group included one female and two male "Homecoming" students who had recently transferred from self-contained classes at other DISD schools. The students were respectful of each other during the interview, as they were in the class. The listened as each child spoke not interrupting.

These students were concerned about their education. The two who had transferred from a self-contained class said that they were learning at this school. They related that at their other school all they did was play. They all said that they liked helping other students as peer tutors. As a group, they all wanted the principal
to spend more time at the school. They stated that he was out of the building too much of the time.

Parents

Both second-grade parents interviewed (Vol. 1, pp. 7-9) said that they liked the program and their children were very happy at school. They both agreed that the school needed to be more communicative with the parents about the program and school in general.

Third-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

The third-grade teacher has been teaching at Rolling Acres for 6 years. There was a classroom visitor the day I observed. A Rabbi explained the Jewish holiday called Purim. He left the students with small gifts. When I entered the class, the students were discussing what they had experienced and were beginning to write about it and send out thank-you notes to the Rabbi.

The students were excited about what they had learned. They were actively participating in a discussion about what they had learned. The classroom was filled with prompts such as examples of different types of writing, multiplication tables, pictures of the Presidents of the United States, science information, and a vowel chart.

When the children were finished with their drawings, they talked about them at the front of the class. Everyone was able to talk without being interrupted or disturbed. I would not have known the "Homecoming" students if I had not met them
earlier in the day while they were in the resource room.

The teacher (Vol. 1, pp. 9-10) related that she was very concerned about her class this year because she had many different levels in academic ability, and several children exhibited serious behavior problems. She wondered what effect the disruptions by the students who were classified as emotionally disturbed were having on her other students' progress. She said that she did not feel that she was getting the support necessary to meet the needs of all of her students. She related that more support staff would benefit this program. This teacher also said that has seen some real changes in the children as a result of being in this program. According to her, they seem to blossom after the initial period of adjustment.

Students

I interviewed four third-graders (Vol. 1, pp. 10-11). The group consisted of one female and three males. Two of the males were "Homecoming" students. One was a student who received special education services in the resource room and from the content-mastery teacher, and the other was a developmental center student. The two "Homecoming" students said that they were happy about not being in a self-contained classroom because they felt like they were learning more in an included class, and they liked the opportunities for social activities that they did not have in a self-contained classroom. All of the students liked the "Homecoming" program as it was and did not think that there were any changes needed.
Teacher and Classroom

The fourth-grade teacher at Rolling Acres was teaching at the school when Project Homecoming began. The class was involved in a writing exercise when I observed. The students were on task when the lesson was being presented and began working on their independent activity as told. The teacher walked through the class, offering praise and suggestions for the students.

She stated (Vol. 1, p. 12) that "Homecoming" enabled the students to learn what the real world was like by being in an included classroom. The ability to work together was one skill they have learned that she thought would be important as an everyday life skill. The lack of support for the teachers for resolving disruptions caused by those students classified as emotionally disturbed was the only negative aspect of "Homecoming" according to this teacher.

Students

There were three male fourth-grade students who participated in the interview (Vol. 1, pp. 12-13). Two of the students were "Homecoming" students. They all said that Project Homecoming has made their school a better school. One reason for this belief was that the teachers work harder to get them to learn. They said that teachers do more than tell them to read the directions and do the work. They agreed that they would like to have more input into the decision-making process at their school.
Fifth-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

The fifth-grade teacher interviewed (Vol. 1, pp. 13-14) taught science and language arts. When I was in the class to observe, the children were taking practice tests for the standardized state test. The students were all on task and appeared to be doing their best. The next time I observed, the students were involved in a science lesson on rivers, which was presented using a laser disc. The students were on task while the lesson was being presented and they participated in the discussion that followed.

The students were quiet and listened to the teacher when she was talking and they worked together in groups helping each other. This teacher said that "Homecoming" was a good program because the children learn to be more accepting of one another.

Students

A fifth-grade male student who was in the gifted and talented program and a female student who was recently evaluated for special education services were interviewed (Vol. 1, pp. 14-15). They both liked the "Homecoming" program because they said that the program helps kids. These students both agreed that they liked being a peer tutor.

Parent

The parent of a gifted and talented male student was interviewed (Vol. 1, pp.
She was also an aide for the physical education program. She appreciated the fact that the students were able to recognize the differences in each other.

Sixth-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

When I observed in the sixth-grade classroom, the students had just had a presentation by a Drug Abuse Resistance Education officer from the Dallas Police Department. The students were on task when they began their writing lesson, which followed the presentation. The lesson was presented in an organized manner, and the students began their independent practice. The teacher walked through the classroom offering encouragement and praise as the students worked. This teacher said that the inclusion program has helped all of the students' self-esteem (Vol. 1, pp. 16-17). There was no stigma attached to participating in a resource or content mastery program in her class according to this teacher. She said that the quality of education was better since the beginning of Project Homecoming because there were more supports available to the children. This teacher stated that there should be more communication between all populations within the school.

Students

Four sixth-grade students were interviewed (Vol. 1, pp. 17-18). Two of the students were female and two were male. All of the students agreed that they all would like to go to content-mastery class at one time or another. They all related that they are learning more since the school became a "Homecoming" school.
Special Education Teachers

The special education staff has been at Rolling Acres since the beginning of Project Homecoming. Staff members related that they knew all of the special-needs students and had a feeling of ownership for their program and the children. This group of teachers stated (Vol. 1, pp. 18-19) that there was not a basis for the classroom teachers feeling unsupported concerning the behavior problems in their classroom because they said that the special education staff attacked the problems as soon as they were aware of them. These professionals agreed that the only negative aspect concerning Project Homecoming was that they have not found a way for the students to fully accept the special education students to the point that they are invited to their parties and to spend the night at other students' homes. They stated that they would have liked to have seen more staff hired because the child/staff ratio was beyond the maximum at this time.

These teachers said that the training opportunities for the staff are excellent. According to them, the staff could get training in any area in which they felt a need. This group stated that the District needed to define the District’s goal and vision for inclusion more specifically. They agreed that there should be more consistency in programming within the District because children are transferring from school to school, and they are confused about why the program is different from one school to another.

Physical Education Teacher

This was the first year this teacher was a physical education teacher (Vol. 1,
Before this, she was a Developmental Center teacher for 3 years and a homebound teacher in rural Texas for many years.

This teacher saw only positives in Project Homecoming. She said that the socialization skills for the special-needs students have improved and that the students were all becoming aware of individual differences among people. The individual needs of each student classified as emotionally disturbed should be taken into account when considering placement options and that the LRE for every student labeled emotionally disturbed may not be the regular education classroom according to this educator.

Librarian

Since the beginning of "Homecoming" this librarian said that she sometimes forgets that there are special education students in her classes (Vol. 1, pp. 20-21). This professional related that all of the children are viewed as students they are not singled out in any way. She stated that these students were getting more out of school than they did when there was a dual educational system in DISD.

Facilities Manager

The facilities manager (Vol. 1, p. 22) has been employed at Rolling Acres since 1982. He stated that Rolling Acres was a better school since the beginning of Project Homecoming because the parents and staff are more involved. He agreed with other staff that the school does need more staff and additional building security.
Cafeteria Manager

The cafeteria manager (Vol. 1, pp. 22-23) has been at Rolling Acres for 7 years. She has a grandson who has been diagnosed as having Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder and has had a very negative experience within his school district. Her opinions and ideas were tempered by her experiences with her grandchild. She stated that she firmly believes that special education students should be in self-contained special education classes or separate schools, not in the regular classroom.

Summary

The staff at Rolling Acres appeared to be working together to include all students in the regular education program. Staff are concerned about the support services that they are not presently receiving, especially those concerning students who are labeled emotionally disturbed. The parents are concerned because they said that they want more information about Project Homecoming. The majority of all of the populations observed and interviewed agreed that Project Homecoming is a successful program at Rolling Acres School.
CHAPTER 6

MOUNTVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Overview of Mountview

The principal of Mountview Elementary walked the halls before and during school as well as after school the days I was in the building. He addressed students by name, even though the school had an enrollment of over 700 students and a large staff including teachers and support staff. I observed him disciplining children and he approached them in a calm, caring manner. The principal was supportive when interacting with students and staff. The school was an extremely clean facility but there were signs of needed repair that the district had postponed.

The principal said that he was very much in favor of inclusion, but that most of the planning and implementation for this program was left up to the staff. The principal viewed the teachers as professionals who were able to do their jobs. Mountview is situated in a very diverse neighborhood. It is surrounded by a very upscale older neighborhood, which at one time was home for mostly White, upper-class families. The neighborhood has been a very diverse mixture of humanity. There have been White families, African Americans, Mexicans, and Asians living side by side in all of the housing units surrounding the school. Many families have moved to this area because of the population mixture. They want their children to grow up
in a multi-cultural society. Some areas in the vicinity of the school were very low-income neighborhoods in which the children are deprived of many of the comforts their friends take for granted. Mountview is located in a very unique neighborhood. This neighborhood already recognized the importance of accepting diversity in individuals. Project Homecoming was a natural outgrowth of the community.

There were five grade levels affected by Project Homecoming within Mountview Elementary School. The second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades have "Homecoming" students on the rolls. There are 26 "Homecoming" students at Mountview. All of the special education students were included for homeroom activities. Most of the students remained in the regular education classroom and received services for special education as resource-room service or content-mastery service. A small number of students were self-contained in the special education classroom for most of the day.

