An Analysis of the Cross-Categorical Special Education Program Model Design at McLane Elementary

by

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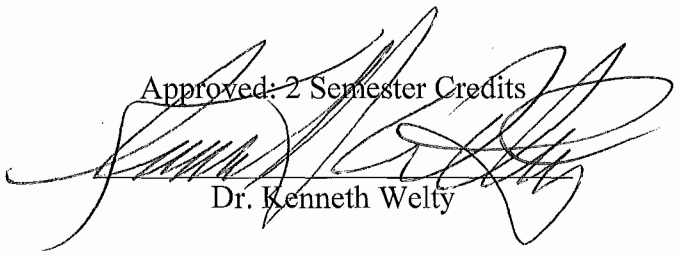

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this evaluation was to validate the cross-categorical program model being implemented at an elementary school in West Bend, Wisconsin by identifying the program strengths and weaknesses. The design for this program evaluation is a management based approach. Key questions were used to assess the program components from observations made by parents and teachers in academic and social settings at school. An analysis of data from the questionnaire revealed strengths in the areas of integration into the regular education classroom, and student's displaying a positive attitude regarding the resource room. Improving parent communication, and educating parents and staff on the Dubuque behavior model will address identified program model weaknesses, leading to improved student outcomes at McLane Elementary School.

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Introduction

In 1997, the United States Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to ensure that students with special education needs would have the opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible with access to the general education curriculum. In addition, provisions were made that supported the education of special needs students. This pressured school districts and educators across the country to provide the support necessary for disabled students of all categories to receive services in the least restrictive environment. The information gathered from the literature review was used to determine the factors of special education programming models. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the cross-categorical program model and the Dubuque behavior model being implemented at McLane Elementary. The different perceptions from parents and staff provided valuable insight in regards to recommendations made to validate the cross-categorical program model.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gather feedback from the 2008-2009 school year that could be analyzed to improve the cross-categorical special education program model being used at McLane Elementary to service students with Learning Disabilities (LD), Emotional Behavioral Disabilities (EBD), Other Health Impairments (OHI), Cognitive Disabilities (CD) and Autism/Aspergers during the upcoming years. McLane Elementary was chosen as the site for this study because of the districts recent implementation of a new cross-categorical program model in the fall of 2008. The site sought to determine the program's strengths and weaknesses according to staff and parents of the student's being serviced by the program model. In order to determine where improvements needed to be made for the upcoming school year, an original

survey questionnaire was created by the examiner. The program model that was being used at McLane Elementary and other schools in the district prior to the 2008-2009 school year was a single-categorical program model. In this model, students were grouped and categorized into caseloads and classes by the diagnosed disabilities written on the students' Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The concern reported from the Director of Pupil Services was that grouping students according to a disability limited their services and optimal educational potential. With this single categorical program model students had the same IEP Coordinator (a special educator assigned to the student to ensure that the students was receiving the appropriate services); where with the new model IEP Coordinators would be assigned to specific students based on their grade level. This was thought to give teachers a better opportunity to focus on a curriculum level aimed to direct services for the special education students at that particular grade level.

Scope

The scope of this study was to determine what specific components of the program model were or were not observed. The study included participants of regular education teachers in grades kindergarten through fifth grade, along with art, music, and physical education teachers. Parents of those students participating in the cross-categorical program model were also asked to take part in the evaluation. Excluded from this study were parents of students who only received speech and language services.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders for the program evaluation were: the special education staff at McLane Elementary, and the students. The principal at McLane Elementary, program support staff, and pupil services were the clients that commissioned this program evaluation.

Key Questions

After discussion with the client's: special education staff, program support personnel, and the principal of McLane Elementary the following key questions were developed and incorporated into the survey questionnaire. The key questions that this evaluation sought to answer based on feedback from staff members were:

1. How are students able to transition between the special education room and the regular education classroom?
2. To what extent have staff members recognized progress in the areas of academic instruction?
3. Are the student's receiving the proper amount of support from the special education teachers and aides in the classroom?
4. Is the special education program structure/room set up in an effective way for students and teachers?
5. Is there behavioral support available for staff members and students in the building that require the extra support?
6. Do staff members and parents feel that the new cross-categorical program model at McLane Elementary better fits the needs of the special education population?

The key questions that this evaluation sought to answer based on feedback from parents were:

1. To what extent have parents recognized progress in the academic?
2. Are there open lines of communication between home and school that support the student?

3. To what extent do parents see that their child is included within the different environments in McLane Elementary?
4. Is the current behavior model of Dubuque understood and effective for their children?
5. To what extent have parents observed additional support from the district to be supported?
6. What is the observed homework load for your child in special education?

Design

The design for this program followed a management based approach. An assessment of data was completed from responses on the parent and teacher questionnaires to guide future improvements in the cross-categorical program model at McLane Elementary. The analysis was then used to make recommendations to the special education team stakeholders on what modifications should to be made to validate the cross-categorical program model at McLane Elementary.

