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**INCLUSION OF SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS
IN HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS:
A PROGRAM EVALUATION**

ROBIN W. HAMMER

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Field Study written by Robin W. Hammer entitled "Inclusion of Special Needs Learners in Houston County Schools: A Program Evaluation." I have examined the final copy of this Field Study for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Education Specialist, with a major in Education.

Garland E. Blair

Dr. Garland E. Blair, Major Professor

We have read this Field Study
and recommend its acceptance:

Allen Williams - JS

William E. Blair

Accepted for the Council.

Samuel B. Blair

Dean of The Graduate School

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Signature Robert W. Manna

Date 12/6/95

INCLUSION OF SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS
IN HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS:
A PROGRAM EVALUATION

A Field Study presented for the
Education Specialist
degree

Austin Peay State University

Robin W. Hammer

December, 1995

DEDICATION

This field study is dedicated to my husband Steve Hammer and my colleagues in the Houston County School system, including Elaine Hewitt and Mark Beal, all of whom have stood beside me through this latest educational endeavor.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my major professor, Dr. Garland Blair, for his input and guidance. I would also like to thank the other committee members, Dr. Al Williams and Dr. Stuart Bonnington, for their input and assistance in the preparation and presentation of this field study. Much credit must be given to the administration, faculty, and staff of the Houston County schools, including but not limited to Mark Beal, Elaine Hewitt, Cathy Harvey, and Pat Mallory for their time and efforts. Finally, my deepest thanks must go to my husband, Steve Hammer, who has encouraged me to pursue my dreams and supported me emotionally, physically, and financially as I did so.

ABSTRACT

Houston County Schools, like so many other school systems in Tennessee and across the nation, has recently introduced the practice of inclusion within its elementary schools. This research evaluated the practice of inclusion as implemented at both Erin Elementary School and Tennessee Ridge Elementary School in an effort to guide future inclusion projects within this school system. One source of data considered in evaluating the inclusion project was a questionnaire containing a Likert scale and narrative responses which was distributed to all participating faculty, staff, and regular/special education students' parents. Also analyzed were the participating special education students' Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) Total Battery Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores and attendance records for both the year prior to and the year of the inclusion project. Finally, the TCAP Total Battery NCE scores of regular education students in non-inclusion classes were compared to those of the regular education students served in an inclusion classroom in an effort to determine what negative effects, if any, this project has had on the achievement skills of those regular education students served in the inclusion classrooms.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Inclusion In Houston County Schools

Inclusion is a practice that, while not novel or unprecedented, is quickly permeating the very foundations of special and regular education. Houston County schools, like so many other school systems in Tennessee and across the nation, have begun to implement the practice of inclusion within its elementary schools. Initially, a formal request for approval as an Inclusion School for the 1994-95 school year was made (see Appendix A). Resource services in the two elementary schools would be provided within the regular classroom for a total of fourteen participating classrooms. It was proposed that forty-seven students who had previously received pull-out special education resource support would now be served by special education personnel within the regular classroom setting. Three special education teachers, three special education assistants, and eleven regular classroom teachers would be participating in the pilot program.

Prior to this formal request for permission, special education personnel visited schools which were already implementing inclusion with special education students and also attended a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) conference. Regular education teachers to participate in the first year of the project were chosen on a volunteer basis. These and other regular education teachers were offered an inservice session within the school system as well as the opportunity to participate in the State Department of Education's Summer Institute on special education.

The proposed inclusion project was then officially endorsed by Joseph Fisher, Assistant Commissioner (see Appendix B). A request was made for a summary of the

data collected as well as any additional information concerning the project to be submitted at the end of the 1994-95 school year. Additional correspondence from Joseph Fisher clarified that evaluation and accountability reports were requested by June 30, 1995. Specific questions to be addressed in the summary were also outlined (see Appendix C).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Lombardi (1994) defines inclusion as "a commitment to educate each student with a disability in the school and, when appropriate, in the class that child would have attended had the child not had a disability" (p. 7). The special education services are brought to the child rather than taking the child out of the mainstream to receive his/her services. The concept of inclusion is not new to the field of special education; previously-used terms that are similar in philosophy include normalization, mainstreaming, least restrictive environment, and integrated education (Lombardi, 1994). While the philosophy is not new, the practice of inclusion has created a division in both the fields of regular and special education.