Dallas Independent School District has also established classes within each zone, which were designated as TAP classes. Mountview houses the TAP classes for their zone. These classes were designed to get behavioral disordered students ready for a regular education classroom. This program was designed to be a short-term placement, but in most cases this placement has become a long-term placement. I was not studying this program, but there appeared to be problems managing these students, and the frustration surrounding their behaviors had affected the opinions of some staff members regarding Project Homecoming.
Second-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

The second-grade teacher had a very active group of students. The class was very noisy each time I observed the class, but it was a happy noise with children learning and interacting positively. During one visit, the students were participating in DEAR, which is Drop Everything and Read. The students were reading to each other, to the teacher, or just out loud to themselves either at their seats or in a comfortable place within the classroom. No one was off task. All of the students were reading. When the teacher wanted to get the class's attention, she said that by the time she said the letter "R" everyone should be in their seat. They were all in their seats and quiet by the time she said the letter "R."

The classroom had many prompts displayed throughout the room. Word charts hung from the ceiling. Charts of words dealing with vocabulary for various class subjects were on the walls. There was a reading cubby constructed for those children who wanted privacy for reading.

The teacher (Vol. 2, pp. 1-2) has been at Mountview for 3 years and has no other classroom experience. She talked to each student in a positive manner praising their progress or patting their shoulder. Until the students were interviewed, I did not know which children were "Homecoming" students.

This teacher stated that the students in the Project Homecoming schools were happier and flourished socially and in other areas because they felt good about themselves. She said that although the program did require more preparation time on
her part because of all the additional activities she used, she would not want to go back to a system of dual education. This educator also said that the District should hire more staff to support the regular education teachers and the students.

Students

Three second-grade students (Vol. 2, pp. 4-5) were interviewed--two were "Homecoming" students and the other was a regular education student. They said that it was easier for all of the students to learn together. Each agreed that they were learning what they were supposed to in second grade, plus they were learning "tolerance," according to one "Homecoming" student.

Parent

A parent of a second-grade student at Mountview was very willing to participate (Vol. 2, pp. 2-3). He was complimentary of the program at Mountview. His son had attended two private schools. One placement was in a self-contained situation and the other was a school that specialized in children with learning problems. His son was diagnosed as being dyslexic and having Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD). While enrolled at the other schools, the child was in trouble all of the time. His father said that he spent most of every day in the principal's office or in a time-out situation.

The family does not live in the Mountview attendance zone but they requested a transfer from the adjoining school. They had been part of the Mountview community several years earlier when their son was in pre-school. They wanted him to attend the school once again because they were familiar with the populations
involved and thought that the staff was well trained in accepting and working with children who have special needs. They are happy with the progress he has made since the beginning of the school year. At Mountview, he was seeing normal behavior, not just abnormal behavior all day long. This has been a positive influence in his life. His teacher does not have a very rigid and highly structured class, and the children were very relaxed and excited about learning. The father said that it was a noisy and busy class, but there was a lot of learning going on. He also stated that his son still had socialization problems but has made progress since being at Mountview.

Although this parent chose Mountview for a very specific reason, he said that he was not aware of Project Homecoming. He stated that there should be more communication between the school and home. He also thought that the parents need to be more involved in their child's school.

Third-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

The third-grade classroom at Mountview was located in a portable near the playground. The classroom was organized. There were many prompts in the class. There were Indian tribe projects throughout the classroom. There were also charts showing the regions of the United States, the seasons of the year, as well as science prompts depicting different classifications of rocks, the earth, and science-fair information, a chart showing the classifications for fish, animal pictures, a chart showing the life cycle of a butterfly, and the parts of a tree. A puppet stage stood in the front of the classroom.
One group of children went to reading with the teacher, and the other group went to a table and began to read a book. The group of children, without direct teacher supervision, helped each other with the vocabulary words as they took turns reading. They continued on task and did not humiliate the children who required assistance.

The teacher (Vol. 2, pp. 5-6) gave up her lunch to talk with me because her class had a field trip to the Arboretum scheduled during the interview time. This was a new teacher and the spring of 1994 was the first semester she has had a "Homecoming" student.

This teacher stated that she did not receive any training or warning before she got her newly transferred "Homecoming" student. The secretary just knocked on her door and introduced the child as her new student.

**Student**

There was only one third-grade student available to interview (Vol. 2, pp. 6-7). The others did not respond to the interview request and could not be reached by phone. This male "Homecoming" student was a transfer student from a self-contained class at another DISD elementary school. He was verbal and cooperative. This student said that he was happy to be at Mountview. He transferred from a TAP program for students with behavior problems. The teacher said that this young man has not been a problem in his current placement. He related has enjoyed being in the class and was very comfortable with the teacher. This child stated that he was getting all of the help he needed, and he was helping with the classroom chores. This student
has been going to content mastery when he felt it is needed and when sent by the
teacher.

He related that Mountview really cared about kids. This student said that
everyone at Mountview expected more of him. He stated that all of the kids were
learning, and the teachers and peer tutors helped those who needed help. The student
continued by saying that the children were friendlier and nicer than at his previous
school. This child said that they did not help him when he had trouble at his old
school. He stated that if he were in charge, he would visit all of the schools and talk
to the teachers, kids, and principals to make sure that the children have help to read.
He felt very strongly about the ability to read. Being able to read was an important
goal for him.

Parent

The guardian of this third-grade student said (Vol. 2, pp. 7-8) there has not
been an incidence of aggression since the boy came to Mountview. She went on
further to say that he was happy and well adjusted at this school; he was learning and
felt good about himself because of the feeling of success he was experiencing. This
mother said that Mountview has been good for her son.

Fourth-Grade Observations and
Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

The day I was observing in this classroom many children in this class were off
task and making noise or talking out loud, not paying attention to what the teacher
was doing. The rules were not posted in the classroom. Prompts were not posted throughout the room.

During an observation, students were doing a writing activity. They were writing a paragraph finishing the statement "If I were the President of the United States . . ." or "I would not like to be President because . . .". An overhead was used to show examples of writing errors, and the corrections were made together as a class. The students were not on task, and the teacher said, in a loud voice, that she was waiting until she had everyone's attention. She did single out individual children who were off task. Later, she gave them an independent activity and walked around and answered questions while students did the practice work.

The period ended and the class changed. The teacher placed a sponge activity on the overhead for a beginning activity. She told the children to cross out #6. This, too, was a very loud and disruptive class.

One child was in the hall and he kept walking in and out, disturbing the class. He was in the hall for being a disruption in the class. The students did two problems as a class, and then the teacher instructed them to do p. 485 in the book. There was very little explanation, but that could have been given the day before.

The day I was to interview this teacher, I was waiting for her in the classroom and one of the fourth-grade students was waiting for the teacher to come back to class. She was screaming at the top of her lungs at a student on the stairwell. The student had stepped on her foot. The child waiting for her in the classroom warned the others that the teacher was returning, and rolled his eyes back in his head and smirked.
This teacher stated (Vol. 2, pp. 8-10) that she did not modify her lessons--she just lets the child sit and get what he or she can. She complained that the special education teachers did not volunteer to help her. When I suggested that they may be waiting for her to request help rather than take over her class, she stormed out of the room and did not come back until I left.

This teacher said that she had been a special education teacher for 5 years and had a master’s degree in special education. When questioned, she said that there was no difference in the quality of education since the implementation of Project Homecoming at Mountview. Mountview has been doing mainstreaming for many years. "Homecoming" had mixed blessings according to this teacher. The social aspects of the program were good, but she thought that the academic programs needed to be in the form of individualized instruction in a self-contained classroom. She stated that it was unrealistic to expect teachers to modify programs for these students. Her students just followed along and then sat when the lesson was over their head.

She related that she would change the "Homecoming" program by establishing more support services for regular education teachers. She said that the schools should establish a pull-out program for reading and math instruction because the children were not getting enough attention and instruction in the regular classroom. When asked whether or not the teachers needed or wanted more training in discipline management, she said that poor discipline management was not the problem. The problem was that the children could not do the class work so they became a behavior problem.
Students

Of the three students interviewed (Vol. 2 pp., 10-11) two were male "Homecoming" students. They agreed that they liked being in the regular class along with the option for content mastery and resource, if needed. They said that they were learning more since the beginning of Project Homecoming. The young girl interviewed was not a "Homecoming" student. She stated that the teachers do not have to make up work for the kids who were gone to resource all of the time. They were learning more by staying with the class. She also said that all of the children can learn together and that not everyone is good at everything. She further stated that we all have weaknesses.

The students agreed that the other children do tease the "Homecoming" kids but that it does not bother them. One of the boys said that students tease them just because they are kids. Both of the "Homecoming" students liked the social aspect of being in a regular class. In fact, one stated that "it was great."

The three students agreed that the school should implement a tougher discipline program and that more teachers and students are needed in the "Homecoming" program. One of the "Homecoming" students said that the District should give the special students to good teachers. All agreed that this was a good program.

Parents

The parent of one of the "Homecoming" students said (Vol. 2, pp. 11-13) that the regular class placement was okay. She wanted to make sure that her child was not allowed to sit and do nothing all day. This mother thought that Mountview was better
than the other school her son attended. She said that the regular class placement along with supports from special education had helped her son. This mother thought that there should be more modifications made in the regular class. Her son was very frustrated at times by all of the work he was given.