Limitations

Prior to this evaluation the cross-categorical program model lacked specific components to provide feedback on program success as it was initially implemented. Since this was the first year McLane Elementary used the cross-categorical program model, data that could be used for comparison did not exist. Also the anonymity of the questionnaire made people more comfortable with being honest but also eliminated the opportunity to understand the objectivity of each participant and where he/she was coming from.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the cross-categorical special education program model being used at McLane Elementary to service students with Learning Disabilities (LD), Emotional Behavioral Disabilities (EBD), Other Health Impairments (OHI), Cognitive Disabilities (CD) and Autism/Aspergers during the 2008-2009 school year. This chapter will begin with a brief introduction of PL 94-142 the Education of All Handicapped Law and IDEA. Both were strong influences in the driving force of educational programming for special educational students. Many ideas have been passed around as to what the best practices are for special needs students. This term best practice signifies importance when creating a program model that best suits students with special needs. Schools must follow laws and incorporate research programs and strategies that have proven to support best practice. Taking into account each student's disability, a program model is created based on the needs of students. These forces are what ultimately led to the implementation of the new program model at McLane Elementary.

The Laws

In 1975, Congress passed the Education of All Handicapped Children Act or PL 94-142. With this law, states needed to provide free and appropriate education for all students with disabilities from age three to twenty-one. At the time, many students that were identified as handicapped attended separate or private schools. Vallecorsa (1983) reported that with PL 94-142 schools needed to restructure their programming to allow students to be integrated back into the public school system from private schools. This became known as mainstreaming. Twenty

two years later, Congress passed a similar law titled the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997), or IDEA, states the following:

> To maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities including children in public and private institutions or other care facilities are educated with children who are not disables... or removal of children with disabilities from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aides and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (p. 8)

PL 94-142 and IDEA were not alone in ensuring students with disabilities an appropriate education. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The American with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 were also signed into law to ensure fair education for all students with disabilities. This push from government led school systems to create systems of best practices for students who required special tools, resources, and models to learn.

The Term Best Practice

School districts and systems nation wide strive to provide students with the superlative strategies to succeed. Special educators use the term best practice to describe what is being used in their schools. However, many educators and administrators cannot determine what qualifications a program needs to ensure that it truly is a program or strategy of best practice. In an article written by Peters and Heron (1993), the term best practice is discussed and how this term has been applied in a wide variety of contexts to showcase strategies or programs that the experts believe to stand out above the rest. They continued to discuss that best practice may concededly be referred to as a program/strategy/practice that is most promising, exemplary, or

emergent. Best practice could also be utilized as a way to determine program quality, and integration potential. However, this provides a wide range of conceptualization, and interpretations. This pointed out the high degree of inconsistency across literature, when utilizing the term best practice.

Due to the laws Congress has passed and continue to implement, many general education teachers are being held accountable for special education student's education, as the least restrictive environment is often best practice. As reported by Palley (2006), "75% of all students with disabilities spend at least 40% of their school day in the regular education setting. Ninety six percent of all regular education teachers are responsible for teaching students with special education needs" (p. 233). Following the laws of least restrictive environment while keeping up with best practice, special educators must decide how to create the optimal learning environment for the students with special needs.

Basic Needs of Special Education Students

At McLane Elementary, the majority of students for this project fall into the following categories: Learning Disabilities (LD), Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (EBD), and Cognitive Disabilities (CD). In order for appropriate programming to be determined, one must first understand what the eligibility requirements identified for each category, and strategies or programming that are the most effective. With this background knowledge a decision can be made about the type of programming that best fits the needs of students with special needs in a school district.

Learning Disabilities

According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2009), to qualify for a specific learning disability you must meet the following criteria: The child must have a severe

delay in classroom achievement along with a significant discrepancy between ability and achievement along with information processing which contributes the child's academic delays. With students who may be diagnosed with a learning disability it is important to pay attention to what is identified as the specific learning disability. Many students may only have a reading learning disability. When this occurs the student should only be receiving additional services in the specified area of reading. According to Sparks and Richardson (1981), paying attention to specific student's delays will assist in providing the correct programming. Sparks and Richardson (1981) stated the following:

> Every learning disabled child's education should include at least the following components: 1. Every learning disabled child will be taught by a teacher trained and certified to teach learning disabled children. 2. Programs for learning disabled children will include the full-range of services specified in PL 94-142, matching the intensity of the services to the severity of the child's disability. 3. Content of instruction (curriculum) for learning disabled children will approximate that for all children as the method of instruction needs to match the unique learning needs of each child. (p. 61)

There is no one specific program model that will benefit LD students the most, but a variety of interventions need to be taught within a given program model. Interventions need to be structured to empower the students to be academically successful. Chamberlain (2006) indicated that in order to determine what interventions need to be taught one must use a backwards-thinking process. The goals and demands need to be a priority and determined first in order to move forward. Chamberlain concludes by stating when working backwards the best possible instructional programs will be assembled, and that in turn measures their efficacy.

Emotional Behavioral Disabilities

In the state of Wisconsin in order for a child to be diagnosed of having an emotional/behavior disability they must meet the eligibility requirements determined by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. A synopsis of this eligibility includes: social, emotional, and behavior functioning that deviates from what is generally accepted by age appropriate peers. Behaviors must appear in school and at least one other setting, being severe, chronic, and frequent.