Both legal mandates and moral principles drive the practice of inclusion. The education of students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers is one of the principles found in the Education for Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) since renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 101-476), which requires school districts to place students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment appropriate and offer a continuum of alternative placements. Inclusion is one of the options now being made in the continuum available to serve the special needs learner.

A moral assumption on which the concept of inclusion is based is that it prepares both disabled and non-disabled students to function in an integrated environment. In a democratic society we must be able to recognize other people's differences and support other people's efforts. Working together in a classroom is thought to offer both disabled and non-disabled students the opportunity to interact and learn from each other.

The perceived benefits are most evident for the disabled student. Inclusion is thought to increase self-esteem by taking away the label of "special education". Also, the disabled learners gain appropriate role models and benefit from more stimulating environments. "Only if the student is based in a regular classroom will he/she be perceived as a true member of the school community and be given a reasonable chance to develop extremely important social relationships with nondisabled students" (Brown et al., 1989, p. 10).

Non-disabled students are also thought to benefit from inclusion. "As teachers begin to individualize instruction to accommodate students with special needs, other students also benefit from the accompanying support systems" (Lombardi, 1994, p. 13). Inclusion is thought to provide non-disabled students with opportunities in leadership and peer tutoring and offer experience in accepting diversity.

The implementation of inclusion has had a far-ranging impact on educators across the country. Court cases arguing the legal justification for inclusion add fuel to the fire. Many call for the "full inclusion of all," arguing that any less would be a violation of the "least restrictive environment" mandate. Such advocates claim that all children learn best in the regular education classroom, with the goal of social equity being of greater importance than that of academic or functional skill development. Pull-out programs are considered to be a violation of the civil rights of the disabled learner because they segregate the child from his/her nonhandicapped peers. Those opposed to inclusion, advocating for special education, argue that pull-out programs provide the much-needed support to the learner with special needs. Many regular education teachers do not feel

adequately prepared nor interested in modifying their present curriculum to include these learners with additional needs while special educators feel threatened by the breakdown of their profession as it once existed. Special education, as it existed prior to inclusion, is therefore thought to best serve the needs of the disabled learners, with opportunities for social skill development built into the framework of the special education classroom curriculum (Smelter, Rasch, & Yudewitz, 1994). While it seems that opinions are divided on the practice of inclusion, the research in the field is surprisingly one-sided

Hamre-Nietupski, Hendrickson, Nietupski, and Sasso (1993) conducted a survey of 158 special education teachers in Iowa, Nebraska, and Florida with the results suggesting that teachers do believe that friendships between special education and regular education students are possible and should be facilitated by adults. The benefits of such friendships are perceived to occur for all involved, but such friendships are best facilitated if the special needs learner is educated in the regular classroom for part of the school day. More functional skills, however, are thought to be better developed within a special class setting. The teachers surveyed perceived themselves and parents as having the primary responsibility for facilitating such friendships. The most effective strategies for implementation of successful inclusion were perceived to be collaboration, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and social interaction skills training. Another study of teacher attitudes toward inclusion found that regular education teachers were most in favor of making classroom modifications for students with social deficits. Physical disabilities and academic impairments were the next favored, with behavioral deficits receiving the least amount of support for inclusion. Overall, teachers were most willing to include students

whose disabilities did not inhibit their learning or the learning of their classmates (Wilczenski, 1992).

Studies have consistently found positive gains for both the special education and non-disabled students served in inclusive environments (Lombardi, 1994). Baker, Wang, and Walberg (1994-95) reviewed three meta-analyses cited in educational literature which outline the small-to-moderate beneficial effects on the academic and social outcomes of special needs learners in inclusion versus non-inclusion settings. After the implementation of an inclusion program, West Feliciana Parish Schools (1992) reported a 50 percent decrease in the number of discipline referrals to principals in grades Pre-K through 6. In addition, 97% of special education students were promoted to the next grade. Improvements in performance on standardized assessments, improved achievement test scores, and lower absentee rates were all attributed to the implementation of an inclusionary intervention program in several Baltimore schools (Madden, Slavin, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1993).