The mother of the regular education student interviewed said that "Homecoming" was a good idea because most of the children did need one-to-one attention. The "Homecoming" program was good because it gave the children a feeling of the real world. This mother stated that more assistants should be hired to help with special education students in the regular classes. One of the things these extra staff could do was to help the kids get acclimated to the regular class in addition to offering assistance with academic work.

Another fourth-grade parent was not an advocate for mainstreaming. She said that the teachers juggle a wide variety of levels and that more good teachers should be hired to work with the "Homecoming" students. She related that the needs of the students were being met by the teachers in a "Homecoming" school.

She stated that there should be more communication between the school and home and that some sensitivity training would be helpful for everyone—parents, students, and staff. She also thought it would be helpful for the teachers to have more training in how to teach students with special needs.

Fifth-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

The fifth grade had two "Homecoming" students, and the week before the first
observation the class had acquired a third student who was classified as emotionally disturbed. The students interviewed and the teacher said that this has disrupted the routine of the class and created problems for students.

This classroom had many signs and charts posted to serve as prompts or encouragement for the students, including charts for:

1. The stated expectations and directions for time out
2. The consequences for not following directions
3. Vocabulary and spelling words for the week
4. Multiplication tables, 1-12
5. Steps for problem solving
6. Process writing steps, including the guidelines for writing a research paper
7. The class schedule
8. Classroom rules
9. A birthday chart
10. Bloom's Taxonomy, with examples of each level.

I observed a math and social studies lesson. The identity of the "Homecoming" students was not known to me. Several students appeared to have some problems at one time or another during the class. The children sat in groups of two to six students. There was no obvious significance for the grouping. The teacher monitored each child’s learning needs during the lesson. There was also evidence of peer tutoring within the groups.

The students were working with fractions in math class. The teacher had great rapport with the children. She never raised her voice or criticized the students. She
provided a hands-on activity for math using folded paper to illustrate fractions. The teacher wrote the steps on the board for adding fractions in very simple terms. The steps were as follows:

1. Add the numerators.
2. Use common denominators.
3. Write the sum in simplest terms.

She explained mixed numbers and improper fractions using the board and manipulatives. She questioned the students and waited for them to ask for help. The teacher constantly praised the students.

A work sheet was used for guided practice. The teacher asked the students to work the first problem and when they got the answer to put their hands on their head. She walked around the class and checked their work. The interaction of the students did not bother her. They were not off task. She did say that she needed to have a certain noise level for assignment work when she was ready to continue on the board. The children did comply with her wish.

I was not aware who the special education students were. The teacher noticed a discipline problem at a table of six boys seated near me. She went to the table and quietly talked to the boys, and they complied with her wish.

The teacher (Vol. 2, pp. 15-16) did have a special education course in college and had grown up with a mentally retarded sister. She did say that 3 years ago she did not think that "Homecoming" was a good idea because of the relationship she has had with her sister, but now she believed that inclusion was good, except for the placement of some students classified as emotionally disturbed in a regular education
setting.

The teacher stated that, as a rule, the students did not tease each other. She thought that they followed the modeling of the teacher and other significant adults. She stated that the students were more understanding and compassionate and had more empathy towards each other. These were important life lessons to her.

She stated that more staff were needed to work with the "Homecoming" classes. She added that this new staff could be in the form of teachers or aides. She also said that more staff development should be offered to help the teachers understand the special education labels and the behaviors associated with them. Some sensitivity training and information about strategies for modifying instruction would be helpful to regular classroom teachers. If she were in charge, she would bombard the staff with the research available on inclusion.

Students

The fifth-grade students interviewed (Vol. 2, pp. 16-18) were all male. These students have recently experienced the placement of an emotionally disturbed student in their class. They all said that they were not happy about this and questioned why this had happened to them. Their view of inclusion has been affected by this placement.

They were all in agreement about the support received from the classroom. They agreed that their teacher was very supportive of the students, and several students served as peer tutors or buddies to help those having trouble. Cooperation was a positive trait they learned by being in a "Homecoming" classroom. They
thought that if kids knew more about special education students they would not tease them. They said that some of the students may be teasing just because they are kids and not because the students are special education students.

They talked about the Circle of Friends. They said that they also talked daily about patience and tolerance. The students all agreed that more staff was needed to deal with disruptive students like the new student recently placed in their classroom. One student thought that the District should limit the number of students in a "Homecoming" class and that some kids did not belong in a regular education classroom.

Parent

The mother of a fifth-grade "Homecoming" student was interviewed (Vol. 2, pp. 18-19). She liked the traditional approach to education. She thought that each child needed individual attention and that the resource class was necessary. She said that each child deserved a teacher who took time to know him or her. At this time, her son was successful as a "Homecoming" student. She thought that the quality of education was better than it had been when her other children were at Mountview.

Sixth-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

The day I observed in the class, a writing prompt was on the overhead. The children had been studying the Prince and the Pauper. This was a multi-disciplinary unit in social studies, art, history, language, and literature.
The class was organized and on task. All the students participated in the discussions, and the teacher encouraged those who were hesitant to participate by gently coaxing them. The teacher related the study to everyday life so that the children saw the relevancy for this study.

This was very important for this class. Several of the students were in gangs or attached as "wanna-be" gang members (Vol. 2, pp. 19-20). One of the children had been involved in a drive-by shooting in which the mother of one of his friends had been killed during the previous weekend. This class had the potential to be very tough, but students were all on task.

This teacher's love for children and quality programming flowed forth. She said that loved kids and wanted to work with them. The Saturday before this interview, she took the students on a long-distance field trip to Space Cavern in Georgetown, Texas. She also volunteered to teach pre-algebra after school twice a week for an hour.

This teacher stated that she firmly believed that all children can learn, and she had high expectations for all students. She devoted more time to the teaching act since becoming involved with Project Homecoming. According to her, the teacher was now a facilitator, a guide or resource, and not a dispenser of knowledge. She said that the "Homecoming" program benefitted all children. She stated that she had higher expectations for these students. Cooperative groups and peer tutoring are helpful to all students according to her. "Homecoming" prepared her students for the real world.

She stated that all teachers should have training so that they are not intimidated
by the behaviors of the special-needs students. In-service was also necessary to enable regular education teachers to modify instructional programs for the special education students in their classrooms. She thought that the regular education teachers could also benefit from visiting a special education class and working in that environment.

Parent preparation would also help, according to this teacher. The parents should visit their child's classroom so that they know what is going on and take an active part in their child's educational program.

Students

I interviewed (Vol. 2, pp. 21-22) four sixth-grade students. All of the students agreed that they were learning more in a "Homecoming" class. The female student stated that all students are weak in some area, and she had learned more since the "Homecoming" students had joined the class because the teachers re-taught in a variety of ways, and she was able to pick up things that she did not get the first time they were presented. The students said that if they were in charge, they would put more kids in the "Homecoming" program. They thought that "Homecoming" was a good program because everyone tried harder and there was more sharing.

Parents

The mother of one of the "Homecoming" students who had just transferred from a self-contained class in another DISD school was very much against the program (Vol. 2, p. 22). Her son did express that he liked the program. One reason he gave was that he gets better grades because everyone helps him learn. His mother stated that the school was not addressing his needs, especially his behavior problems.
Since his transfer, the teacher said that the school had not observed any inappropriate behaviors. This mother felt that her child was more of an individual at the school he had transferred from, which was not a "Homecoming" school, than he was at Mountview.

The mother of a sixth-grade regular education female student was also interviewed (Vol. 2, p. 23). She was not aware of Project Homecoming. Her child has been at Mountview since kindergarten, and she said that it would have been nice to have had an information session for the parents when the program began. She felt that there should be more communication between school and home.

**Physical Education**

The head physical education teacher at Mountview stated (Vol. 2, pp. 24-25) that there was very little difference between a traditional program and Project Homecoming at Mountview. She said that the school did not have many severely handicapped students. Over the years the school has had a few. This teacher stated that Mountview does not do adaptive physical education. At the present time, all the children in physical education do the same activity. She does believe that a change in staff attitude is needed. The district and schools should have more staff development to address this issue.

**Head Custodian**

The head custodian has been with DISD for 10 years (Vol. 2, pp. 25-26). He has been at Mountview for 3 years. He thought that the Project Homecoming was successful except for the TAP program. He said that the TAP program was out of
control. He stated that the behavior of the students in the regular education classes was good. This staff member related that this program does help kids. His negative comments were about the TAP program. Mountview was the area center for this program because there was space available to house the program.

He related that a child in a self-contained class usually acted inappropriately because that was all that was expected of him or her. The teachers in a "Homecoming" school expected more of the students and therefore they acted better.

This staff person stated that more staff were needed. Increasing the staff/child ratio would allow for more monitoring of the children's behaviors.

**Cafeteria Manager**

The cafeteria manager at Mountview has held that position for 2 years (Vol. 2, pp. 26-27). She did not have any previous experience working with children. Most of her comments during the interview process had to do with the students in the TAP program. These students were very disruptive in the lunch room. She stated that she would require that parents become more involved in their child's school if she were in charge of the program. She would also expose the children to better social-skills training and provide the staff with more information about the students' behavior.