Muscott (1995) discussed in his article the impact and challenges that students with emotional/behavioral disabilities bring to the inclusive school setting. Muscott and other critics' worry that inclusion may lead to disastrous consequences particularly for those with emotional behavioral disabilities because effective practices may be overlooked with the pressure for change to occur. Schools must create a vision of inclusion for students with emotional behavioral disabilities to serve as a foundation for inclusive programming to be successful.

One key component of educational programming is reducing the frequency and intensity of emotional/behavioral outbursts so that the student is able to learn. In order for this to occur, effective practices must be implemented. To assist a student who has excessive aggression and disruptive behaviors the classroom environment can utilize positive, differential, and negative reinforcement, precision requests, and behavioral momentum. Authors Landrum, Tankersley and Kauffman (2003) reported that if a student has a deficit in one or more of the following areas: social withdrawal, non-compliance, social skills, or language skills some techniques may need to be applied in the classroom such as: time out, response cost, group-orientated contingencies, continuous monitoring of student performance, direct instruction of individually

targeted behaviors, modifying of antecedents and consequences, and allowing the opportunity to practice appropriate behaviors in natural settings.

With emotional and behavioral outbursts occurring with weaker intensity and diminished frequency educators can begin tackling academic achievement. "Consequently, interventions must target not only effective instruction designed to enhance achievement but also learning strategies that enhance students' ability to attend to instruction, retain information, and apply knowledge in appropriate contexts" (Landrum et al., 2003, p.150). Direct instruction is a technique widely used because it offers structure, sequencing, passing, frequency feedback, and opportunities to practice. Class Wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT) has also shown to increase student's engagement and response rates. In CWPT, students respond to questions using a game-like format and allow for peers to determine if they are correct or incorrect. This also helps give students the opportunity to work with others who most likely will be modeling appropriate emotional/behavioral skills. Lastly, monitoring student academic progress can help guide not only the student, but also allow the educator to see where the student may or may not need additional or continual support. Before any programming or techniques are implemented one must remember that teaching must occur not only academically, but also emotionally and behaviorally for EBD students to be successful in the educational setting.

Cognitive Disabilities

A student who has qualified for a cognitive disability will often have a standard score of two or more standard deviations below the mean or the child has been documented as having a cognitive disability in the past. The child's condition is expected to last indefinitely. The child must also display deficits (interpreted to mean two or more of the age related adaptive behavior areas) in adaptive behavior as demonstrated by a standard score of two or more standard

deviations below the mean. Like students with learning disabilities and emotional behavioral disabilities student strategies, with in place supports is better at determining student success than any one given program. Cushing, Clark, Carter and Kennedy (2005) indicated in their article that educators should provide students who have cognitive disabilities with the supports and adaptations necessary to create an optimum learning environment just like any educator should provide for other students.

Adaptations can be easily developed and implemented to a program model that a school is using with the underlying goal of promoting social and academic participation. The most important component being that the adaptation occurring is the least intrusive option. This is what educators must consider first. "If an adaptation isolates a student from their peers or hinders their participation in class activities it is too intrusive and should be changed" (Cushing, et al., 2005, p. 12). Age-appropriate adaptations involve using similar material that the same-age students without disabilities are using, however making modifications to those materials to enhance the student's skills. Functional adaptations are effective in helping students participate in the general education setting. Meaningful modifications allow the student to realize why the adaptation/modification has been made and the purpose behind it so that the student can self-monitor his/her progress towards goals in the future.

Special Education Program Models

While reform in special education was welcomed, not all reform initiatives were embraced by all special educators, which evolved into controversy and a variety of program models being created in schools nation wide (Kutash et al., 2000). The fact is that all students who have a disability have different needs from others who may have a similar or different disability. Researchers, educators, administrators, and psychologists all over the world search and learn

about new models that can best meet the needs of a variety of students. In an article written by Lloyd & Kavale (1998) it was stated that before new interventions are adopted they need to be studied to further determine if the program has the capability of benefiting the students the intervention will be servicing. The current laws in place ensure that a program that is created for a student must be in the least restrictive environment. "Special education practice is buffeted by many theories, expert recommendations, and fads. Some are widely adopted because of teacher, parent, or administrative opinion. Others are adopted because they have appeal" (Lloyd & Kavale, 1998. p. 3). However, most importantly the program or intervention being adopted must meet the needs of the students it is servicing.

Inclusion

Inclusion in regular education is one program model that school districts have been implementing. Patrick A. Schwarz (2007) a professor at National Lewis University in Chicago studied a fourth grade student named Oscar who had significant auditory processing problems and was an English language learner. The school Oscar attended adopted the inclusive classroom model. With the inclusion model all special education students would receive their services in the general education classroom. In this inclusive model, services of special education support, ESL, and speech and language were provided primarily in the general education classroom through adaptations, differentiated instruction, and universal design strategies.

The inclusion model requires constant collaboration between special education support teacher and the general education teacher in the classroom. Weekly meetings and e-mailing of lesson plans are components that are necessary to ensure success in the inclusive classroom

environment. The special educator and classroom teacher must be together in the understanding of the student's needs and adaptations to ensure success in the general education classroom.