Inhibiting the learning of classmates seems to be a primary concern of those opposed to inclusion; however, research has found no evidence that inclusion reduces the academic progress of the nondisabled student, takes teacher time and attention away from the regular classroom student, or teaches the nonhandicapped child undesirable behaviors (Staub & Peck, 1994-95). No academic or behavioral differences were found between regular education students served in an inclusive environment and those served in the traditional classroom (Sharp, York, & Knight, 1994).

In looking past the academic and functional skill development of learners, research has focused on the social benefits of inclusion. A study looking at 46 students identified as learning disabled and served in an inclusive environment found that these students were as socially-integrated and adjusted as their nonhandicapped peers (Juvonen & Bear, 1992). Inclusion is thought to decrease the negative effects of labeling while increasing the special needs learner's self-esteem (Putnam, 1993).

Research has also identified many potential social benefits for the nonhandicapped student actively involved in an inclusive environment. Such benefits include a reduced fear of human differences accompanied by an increased comfort and awareness, growth in social cognition, improvement in self-concept for both the regular and special education student, and the development of personal principles as well as warm and caring friendships (Staub & Peck, 1994-95). When surveying 21 nonhandicapped peers as to the benefits they perceived for themselves when interacting with disabled peers, the additional benefits of an increased tolerance of others and interpersonal acceptance and friendship were identified (Peck, Donaldson, & Pezzoli, 1990).

Opponents to inclusion provide theoretical support for their argument against inclusion. Some argue that research supports the idea that many special education classrooms are superior to regular classrooms for some students (Carlberg & Kavale, 1980; Madden & Slavin, 1983; Sindelar & Deon, 1979). Research has shown that many special education programs are superior to regular classrooms because they are more individualized, incorporating a variety of instructional techniques, curriculums, and motivational strategies with evaluation systems designed to track individual student

progress (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994-5). Teacher attitudes toward inclusion are heavily influenced by their evaluation of the disability in regard to its effect on learning and the type of classroom accommodations that would be necessary to serve the special needs learner within the regular classroom (Wilczenski, 1992). Inclusion is viewed by some as a short-term solution that fails to take into consideration the long-term needs of the special learner. The special education placement is viewed as a means to an end while inclusion is thought to close the door on valuable opportunities to learn not only academics but also how to control one's own behavior and become a responsible and productive citizen (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994-95).

Despite the controversy, inclusion is a practice that is quickly becoming the norm rather than the exception (Lombardi, 1994). With the increasing implementation of inclusion has come implications for curricular and instructional improvement, beginning with the post-secondary training of teaching candidates. Kearney and Durand (1992), in a study of post-secondary schools of education in New York, found that more than one-half require one or fewer courses in special education or child psychopathology. In addition, little or no training time is spent in mainstream classroom settings, suggesting inadequate preparation of regular education teachers to deal with the special needs of the disabled learner. With the shift from self-contained settings to inclusive classrooms, more attention will need to be given to creating more appropriate teacher-training programs. Hegarty (1993) also suggests changes be made in all levels of training for public schools' faculty and staff. More inservice and professional development activities will need to be provided in order to give teachers a feeling of competence in working in the inclusive classroom.

environment. As needs will differ across schools dependent upon the student population served, individual schools will need to take responsibility for the professional development of their own staff.

Changes in teacher training and professional development will also need to address curricular and instructional issues such as pupil grouping, instructional methods, and evaluation systems. Hegarty (1993) advocates changing the structure of schools in order to support the practice of inclusion. Changes in pupil grouping, with special needs learners served within the regular classroom setting, would allow for the needed individualized attention while also enabling each student to be a real member of the school community. School timetables would also need to be restructured in order to determine how to make the best use of staff and facilities to the mutual benefit of all students. Arrangements would be necessary in order to allow for needed supplementary teaching as well as modifications to the curricular range in order to include all learners. Changes in teaching methods would also be a necessary product of inclusion. Students diagnosed with learning disabilities were found to have a better chance of success when commonly-used special education techniques such as collaborative learning, cooperative teaching, peer tutoring, and innovative scheduling and planning were incorporated into the regular classroom (Maloney, 1994-95).

