DOMINICAN
UNIVERSITY
of CALIFORNIA

Dominican Scholar

2015

Teaching Students with Special Needs in a Local Catholic K-8 School Setting

Allison A. Pheatt
Dominican University of California

Teaching Students with Special Needs

in a Local Catholic K-8 School Setting

Allison A. Pheatt

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Education

School of Education and Counseling Psychology

Dominican University of California

San Rafael, CA

May 2015

Signature Sheet

This thesis, written under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor and approved by the Chair of the Master's program, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Allison A. Pheatt   May 1, 2015

Candidate

Madalienne F. Peters, Ed.D.   May 1, 2015

Thesis Advisor

Elizabeth Truesdell, Ph.D.   May 1, 2015

Program Chair

Acknowledgments

It would have been impossible for me to get to this point without the help and direction of the exceptional faculty at Dominican University. First and foremost, Dr. Madalienne Peters, you helped me to destroy the power of the blank screen and you helped me keep my head above water when at times I felt like I would drown. Mrs. Suzanne Roybal, you are a wealth of knowledge and your assistance was greatly appreciated. Thank you to Dr. Elizabeth Truesdell for inspiring me to be a teacher leader within my school community. Dr. Billye Brown and Dr. Rande Webster brought the significance of special education to the forefront of my studies while I was enrolled in the credential program. Thank you for your tireless support in the world of special education and for the support behind me as I began my journey within that world.

Secondly, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my professional colleagues that I now call my friends, Mrs. Maureen Stillman and Mrs. Kim Orendorff. Your help and expertise never went unnoticed and it is because of you that I seek to further my own learning in education and special education. Thank you for establishing and being a part of a nurturing school and professional community.

Lastly, thank you in large part to my family and friends. To my parents, Jeff and Ginny - you were my first teachers. You taught me how to help others. Thank you for preparing me to become a teacher for and with others. To my siblings, Kendra, Kelly, and Rob – every day you inspire me to be the best teacher I can be. I chose to enter the field of education because of your amazing examples. Finally, thank you to my best friends, Brian Skinner and Dr. Katie Sears - you both push me beyond my limits and you are the reason I continue to succeed.

Table of Contents

Abstract

Many students with special needs are enrolled in private, Catholic schools and are included in the general education classroom. In most cases, these schools do not have the necessary resources or information on how best to serve these students. The purpose of this study is to evaluate a local K-8 Catholic school's current special education program(s) and to document strategies and services that can be implemented in this school setting to serve students with special needs. A review of the literature revealed that teachers in a Catholic school setting are not aware of how to work with and best serve students with special needs. This study involves survey results from teachers, administrators, and support staff in an effort to help support all students and their needs at a local Catholic elementary school. Results indicated that teachers were not especially educated or well qualified in special education instruction. Almost half of the teachers, administrators, and support staff felt 'somewhat prepared' to teach students with special needs. Participants in this study desire more trainings and information on students' specific disabilities and how best to work with these students in their classrooms. This study included a small and closed sample site. Only one school's experience with special needs students and opinion of admitting students with special needs was documented. Implications of this study include the staffing of more qualified and trained teachers and more resources available to the students and teachers.

Chapter 1 Introduction

When I chose to enter the teaching credential program at Dominican University in 2010, I chose to participate in the Dual Credential program, earning both a Multiple Subject and an Education Specialist credential. My thoughts initially were to make myself marketable in the competitive teaching field. The two-year journey I was about to commence did, in fact, make me a desirable candidate in the interview room, but more importantly, made me a better teacher in the classroom.

I accepted my first teaching position in June 2012 at a K-8 Catholic elementary school. At the time, there was a part-time K-5 resource teacher and a part-time middle school resource teacher. Though a resource program existed, it was not and is still not comparable to the special education services found at the local public schools. Some qualifying students have been assessed through the local education agency (LEA) and received an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Family interest in having children attend a Catholic school leads parents to place students at Saint Elementary School, a pseudonym. For the purpose of this study, all names have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

Statement of Problem

Many students attending Catholic schools, or other faith-based schools, do not receive the same special education services a student may receive at a local public school. These students often go undiagnosed and receive minimal special education instruction. Students matriculate through the grades, receiving below average grades, and often times 'get lost in the crowd' and 'coast by.' In some instances, Catholic schools do not employ well-qualified teachers trained in special education instruction. The parents of struggling students, likewise, are not informed of

the rights their children have as students. Parents seek outside assistance, in the form of tutoring or after-school programs, and have to pay out of pocket for these expenses. Students should be able to receive all the necessary instruction and tools in one place.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore and collaborate with faculty and administrators to create a Catholic school plan of action or model on how best to serve the needs of students with learning differences. Traditionally, Catholic or other faith-based schools focus on academic rigor and religious values, and not necessarily on specific learning needs of struggling students. In the history of Catholic schools, special services for students with special needs do not exist. The overall population of students enrolled in Catholic schools in the San Francisco area is homogeneous. Children of college graduates and middle-class families at the high socio-economic level and good health make up the student demographic. In recent years, as education practices and basic rights of children are publicized, administrators and teachers have worked to become educated in reaching and teaching all of their students. Parents are increasingly aware of their children's educational needs and are involved in the educational planning process. As this gradual enlightening continues, educational leaders are examining ways to structure academic services for struggling students.

Research Question

How can a local Catholic K-8 elementary school serve students with special needs? For the purpose of this study, the key terms are defined as follows.

Definitions

Catholic school(s) refers to any parochial school run and maintained by the Roman Catholic Church. Catholic schools are organized within dioceses or archdioceses under the leadership of the local bishop or archbishop. A diocese or archdiocese refers to the geographic region of the Catholic Church under the jurisdiction of a Roman Catholic bishop. Support staff refers to all those employed by a school that are not full-time classroom teachers. Examples of which include, but are not limited to, a physical education teacher, a K-5 science teacher, instructional aides, an art teacher, the school counselor, and administrative assistant(s) and secretary. To serve the needs of students refers to the act of assisting students in their preferred or most successful mode of learning. Serving students in the classroom requires teachers to attend to and pay attention to the various strengths and areas of concern for each individual student because no student is the same. A student with special needs refers to a student that has certain educational requirements due to learning difficulties, emotional or behavioral difficulties, or a physical disability. In this study, a student with special needs may also be referred to as a struggling student. At different times in this study and in the review of the literature, educational legalities and mandates are mentioned. IDEA is an abbreviation and refers to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. FAPE, a principle under IDEA, is an abbreviation for free appropriate public education. LRE, another principle under IDEA, stand for the least restrictive environment. This means that students should be served in the general education classroom whenever possible. The Local Education Agency (LEA) refers to the local public school and its governing district. The term Specific Learning Disabilities or Difficulties (SLD) refers to a disorder in one or more of the central nervous system processes involved in perceiving, understanding and/or using concepts through verbal language or nonverbal ways. This disorder

reveals itself with a deficit in one or more of the following areas: attention, reasoning, processing, memory, communication, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, coordination, social competence and emotional maturity.