**Special Education Staff**

The special education teachers at Mountview have been at this school since the beginning of the program (Vol. 2, pp. 27-28). They said that the children in a "Homecoming" program were able to develop appropriate social skills. This was very important for the children. The "Homecoming" students were exposed to class
instruction and interaction with regular education students. They stated that the
teachers had higher expectations for these students and that all students were learning
tolerance and compassion. They monitored the progress of the students, and before
Project Homecoming they were in charge of the special education students’ total
program. Each teacher stated that he or she preferred “Homecoming” because of the
visible progress of the students. Both teachers stated that the quality of education was
better for the “Homecoming” students because of the interaction with the regular
education students. The teachers said that more training and staff were needed. They
stated that the regular education teachers needed more staff development and more
staff to keep up with the children’s progress. Some of the staff were not willing to
take on a “Homecoming” student, according to these teachers. They also would
develop guidelines for developing a “Homecoming” program. All new schools would
be given these guidelines in order to encourage more consistency in programming
within DISD schools.

Summary

The students at this school were very perceptive and aware of others and their
feelings. It appeared that the staff and parents had schooled their children very well
about individual differences and tolerance. The multi-cultural community surrounding
the school may have impacted the attitudes of the students. The staff were supportive
of the program, but it appeared that it was an individual support and not a true group
effort. The parents at Mountview were also concerned about what they perceived to
be a lack of communication between the school and home. All populations agreed
that more staff and staff development were needed. Most agreed that Project Homecoming was a good program.
CHAPTER 7

SAVANNAH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Overview of Savannah

There has been very little staff turnover at Savannah Elementary School. Parents are sending their children to the school because they themselves attended the school and do not want to move out of the District. This has been a neighborhood of lower-middle-class families. Most of the neighborhood has been very stable, but some areas surrounding the school are very transient and not safe because of violent acts that have occurred. Some areas in close proximity are affected by active gang activities.

Teachers throughout the District want to be assigned to Savannah Elementary. The only jobs that become available are those that result from a teacher transferring because of a husband’s transfer or a marriage, which involves a move to another location. The staff members related that teachers remain at Savannah because they want to be there. They love children and will do whatever it takes to make their learning experiences successful.

This building has always had a large population of severe and profoundly handicapped students participating in the Developmental Centers. In the late 1980s, parents of these students did not like some of the things they saw going on in the
Developmental Center. They banded together and formed a group that became known as the Holland Group. They requested a meeting with the principal and special education administrators from the District office. The District took their concerns very seriously and steps were taken to address each issue. The principal and administrative staff worked closely with the parents and the school staff to find solutions.

The parent's concerns were:

1. They believed that the special education students were being segregated by:
   a. Getting out earlier than the non-handicapped students and they were not participating in a scheduled instructional day
   b. Not being offered an opportunity for interaction with non-disabled children at lunch, recess, physical education, and library
   c. Being separated by handicapping condition with the door locked and windows covered

2. They were concerned about the safety of their special education students because they were:
   a. Not participating in fire drills on a regular basis
   b. In danger because of locked doors and covered door windows and other windows
   c. Not getting proper supervision and monitoring on the school buses
   d. Being fed and their diapers were changed in unsanitary conditions
   e. Sometimes left unattended or in the care of an unqualified person.

3. They were concerned that the special education students were not receiving
an appropriate education because:

a. They were receiving a maximum of 2 hours of education daily

b. The children were forced to take unwanted and unneeded naps, which cut into their educational day

c. Students were forced to watch too much T.V., which cut into their educational day

d. They were not given the appropriate learning tools and equipment

e. The children were not receiving individualized physical or occupational therapy

f. The students are not allowed to use the gym, library, cafeteria, or any of the other school facilities

g. The students were not receiving appropriate education due to the lack of teachers and aides.

The school and the special education department addressed these concerns by meeting with the parents and addressing each issue. The school district set goals and time lines to address each concern. The parents approved of the plan (DISD, 1989a).

The entire plan was in place by the next school year, and a monitoring system was in place to make sure that all changes were being implemented. This was an extremely explosive situation that was diffused before it was out of hand.

The principal thought that he had a good relationship with all of the parents. He was upset when he was presented with the formal concerns of the parents. Dr. Ruth Turner came to the school and found out that the concerns of the parents were valid, and they went to work to find solutions to the problems. She relied upon the
advice of District personnel and experts she brought in from outside the District to offer suggestions. The entire school staff pulled together to accomplish the goals by the time lines set forth.

This school has participated in mainstreaming for a long time, although it did not actively become a "Homecoming" school until the 1992-1993 school year. The staff at Savannah have been very innovative and ready to try any program that would benefit the children. They planned and implemented several programs in recent years. This year they have implemented the Savannah Project, which is a program to include the Developmental Center students, the early childhood children, and the pre-school and kindergarten students. Every group is scheduled around a center system set up in each of the classrooms. Staff members have worked very hard to implement the program, and they were looking forward to a successful program. The inclusion program at Savannah has been looked upon as a model program.

First-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

The first-grade classroom organized. The teacher a long-term substitute in a special education class and was able to gain experience working with special education students.

She stated (Vol. 3, pp. 1-2) that the regular education students were not exposed to special education students in a traditional setting and therefore were not accepting of them. She continued by saying that in a "Homecoming" school, the regular education students are accepting of the special education students. They know
that there are differences but do not treat others as if they are different. When asked
why this happened, she said that the parents of special education students demanded
that it be done, and the staff began with short periods of inclusion and the program
gradually grew. According to this teacher, the children's expectations for themselves
have been raised on both levels. This acceptance has improved the level of self-
esteeem for both groups.

Students at Savannah Elementary are moving to various classes during the day
so that they are on their academic level, not necessarily with their age-group level.
This differs from what has been done at other schools in the District.

Students

I interviewed three first-grade students (Vol. 3, pp. 2-3). Two of the students
were male and one was a "Homecoming" student. One of the students was female.
The students did have a positive feeling about "Homecoming" for a variety of reasons.
The "Homecoming" student liked going to the resource room. He said that he was
learning there. He also liked going to the kindergarten room to learn his letters and
sounds. One student who is not a special-needs student liked working with peer tutors
and the teacher when he required extra help within the classroom. The students
agreed that all children were learning in their "Homecoming" class.

Second-Grade Observations and
Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

There were 18 students in her class in this second-grade classroom. The day
of the observation they were having a reading lesson. Some of the children were
sitting on the floor reading a trade book with the teacher, and the others were at their
seats doing seat work. All of the students were on task. When one had a question, a
peer tutor was consulted.

Many materials and books were available in this classroom. Every window
ledge and shelf space was crowded with books. Prompts were also posted throughout
the room, including a chart explaining Bloom’s taxonomy.

This teacher has taught at Savannah for 17 years (Vol. 3, pp. 3-4). Nine of
those years were spent as a second-grade teacher and the remaining years were spent
teaching kindergarten and first grade.

She said that she does not view the students as “Homecoming” kids.
According to her, all of her students are on one level. She just "gears down" and
modifies the lessons. Each student’s needs are being met, according to this teacher,
and all students have benefitted from the "Homecoming" program socially. This
teacher said that every school should be involved in the program. She said that they
have a great group of teachers and staff at Savannah who have worked together to get
things done that other schools might have been unable to do.

Students

Three female students were interviewed (Vol. 3, pp. 4-5) and one of them was
a "Homecoming" student. A male "Homecoming" student was also interviewed. The
students were very active and had difficulty focusing on the interview. The children
stated that they liked having peer tutors and the teacher helping them. The
"Homecoming" students also liked going to content mastery. They all said that they were learning. All of the students, not just the "Homecoming" students, would like to go to content mastery when needed.

Parent

A parent of a female "Homecoming" student participated in the interview (Vol. 3, pp. 5-6). She had been a student at Savannah and now her children were attending the same school. She was not familiar with the term "Homecoming." This parent did not like the fact that her daughter was pulled out of class for resource. She said that she missed too much from the regular class.

Nothing was done to prepare this parent for Project Homecoming, and she stated that the parents should be informed. The parents need more information about the program according to this mother.

Third-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

The third-grade classroom was located in a double portable. It was a large, organized classroom. The teacher has been teaching for 23 years and has been at Savannah for 5 years (Vol. 3, p. 6). She stated that she was open to new ideas but was frustrated because she has a child with a serious behavior problem that has not been addressed.

The teacher said that she does like "Homecoming." However, she was very frustrated with the lack of support she is experiencing with an emotionally disturbed
student in her class. She said that Project Homecoming was good for all students because it gave them a view of what the world is like. This professional thought that it was good to grow up in a society that was accepting of differences. She was interested in a program that would provide support for teachers who have emotionally disturbed students in their class.

Students

Two third-grade students took part in the interview process (Vol. 3, p. 7). The female student was a "Homecoming" student and the male student was a regular education student. The students said that more kids were improving their grades in this "Homecoming" school. They agreed that they get help in many new ways. They said that before "Homecoming" they were told how to do something and did it. Now they said that they get more examples of how to do it.

The children stated that they usually get along, but sometimes they have problems. The problems are usually "kid" things and they are not serious. The students related that all kids are learning together.

The students agreed that the quality of education has improved since Project Homecoming began. Both of the students said that the school should get tougher on kids having behavior problems. They also said that the teachers should appoint more peer tutors.
Teacher and Classroom

The fourth-grade teacher at Savannah has been a teacher for 17 years (Vol. 3, pp. 7-9). Four of those years were as a fourth-grade teacher. The day of the class observation a developmental student was in the classroom during a language arts lesson. When he left the classroom, all of the children told him that they would see him at lunch. They then returned to the task of constructing a story. All of the students were participating. They were brain-storming ideas about characters and plot. When it was time to begin their independent assignment, all of the students began to work without delay.