Resource Room

A second type of programming that is commonly used is having a resource room to accommodate those students who need extra help in specific academic areas where the general education classroom is not the least restrictive environment. Vallecorsa (1983) found that often times the least restrictive alternative to the general education classroom setting is to have a resource room. Students served in such arrangement attend the classes in the resource room where they require a small classroom environment and small group instruction. Students then spend the remainder of their day in a regular classroom setting. The popularity of this approach is reflected in the large number of resource classes currently available in schools. Within these resource rooms the terms categorical or cross-categorical are used. In categorical programming there are separate rooms for students with specific disabilities. In cross-categorical programming schools have resource rooms set up by grade level for students with special needs.

Self-Contained

It is extremely difficult to find a program that is entirely self-contained. This is due to the laws stating the students must be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE). A self-contained setting refers to students being removed from the general education classroom to receive their instruction. Bouck (2008) defined that self-contained settings occur when over 60% of the students' day is spent in a separate room apart from the general education students. Schwarz (2007) argues that grouping a wide variety of students in the same self-contained classroom just because they share a diagnosis defeats the idea of individualization. All students

with the same disability do not require the same supports, modifications and adaptations in order to learn.

Another reason why many self-contained programs are not frequently seen is because of the negative influence it has on a student's social experiences. Bouck (2008) shared that students experience negative social consequences while being pulled out because they are being educated away from their peers. A second concern that arose is the lack of role models a pull out room may contain. When students are with their general education peers they can observe behaviors, interactions, and conversations that are acceptable to their grade level.

Single-Categorical

Traditionally programs were categorical, in that separate classrooms were operated for different disability areas. According to Vallecorsa (1983), this model implied that: categorical disabilities are operationally defined and functional, children of one disability are homogeneous, and all exceptional children in need of special service will be identified and served adequately via a categorical model.

In the case of this study at McLane Elementary, single-categorical programming was the type of programming that was utilized prior to moving towards a cross-categorical programming model. Prior to 2008 McLane Elementary had a CD room, an EBD room, and an LD room. If there was a first grade student diagnosed with a learning disability they would be placed in the same room as a fifth grade LD student to receive any additional services needed to assist them in education. In this model, students would have the same IEP coordinator and/or teacher from kindergarten through fifth grade. This provided parents and students with consistency, however if the relationship had difficulties it remained unchanged for the entirety of the students career at McLane Elementary.

Vallecorsa (1983) reported that traditional categorical models are difficult to administer in some situations. In some school districts there may not be enough students with the same diagnosed disability to justify a classroom for that disability. Depending on the student population, student needs, and school district, a single-categorical program model may work best. However, students must always be placed in the least restive learning environment, as with any programming model being used.

Cross-Categorical

A cross-categorical program model is similar to a single-categorical program model despite one crucial component: grouping by disability. Bouck (2008) defined a cross-categorical program as being a program that services students from multiple disability categories together in one room. This is the program model for this study project.

McLane Elementary is not divided by student ability, but rather by grade level. One teacher is responsible for kindergarten and third grade special education students. A second teacher is responsible for first and second grade education students, and the final teacher is responsible for the fourth and fifth grade special education students. With this model students are not divided by disabilities, but by grade levels.

Vallecorsa (1983) discussed extensively that the cross-categorical programming model offer flexibility. Students from several disabilities can be serviced within the same class as their peers if grouped by grade level or in the same group as others who have similar instructional needs. When done effectively the cross-categorical philosophy emphasizes students' functional abilities as the basis for placement. It also recognizes that students from different categories can have overlapping education needs and that those with similar needs can be grouped together for

instruction with success. This model also allows for peer teaching where students must learn to work cooperatively regardless of ability and learn from each other.

The continued growth of cross-categorical programs is likely; however in order for growth to continue it must have continued success. Vallecorsa (1983) continued to report that to ensure success with the cross-categorical program models, classes must serve the right children. Classrooms must be operated by teacher who can effectively meet the needs of all students placed in that learning environment. The main idea behind that success is part-time placement. Students should not be spending 100% of their day in this special education classroom. It is important that they are receiving instruction in areas where it is the least restrictive environment. In order to ensure that success, an extreme amount of emphasis goes back to referring a child for special education, and determining eligibility. Vallecorsa (1983) wrote the following:

> Since administrators, psychologists, counselors and regular classroom teachers all play a role in a making special education placement decisions, it is essential that they understand that nature and intent of cross-categorical programming. They can greatly influence the appropriateness of placement decisions. Further, since students from cross-categorical resource program spend part of their day in the regular classroom setting, training programs must prepare teachers to deal with these youngsters effectively. (p. 135)

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gather feedback from the 2008-2009 school year needed to improve the cross-categorical special education program model being used at McLane Elementary to service students with Learning Disabilities (LD), Emotional Behavioral Disabilities (EBD), Other Health Impairments (OHI), Cognitive Disabilities (CD) and Autism/Aspergers during the upcoming years. Key questions that clients wanted assessed from the staff evolved around: transitioning between special education room and classroom, special education instruction, classroom support received from special education teachers/aides, special education room program/structure, and behavioral support. Key questions that the clients wanted assessed from parents evolved around: special education instruction, communication, inclusion, behavioral model of Dubuque, support from district, and homework load.