Theoretical Rationale

The laws of special education in the United Stated are where and what they are today because of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s in our country's history. "Separate but equal" was deemed not equal in 1954, thus sparking the mandate for inclusion in education settings. The Civil Rights movement, specifically *Brown v. Board of Education* in the educational setting, gave rights to Black students, and in turn, students with special needs. Turnbull, Stowe, and Huerta, (2007) state "….to separate Black students (students with disabilities) from other of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race (disability) generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone" (p. 16). The *Brown* decision, not only victorious for the societal rights of ethnic minorities, gave rise to the right to education for all students with special needs and to other rights for people with disabilities. *Brown* exhibits that the standards of equal protection and due process under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments play a considerable role in a child's education.

Assumptions

A majority of general education teachers have not been exposed to or versed in the world of special education. Most teachers have not been formally trained in classroom interventions, nor have they been formally educated in working with students with specific learning needs.

Parents in the community, those parents of students with special needs, often do not know how to help their children. Specifically, parents do not know what services are available to them and what they are entitled to. In the K-8 setting, students are still learning how they themselves learn, and often times this is further complicated by the fact that some students have a specific learning need. Families choose to send their children to faith-based schools because these schools provide a moral education and a greater sense of community.

Background and Need

Durow (2007) surveyed nineteen superintendents at Midwestern diocesan schools to review their mission statements about including special needs students at their schools. Along with a confidentiality statement, Durow included in his survey cover letter his research questions. He found that sixteen out of the nineteen diocesan representatives answered that it was in their mission to make a Catholic education available to all students that wanted one.

Eigenbrood (2005) found in his survey of ten Midwestern county Catholic schools that teachers were untrained and that parents were uninformed. Eigenbrood identified IDEA of 1990 and the Commission of Catholic Bishops. In other research, he indicates that private, Catholic schools have tried to gather information to help students with special needs. Eigenbrood created a survey that was sent to schools in ten rural counties in a Midwestern state. In addition to the rural, faith-based schools, he also sent the surveys to the faith-based schools' local public schools. The survey required principals to indicate the level of special education at their schools. Both the nonpublic and public schools to refer to a pullout program serving students with mild disabilities used the term "resource room". The survey failed to include the characteristics or demographic of students served and their specific needs or disabilities.

Summary

The profession of teaching is an ongoing, ever-changing craft and profession. As teachers learn more about their student populations, they must evaluate their own teaching practices. Teachers have to work with students with special needs and all needs. It makes no difference what type of school setting a teacher is at, all types of students and their needs must be met in accordance with the civil liberties entitled to us in the United States Constitution. As teachers become more sophisticated and more educated in the world of special education, they must closely examine students' abilities and disabilities, and then the teacher's own abilities on how best to meet the needs of every student in their classroom. Teachers need to bring thinking to the table and learn how to interact with one another, how to collaborate with parents, and how to attend to the students' areas of concern.

Brown v. Board of Education paved the way for all students to be entitled to equal educational rights. 'All students' includes those who have been diagnosed with a learning disability and those that may not have a formal diagnosis but require extra assistance. As the research suggests, Catholic schools make it part of their mission, due to IDEA, to give a Catholic education to any individual that wanted one. However, if these Catholic schools enroll a student with special needs, in most cases teachers are not adequately prepared or trained.

Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

Historical Context

Catholic schools are part of the oldest educational organizations in the United States. Marks (2002) reports that Catholic schools began as early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the form of college seminaries and academies. Later in the nineteenth century, the parochial, or Catholic parish, school was founded as more immigrants came to the United States.

Ramirez (1996) authored a manual that presents a model for designing and carrying out a program to provide special services to student with special needs within general education classrooms in Catholic elementary schools. At the time this manual was written, the model was being implemented in Oakland, California. This model is now almost 20 years old, but can be used as a starting point for research and future action plans. The model includes three components: a Diocesan-wide structure, appropriate and applicable staff development, and local school site-base programs.

Review of the Academic Literature

The Need for Support.

Frabutt and Speach (2012) investigated the perspectives on school mental health needs, professional development in relation to school mental health, and areas of successful practice by Catholic elementary school principals in the United States. The study draws on survey data producing some of the first representative estimates of mental health services and staffing in private schools. Principals from 346 elementary schools expressed their views on three main areas: challenges in meeting student mental health needs, what types of professional

development they would like, and the successful types of practice that are currently working in their schools. In response to the question, "What are your school's greatest needs in regard to supporting students' socio-emotional wellness and mental health?" Thirty-two percent of the responses referenced 'personnel' and 7% noted 'training and awareness.' Participants were asked a second survey item which required identification of the most important professional development needs of their faculty and staff. Of the 245 principal respondents, the most frequently cited areas were specific training, 34%; general training, 22%; and awareness and identification of mental health issues, 12%. When asked what the most successful approach or strategy that their schools is using or has used to improve the mental health of students, 33% of the 244 total principal respondents indicated 'Specific Program or Curriculum.' Within these programs or interventions, ADD/ADHD support groups, differentiated instruction, intervention assistance team or student support team, response to intervention, and tutoring were included.

Vatican II.

Pope John XXIII and the Catholic Church recognized a change in the social conditions, and therefore, between 1962 and 1965, the Vatican Council II was held with 2,500 bishops in Rome. Fisher (2010) used many passages from the Holy Bible and quotes from Vatican II to present the case that every human made by God is equal, and thus should be served equally. The author of this article reports data collected from Catholic schools in Australia, such as students with disabilities enrolled in Australian Catholic schools has risen from 6,687 in 1991 to 23,215 in 2008. This article is mostly an opinion piece and Fisher raises important talking points, which include the image of God and the preferential option for the disabled or educational needy. Although Fisher does not speak to how to best serve struggling student in Catholic school settings, his convictions are clear and well heard.

National Conference (Council) of Catholic Bishops.

In 1972, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement on Catholic schools 'to teach as Jesus did,' to teach a message of hope, to build community, and to serve all people. Everyone is made in the reflection of the divine. We are called to include them as part of our society. School settings should have a faith-based full inclusion approach with all students.