This teacher stated that there had always been mainstreaming at Savannah. She said that the children were more accepting of individual differences and each other. According to her, the negative aspect of the program was that sometimes there was not enough time to do everything. She said that the quality of education had improved because the teachers were more aware of teaching to the learning styles of each student, and the students were not treated the same.

She related that there should be more preparation at the teachers' college for working with students with extreme needs. The District should also provide more inservice on social-skills training and making modifications in curriculum. There should also be more joint planning for all teachers, according to this staff member. She also said that Project Homecoming should have started earlier—if something works, you should go forward.
Students

Three students were interviewed (Vol. 3, p. 9). Two of the students were male, both of whom were "Homecoming" students. The other student interviewed was a female and a regular education student. All of the students said that they liked "Homecoming" because they were learning to be tolerant and patient.

Fifth-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

The fifth-grade teacher has been at Savannah for 8 years (Vol. 3, pp. 9-10). This class was unorganized. Students were off task, rowdy, and disrespectful of the teacher and each other. No other class at this school behaved in this manner. The teacher talked badly of the students and she was sarcastic. It took over 30 minutes to begin the lesson. She procrastinated and blamed it on the students.

This teacher did state that "Homecoming" was good because the children learn about each other. She said that the program is working as far as she could see. This teacher did express a desire for a classroom aide if one was available. She said that Project Homecoming was a good program and should be tried by others.

Students

The fifth-grade students interviewed (Vol. 3, p. 10-11) said that they were very upset and frustrated with their teacher. They did not like to be yelled at or told that they are stupid or dumb. They just talked for a long time about the problems with their teacher and did not address the questions except when asked about what
changes they would make if they were in charge. Their answer was that they would change the teacher.

It was very difficult to talk with these students because the teacher remained in the room while the students were interviewed. Previously, all of the other teachers had left the room. I advised the students to discuss their concerns with their parents and the principal. I was very concerned about these children because I observed the behaviors the students were talking about. The special education teacher was advised about the interview. She said that she would discuss the children's concerns with the principal. These students were not complaining for themselves—they felt badly for other students in their class.

Sixth-Grade Observations and Interview Summaries

Teacher and Classroom

The day I observed the students in this class were beginning an oral activity relating to book reports which they had completed. They were on task and attentive to what was being presented.

When the presentations were completed, the class began to discuss some articles in the current *Scholastic* magazine. One of the resource teachers came in and sat next to the "Homecoming" students and helped them read the articles.

This teacher stated (Vol. 3, pp. 11-12) that all kids learn together at a "Homecoming" school and gain experience interacting with students of varying abilities. He further stated that a self-contained student lacks the social-skills training of being in a regular class.
He said that some teachers have reservations about the program. Some teachers do not want to put forth the extra work to modify their teaching for the special education students. The resource staff does help him modify lessons. This teacher said that the students do use peer tutors and go to other grades for instruction. He related that all students wanted to help the special-needs students. The District should implement more programs to support the regular education teacher to help the special education students attain success according to this educator.

This teacher said that he was apprehensive about the program at first. The thought of inclusion frightened him. He stated that Project Homecoming was a good program.

Students

Three sixth-grade students were interviewed (Vol. 3, p. 12-13). One was a female "Homecoming" student and the other two were male students. One of the male students was a "Homecoming" student who has been in a self-contained special education class for his entire school life; the other male student has a brother who has been a "Homecoming" student.

The regular education student stated that there was no difference in the quality of education before Project Homecoming and since its implementation. The "Homecoming" students liked being in the regular class because they believed they were learning more. These students also enjoyed the peer tutors and going to resource class.

They said that the teacher talked to the class about the individual differences of
students. The children said that more training always helps.

Special Education

The "Homecoming" special education staff consisted of two teachers. One has taught for 5 years and has been at Savannah for 1 year (Vol. 3, pp. 13-14). The other has taught for 16 years, and this was her third year at Savannah. The special education teachers were very busy. They assisted the teachers and taught students in the resource room and in their classrooms. Their time was very scheduled.

The special education teachers said that they firmly believed that "Homecoming" has been a good program. The community has been very accepting of the concept. The only negative aspect to the program has been that the students classified as emotionally disturbed have not been getting the support they need in the regular class placements. They said that the schools should work with other programs such as TAP.

They stated that the "Homecoming" students do not hide behind their label, and the regular education students are compassionate and accepting. No program is better than this, according to these teachers--the students were learning many new things together.

The teachers said that in the beginning they stayed with the teachers who accepted them and worked with them to support their actions. The first year they gave an overview of Project Homecoming, content mastery, and resource. They said that the staff planned the program using the resource and content-mastery model. They stated that there should have been more staff development on learning styles,
curriculum modifications, and behavior management techniques for all regular education teachers. According to these teachers, the District should provide more support for the regular education teachers. If the special education teachers were in charge, these teachers said that the regular education teachers would get all the support they need to ensure that each child would be successful in his or her classroom.

**Physical Education**

The physical education teacher has taught for 15 years (Vol. 3, pp. 14-15). This is her fourth year in physical education. She taught fifth grade 3 years, and the other years were divided between the kindergarten, first, second, seventh, and eighth grades. She was very interested in the program and has worked very hard to develop an adaptive P.E. program, which has been used at other schools.

She observed that it is helpful to let the students know about the abilities of other students. In reality, this physical education program has been enhanced because of the social-skills training the students have received. This teacher stated that she has not had any training but only a desire to do it coupled, with a little creativity. She stated that there needs to be a way to relate general information about the child's label and specific programs and limitations. The District should provide more training for the staff and parents at new "Homecoming" schools according to this teacher. She also said that Project Homecoming is hard work, but any school can do it if it wants to.
Facilities Manager and Cafeteria Manager

The facilities manager and the cafeteria manager said (Vol. 3, pp. 15-16) that there is a big difference in a traditional school and a "Homecoming" school because the Project Homecoming students respect each other. There is also a cooperative spirit; everyone works together. When students have this they stated that they can do anything. The managers thought that it has also helped that the principal is very interested in the program.

Summary

Savannah Elementary has achieved what most school communities dream about. It has shown that the staff and community are able to work together to solve serious problems and continue to grow and work together to meet the needs of the children in the community. The staff, with one exception, appeared to be fully committed to including all students to the greatest extent possible. For some students this may mean just a few minutes a day, and for others it may mean a full day in a regular education class with the support services necessary to bring about success.

The acceptance and tolerance shown by all of the students impressed me the most. The students were very natural in their interactions. This did not happen overnight, although there did not appear to be any formal policies and programs other than Circle of Friends that set the groundwork for this. The staff commitment and example must be shining forth to these students. If only this tolerance and acceptance could be spread to other communities, cities, states, and countries.
CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

In conducting this study, I was interested in discovering the actions, policies, and procedures that aided three elementary schools within the Dallas Independent School District's Project Homecoming to achieve success. A descriptive multiple case study design was chosen using cross-case analysis in order to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context when the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1989, p. 23). Merriam (1988, p. 27) states that a descriptive case study is one that presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under study. The phenomenon researched in this case study is the inclusive education process—in particular, the actions, policies, and procedures which aid in the successful implementation of the program. Case studies are useful in presenting basic information about areas of education where little research has been done.

Forms of Data Collection

I used several forms of data collection in this case study. Documents, interviews, and direct observations were used to collect data. The documents and were taken from those found within the District files and those gathered in newspaper, journal, and magazine articles. The observations were conducted on the
campuses of the three elementary schools chosen for the study.

Interviews

An interview guide was developed for each group to be interviewed. After piloting this guide at a private elementary school, which had recently implemented an inclusion program, I decided to limit the interview guide to five topics of discussion.

1. Compare a traditional school experience to what you have experienced at your elementary school as a Project Homecoming school.

2. Has the quality of education changed since the implementation of Project Homecoming at your elementary school?

3. What actions, policies, and procedures were established by the district or school when Project Homecoming began at your elementary school?

4. What actions, policies, and procedures should be established by the district or school to make Project Homecoming a more effective program?

5. What changes would you make if you were in charge of Project Homecoming at the school or district level?

Those interviewed included the administrators of the schools chosen to be studied, one "Homecoming" teacher at each grade level within each building, as well as the support personnel serving the children in those classrooms, and two handicapped and two non-handicapped children, if possible, from each of those classes as well as their parents, if possible. The head custodian and cafeteria manager were also interviewed. The current project coordinator and the previous coordinator for the
"Homecoming" program, the previous Director of Special Education were also consulted.

**Topics Which Emerged From Interviews**

Topics which emerged in many interviews with students reflected a positive attitude toward Project Homecoming. The students said that they were learning more with the inclusion program because the teachers were using different teaching techniques and strategies. They also stated that they were learning tolerance and they liked working together. Students were concerned about children being in their classrooms and not behaving appropriately. They believed that these students should not be in their classroom until they were able to behave.

The parents were also positive about the inclusion program. They related that they would like more communication about the program between the school and home. Parents expressed the concern that more staff might be needed to make the program more successful. Their children were learning tolerance and that this was important according to these parents.

Teachers and staff members also did not want students with severe behavior problems placed in their classrooms on a routine basis. They said that more supports are needed to effectively meet the needs of these students. At the present time these supports are not given on a regular basis. Staff also expressed the need for more staff to support the efforts to educated all children within the regular class setting.