The final implication of inclusion involves tailoring the curricular emphasis to meet the individual needs of the learners. In a survey of parents of students with mild to moderate disabilities, functional life and academic skills were most highly valued while parents of students with severe to profound disabilities valued friendships and social

relationship development for their children (Hamre-Nietupski & Nietupski, 1992). This would suggest a need to tailor the curriculum to match the needs and abilities of the individual learner, with input from not only school personnel but also from parents.

The proper implementation of inclusion involves much planning and requires widespread changes in current educational practices. While change is often met with reluctance, research indicates that properly-implemented inclusion can be a beneficial experience for all involved. Despite the research and its basis upon legal mandates, the practice of inclusion continues to be an emotionally-charged issue, evoking controversy among education professionals. As it spreads to small school systems like Houston County, efforts must be made to evaluate its effectiveness on a school-by-school basis. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of inclusion as implemented in the Houston County School system.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants included 304 parents, 46 classroom teachers, 3 administrators, and 3 educational assistants. All classroom faculty and staff in both schools were given an opportunity to respond to the questionnaire, regardless of whether they participated in the project or not, while only parents of children in the inclusion classrooms were surveyed. In addition, data was collected pertaining to the forty-seven special education students who have participated in the project. Finally, data was collected pertaining to the 131 regular classroom peers served in the inclusion classrooms as well as the 177 regular classroom peers served within non-inclusion classrooms in each of the grade levels implementing inclusion within the school.

Instruments

A questionnaire developed by the Houston County Special Programs Department was used to collect Likert ratings and narrative information from parents and school personnel. In addition, attendance records and TCAP Total Battery NCE scores for each special education student prior to and after the implementation of inclusion was analyzed to determine significant differences. Finally, TCAP Total Battery NCE scores of regular education students both in inclusion and non-inclusion classrooms were compared.

Procedures

A correspondence from the Houston County Special Programs Supervisor to all of the participating school personnel was distributed, outlining the need for evaluative information regarding the inclusion project (see Appendix D). Enclosed were letters and

questionnaires to be sent home with all participating students (regular and special education) and completed and returned by their parents (see Appendix E). In addition, all classroom faculty and staff were invited to complete the questionnaire and return their responses to the Houston County Board of Education office. Questionnaires were marked to indicate which of the two elementary school inclusion projects they were evaluating. No names were requested, in an effort to insure anonymity.

When looking at the Likert ratings on the questionnaire, total scores on the ratings were divided and analyzed using an ANOVA across six groups: parents of special education students at either Tennessee Ridge Elementary (TRES) or Erin Elementary (EES), parents of regular education students at both TRES and EES, and faculty/staff at both schools.

In addition to information received in the questionnaires, the Special Programs Department made the decision to consider other sources of information in an effort to measure the success or failure of the inclusion project. These sources included the special education students' Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) Total Battery Normal Curve Equivalents (NCE's) and attendance records from the school year prior to the implementation of inclusion as well as from the inclusion school year. Attendance from one year to the next was analyzed using the Sign Test for matched samples. Mean Total Battery NCE's of special education students in each grade level were analyzed to help identify any significant trends.

Finally, in an effort to determine the impact of inclusion on regular education students' school performance, mean TCAP Total Battery NCE's from regular education

students both in inclusion and non-inclusion classrooms were compared from the year prior to and the year of inclusion.

Sources of data which were initially considered but later disregarded as inappropriate due to their inherent subjectivity included both grades and discipline records of the special education students served in the inclusion environment. Both of these sources may need to be considered in the future if deemed appropriate by the school system.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

After dividing the questionnaires into six groups, the individual totals (adding the ratings 1-5 for the 12 items) were then used to perform an ANOVA. The data used to calculate the ANOVA is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Group Means

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>mean</u>
TRES Faculty	7	43.143
TRES Parents (Regular Education)	13	45.846
TRES Parents (Special Education)	6	49.667
EES Faculty	18	40.500
EES Parents (Regular Education)	32	42.750
EES Parents (Special Education)	7	45.571

In comparing the responses given by the six different groups, no significant differences were noted between the overall responses by each group. While minimal differences were noted between groups, with parents of special education students served in inclusion at TRES responding most favorably while the faculty/staff at EES responded least favorably, such differences were not statistically significant. Narrative comments from the questionnaire were compiled and can be found in Appendix F.