Defiore (2006) states that Catholic school principals are seeking to improve their schools' special education programs because they dislike informing families that they must leave the school because their child(ren) would be better served at a different school. The author begins by reviewing the 'National Context' of the issue by detailing the education laws, such as IDEA and FAPE. Next, the author references the 1972 National Conference of Catholic Bishops' document and issuance *To Teach As Jesus Did*, which explains our moral obligation to accept everyone, regardless of disability.

> The right of the handicapped to receive religious education adapted to their special needs also challenges the ingenuity and commitment of the Catholic community. Planning is essential to create a unified system of religious education accessible and attractive to all the People of God. We must continue to explore new ways of extending the educational ministry to every Catholic child and young person. In doing so, we must open the possibility of new forms and structures for all Catholic education in years ahead (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB, 1972, para. 99).

Although the *To Teach As Jesus Did* (USCCB, 1972) document did not explicitly state a requirement for special education in Catholic schools, it did acknowledge the individual's right to receive a religious education that is adapted or modified to his or her 'special needs' within church programs. Huppe (2010) makes the contention that the intent in this document included Catholic schools since many Catholic children receive a significant portion of their Catholic and religious education in the Catholic school setting.

Six years after the publishing of *To Teach As Jesus Did*, the United States Conference of

Catholic Bishops published a pastoral statement in 1978 entitled *Pastoral Statement of U.S.*

Catholic Bishops on Handicapped People (USCCB, 1978), which was later updated in 1989 as

Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities (USCCB, 1989). This

document served as a formal commitment to serve those with disabilities a priority, stating that

> diocese might make their most valuable contribution in the area of education by
> supporting the training of all clergy, religious, seminarians and lay ministers by focusing
> special attention on those actually serving individuals with disabilities. Catholic
> elementary and secondary schools teachers could be provided by the diocese in-service
> training in how to best integrate students with disabilities into programs of regular
> education (USCCB, 1989, para. 31).

PL 94-142 / IDEA.

In November of 1975, President Ford signed the Education for All Handicapped Children

Act, also known as Public Law (PL) 94-142 (U.S. Department of Education, 1975). By doing so,

President Ford opened the door for all students and children identified with disabilities the right

to a public education. This act was later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

IDEA calls for all students with disabilities to be given a free and appropriate public education

(FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Turnbull, Stowe, and Huerta (2007) restate

the laws of IDEA in their book by saying "if a free appropriate public education is available to a

child in an LEA or other public agency but the parent chooses to place the child in a private

school, the LEA is not required to pay for the private school education" (p. 66). The lack of

responsibility of payment does not mean there is no responsibility by the LEA completely, in fact,

"the LEA must make special education and related services available to the child" (Turnbull, et

al., 2007, p. 66). This means that if sought out by the parents, the LEA is responsible for the

assessment and recommendation of the student. In the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004, the LEA of location (the LEA in which the private school is located) became the responsible agency for engaging in timely and meaningful consultation with private school representatives, conducting a thorough and complete child find process and providing fair and reasonable services for students with disabilities.

Prior to 2004, the school district, or LEA, where these children's parents resided in was the responsible agency. Under IDEA, LEAs are asked to and responsible for spending a balanced and fair share of their federal funds on students enrolled in non-public schools. As long as the LEA spends the minimum amount of federal funds on students enrolled in non-public schools, they have met their lawful requirement. Most individual state policies reflect the federally mandated regulations. However, recent state legislation in Rhode Island requires the LEA of location to provide a service plan but requires the LEA of residence to provide the services identified in the service plan (Sopko, 2013).

Russo, Massucci, Osborne, and Cattaro (2002) published a reference guide that examines special education, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and their implications for educators in Catholic schools. Chapters 1 through 4 look at special education, Section 504, and IDEA from a legal perspective. A brief history of special education is provided and several key court cases are discussed. The guide examines what Section 504 addresses and what must be done in compliance with it, including admissions examinations and standards as well as service plans. Ten key issues under IDEA are then addressed, including private and residential school placement, extended school year programs, related services, assistive technology, and discipline. Chapters 5 through 8 examine special education as it affects religiously affiliated non-public schools. In light of the

197 IDEA amendments and the 19 regulations, the guide addresses how these institutions fit within the law's requirements. Several key issues specifically facing Catholic school administrators are addressed, including working with parents and public school officials, providing staff development, and assessing the classroom setting. Appendices contain the United States Bishops' statement on individuals with disabilities, selected relevant federal regulations, and a list of useful special education websites.

Cookson and Smith (2011) refer to the Congress passed Public Law 94-142, later renamed IDEA. The authors review the literature by Eigenbrood (2005) and summarizes that Eigenbrood urges Christian school principals to follow the same mandates that are required of public schools. The purpose of this study by Cookson and Smith was to examine the experiences of seven different Christian or Catholic school principals as they start to develop Special Education programs at their respective school sites. The school principals were all male and were among a sample of Christian school principals located in suburban communities in the state of Michigan. Research questions for this study are as follows: (1) what were the experiences of Christian school principals as they were involved in considering and implementing Special Education programs? , (2) What factors or events were influential in the principals' experiences? , (3) Were there any biblical considerations that were influential when considering the implementation of a Special Education program? , and (4) were there any legal considerations that were influential when considering the implementation of a Special Education program? Data were collected by interviews that were recorded and later transcribed.

Long and Schuttloffel (2006) begin by quoting a homily by Pope John Paul II and statements from the bishops of the United States. The authors reference a document published by the U.S. Catholic bishops, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary*

Schools in the Third Millennium, and give positive feedback to the increasing number of Catholic schools principals and faculty for taking steps in including students with disabilities into their schools. This article concludes by reinforcing Catholic and Christian ideals stating that each person is a reflection of God, we all belong to a community of faith, and it is mandatory for members of that community to work together to include those with disabilities into society. As stated in the title "rationale" this article is opinion and does not present research data or findings.

Scanlan (2009) applies a moral context to analyze the legal obligations of Catholic schools under Section 504 to serve students with special needs. The author makes the argument that Catholic schools that follow Catholic social teaching should start by developing inclusive service delivery to meet students' special needs and their legal obligations grow. This article does not report any data, but includes a collection of various applicable special education legalities. The article concludes by describing the learning consultant model, a system of service delivery that balances these moral and legal duties.

Statistical Information

The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA, 2014) data website includes various types of data related to Catholic schools around the United States, including enrollment, number of schools, and the make-up of the professional staff. In December 2014, the total student enrollment for Catholic schools is 1,974,578, including both elementary/middle schools and secondary schools. Of those enrolled, 19.8% are racial minorities and 16.4% are non-Catholic. At the time data were published, there were 6,594 Catholic schools open. Of the 151,351 full-time staff, 96.8 are laypersons, while the rest are clergy members. Students identified with special needs are not included in the data.