Staff members were positive about their inclusion programs. They said that the students are learning many social skills that they would not learn in a more
traditional school setting. They also said that the students were learning more academically because of the variety of learning situations used in the classrooms.

Findings of the Research Questions

Question 1

Question 1 asks: What were the actions, policies, or procedures carried out at the elementary schools involved in instituting an inclusion program?

All three of the elementary schools first of all had to meet the criteria set forth by the District for the selection of schools to be considered for Project Homecoming.

First selection criteria

The first selection criteria was: The campus administrator was perceived as willing to provide the leadership necessary to make the program successful.

All of the campus administrators were willing to provide the leadership necessary to make “Homecoming” a success. They each believed in the program and gave their staffs the freedom to plan and implement the strategies necessary to make the program a success. They each provided the support necessary to carry the program forward.

Second selection criteria

The second selection criteria was: The faculty had a history of working well with special education students in a mainstream setting.

The staff of each of the three schools had a history of working with special education students in a mainstream setting.
Third selection criteria

The third selection criteria was: The school served a significant number of its own special-needs students, or the addition of special-needs students in the school's attendance zone would not require major adjustments.

Each of the schools served special education students in its attendance zone as well as those from surrounding areas.

Fourth selection criteria

The fourth selection criteria was: The faculty included a minimum of one excellent, dynamic special education teacher who could serve as a consultant to the faculty.

The former director of special education showed me a working document from the planning stage for Project Homecoming where the planning team had reviewed the teachers' evaluations and talked with other administrators and special education central-office staff concerning their opinions of the lead teachers and their ability to carry the demands of the program. The special education staff of each of the three schools were very competent. The lead teachers were dynamic, but there were others on staff who were equally dynamic.

Question 2

Question 2 asks: How do the actions, policies, or procedures instituted by the administrative staff of an elementary school influence the success of an inclusion program?

The administrative staff of each of the three schools did not institute any
additional actions, policies, or procedures to ensure the success of the inclusion programs. They gave the staff the freedom to plan and implement the inclusion programs in their school.

**Question 3**

**Question 3 asks:** How are the teachers influenced by the actions, policies, or procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

**Rolling Acres**

Rolling Acres did have a school planning team that did attend the original Kick-off Conference for Project Homecoming, but no one was sure who the members of this team were. A majority of the present staff members were also at Rolling Acres when Project Homecoming began, but the training they received that first year is not outstanding in their memories. The head of the special education department said that she was a member of the planning team and did attend the Kick-off Conference. The principal did not remember participating in the conference.

The planning team decided upon a content-mastery and resource model for their building. Most of the students and staff remembered that the students were given some sensitivity training such as Circle of Friends. Parents were not included in the preparations for the inclusion program.

As an outsider, the reason the program appears to be successful at Rolling Acres is that the staff has, for the most part, decided that the program will be
successful and has worked together to make it successful. Attitude seems to be a key component to the success of their inclusion program. Another important component of this inclusion program is the support given to the regular education teachers by the special education staff and the school administration.

Mountview

Staff at Mountview did not remember participating in the summer Kick-off Conference for Project Homecoming schools. Several staff members stated that they were told a few days before the end of school the previous spring that they would be a "Homecoming" school in the fall. The planning team--but no one is sure who was on the team--decided that it would use the content mastery and a resource model as the basis for its inclusion program.

The special education staff has been very particular in matching special-needs students to the teaching styles of the regular education teachers. Staff members have been very interested in choosing a teacher who would be supportive of the special education students.

As in Rolling Acres, the attitude of the staff seems to be a key to the success of the program. When possible, staff members are fully committed to the program and support the needs of the "Homecoming" students have been chosen to work with the "Homecoming" students.

Savannah

The staff at Savannah has become proficient at beginning new programs. Members began an inclusion program as a result of a series of concerns brought about
by a group of parents known as the Holland group. The staff has worked very closely
with other staff members, central office staff, and parents to develop a successful
program. When Project Homecoming began, the staff was already working
collaboratively to include special-needs students.

The staff participated in the planning team, and some staff members
participated in the Kick-off Conference in the summer. They also had an introduction
to "Homecoming" the spring before the school became part of Project Homecoming.
The special education staff began working with a few teachers to include
"Homecoming" students, and then gradually branched out to more teachers. The were staff was able to offer the support needed to make the experience a successful one for the students and the teacher. The staff also worked with the children through programs such as Circle of Friends and by talking about the differences and encouraging sensitivity to others.

It seemed that everyone respected every other person in the building. The students went out of their way to include others. There was never a lack of volunteers to push a wheel chair, help hold a book, or participate in a game of catch in gym class. It was a beautiful scene. If the children of the world could all be taught to be as caring and understanding as these children are, it would be a different society in a few years.

The staff participated in several training sessions on learning styles and making modifications in the classroom. As with the other schools, one key to success in this school is the attitude of the staff and the support given by the administration and special education staff.
The staff at Savannah has shown that members are adept at planning and implementing successful programs in record time. They are able to pull together as a staff and successfully meet the needs of the students.

Question 4

Question 4 asks: How are the certified staff members influenced by the actions, policies, or procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

Rolling Acres

The certified staff at Rolling Acres just seemed to pull together to create a successful program. The planning team decided that the school would adopt a content-mastery and resource model for its inclusion program. The staff went about implementing the program. The regular education teachers working with the "Homecoming" students have developed an attitude that encourages success. They want the program to succeed.

Mountview

Mountview certified staff have become very accommodating and adept at modifying and adjusting the program. The staff has made great strides towards making the inclusion experience a successful one for all children. They have also volunteered to conduct other programs to help all children succeed such as after-school one-on-one tutoring and conducting after-school programs such as a class on algebra for selected students.
Savannah

Savannah chose a content-mastery and resource model for implementing inclusion. The attitude of the staff and students was more evident at Savannah than at either of the other schools. The staff has been successful at encouraging the students to be sensitive to the needs of others. The staff members are very considerate of each other and the students.

Every person in that building appeared to be extremely concerned about others, and it seemed that they were so concerned because they value themselves and value what they are doing. It has been said that when teachers consider the needs of the least successful students in the class that the self-esteem of the more successful students is raised. The successful students feel that when they need help that they, too, will be considered to be "important" enough to warrant the time and attention needed.

Question 5

Question 5 asks: How are the non-certified staff members influenced by the actions, policies, or procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

The non-certified staff at each of the schools were not aware of any actions, policies or procedures instituted for the inclusion program. Staff members did not receive any additional training or explanations about the program.

Question 6

Question 6 asks: How are the students influenced by the actions,
policies, or procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

The only action, policy, or procedure the students at each of the three schools were aware of were the programs that dealt with sensitivity training or awareness training. They remembered the teachers and counselor talking to them about this topic. One program that they did remember was the Circle of Friends.

Question 7

Question 7 asks: How are the parents of the students influenced by the actions, policies, or procedures instituted in an elementary school having an inclusion program?

None of the parents I interviewed was even aware of Project Homecoming. Only one parent said that he was aware that the school was actively involved in dealing with the individual differences of students, but thought that this was more to do with a multi-cultural program than an inclusion program.

Success Level of Selected Schools

The three elementary schools described in this case study were selected after consulting with school district personnel. The schools chosen were selected because they were judged by Dallas Independent School District's special education administrative staff as having a successful inclusion program using the criteria set forth by the District.

Dallas Independent School District defined success or the effectiveness of a "Project Homecoming" school in relation to the project's goals by determining if the
school was or is able to accomplish the following four goals:

1. GOAL #1 is to place all students on the campus they would attend if not handicapped. The Performance Indicator is the number of students placed off of their home campus for special education.

Rolling Acres in 1990 had 81% of the special-needs students residing in its attendance zone enrolled in the school. In 1991, 90% of those students were enrolled in the school. In 1992, 85% of those students were enrolled in the school, and in 1993, 94% of the special-needs students residing within the attendance zone of Rolling Acres were enrolled at the school.

Mountview had 76% of the special-needs students residing within its attendance zone attending the school in 1992. In 1993, 78% of those students were enrolled in the school.

The figures for Savannah were not published.

Each school was able to raise the percentage of special-needs students returning to their home school. Savannah's records were not published. I think that they were successful in achieving this goal. The staff related that the only special-needs students they were aware of who were not attending their home school were students who were classified as severely emotionally disturbed.

2. GOAL #2 is to increase the time that students with handicaps spend with the same-age peers in regular education settings. The Performance Indicator is the percentage of students with moderate and severe handicaps, traditionally self-contained students, participating in available options with the same age peers.

To determine the extent to which the time increased that the students with
disabilities spent with their same-age peers in the regular education classroom setting, the District conducted an analysis of the ARD Committee reports. It specifically looked at the amount of time students were scheduled for regular education class instruction. It randomly selected every 10th student from the total list of "Homecoming" students. The changes in the amount of regular education participation from 1991-1992 to 1992-1993 were determined.

The result of this analysis revealed the following: (a) for students enrolled in schools that were new to the "Homecoming" program in the 1992-1993 school year, the mean amount of regular education participation for sampled students during the previous school year was 2.5 hours per day; (b) during the 1992-1993 school year, this same group experienced a mean of 3.2 hours per day in the regular education setting. This was a 28% increase.

3. GOAL #3 is to improve the overall academic performance of each campus. The Performance Indicator is the percentage of students who took and passed the TEAMS/TAAS test.