Subjects

This study was chosen to look at the special education program model being used at McLane Elementary School because of the recent change from categorical programming to cross-categorical programming during the 2008-2009 school year. The study focused on what aspects of the new program model were observed through parents of the students in the program and the staff members at McLane Elementary.

Design

A management-oriented approach was used to guide the design and implementation of this evaluation. More specifically, it served in the assessment of the cross-categorical program model at McLane Elementary. Judgments of outcomes were collected to which a quantitative

evaluation was done by parent and teacher questionnaire responses. The evaluation was then used to make recommendations identifying possible modifications to validate continuing the cross-categorical program model at McLane Elementary.

Instrumentation

Two questionnaires were the tools developed to address the key questions that the clients wanted assessed. Both questionnaires were designed to identify strengths and deficits of the program and to solicit feedback that can be used to validate the program. One questionnaire was configured to solicit feedback from the faculty while the other was developed to obtain perspectives from parents. These tools were divided into distinct sections that featured multiple items that asked the respondent to indicate the number of times he or she observed each variable. A simple Likert scale was used to characterize the frequency of observations. More specifically, it asked the respondent to indicate if he or she never, sometimes, often, or almost always observed the variable in question.

Variables

The evaluation analyzed the following components from the staff's positioning by utilization of a questionnaire: transitioning between classrooms, instruction given to special education students, support provided for special education students, structure of the program, and behavior support for those students who display behavioral disabilities. The boundaries that were created in the parents positioning were: instruction given to their children, communication between home and school, inclusion of children in general education opportunities, behavior models for students with behavioral disabilities, support provided to parents by the school and/or district, and homework load their students received.

Data Collection Procedures

The parent questionnaires were sent home with all students in special education along with a letter explaining the purpose of the survey (see Appendix A and B). The teacher questionnaire was placed into teacher mailboxes with an e-mail to follow-up with the explanation of the survey (See Appendix C). The questionnaires were completed without the influence of the special education staff. The teachers and parents were allowed to complete the questionnaire on their own time, and return to the special education staff's mailbox anonymously.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected from the teacher questionnaire was split by grade level, and then by subject matter in order to calculate frequencies and percentages. The data collected from the parent questionnaire were broken down by categories embedded in the questionnaire and used to calculate frequencies and percentages. N in each table represents the number of respondents in the sample that answered that specific question, as not all teachers/parents answered each question. Totals were then generated for each area of never observed, sometimes observed, often observed, and almost always observed. A total percentage was then calculated.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gather feedback from parents and staff regarding the 2008-2009 school years' implementation of the cross-categorical special education program model being. More specifically it looked at what components of the cross-categorical program model were being observed or not observed in the implementation of the program. Key components the evaluation sought from staff members view points included: transitioning between special education room and classroom, special education instruction, classroom support received from special education teachers/aides, special education room program/structure, and behavioral support. Where the parent questionnaire evolved around topics of: special education instruction, communication, inclusion, behavioral model of Dubuque, support from district, and homework load.

Setting

This project focused on McLane Elementary, an elementary school included in the West Bend School district, located in the state of Wisconsin. The school was chosen because they recently moved from a single-categorical program model that they have been using for the past several years to a cross-categorical program model. McLane Elementary has a population of 609 students in grades kindergarten through fifth with 10.3% designated as special needs. See table below for breakdown of students.

Table 1

Ethnicity at McLane Elementary

	Percentage of Student's ethnicity at McLane Elementary	
Student's Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
American Indianan	1	0.16%
Asian	5	0.82%
African American	10	1.64%
Hispanic	18	2.96%
White	575	94.42%
Totals	609	100

Teacher Feedback

The first key question that the evaluation sought to answer on the staff questionnaire was: How are students able to transition between the special education room and the regular education classroom? To address this question the evaluator asked the faculty to recount how often they observed students going from one classroom to the next in a quiet manner (see table 2).

Of the group whom completed the questionnaire 47% of staff members reported they observed students moving quietly between classrooms. There was a breakdown in quiet transitions while students were entering or exiting specials classes (art, music, physical education). The one first grade teacher who responded did not always observe a quiet transition, and was later identified as an area for improvement at that grade level.

Table 2

Transitioned Quietly Between Classrooms

	The students transitioned quietly between the two classrooms				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	2 (66%)	0 (0%)	1 (33%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	4
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Special	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2
Totals	2 (13%)	3 (20%)	3 (20%)	7 (47%)	15

To address the first key question, respondents were also asked about the students' ability to be independently organized. More specifically, how often students were able to independently organize the materials that they needed to take from one classroom to another (see Table 3).

Teachers reported that they observed students sometimes or often independently organizing their materials 75% of the time, while 17% of the time teachers almost always observed students being independently organized. The first grade teacher's response correlates from the previous question in only sometimes being observed.