As numerous studies have reported a drop in the absentee rate of special education students served in an inclusion classroom, the absentee records of special education

students at EES and TRES were analyzed to determine whether this trend was found in the Houston County inclusion project. Only the absentee records of those special education students attending Houston County School for both the school year prior to and the year of the inclusion project were used. The Sign Test for matched samples revealed no significant differences in the absentee rates at both EES and TRES for the two years analyzed (see Table 2).

Table 2. Absentee rates for matched samples.

<u>Group</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>z score</u>
EES	23	-.834
TRES	15	0

When comparing the Total Battery TCAP NCE's for the three groups (special education [SEI], regular education in inclusion [REI], and regular education in non-inclusion [NI]), TCAP scores were only used for those students who had attended Houston County schools for both school years and for whom TCAP Total Battery scores were available. As no TCAP Total Battery NCE score is calculated for kindergarten students, those students served in a 1st grade inclusion classroom were omitted from the sample as a Total Battery score was not available from their kindergarten year to make the comparison. Mean Total Battery NCE's from both 1994 and 1995 were compared, with the national mean ($X=50$; standard deviation = 21) used as a point of reference. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Analysis of TCAP Total Battery NCE Scores

<u>Group</u>	<u>N=</u>	<u>1994 x=</u>	<u>1995 x=</u>
Non-Inclusion	177	59.63	57.28
Regular Ed. in Inclusion	131	55.83	52.49
Special Ed. in Inclusion	38	33.08	29.24

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

When considering the Likert ratings of the six groups, the lack of significant differences between the groups' ratings suggest that all groups held a similar view of inclusion. All six groups responded favorably to the practice of inclusion when considering a "neutral" response would result in a total score of 36 (group means ranged from 40.5 to 49.667). While differences were noted between groups, these differences were not statistically significant. After addressing concerns noted on the questionnaires, the Likert scale could be used again to determine whether inclusionary practices are viewed with more or less favor in the future.

Attendance records for special education students at both TRES and EES also yielded no significant differences, suggesting inclusion had neither a positive nor negative effect on the absentee rates of the special education students served. This does not correspond with findings from other studies, although the sample size considered here was small and extraneous supports commonly found in research studies were not present in this project.

While both groups of regular education students (those served in an inclusion classroom and those in a non-inclusion setting) had TCAP Total Battery mean NCE's above the national mean for both 1994 and 1995, the non-inclusion scores were slightly higher than those of the inclusion group for both years. No significant differences were noted within either group from 1994 to 1995. The special education group's NCE's, whose scores were less than one standard deviation below the mean in 1994, fell to almost one standard deviation below the mean in 1995, although the difference between the two

years was also not significant. The analysis of TCAP scores suggests that the drop in NCE's cannot be attributed to inclusion as it was found across all samples. Rather, it would seem that this was a system-wide trend that is in the process of being explored further by the Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction. While the differences between groups were minimal, the scores can be used to disprove the fear that inclusion had a negative impact on the regular education students served in this environment (see Appendix F). The scores do suggest, however, that the regular education students placed in the inclusion environment were lower achievers than their peers placed in the non-inclusion environment, lending evidence to the idea that inclusion was used as a method of "tracking" at the elementary level. Whether this method of grouping is considered to be most effective should be explored in the future.

The 1995-96 inclusion project was implemented taking these findings into consideration. Prior to implementation, two concerns expressed in the questionnaire were addressed: distribution of special education students across grade levels and training for faculty/staff. Special education students in the current inclusion project have now been divided across several classrooms within each grade level rather than placing them within one classroom per grade level as was the practice last year. More training opportunities were provided through school-sponsored inservice activities offered to all faculty for grades K-12. Personnel from the State Department of Education as well as faculty from other school systems practicing inclusion were utilized to provide such training. Based upon input gathered from the questionnaires, future program improvements might focus on providing more support for regular education teachers and students, enhanced

collaboration between teachers, and a more equitable distribution of all students, with special attention being given to both the distribution of students with behavior problems and those with more severe academic needs.