Crowley and Wall (2007) begin by presenting data from 2002 from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stating that 7% of the children in Catholic schools have been identified as having a disability that impedes their learning in the classroom. After reviewing laws under IDEA and views of the Catholic bishops, the authors give a historical background of the use of paraeducators, or classroom aides or teaching assistants. The uses of paraeducators in the school setting are primarily within special education programs. Next, the authors present the case for a need for 'well-prepared paraeducators in Catholic schools' (p. 512) and reports that the Catholic University of America was awarded a grant to provide a program to educate paraeducators before the work in the field.

According to the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health (2015), 613,061

Marin County	Percent
Autism	7.8%
Deaf	N/A
Deaf-Blindness	N/A
Emotional Disturbance	9.1%
Hard of Hearing	2.5%
Intellectual Disability	4.8%
Learning Disability	34.5%
Multiple Disability	0.4%
Orthopedic Impairment	1.5%
Other Health Impairment	11.0%
Speech or Language Impairment	27.1%
Traumatic Brain Injury	N/A
Visual Impairment	0.9%

students were enrolled in a Special Education program in the state of California in 2013. Of those, 3,195 students in Marin County were enrolled. Marin County was chosen because it is the county in which a particular K-8 Catholic school is located. The five largest percentages of students in Special Education in Marin County were eligible to receive services under the

following categories: Learning Disability (34.5%), Speech or Language Impairment (27.1%), Other Health Impairment (11%), Emotional Disturbance (9.1%), and Autism (7.8%). Other categories included Deaf, Deaf-Blindness, Hard of Hearing, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disability, Orthopedic Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visual Impairment.

Students in Need of Specialized Services.

Specific Learning Disabilities.

"Specific learning difficulties is an umbrella term which indicates that children display discrepancies across their learning, exhibiting areas of high competence alongside areas of significant difficulty" (MacIntyre & Deponio, 2003, p. 1). A student diagnosed with a 'specific learning disability' typically demonstrates his or her disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes. The category of 'Specific Learning Disabilities' does not include learning disabilities that are a result of hearing, visual, or orthopedic disabilities, emotional disturbances, or intellectual disabilities. A deficit occurs in the misinterpretation of or use of both spoken and written language, mathematics, and reading. Eighty percent of students that qualify for special education services under Specific Learning Disability (LD) have problems in the area of reading. Students that possess deficits in phonological processing have difficulties learning to read. An example of an intervention program or specialized instruction plan would be to provide this student with instruction in phonemic awareness and give him or her plenty of opportunities for decoding practice (Harwell, 2001). The term LD includes commonly known conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, and developmental aphasia.

Speech or Language Impairment (SLI).

Students diagnosed with a speech or language impairment will exhibit varying characteristics depending on the main impairment at hand. There could also be the presence of a combination of problems. The three main impairments within the Speech or Language Impairment categorization are fluency, voice, and language. Fluency impairment involves a disruption in the flow of speech or spoken word from an individual, such as a stutter. An impairment involving voice typically involves problems in the pitch, resonance, or quality of the voice. The third SLI, language, can prove to be the most difficult in a student's learning. A language disorder typically manifests as the inability to understand and/or use words in a given situation. More specifically, an expressive language disorder involves challenges in expressing ideas and a receptive language disorder involves challenges in understanding others' ideas.

Other Health Impairments, including APD and ADHD.

One of the most common conditions or disorders that is included under the 'Other Health Impairment' (OHI) categorization is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Symptoms of ADHD include but are not limited to the following: impulsivity, distractibility, inability to sit or stand still, overreaction to stimuli, incessant talking, and inattention. Students with a confirmed diagnosis of ADHD are often described by their teachers as constantly off-task and readily distractible. They frequently get up from their seats during a time when they are expected to be seated to finish given tasks or assignments (Wong, Graham, Hoskyn, & Berman, 2008). ADHD occurs as a co-morbid condition in a significant portion of the LD population (Harwell, 2001, p. 188), which means that a lot of students in the special education programs qualify for services under two categories. Causes of ADHD include hereditary and neurological

factors. One of the most common accommodations or interventions for students with ADHD is providing a structured learning environment with limited distraction.

A second common disorder classified under OHI is an auditory processing disorder (APD). The informational website published by the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA, 2015) contains a summary of signs and symptoms of an individual diagnosed with an auditory processing disorder. In addition, the LDA provides a brief list of strategies or accommodations a teacher may employ in that classroom when teaching an individual with APD. Students who are identified with APD have trouble determining and making sense of sounds and lack the ability to tune out other environmental noises around them. Common symptoms include the difficulty in processing and remembering language-based tasks and the inability to articulate one's thoughts and ideas. Individuals with APD can often exhibit confusion with metaphors, similes, and sarcasm, as they interpret words too literally. Students with this diagnosis find it hard to remember oral directions, especially if they are required to follow a series of verbal directions.

Emotional Disturbance (ED).

Under IDEA 2004's thirteen categories of special education, the fourth special education qualification is Emotional Disturbance (ED). ED is a condition where specific characteristics exist over a long period of time that harmfully affects a student's performance. These characteristics include: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; and a tendency to develop physical symptoms or

fears associated with personal or school problems (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Students with ED also typically possess mood disorders, anxiety disorders, or ADHD. A student with ED may also have the co-occurrence of other learning disabilities, which often leads to the exacerbation of his or her behavioral problems and academic performance. Like students with ADHD, students diagnosed with ED benefit from a structured learning environment. Negative behaviors associated with ED exhibit themselves in the presence of environmental changes and in the classroom during periods of transition, especially if the following activity is not preferred. Teachers of students with ED should be mindful to disruptions and should clearly post and state each day's schedule in advance.

Autism and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Pervasive developmental disorders (PDD), including the more widely known autism and Asperger syndrome, present themselves in varying severity. Commonly referred to as Autism Spectrum Disorders, it is not a disease but a varying 'spectrum' of characteristics that differ in intensity and severity across the typical development pattern (Lawson, 2001, p. 30). Research is continuing and the cause is associated with brain development. Autism is not a disease, it is a developmental disposition. Common characteristics of those diagnosed with ASD include, but are not limited to, behavioral problems due to the heightened sensitivity to sensory stimuli or the inability to express one's feelings, repetitive movements, unusually focused interests and sensory interests, difficulties with social and emotional responsiveness, and delayed language development. Some Autistic individuals are echolalic (those that repeat spoken words) and use idiosyncratic language such as pronominal reversal (reversal of personal pronouns, e.g. I and you).