Table 3

Independently Organized Materials

	The students independently organized his/her materials (as able) to be carried between classrooms				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	2 (66%)	1 (33%)	0 (0%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (66%)	1 (33%)	3
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	2
Special	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Totals	1 (8%)	3 (33%)	5 (42%)	2 (17%)	12

Another area of interest was the extent to which students were able to fall into the routines of mainstream classrooms after being in the special education room. Therefore, the faculty was asked to rate how often they observed students engaged in mainstream classroom activities (see Table 4).

All the teachers in first, second, and fourth grade reported that they almost always observed students being able to integrate back into classroom activities after returning from the special education room. Notice that the first grade teacher's response has now become almost always observed for this area in transition. Third grade teachers along with specials teachers often

observe that integration was successful, while the fifth grade teachers were split between being sometimes and often observed.

Table 4

Integrated Back into Classroom Activities

	The students successfully/independently integrated back into classroom activities after returning from the special education room				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
Totals	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	5 (36%)	8 (57%)	14

A fourth area of interest in relation to key question one was to what extent were students able to handle their positive reinforcement in an appropriate manner not causing distractions in the regular education classroom. Therefore the faculty was asked to recall the frequency of students being reminded to appropriately take care of reinforcements earned in the special education room (see Table 5).

Table 5

Care of Reinforcements

	The students did not need to be reminded to appropriately handle/take care of reinforcement candy/prizes eared in the special education room				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Second grade	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	4
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	2
Special	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Totals	1 (8%)	2 (15%)	4 (31%)	6 (46%)	13

When prizes were awarded to students in the special education room 77% of the staff members often or almost always observed that students were able to take care of those rewards independently. Specials teachers are not able to observe that students are doing this, however it is not determined if students have rewards in those classes.

The final question regarding key question one of transitioning asked faculty to reflect on the student's displayed attitudes when attending classes in the special education room. The staff members were asked: To what extent do students appear to have a positive attitude about going to the special education room (see Table 6)?

Table 6

Attitude Toward Special Education Room

	The students appeared to have a positive attitude about going to the special education room				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (33%)	2 (66%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2
Special	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Totals	1 (6.5%)	1 (6.5%)	3 (20%)	10 (67%)	15

Student's attitudes about going to the resource room appear to almost always be or often observed to be positive 87% of the time. One first grade teacher still was only often able to observe positive attitudes that students displayed. Students who leave specials to go to the resource room do not have a positive attitude.

The second key question the evaluation sought to answer was: To what extend have staff members recognized progress in the areas of academic instruction? To address this key question the evaluator asked the faculty to reflect on observed student achievement throughout the 2008-2009 school year (see Table 7).

Table 7

Special Education Instruction - Reading

	Reading				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (63%)	3 (37%)	8

Not all students who received special education services are pulled out for reading. Of those students pulled out for reading, all teachers except specials and kindergarten have observed at least some growth in the academic area of reading. Teachers who did not have students being serviced were not included in the percentages.

Another academic area reflected in key question two was writing. Staff members were asked to what extent was growth observed in writing (see Table 8).

Table 8

Special Education Instruction - Writing

	Writing				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (100%)	1 (100%)	1
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Totals	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	7

Not all students who received special education services are pulled out for writing. Of those students pulled out for writing instruction all teachers have observed at least some growth with the exception to a fourth grade teacher who only sometimes observed growth in writing. Teachers who did not have students being serviced were not included in the averages.

Spelling is a third academic area that special education students received service in therefore another component of key question two. The faculty was asked: To what extent was progress observed in the academic area of spelling (see Table 9)?

Table 9

Special Education Instruction - Spelling

	Spelling				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Third Grade	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	2
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Totals	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	5

Those teachers, who had students pulled out for spelling sometimes or often times observed academic improvement in the area of spelling 80% of the time. Only 20% almost always observed academic progress made in spelling over the year. Again fourth grade only sometimes observed growth, which correlates to what was answered in the academic area of writing.

The final academic area that the special education offers instruction in was Math. Faculty was asked: To what extent was math growth observed? The results aided in answering key question two (see Table 10).

Table 10

Special Education Instruction - Math

	Math				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5

The number of teachers who had students being serviced in the area of was a total of five. All five of those teachers often to almost always observed academic growth in math. This means that student's academic progress in math was easily visible within the regular education classroom.

The final area of instruction that occurred in the special education classroom was behavior. The faculty was asked: To what extent was behavior growth observed through the school year. This final question around the area of instruction, answered key question two (see Table 11).

Table 11

Special Education Instruction - Behaviors

	Behaviors				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	7 (70%)	10

Students who received support in the area of behavior issues from the special education room made improvements throughout the year. This was reported by all teachers in McLane Elementary that completed the questionnaire. This brings about a miscorrelation between growth made academically and behaviorally.

In continuing to answer key question two the evaluator sought the teacher's levels of observance on the curriculum being taught. The faculty was asked if they observed students applying the skills they were taught in special education classroom in the general education classroom (see Table 12).

Table 12

Generalize Skills to General Education Classrooms

	Students were able to generalize skills worked on in the special education room to activities taking place in the general education classroom				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	1 (33%)	2 (66%)	0 (0%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Totals	0 (0%)	2 (17%)	4 (33%)	6 (50%)	12

A kindergarten and a third grade teacher only sometimes observed that students were able to generalize the skills they learned from the resource room, which does not correlate about with responses to what growth was observed in academic areas. However 83% of the teachers often or almost always observed those taught skills being utilized in the general education setting.