Although research studies continue to find positive effects of inclusion on all groups of students, the results of this study were much less significant. While inclusion cannot be shown to have had a significant effect on students in Houston County, it has also not been shown to adversely effect students' performance. Analysis of future inclusion projects may assist in determining what benefits, if any, are to be gained for students in Houston County and in what direction future inclusion projects should head.

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APPENDIXES

Houston County

HOUSTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Houston County High School

Erin Elementary School

Tn. Ridge Elementary Sch



Schools

SUPERINTENDENT
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October 25, 1994

Ms. Nan Crawford
Division of Special Education
8th Floor, Gateway Plaza
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Ms. Crawford:

I wish to request the following Houston County Schools be approved as Inclusion Schools for the 1994-95 school year: Erin Elementary and Tennessee Ridge Elementary. The names of special education teachers and regular classroom teachers and grade levels to be included are enclosed.

In both schools, the resource services will be provided in accordance with students' individualized education plans within the regular classroom setting by certified special education teachers and/or educational assistants. Since additional time for students to go to the resource lab for additional assistance is available, I am requesting flexibility in listing IEP hours.

Teachers and educational assistants have received inservice in appropriate inclusion practices. Group meetings are being scheduled mid-year to begin planning for improvements to the inclusion efforts for the upcoming school year.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Elaine P. Hewitt

Special Programs Supervisor

Houston County Schools Inclusion Participants

Erin Elementary

Resource Teacher - Sylvia Vinson

Educational Assistant - Darla Mahoney

Regular Classroom Teachers

Terri Mitcham	2nd grade	4 students
Teresa Brake	3rd grade	7 students
Nicole McCullough	4th grade	9 students
Amy Wilson	5th grade	3 students
Kay Brooks	rotation	
Barbie Taylor	rotation	

Resource Teacher - Susan Lewis

Educational Assistant - To be filled permanently in November

Regular Classroom Teachers

Kay Brooks	6th grade	7 students
Amy Wilson	rotation	
Barbie Taylor	rotation	
Susan Williams	8th grade	1 student

Tennessee Ridge Elementary

Resource teacher - Barbara Skelton

Educational Assistant - Rhoda Story

Regular Classroom Teachers

Sandra Baggett	Kindergarten	1 student
Janet Miller	1st grade	3 students
Emily Mayfield	5th grade	7 students
Sharon Tanner	7th grade	5 students

NOTE: Student numbers being served as of October 1 census, subject to change.



TENNESSEE
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0375

Appendix B

November 1, 1994

Mark Beal, Superintendent
Houston County School System
P. O. Box 209
Erin, Tennessee 37061

Dear Mr. Beal:

The proposed program you wish to implement in your school system is endorsed by the State Department of Education. It is the goal of the department to include children, to the maximum extent possible, into regular education programs. The schools that will be participating in this project are Erin Elementary and Tennessee Ridge Elementary.

It is very important that those students receiving special education services, whether in resource or regular class, may be counted for funding as long as the services are being provided by a special education teacher. The range of hours that are provided to the student must coincide with the time required for the option of services provided. This flexibility is only being allowed for this pilot project.

In order to determine the effectiveness of the inclusion project, we are requesting a summary of the data collected, as well as any information you wish to share concerning your project, be submitted to Nan Crawford in this office at the end of the school year. We would also like to visit the project during the school year and provide assistance when needed.

Sincerely,

Joseph Fisher
Assistant Commissioner

cc

Nan Crawford
Paul Coffey
Judy Haston

JF:NC:slmb



TENNESSEE
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
 OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER
 NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0375

Appendix C

March 21, 1995

Elaine Hewitt
 Special Education Supervisor
 Houston County Schools
 Courthouse, P.O. Box 209
 Erin, Tennessee 37061

Dear Ms. Hewitt:

The 1995 school year is almost over and your inclusion project has completed another year. When you submit your evaluation and accountability reports in the next few weeks, please be sure to reapply for the 1995-96 school year. I would appreciate receiving this report by June 30, 1995 if possible.