Summary

There have been many changes in the history of Catholic schools in the Unites States in order to provide the same educational opportunities for everyone, regardless of race, background, or ability. In addition to legal obligations or federal programs, the Catholic Church recognized that changes in our society and the method of delivery that once worked needs modification. Members of the Catholic Church are called to serve everyone equally as service to God. Catholic schools need to support in order to best educate students with learning difference. Though the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has established a call to action, follow-through is insufficient. Principals and teachers indicate that there is a lack of training in special education.

Chapter 3 Method

Research Approach

The study is a qualitative teacher action research project that involved collecting information from teachers, administrators, and support staff. The research study addressed the need to identify needs of the teacher in order to build a model for a resource program that serves students with special needs in the Catholic elementary school setting. The tools used were a survey questionnaire and observations of the current resource program. I have asked permission from the principal to send out a survey invitation. The survey was taken on a voluntary basis. I have asked permission from the K-8 resource teacher to observe her classroom.

Participants

Participants were twenty teachers, administrators, and support staff from a local K-8 Catholic elementary school. For resource program and classroom observations, the researcher observed the school site's current resource teacher and her classroom environment.

Observations

The researcher chose to observe the current special education program at a specific Catholic elementary school. At the time of the observation, Saint Elementary School had one full-time (five days per week) K-8 resource teacher and a part-time K-5 resource teacher (one day per week). These two teachers work with the homeroom and specialist teachers to align a schedule of when to meet with students. For example, the middle school students that are part of Saint Elementary School's resource program visit the resource classroom for assistance during a

period when their classmates would be in their foreign language class. In addition to the flexible scheduling, teachers sometimes send students times other than the designated time to take a test or to finish an assignment.

The researcher found that the resource classroom had an open floor plan with two tables in the center of the room. Both tables allow for group work or student and teacher collaboration. One of the tables is located closer to a whiteboard to provide guided instruction. The teacher's desk is located close to the main classroom door and it one of the first things you see upon entering the room. In the back of the room, under a bulletin board that displays inspirational posters, is a long table with desktop computers. In other areas of the room are filing cabinets and bookshelves.

Ethical Standards

This paper adheres to the ethical standards for protection of human subjects of the American Psychological Association (2010). Additionally a research proposal was submitted and reviewed by the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), approved and assigned number 10351.

Access and Permissions

The researcher chose to survey teachers, administrators, and support staff and to observe a resource program at the school site where she is currently employed. The participants were colleagues and people the researcher had access to on a daily or weekly basis. The researcher asked the principal of the school site for permission to anonymously survey the faculty and staff.

The survey was completely voluntary. The researcher used her school issued email account to email her colleagues the link for the survey.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher gathered data in an anonymous survey method, using the Survey Monkey® online survey tool. An introductory email, containing a brief description of the study, was sent with the link to the survey to each member of the Saint Elementary School staff on April 13, 2015. Participants were given access to a unique web address or link and were asked to complete the questions to the best of their ability. Participants were given a one-week window to complete the survey. Three days after the initial email, only nine members of the staff had completed the survey. A second email was sent inviting all those who had not yet participated to do so. The survey tool was closed on April 19, 2015.

The researcher also chose to gather data by an observation of the current resource program and classroom. The observation guide was a checklist created by the Loudoun County Public School District in Ashburn, Virginia. The checklist asked the observer to mark the presence or evidence of certain characteristics in the learning environment, in the teacher, and in the students. Each item was categorized as clearly evident, somewhat evident, or not observed.

Data Analysis Approach

The researcher sought to analyze the common themes reported by the faculty, administrators, and support staff employed at a K-8 Catholic school. The researcher looked at similar ideas or phrases in the survey's comment section.

Chapter 4 Findings

Description of Site, Individuals, Data

Participants included the faculty, administrators, and support staff at a local, Catholic K-8 school. The researcher recruited participants through email with a link to the online, anonymous survey. The participants were assured that the survey would take less than twenty minutes to complete and that their responses would remain anonymous.

What is the highest level of school that you have completed?

Answered: 20   Skipped: 0
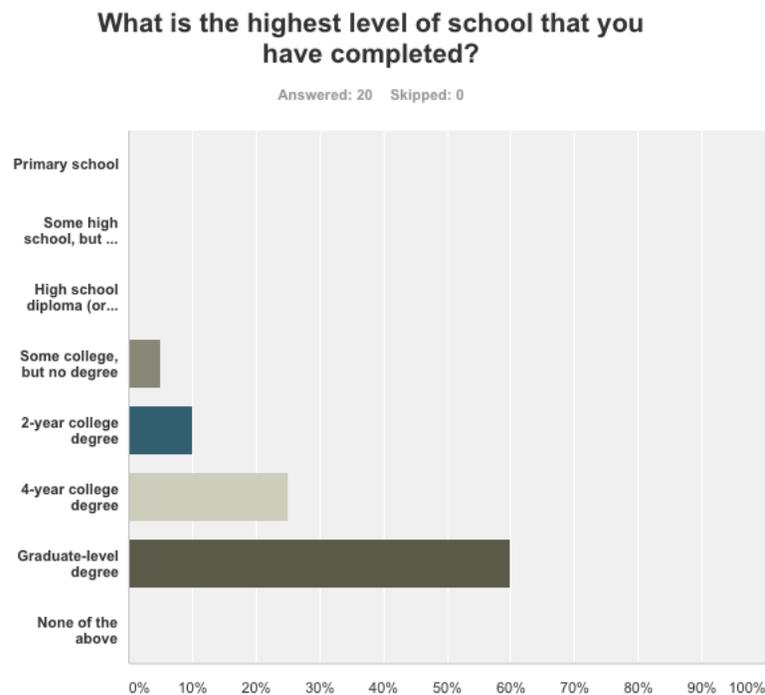
The researcher contacted twenty staff members at one local, Catholic K-8 school. Of those twenty, 95% were female. The ages of the participants ranged between 27 and 69 years old (median = 47.42). When asked their highest level of education, 60% responded that they possessed a graduate level degree. Other responses included four year college degree (25%), two year college degree (10%), and some college – no degree awarded (5%). When asked if they

possess any special training or certification in special education instruction, only 26.67% of the

total respondents (total = 15) indicated yes. Fifteen of the total 20 participants recognized that

their school site currently has special needs students enrolled. The remaining five participants

either did not answer this question or were not sure.

Fifteen out of the total 20 participants ranked how prepared they feel to teach students

with special needs. Each choice was weighted 1 through 5, and the average was taken upon final

results, indicating an average of 2.93. The percentage for each choice broke down as follows: not

prepared at all (6.7%), somewhat unprepared (26.67%), somewhat prepared (46.67%),

adequately prepared (6.67%), and very prepared (13.33%).