Continuing with the second key question the evaluator sought out the pacing of the special education curriculum. Faculty members were asked to recall the frequency in which they observed the curriculum being appropriately paced (see Table 13).

Table 13

Pace of Special Education Instruction

	Special Education Instruction appeared to be paced appropriately				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (33%)	2 (66%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Totals	2 (17%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	9 (75%)	12

According to the teachers who teach first, second, fourth, and fifth grade the curriculum was observed in being appropriately paced. Those teachers in grades kindergarten, third, and specials have not almost always observed the curriculum as being paced appropriately. Both of these percentages correlate with what was asked in the previous question regarding the generalization of skills.

The last question created to answer key question two involved teachers recalling the materials being used in the special education classroom. Were the materials being used in the special education observed as being instructionally sound (see Table 14)?

Table 14

Soundness of Special Education Instruction

	Materials used for special education instruction appeared to appropriate and instructionally sound				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Totals	2 (18%)	0 (0%)	0 (8%)	9 (82%)	11

Although teachers do not always observe that students are able to generalize the skills they are learning, 82% of the staff see that the special education curriculum at McLane Elementary is almost always instructionally sound. A kindergarten teacher and a specials teacher did not observe the same.

The third key question that the evaluation sought to answer was: Are the student's receiving the proper amount of support from the special education teachers/aides in the classroom? To answer this key question the evaluator created six questions on the questionnaire. The first question asked staff members how they observed classroom work being promptly completed (see Table 15).

Table 15

Work Completed in an Appropriate Time Frame

	Classroom work was completed in an appropriate time frame				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Special	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	2
Totals	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (90%)	10

Classroom teachers observed that student's work was completed in an appropriate time frame. The one teacher whom disagreed was the specials teacher. Perhaps this difference was because specials classes are not considered to be a core academic area.

A component of the cross-categorical program model was support given to students on classroom-based projects. The evaluator asked for faculty to reflect on the observed support given to special education students on assignments given in the regular education setting (see Table 16).

Table 16

Support Provided to Students

	The student received adequate/appropriate support when completing RBT's, writing activities, and classroom assignments				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	2
Totals	1 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (91%)	11

The one specials teacher, who reported, is not observing support given in classroom activities and/or assignments. All other academic teachers report that they almost always observe that the appropriate support is given when needed.

Support is also given to special education students in studying for tests. To continue to answer key question three the evaluator asked faculty to recount the amount of observed support the students were given when studying (see Table 17).

Table 17

Support When Studying for Tests

	The student's receive adequate/appropriate supports when studying for tests				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Totals	1 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (%)	10 (91%)	11

Academic teachers observed that students are receiving the support they need when studying for tests. The specials teachers do not observe that happening which continues to correlate to the special education support he/she is observing taking place in his/her classroom.

After studying for test, the cross-categorical program model must then provide the appropriate support to complete the test. This continued to answer key question three asking the faculty to recount the observed support students where given in completing tests (see Table 18).

Table 18

Support When Completing Tests

	The student's receive adequate/appropriate supports when completing tests				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Totals	1 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (%)	11 (92%)	12

Academic teachers reported that they had observed students receiving the support they needed when taking tests. Again, the specials teachers do not observe that happening.

The fifth question that aided in answering key question three concerned, holding students to high standards. The evaluator asked the faculty to recall the observed standards that the special education students were held to in comparison to non-disabled peers (see Table 19).

Table 19

Standards and Quality of Work

	When appropriate, the students were held to the same standards/quality of work as that of his/her non-disabled peers				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (14%)	12 (86%)	14

Teachers reported that they often observe or almost always observe that students who have special needs are being held the same standards/quality of work of those peers who are non-disabled. The specials teachers who responded had observed this in comparison to other questions relating to support they observe being given in their classrooms.

The final question on the questionnaire that aided in answering key question three was in regards to students feeling success in the general education setting. Staff members were asked to recall how often they had observed students receiving adequate support from the special education room in order to feel that success (see Table 20).

Table 20

Adequate Support for Academic Success

	The students receive adequate support from the special education room to experience success when he/she was in the regular education curriculum.				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	11 (92%)	12

Teachers observed that the students received adequate support from the special education room to experience success when he/she was in the regular education curriculum 100% of the time. This differs from what the specials teachers answered in previous questions regarding specific support structures in the classroom.

The fourth key question the evaluation sought to answer was: Is the special education program structure/room set up in an effective way for students and teachers? To answer this question the evaluator asked five various questions surrounding the topic of structure. First, the faculty was asked how they observed the special education staff in their willingness to accept input from others (see Table 21).

Table 21

Special Education Faculty Openness

	The special education teacher was easily approachable and openly accepted input from others.				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	16 (100%)	16

Teachers almost always observed that they were able to approach the special education teacher. All teachers including two specials teachers were in agreement with this.

The evaluator next sought the teachers to reflect on how they observed the accessibility of the special education teachers. This continued to aid in answering key question four (see Table 22).