As staff members have visited the inclusion projects, they have seen that inclusion benefits everyone...students, teachers, parents and the community. In order for our department to compile and disseminate information, I am asking your special education and regular personnel who participated in the project take a little more time and include the answers to these questions in their summary.

What benefits (to the student, teacher, school, parents, etc.) were realized because of this project?

Were there any negative problems or perceptions from this project?
 What, if anything, could be done to counteract this?

What are the most important aspects that another system should address before implementing an inclusion project?

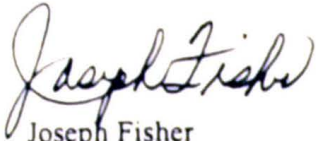
What regular education teaching strategies and methods have been used to ensure that special education students are being provided appropriate programming without being singled out in class?

Page 2

We feel that the information gained from your responses will be of value to the State Department of Education as well as to other local education agencies who are interested in developing an inclusion program. We appreciate the time and effort your staff has expended in order to implement the inclusion program in your schools and the commitment needed to ensure its success.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joseph Fisher".

Joseph Fisher
Assistant Commissioner

JF:NC:slmb

cc: Nan Crawford
District Office

Appendix D

May 2, 1995

Memo To:	Cathy Harvey	Susan Williams	Pat Mallory
	Sylvia Vinson	Teresa Brake	Barbara Skelton
	Darla Mahoney	Kay Brooks	Rhoda Story
	Susan Lewis	Joyce Pryor	Sandra Baggett
	Eric Jernigan	Nicole McCullough	Sharon Tanner
	Teri Mitchum	Barbie Taylor	Janet Miller
	Amy Wilson		Emily Mayfield

From: Elaine Hewitt, Special Programs *EH*

Re: Inclusion Project Evaluation and Planning

I sincerely thank each of you for being willing to participate in the inclusion project for this year. Please take a few moments to respond to the enclosed survey. Your responses along with those of parents will serve several purposes:

1. Evaluation of the program, which is required by the state department.
2. Planning for nex year.
3. The data will also be used by Mrs. Hammer for her EdS. thesis paper.

We will have enclosed a different letter and surveys for all parents in your class. **Please** respond anonymously and return the completed surveys to the central office in the envelope provided.

Thank you again for your support this year.

May 2, 1995

Dear Teacher:

This survey is being given to the teachers and parents of students in the inclusion classroom.

We would like to have your input as well. If you would like to take part in the survey please complete it and return it to me in the central office mail.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mrs. Hewitt".

Mrs. Hewitt

Appendix E

May 2, 1995

Dear Parent:

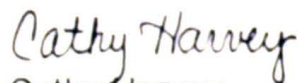
This year your child was taught in an "inclusion classroom". Instead of special education students being pulled out for special services, the resource teacher and/or aide came to the room to provide services.

Please read and complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it as quickly as possible to your child's teacher. We want to hear from the parents of all children in these classrooms. Your input will help us evaluate this new program, improve it for next year, and will be used as the basis for a research paper by an Austin Peay State University graduate - level student.


We hope all children can benefit from the inclusion project and strongly encourage you to help us design an even better program for next year.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the enclosed survey.

Sincerely,



Cathy Harvey
Principal



Elaine Hewitt
Special Programs Supervisor

May 2, 1995

Dear Parent:

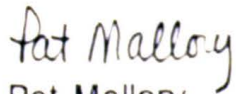
This year your child was taught in an "inclusion classroom". Instead of special education students being pulled out for special services, the resource teacher and/or aide came to the room to provide services.

Please read and complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it as quickly as possible to your child's teacher. We want to hear from the parents of all children in these classrooms. Your input will help us evaluate this new program, improve it for next year, and will be used as the basis for a research paper by an Austin Peay State University graduate - level student.

We hope all children can benefit from the inclusion project and strongly encourage you to help us design an even better program for next year.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the enclosed survey.