How prepared do you feel to teach students with special needs?

Answered: 15   Skipped: 5
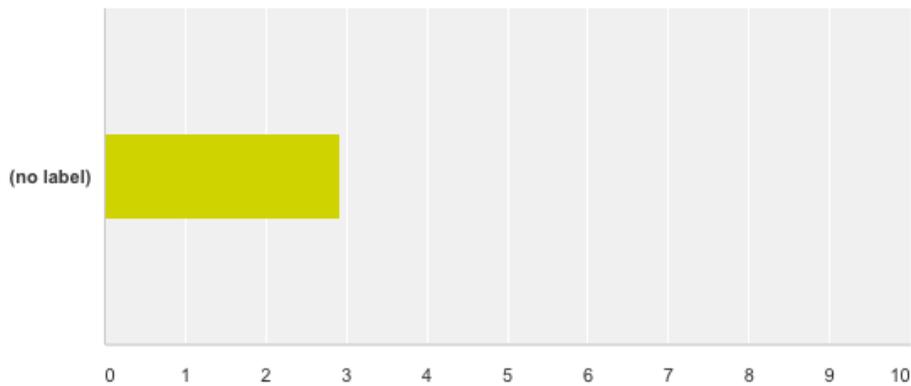
	Not prepared at all.	Somewhat unprepared.	Somewhat prepared.	Adequately prepared.	Very prepared.	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	6.67% 1	26.67% 4	46.67% 7	6.67% 1	13.33% 2	15	2.93

Themes

When asked to add additional comments to the aforementioned self-ranking, five of the total eleven comments cited their previous experiences with teaching students with special needs has influenced their current feelings of preparedness or unpreparedness. Two comments also referenced that the current, larger class sizes at their school site has led them to feel unprepared and overwhelmed. "Often, with class sizes being so large, it seems that some of the kids with obvious special needs might be better served in a smaller/more trained school setting." To teach an average sized class of thirty is tough as it is, and to have to consider every student's unique needs, especially those with learning needs, can prove difficult.

Participants of this survey were also asked to comment or describe any additional training or information that might help better serve students with special needs. Thirteen of the twenty total participants answered this prompt. The most cited 'additional training or information that might help better serve students with special needs' were more information on the specified disabilities of the students and how to best assess and incorporate these students. All thirteen responses cited at least one of the following: special classes, training, workshops, guest speakers, professional development, techniques and strategies, and school in-services. All of these responses fit under the same category of professional development.

When asked about the participants' views or opinions on admitting students with special needs to a private, faith-based school, fifteen out of the total twenty responded. Three major thematic answers were given. The first of which, with eight cited lines, stated that the admittance of students with special needs was reliant on the school's adequate resources and funding, if the school could fulfill and meet the students' needs, and upon additional trained staffing. The second most popular commentary, with four cited responses, expressed that admittance was

dependent on the student and his or her needs or disability and how severe or drastic those needs were. Lastly, with three responses, was the enthusiastic notion that we must welcome these students and be accepting of all of God's creation.

Finally, the survey's last item asked participants to comment on the obligations that administrators and teachers have in providing additional accommodations to children with special needs that are admitted to a private, faith-based school. Fourteen out of the twenty total participants answered this question. Each of the fourteen responses contained something unique and it was difficult for the researcher to connect to any major themes. Some of the stand-out responses included that the school is obligated to provide the students with his or her physical, emotional, and academic needs and all accommodations that are stipulated in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Another respondent differed in his or her opinion and expressed that the school should only be obligated to provide the resources that are available based on the school's operating budget. Other responses indicated that the school's obligation to meet the needs of these students should include proper teaching and staffing, with close work and consultation between the classroom teachers and a qualified resource specialist.

Chapter 5 Discussion /Analysis

Summary of Major Findings

Results of this study indicated that teachers were not especially educated or well qualified in special education instruction. Almost half (46.67%) of the teachers, administrators, and support staff felt 'somewhat prepared' to teach students with special needs. Teachers at Saint Elementary School, a pseudonym, clearly desire more trainings and information on students' specific disabilities and how best to work with these students in their classrooms.

The researcher found that the current faculty of Saint Elementary School has varying views on the admittance of students with special needs at their school site. Many of the faculty who completed the survey referenced the school's ability to accommodate students with special needs. Within the different responses from the teachers, the admittance of these students was solely based on what already existed at the school site. There was no mention of what should or could be done to help or develop the current special education resource program.

Comparison of Findings to the Literature

In accordance with the findings of Frabutt and Speech (2012), the results of this survey indicate that the faculty recognizes challenges in meeting the needs of students, either because of the lack of training or resources available to them. As reported by the researchers, teachers and administrators want specific types of professional development, especially related to special education and different types of disabilities.

As indicated in Eigenbrood's (2005) survey results, faith-based schools, such as the one surveyed in this study, do not have as much special education training for their teachers

compared to teachers in a local public school district. Eigenbrood cited that faith-based schools had less use of related services. In addition, the researcher's observations of the current resource program found that there was no outstanding presence of occupational therapy strategies.

Limitations/Gaps in the Research

One of the limitations in the research is the closed, small sample site. Though the proposed recommendations for a Resource Program is meant to fit one school in particular, it would have been beneficial to survey multiple private, Catholic K-8 schools in the same area, county, and diocese to see county-wide or diocesan-wide trends.

Twenty people chose to participate in this survey. However, of the twenty faculty surveyed, thirteen completed the ten-question survey completely. Questions that required an objective answer such as their demographics and preparedness ranking were easy to identify. An individual could skip other survey items that asked for comments and opinions. Participants often did not respond to items because the questions required a more subjective, thoughtful answer and took more time to complete.

Implications for Future Research

The researcher's intention in conducting the survey and observation was to determine the faculty's perception of the state of special education services in one particular Catholic school, including a teacher's training, attitudes or thoughts on teaching students with special needs, and current enrollment. Results of this study and identify that teacher training is important for the growing population of students with special needs. Further research needs to be completed in the areas of 'what' and 'how.' What types of special needs or disabilities are most prevalent in

Catholic schools? It is important to find the types of students with special needs that Catholic school teachers are most likely to have in their classrooms. Research should also include common strategies and best practices in teaching and working with these types of students.

Successful service models in place across the archdiocese or diocese, state, and country may offer school leaders insight into improving educational opportunities for children. What background knowledge or training is needed for teachers?