To assess the extent to which this outcome was achieved, the rank of the original Project Homecoming schools was compared to the rank of all Dallas schools from 1990-1991 to 1992-1993 for TAAS results. The reason the District used only the test scores from this group of schools was that changes in school-wide performance would not probably be immediately impacted by Project Homecoming. In analyzing the data, five of the ten "Homecoming" schools raised their test scores and ranking in comparison with other DISD schools and five of the schools had lower TAAS scores and ranking in comparison with other DISD schools in 1992-1993. The
achievement of this goal is inconclusive.

4. GOAL #4 is to increase the effectiveness of special education services. The **Performance Indicator** is a survey that was developed and distributed to school staff at each Project Homecoming school in May of 1991. School staff, parents, and students were surveyed and the mean for all groups showed that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the special education services.

The District did achieve this goal to a degree. Reflecting on the history of this program, it was not able to continue to effectively support this program because of budget cuts and the District discontinued adding new "Homecoming" schools until it is able to provide the supports necessary.

Comparing Cases

Rolling Acres

The staff at Rolling Acres Elementary was very aware of the individual differences of the students. Teachers are able to modify the lessons to meet the needs of all of the students. The first-grade teacher was the only negative personality I encountered in the classrooms. She said that she did not have time to cope with the additional tasks of modifying her lessons for those students not able to keep up with what she believes is traditional first-grade work. This classroom was close in proximity to the special education teachers and more support could be gotten if she would only ask.

The special-needs students at Rolling Acres were very fortunate to have a physical education teacher who had been a special education teacher. She has had several years experience working with the students in the Developmental Center. She
was able to adapt the program to meet the needs of handicapped students.

Overall, the students, faculty, and parents are very supportive of the inclusion program at Rolling Acres. This school is not as supportive and cohesive as Savannah Elementary. The climate at Rolling Acres is supportive and caring, but there is a difference in the intensity. The support system does not extend across the entire school. The staff and students are supportive of their own class of students.

Mountview

Mountview draws from a different community than either of the other schools. The community surrounding the school is made up of individuals who have chosen to live in that neighborhood because it is a multi-cultural community. The community recognizes the individual differences of each resident. The ideals being talked about at school are re-enforced at home for some of the children.

The staff was very creative and innovative at this school. Some excellent teaching was taking place within this school. Teachers were willing to give of themselves to bring about success for the learners. There was only one example of a teacher who stated that she does not have the time to modify lessons for the "Homecoming" students in her class, and in fact, she did not do so. Her students just sat when the lesson went beyond their abilities. Her classroom was evidence of this behavior because many students exhibited off-task behaviors. This teacher was an experienced special education teacher who had a master's degree in special education.

Savannah

The staff and students at Savannah are supportive of the entire school.
population. The staff has been able to instill in the students a very deep feeling of sensitivity through the various sensitivity-training programs it has utilized.

One staff member at Savannah did not have a climate within her classroom that encouraged a feeling of support and caring for one another. Researchers such as Rosenthal have shown that you get what you expect. This teacher did not appear to expect the students to be supportive, and she did not model that behavior. Educators have also said that we need to model the behavior we are teaching, and this is not occurring in this classroom. The children interviewed know that there is a difference, and they do not like what they are experiencing this year. When asked what they would change if they were in charge of Project Homecoming, they said that they would change their teacher.

All Schools

In all of the schools studied, the special education staff was supportive of the regular education teachers. Their jobs have become more difficult because of the increased enrollment of "Homecoming" students and the decrease in staff to support these children.

The administrative staff of each of the schools was supportive of the teachers. The support at Rolling Acres came from the special education department and the assistant principal. The principal at Mountview was supportive of his staff, but he stepped back and allowed them to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities. The principal at Savannah was supportive of his staff and truly believed that they could tackle any project that was presented to them. The staff sincerely believed that it could tackle any task. Others have said that it takes time to bring about
change. These educators decide how to solve their problems, and form an action plan, and begin. They would not be able to do this if they were not able to work cohesively. There is no turnover at Savannah unless a teacher moves or retires. It would be wonderful if all schools could experience this climate. The principal was the driving force because of the respect he shows for the professionalism of his staff.

Comparison of Vermont "Homecoming" and Project Homecoming in Dallas

The movement towards the Homecoming program in Vermont was different than the direction taken by DISD. The Vermont schools did agree that administrative and state commitment were important. They also used the planning team concept. Dallas did use planning teams, but did not carry it as far as schools did in Vermont. In Vermont, this was an on-going program. The planning teams continued to be involved in programming for the students. The special education staff within each school took over this duty in Dallas.

The districts in Vermont utilized the services of educational specialists from outside the school and in some cases outside the districts. Within Dallas, the District provided technical assistance the first year of the program through re-structuring the special education central staff and re-aligning job descriptions. As the program progressed, the services were diminished and the schools' individual special education staff and administrators were left to their own resources to provide technical assistance. Both Vermont and Dallas realized that it was necessary to make a commitment to staff development and to provide support services for the teachers receiving the "Homecoming" students. This was greatly diminished in the Dallas
program after the first year. The funding was no longer available to support these commitments. The schools were left to their own resources.

Project Homecoming reached a standstill with the 1994-1995 school year. When the project began, staff training and support services were important components. As the years passed, the funding disappeared and cuts were made in the budget for staff training and support services. The former Director of Special Education said that staff training was very extensive the first year, and after that it was not effective.

The current Director of Special Education for Dallas Independent Schools District, said that the Project is on hold and the District is in the process of developing staff training programs and support services for those schools that are presently Project Homecoming schools. Project Homecoming was also without a coordinator for several months. The program coordinator from 1990, left in May of 1993 to work for the state office of the Association for Retarded Citizens. The new coordinator did not begin work until after school started in 1993. This created confusion for those schools beginning the program in the 1993-1994 school year.

Project Homecoming is a good program, but staff training and an adequate support system for the regular education teachers are key components. Both have been eliminated because of budget cuts. The attitude of the staff is also a key component, but education and training can change negative attitudes. Funding is necessary to provide the training needed.
Recommendations for Changes to This Inclusion Program and Future Implementations

1. Encourage the teachers to attend training programs in areas which would improve their ability to successfully meet the needs of all children within their class. This would also suggest that the principals would have to be more actively involved in routinely visiting the classrooms and engaging the staff in active clinical supervision.

2. Administrative support should be present. Teachers and staff should know that the principal is available and will actively address concerns.

3. There needs to be more administrative support and direction from the district level. Making decisions at the building level is important, but students are transferring within the District on a regular basis and "Homecoming" does not mean the same thing at each school, and students and parents are confused.

4. More communication is needed from school to the home. Parents want to be more informed.

5. Employ staff to work in this program who want to teach all students. Students deserve to have a teacher who is able to give them their best. If the teacher does not want to be in that particular classroom or school, he or she will not be able to give the students the best education available to them.

6. There should be a long term commitment for funding a program such as this. It takes several years to successfully implement an inclusion program District wide.
Recommendations for Future Study

Areas for future study are:

1. How does the attitude of regular education teachers affect the achievement of students in an included situation?

2. What changes need to be made in teacher education programs in order for regular education teachers to feel comfortable educating special-needs students in an included school?

3. How can inclusion be made more cost effective for districts considering the rise in the cost of educating children?

4. How do the modifications made in teaching strategies in an included classroom benefit or hinder the achievement level of students without special needs?

5. How do the modifications made in teaching strategies in an included classroom benefit or hinder the achievement level of students with special needs?

6. What relationship should be present between a teacher and student in an included classroom?

7. What is the role of an administrator in a successful inclusion setting?

8. How would the change from educating teachers for a specific population of students or specific certification to training teachers to be teachers of all students affect the education of students?

Conclusions

1. Project Homecoming provides opportunities for all children to learn together. Special education and regular education students benefit from this exposure.
Because the children learn to work together it seems that society also benefits.

2. It also appears that staff training and an adequate support system are important concerns for the success of an inclusion program. DISD initially was prepared to provide the training and support services necessary to ensure the success of the program, but with budget cuts staff training was eliminated and the services of support staff were severely cut due to the downsizing of staff. The schools were left on their own to provide the services needed. The schools whose staff were very dedicated and committed to the success of children were able to carry out a successful program without extensive training and with a minimum of support services from the District.

3. Although each school met the District's criteria for a successful inclusion program, Savannah outshined the other schools because of the individual personalities of the community. The entire staff, administration, students, and parents were committed to children. They were not just committed to special needs students, but to all children. The students at Savannah profit greatly from the exposure to the commitment and dedication of the staff members. The positive climate and caring atmosphere are apparent as soon as one walks through the front door of the school.

4. Project Homecoming began with actions, policies, and procedures. The District established criteria for selection as a "Homecoming" school and a timeline for implementing the program. The District also set some minimum guidelines for implementing the program within a school. There also was a schedule of training programs for the staff of each "Homecoming" school. Support staff was available for technical assistance from the central office. All of the established actions, policies,
and procedures gradually diminished or disappeared as budget cuts were implemented. The program coordinator resigned and moved to another position. The schools already implementing the program have continued to do so in various degrees. The District is in the process of re-grouping.

5. Much of the achievement of the four goals set for Project Homecoming were not due to the District’s policies or to Project Homecoming itself, but due to the work done spontaneously in the schools.
APPENDIX A
LOGO INFORMATION
Project Homecoming Logo

Bell

The logo tells the story of Project Homecoming. The bell symbolizes the ringing in of a new era in the relationship between regular education and special education. Rather than students with special needs being placed outside the regular education class, special education will increasingly be supporting teachers and students within the regular class.