Sincerely,



Pat Mallory

Principal



Elaine Hewitt

Special Programs Supervisor

Inclusion Questionnaire

Demographic Information

1. Please mark one. I am . . .

- ☐ Parent of child in regular education
- ☐ Parent of child receiving special education/inclusion
- ☐ Educational assistant
- ☐ Regular education teacher
- ☐ Special education teacher
- ☐ Administrator

If parent, please provide age and grade of child in inclusion classroom. _____

If school employee, please provide years experience in public education. _____

2. Please check your educational level

- ☐ Less than 9th grade
- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school diploma/ GED
- ☐ Some college coursework
- ☐ Associate's degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree +
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Master's degree +
- ☐ EdS
- ☐ PhD

3. Inclusion statement: For the purpose of this survey, inclusion is defined as the education of students with special needs in classrooms with their non-disabled peers. Special education services are brought to the student rather than taking the child out of his/her classroom to provide services.

Please read the following statements and react to each by marking one of the following:

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral or No opinion 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>
a. I agree with the philosophy of inclusion.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I was adequately prepared for the inclusion of special education students into regular classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Inclusion has been academically beneficial for special education students.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Inclusion has been academically beneficial for regular education students.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Inclusion has been socially beneficial for special education students.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Inclusion has been socially beneficial for regular education students.	1	2	3	4	5
g. Inclusion has had a positive impact on the special education student's self-esteem.	1	2	3	4	5
h. Inclusion has had a positive influence on the special education student's behavior in class.	1	2	3	4	5
i. Inclusion has had a positive influence on the special education student's perception of and interest in school.	1	2	3	4	5
j. Inclusion has promoted a collaborative relationship between regular education and special education teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
k. Inclusion provides more support for the teacher(s) involved than the previous practice of pull-out services.	1	2	3	4	5
l. I would be in favor of continuing the practice of inclusion at my school.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Please respond to the following questions. If necessary feel free to write on the back or attach additional comments. Thank you for your time.

a. What benefits were realized because of inclusion at Erin or Tenn. Ridge Elementary?

b. What were the negative consequences of inclusion at Erin or Tenn. Ridge Elementary?

c. What teaching strategies have been the most effective/useful?

d. What teaching strategies have been the least effective/useful?

e. What changes should be made when planning for future inclusion at these schools?

Appendix F

Summary of Narrative Comments From Questionnaire

What benefits were realized because of inclusion at EES or TRES?

"best of both worlds", more social opportunities, more varied teaching styles/personalities, acceptances of differences, more one-on-one for all in class, extra support for teachers, improved student behavior, self-esteem/normalcy for special education students, teachers learned more about special education students, higher expectations for special education students

What were the negative consequences of inclusion at EES or TRES?

special education students still "pulled out" for some activities, students too far behind classmates still singled out or different, others more aware of special education students' deficits, all students wanted extra attention, all classes not involved, did not result in total split of responsibilities between special/regular education, too many special education students in one room, just like "tracking", negative effect on regular education peers' learning, too little support provided for both students and teachers, regular education peers wanting additional support too, distracting for regular education students, negativism of teachers, too varied of a pace necessary to meet all students' needs/abilities, resulted in grouping/tracking

What teaching strategies have been the most effective/useful?

one-on-one, re-teaching, hands-on materials, two teachers in room together, close proximity of teachers to discourages misbehavior, peer-tutoring, small groups, modeling, partner reading, computers

What teaching strategies have been the least effective/useful?

using same materials for all students within class, lectures, singling out individuals, two adults attempting to "share" classrooms/responsibilities, group work, providing answers to students rather than support/guidance to discover answer independently, peer-tutoring, individual work

What changes should be made when planning for future inclusion at these schools?

more training for all involved, placing fewer known behavior problems in inclusion room, placing narrower range of abilities within inclusion room, more parental involvement/public awareness, using more computers, help all in room instead of just special education students, better division of special education teacher's time across more classrooms, more collaboration between teachers, reduce number of special education students within inclusion classroom, lower pupil/teacher ratio within inclusion classroom, more special education support for both students and teacher throughout day