After gathering information about the students and the necessary training, a final area to explore is how to make it a reality for each school site. Although an archdiocese or diocese may contain several Catholic schools, each school is run differently and serves different demographics or populations. Each school also has different levels of access to educational resources, including well-qualified teachers and funding for services. In looking at the resources available at each school, it would be imperative to find ways to raise money for certain services, if needed. The parish community is considered to be members of the stakeholders in a parochial Catholic school. Further study in the parish community's attitudes and perceptions about providing students with special needs education in a Catholic school setting would also be relevant.

Overall Significance of the Study

This study has found that, in today's world, we need to and are obligated to provide an education to all students. Not only do we have a legal obligation, but also as Catholics we are called to respect and teach all of God's children and creation. Teachers in general, and especially those teachers included in this study, desire further education in the area of their students. Teachers are not always thrilled and looking forward to the next workshop or professional

development related to curriculum and textbooks, but, as indicated in the study's results, teachers are looking to gain more insight into how their students learn, more specifically with the students who possess special needs.

About the Author

Education is ever changing and full of unlimited adventures and opportunities. I will always be a part of the education world. I graduated in May 2009 from Saint Louis University, a Jesuit university in St. Louis, Missouri with a Bachelors Degree in Art History and a Certificate in Christian Intellectual Tradition in fulfillment of the Manresa Program. I earned my California Multiple Subject and Education Specialist credentials from Dominican University in May 2012. Some might say that being a teacher is in my blood. I have three older siblings that all have held or currently hold teaching positions. Watching their devotion to education really empowered me to do the same. I have been teaching for three years now. The moment I stepped foot on the campus and met the administration and faculty, it felt like home. I could not ask to spend my day with a more curious and charming group of students. Though I have had my siblings and a number of important veteran teachers inspire me growing up, it is truly my colleagues and my students that inspire me daily. The students and faculty have a mutual and supportive relationship with each other and we challenge each other in different ways.

One of the most exciting things about teaching is that every day is a different adventure and you never know what is going to happen. As my colleagues and students know, I am a meticulous planner and organizer. So much so that when you ask my students, "What does Ms. Pheatt love?" they will almost always say, "Making lists!" However, even the best taskmaster and listmaker cannot always prepare completely for a room full of 33 fourth graders in the springtime. As one of my favorite filmmakers Woody Allen said, "If you want to make God laugh, tell him about your plans." Amidst all the planning or sometimes rolling with the punches,

my students and I always find a way to joke around and a reason to laugh. There is no sweeter sound than children laughing together. Laughter bridges any sort of gap between people.

Everyday I wake up and know that I am called to be the best version of myself for these kids, and a lot of the time, it is never the same role for everyone. One of my favorite things about teaching is the ability to play many roles and wear many hats for my students: teacher, friend, confidant, nurturer, partner in learning, someone to laugh with, and maybe even someone to cry with. I have such vivid memories of my teachers growing up. I can only hope that my students will remember me in their later years. Teaching is my way of giving back to my local community. I can think of no better way to serve than to teach the future leaders. Those amazing teachers that once taught me won't be around forever, so I plan to continue teaching as long as I am able, to carry on their legacy while creating my own.

References

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Catholic School Data | NCEA. (n.d.). Retrieved December 11, 2014, from http://www.ncea.org/data-information/catholic-school-data

Cookson, G., & Smith, S. J. (2011). Establishing special education programs: Experiences of Christian school principals. *Journal of Research on Christian Education, 20*(3), 239-253. doi:10.1080/10656219.2011.623653

Crowley, A. L. W., & Wall, S. (2007). Supporting children with disabilities in the Catholic schools. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry & Practice, 10*(4), 508-522. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com

Defiore, L. (2006). The state of special education in Catholic schools. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry & Practice, 9(4),* 453-465. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com

Durow, W. P. (2007). Including and serving students with special needs in Catholic schools: A report of practices. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry & Practice, 10*(4), 473-489. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com

Eigenbrood, R. (2005). A survey comparing special education services for students with disabilities in rural faith-based and public school settings. *Remedial & Special Education, 26*(1), 16-24. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com

Fisher, A. (2010). Catholic means every child counts: The challenge of providing special education in Catholic schools. *Australasian Catholic Record, 87*(3), 296-306. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com

Frabutt, J., & Speach, G. (2012). Principals' perspectives on school mental health and wellness in U.S. Catholic elementary schools. *School Mental Health, 4*(3), 155. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com

Harwell, J.M. (2001). *Complete learning disabilities handbook.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Huppe, M. A. (2010). *Teaching all of God's children: Attitudes of Catholic school principals towards children with disabilities.* (Masters Thesis.) KU Scholar Works, University of Kansas.

Lawson, W. (2011). *The passionate mind: How people with autism learn.* Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Learning Disabilities Association of America (2015). Auditory Processing Disorder. Retrieved December 11, 2014, from http://ldaamerica.org/types-of-learning-disabilities/auditory-processing-disorder/

Long, T. J., & Schuttloffel, M. J. (2006). A rationale for special education in Catholic schools. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 9*(4), 443-452. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com

Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health. (2015). Special education enrollment. kidsdata.org. Retrieved March 24, 2015, from

http://www.kidsdata.org/topic/96/special-needs-education-enrollment-disability/table#fmt=246&loc=2,217&tf=73&ch=206,207,208,209,210,212,211,213,214,215,216,217,218&sortColumnId=0&sortType=asc

MacIntyre, C., & Deponio, P. (2003). *Identifying and supporting children with specific learning difficulties: Looking beyond the label to assess the whole child*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Marks, H. (2002). Catholic Schools. In D. Levinson, P. Cookson, Jr., & A. Sadovnik (Eds.), *Education and sociology: An encyclopedia*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). (2014). Data and information: Enrollment. Retrieved January 25, 2015 from https://www.ncea.org/data-information/catholic-school-data

Ramirez, K. M. (1996). *A service delivery model for students with special needs in the Catholic elementary school system (Guidelines for designing and implementing a support system for students with special needs)* Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED420144

Russo, C. J., Massucci, J. D., Osborne, A. G., Jr., Cattaro, G. M., & National Catholic, E. A. (2002). *Catholic schools and the law of special education: A reference guide* Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED468019

Scanlan, M. (2009). Moral, legal, and functional dimensions of inclusive service delivery in Catholic schools. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 12*(4), 536-552. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/

Sopko, K. M. (2013). Parentally placed private school students with disabilities. *Communication Disorders Quarterly, 35*(1), 28-38. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/

Turnbull, H. R., Stowe, M., & Huerta, N., (2007). *Free appropriate public education: The law and children with disabilities*. Denver, CO: Love Pub. Co.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), & National Catholic Partnership on Disability. (1989). *Pastoral statement of the United States Catholic Bishops on people with disabilities.* Retrieved March 20, 2015 from http://www.ncpd.org/views-news-policy/policy/church/bishops/pastoral

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). (1972). *To teach as Jesus did. A pastoral message on Catholic education.* Washington, DC: National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

U.S. Department of Education (2004). Building the legacy: IDEA 2004. Retrieved March 5, 2015 from http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/,root,regs,300,A,300%252E8,c,

Wong, B. Y. L., Graham, L., Hoskyn, M., Berman, J (2008). *The ABCs of Learning Disabilities.* Boston, MA: Elsevier Academic Press.