School House

The second symbol is the one-room school house inside the line of the bell. In the old days, there was just one system of education that worked for all students. Everyone learned together in the one-room school, regardless of their abilities or differences. Project Homecoming creates an unified system of education which works well for all students—including those with disabilities.

The focus of this project is on breaking down barriers and boundaries between special education and the general education system. Talents and abilities of individuals working in the two separate systems are pooled and shared to benefit the learning of all students.

Motto

Finally the logo includes the motto of Project Homecoming—Where learning is right at home. This reflects the importance the project places on the neighborhood-school concept of education and the value of building a sense of community and caring among students on each campus. All students residing within a school’s attendance zone become the shared responsibility of the entire school community. The
school becomes like a home in which all family members help and look out for one another.
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SUMMARY MOUNTVIEW SECOND GRADE
RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTION AT MOUNTVILLE ELEMENTARY

RESPONDENT  Q-#1  Q-#2  Q-#3  Q-#4  Q-#5

T-2

1. Many benefits - social and self esteem - requires more planning
2. N/R
3. Staff on their own - informal explanation of program by administration
4. More staff needed as support in classroom - less time for referrals to be processed
5. More staff

S-2

1. Bright students- easier to learn when everyone together
2. Learning as much or more - tolerant was mentioned by male student
3. Don't remember anything
4. Rules to prevent cheating and talking in class
5. Students need to work harder and birthday parties for all students

P-2HC

1. Chose school because of population and staff
2. Chose school because quality of education was high
3. No preparations or explanation
4. More communication and parental involvement needed
5. Establish more avenues of communication

T-3

1. Adept at meeting individual needs of the students
2. Good
3. No preparation just came in and said this is Calvin
4. N/R
5. N/R

S-3

1. Former BD students - loves school and learning - no problem
2. Learning more at MV - feels that school cares about kids - friendlier and nicer
3. Nothing
4. N/R
5. Make sure administrators, teachers and kids know the importance of learning to read
Mr. Casey Kabob
Savannah Elementary School
650 Georgia Ave.
Dallas, Texas 75000

Dear Mr. Kabob:

My name is Sharron A. Caraker and I am a doctoral student at Andrews University. I was an employee of Dallas Independent School District for two years.

My interest in "Project Homecoming" has led me to my doctoral dissertation. I have been cleared through the Research Department and through Freda Green in the Special Education Department to begin my research.

I plan to do a descriptive multiple case study of three elementary schools in "Project Homecoming." One school has been selected from the original group of schools, one school from the second year and a third from 1992-1993 school year.

Your school has been selected as one of these sites. This decision was made after consulting with Freda Green. We are interested in schools who have been successful in including special education students into regular education programs. Basically, I am interested in the actions, policies, and procedures which aided the successful implementation of the inclusion program within your school. My methods of gathering information will be observations, interviews and selected documents.

I am planning to be in Dallas next week and would like to set up a time to bring you a copy of my proposal, talk with you for about thirty minutes and spend most of the day just observing classes and the school in general. As a principal myself, I know that there are a lot of demands made upon your time, I plan to be as organized as possible so that I will not need more than thirty minutes of your time. The rest of the day, I will plan to be a part of the woodwork.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Dear Mrs. Jones,

My name is Sharon A. Caraker. I am a doctoral student and an elementary principal in Indiana. I was a DISD special education teacher before I went back to school to complete my doctoral work. My dissertation research is centered on schools involved in "Project Homecoming." The district has chosen three schools that are doing a good job in this area as determined by standardized test scores and other criteria. Your child’s school is one of those schools.

I observed in your child's school on February 24. I am planning to interview the staff on April 14, and interview selected students April 15. Your child was selected to participate in the interview process. He or she was chosen because his or her classroom is one I observed. I am interested in interviewing two "Homecoming" students and two other students from each class.

The focus of the interview will be to discover what your child thinks is good about his or her program; what was done to make his or her transition to inclusion an easy process; and what else needs to be done to make inclusion more effective. I would also like to interview you as the child's parent.

I need to have your permission to interview your child. The interview will take place during P.E. time on April 15. Also, let me know when I can contact you to interview you. I will be available in the evening April 14, and April 15 and Saturday April 16 all day. I can also interview you by phone. An addressed envelope is enclosed so that you may return your signed permission form.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Sharon A. Caraker
I. __________________________________________ give my permission to
Sharron A. Caraker to interview my child, ________________________
at Savannah Elementary School as part of the research being conducted for her
doctoral dissertation.
I will be available ________________________ to be interviewed.
date/time
Circle one please.

   I would prefer to be interviewed at home.
   I would prefer to be interviewed at the school.
   I would prefer to be interviewed by phone.

   Phone #________

Thank you for your cooperation.
Mr. Casey Kabob
Savannah Elementary School
650 Georgia Ave.
Dallas, Texas 75000

Dear Mr. Kabob:

I want to thank you for all of your cooperation I experienced while I was at Savannah Elementary School. I appreciate the time you were able to give me and the way your staff was very accommodating. I realize that it is not easy having another person in your classroom when you’re not sure of what they are doing. I was able to gain valuable information not only for my research, but also to bring back to my own school and hopefully, convince my staff to implement.

I will be returning to, April 14, 1994. On that day I will be interviewing the staff. The interviews will take place during P.E. time. I need to interview all of the teachers whose classroom I observed, but I would also like to include any of the other teachers on that grade level who has an opinion—negative or positive—about “Project Homecoming” to also participate.

The schedule of interview times for staff members:

- 6th grade - 8:45 - 9:30
- 5th grade - 9:30 - 10:15
- 4th grade - 10:15 - 11:00
- 3rd grade - 11:00 - 11:45
- 2nd grade - 12:00 - 12:45
- 1st grade - 2:00 - 2:45

I will also need to schedules times to speak with the custodian, the cafeteria manager and the P.E. teacher as well as the special education staff.

I will be interviewing the students April 15, 1994 at the P.E. time. I would like to do this in the same classrooms if possible, unless you have a better location in mind. The students to be interviewed are:

- 6th grade - D.C.
  - C.R.
  - D.M.
  - J.R.

- 5th grade - M.B.
  - C.F.
  - F.L.
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Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sharron A. Caraker
REFERENCE LIST


Oberti v. Board of Educ. 995 F.2d 1204 (3rd. Cir. 1993)


VITA

NAME  
SHARRON A. CARAKER

EDUCATION  
Ed.D. - Educational Administration  

M.Ed. - Educational Administration  
East Texas State University  8/92

M.Ed. - Special Education  
East Texas State University  5/91

BA. - Elementary Education - Special Education  
Purdue University  6/66

EXPERIENCE

SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR  - Director of Special Education for Educational Service Unit #12. Served as a consultant and supervisor for the special education programs in 14 school districts. Prepared the budgets, financial reports and required paper work. Interacted with superintendents and boards of education on a daily basis. 9/94 to Present

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL  - Principal of a private school pre-kindergarten through eighth grade in Northern Indiana. Experience in site-based management, long-range planning as well as implementing new programs. 8/92 to 9/94.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER  - Dallas Independent School District, Dallas, Texas.  8/90 to 7/92. Planned and implemented the educational and behavioral programs for special education students. Trained and supervised the classroom paraprofessional.

MANAGER OF THE WORK ACTIVITY CENTER  - Dallas Center, Dallas, Texas.  7/88 to 8/90. Developed the vocational and educational programs for mentally retarded individuals. Supervised the implementation of these programs by six staff members. Served as case manager for the individuals in the WAC. Participated in intra-agency and inter-agency staffings.

DAY SCHOOL OWNER AND DIRECTOR  - Cowboy Country Day School, Dallas, Texas.  6/81 to 2/88. Owner/director of a licensed facility for 119 children. Directed the daily business activities including.
budgeting, payroll, marketing, staff development and curriculum development.

PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER - White Rock North Day School, Dallas, Texas. 9/80 to 5/81 Developed and implemented the curriculum for a class of three year olds.

LODGE OWNER AND OPERATOR - Daven Haven Lodge Grand Lake, Colorado. 1/79 to 9/80. Experience in marketing, reservations, staff development and personnel, restaurant and bar management, and coordinating convention and tour group activities.

DAY SCHOOL OWNER AND DIRECTOR - Cowboy Country Day School, Dallas, Texas. 8/77 to 12/78. Directed the daily business activities including budgeting, payroll, marketing, staff development and curriculum development. When I purchased the school, the enrollment was 18 and in thirteen months it increased to 158 children with a waiting list.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER - Atlanta City Schools, Atlanta, Georgia. 2/70 to 6/70 and 10/74 to 3/75. Special education teacher for primary and intermediate age children. On both occasions, established class and developed the programs.

SUMMER RECREATION SPECIALIST - Bibb County Association for Retarded Citizens, Macon, Georgia. Summer 1970 worked with retarded citizens of all ages.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER - Bibb County Schools, Macon, Georgia. 8/68 to 6/69. Established classroom and programs for primary and intermediate age special education students.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER - Norfolk City Schools, Norfolk, Virginia. 9/67 to 2/68. Developed a program for junior and senior high special education students.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER - Tidewater Association for Retarded Citizens, Norfolk, Virginia. Taught pre-school special education and was a camp counselor during the summer.