Appendix A - Survey Questions

Teacher Survey

Demographic Information

Please complete each item to the best of your ability.

＊1. What is your gender?

○ Female

○ Male

＊2. Please enter your age.

[   ]

＊3. What is the highest level of school that you have completed?

○ Primary school

○ Some high school, but no diploma

○ High school diploma (or GED)

○ Some college, but no degree

○ 2-year college degree

○ 4-year college degree

○ Graduate-level degree

○ None of the above

Special Education Training

＊4. How prepared do you feel to teach students with special needs?

Not prepared at all.	Somewhat unprepared.	Somewhat prepared.	Adequately prepared.	Very prepared.
○	○	○	○	○

Please explain:

[   ]

✱5. Do you possess any special training or certification in special education instruction?

[dropdown]

✱6. How many staff members does your school site have that are trained in special education?

- ◯ 0
- ◯ 1-2
- ◯ 3-4
- ◯ 5+

✱7. Describe any additional training or information that might help you to better serve students with special needs.

[text box]

Students with Special Needs

✱8. Does your school site currently have any students with special needs enrolled?

- ◯ Yes.
- ◯ No.
- ◯ I'm not sure.

✱9. Given the nature of private, faith-based schools, what are your views on admitting students with special needs?

[text box]

✱10. If children with special needs are admitted to a private, faith-based school, what are the obligations that administrators and teachers have in providing additional accommodations to these children?

[text box]

Appendix B - Classroom Observation Guide

Created by the Loudoun County Public Schools - Ashburn, Virginia

Clearly evident	Somewhat evident	Not observed	**Physical Environment** **In this classroom, you observe:**
☐	☐	☐	Appropriate amount of visual and auditory stimulation
☐	☐	☐	Individualized seating accommodations, as needed
☐	☐	☐	Visually separated areas
☐	☐	☐	Work: teacher directed; independent; centers
☐	☐	☐	Group instruction
☐	☐	☐	Leisure/break
☐	☐	☐	Transition/schedule
☐	☐	☐	Identifiable space for personal belongings
☐	☐	☐	An organized and orderly environment: Examples
☐	☐	☐	Placement of furniture and materials
☐	☐	☐	Containers, carts, shelving, cabinets
☐	☐	☐	Schedules
☐	☐	☐	Color-coding
☐	☐	☐	Labeling
☐	☐	☐	Adaptive equipment, as appropriate
☐	☐	☐	Student work displayed
☐	☐	☐	Evidence of the use of technology to meet student needs

Learning Environment

In this classroom, there is evidence of:

Clearly evident	Somewhat evident	Not observed	
☐	☐	☐	Curriculum, adapted or modified as needed
☐	☐	☐	Differentiated instruction to meet individual student's strengths and needs
☐	☐	☐	Adaptations to meet individual student's strengths and needs
☐	☐	☐	Use of visual strategies to augment instruction
☐	☐	☐	Pictures/picture symbols
☐	☐	☐	Checklists
☐	☐	☐	Pictorial/written directions
☐	☐	☐	Task sequences
☐	☐	☐	Highlighting
☐	☐	☐	Flip chart
☐	☐	☐	Assignments poster
☐	☐	☐	Variety of presentation materials
☐	☐	☐	Text
☐	☐	☐	Manipulatives
☐	☐	☐	Overhead projector
☐	☐	☐	Tape recorder
☐	☐	☐	Computer and software
☐	☐	☐	Card reader, as appropriate
☐	☐	☐	Writing boards
☐	☐	☐	Age appropriate materials and activities
☐	☐	☐	Meaningful, relevant, functional activities
☐	☐	☐	Opportunities for all students to participate and communicate
☐	☐	☐	Communication systems in use for individual students across

settings

☐ ☐ ☐ Group & individual learning opportunities

☐ ☐ ☐ Transitional routines

☐ ☐ ☐ Positive behavior programming

☐ ☐ ☐   Group and individual reinforcement plans

☐ ☐ ☐   Opportunities for making choices

☐ ☐ ☐ Modeling of desired behaviors

☐ ☐ ☐ Instructional language matched to student levels

☐ ☐ ☐ Minimal distractions/interruptions

☐ ☐ ☐ Assignment books/organizers/communication logs

Clearly evident	Somewhat evident	Not observed

Teacher

In this classroom, the teacher:

☐ ☐ ☐ Provides a supportive classroom environment

☐ ☐ ☐ Maintains high expectations for student achievement

☐ ☐ ☐ Effectively manages the classroom by

☐ ☐ ☐   Establishing and teaching procedures and routines

☐ ☐ ☐   Effectively using prompting and cuing techniques

     to maximize student success

☐ ☐ ☐   Promoting student independence

☐ ☐ ☐   Ensuring a safe learning environment

☐ ☐ ☐ Presents information in a systematic and clear format

☐ ☐ ☐ Models/demonstrates concepts and procedures

☐ ☐ ☐ Uses techniques to promote student success

☐ ☐ ☐ Observes, records, and assesses student progress related to IEP

goals

☐ ☐ ☐ Provides appropriate follow-up activities

☐ ☐ ☐ Provides a variety of ways for students to demonstrate knowledge

☐ ☐ ☐ Maintains momentum through

☐ ☐ ☐   Preparation

☐ ☐ ☐   Organization

☐ ☐ ☐   Delivery

☐ ☐ ☐ Collaborates with service providers and team members

☐ ☐ ☐ Implements an effective work plan for instructional team members

☐ ☐ ☐ Provides opportunities for peer interaction

Clearly evident	Somewhat evident	Not observed

Students

In this classroom, the student:

☐ ☐ ☐ Demonstrates the ability to follow classroom routines

☐ ☐ ☐ Is actively involved in a variety of learning activities

☐ ☐ ☐ Demonstrates an understanding of the instructional activity

☐ ☐ ☐ Works independently for an appropriate period of time

☐ ☐ ☐ Cooperates in a group for an appropriate period of time

☐ ☐ ☐ Uses equipment/materials appropriately

☐ ☐ ☐ Interacts with peers in both structured and unstructured

     activities