Table 22

Special Education Faculty Accessibility

	The special education teacher was accessible for the communication needs between special education and regular education				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	16 (100%)	16

Teachers almost always observed that the special education teacher was accessible for the communication needs between special education and regular education. All teachers were in agreement with this correlating the answers to the previous question.

Continuing with key question four, the evaluator sought to answer a question regarding flexibility within the new program model. Teachers reflected on what they observed daily in regards to the flexibility of the special education teacher when working with the general education classroom (see Table 23).

Table 23

Special Education Faculty Flexibility

	The special education teacher was flexible when working with the general education classroom schedule				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	16 (100%)	16

The teachers reported that they almost always observed that the special education teacher was flexible when working with the general education classroom schedule. This emphasizes the answers that were given in the above relating questions.

A component of the cross-categorical program model was the pull-out of students when appropriate. Faculty members were asked to recount the observed times students were pulled out of the general education classroom at appropriate times to aide in answering key question four (see Table 24).

Table 24

Special Education Student Pull-out

	The special education students were pulled-out when appropriate				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	16 (100%)	16

Teachers at McLane Elementary almost always observed that the special education students were pulled-out when appropriate. The data correlates with the continuing theme that staff members almost always are observing the appropriate classroom and program structure.

In regards to key question four, question five gathered data on what the faculty observed regarding the inclusion of students in the general education classroom. The question was specified as such: Were students in special education included in the general education classroom when appropriate (see Table 25)?

Table 25

Student Inclusion in the General Education

	The students in special education were included in the general education classroom when appropriate				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	16 (100%)	16

Of the times when special education students needed to be pulled out of the general education setting the teachers almost always observed that the students were then included during appropriate times. This was shown across grade levels as well as in specials classes.

Key question five of the evaluation sought to answer: Is the behavioral support available for staff members and students in the building that require the extra support? To answer this question the evaluator examined what the teachers reported being observed. Teachers were asked how they observed the special education teacher holding students accountable in comparison to non-disabled peers (see Table 26).

Table 26

Reinforcement of Social and Behavioral Standards

	Special education teachers appeared to reinforce and hold students to the same social and behavioral standard as non-disabled students				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (12%)	14 (88%)	16

Across the building, staff members observed that special education students were held to the same standard as non-disabled students. One specials teacher, and one first grade teacher often observed this instead of almost always observing this.

The next question in relation to key question five was around supports teachers felt they were given when coming across students displaying difficult behaviors. The evaluator asked: When behavior situations arouse was the regular education teacher being supported by the special education teacher (see Table 27)?

Table 27

Support from Special Education with Behavior

	The special education teacher supported me (as a teacher) with students when they had behavior difficulties				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	16 (100%)	16

When teachers have needed support they have almost always observed that the special education teacher was supportive. This included both the regular education teacher and the special education teacher when dealing with behaviors. The specials teachers observed that they did not receive the support in other classroom areas such as projects, and assignments.

Key question five of the evaluation sought to answer: Is the behavioral support available for staff members and students in the building that require additional support? Dubuque was a large, new component of the cross-categorical program model at McLane Elementary. In relation to key question five the evaluation asked the faculty if they observed themselves having the proper knowledge of Dubuque to use utilize it effectively in their classroom (see Table 28).

Table 28

Knowledge of DUBUQUE

	I felt that I had the proper knowledge of DUBUQUE to use it in an effective way with EBD students in my classroom				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (33%)	6 (67%)	9

Not all staff members used Dubuque however; of the nine staff members who do, they feel as though they often or almost always observe that they have knowledge of the program to implement it in their classroom. However, at least nine teachers do not use Dubuque and therefore have no knowledge of the program.

In regards to key question five, faculty members were asked to examine the communication between themselves and special education staff. More specifically the question asked teachers if they observed an open line of communication between special education staff and themselves when behavior situations arose (see Table 29).

Table 29

Open Communication Regarding Behavior

	Communication was open between the special education staff and myself when behavior situations arose				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	3
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	13 (93%)	14

An open line of communication was almost always observed as being open between staff members when behavior situations arose. Data reports this to be true across all grade levels.

The final key question the evaluation sought to answer from the staff members was: Do staff members and parents feel that the new cross-categorical program model at McLane Elementary better fits the needs of the special education population? To answer this question the evaluator asked if the staff members observed that the cross-categorical program model was meeting the needs of the student's individual education needs (see Table 30).

Table 30

Overall Impressions of the Program

	Overall the cross-categorical program model meets the needs of the student's individual education needs				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Kindergarten	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0
First grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
Second grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Fourth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Fifth Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2
Special	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
Totals	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (27%)	8 (73%)	11

Overall, the teachers at McLane Elementary often or almost always observed that the cross-categorical program model at McLane Elementary is meeting the student's individual educational needs, which emphasized that the questions teachers answered never observed or often do not observe mean there is not a negative impact on the overall function of the special education program.

Parent Feedback

The first key question that the evaluation sought to answer with the parent questionnaire was: To what extent have parents recognized progress in the academic areas? To address this

question the evaluator asked the parents to characterize how often they observed their student perform better in the areas of reading, writing, spelling and mathematics (see Table 31).

Table 31

Perceptions of Academic Progress

	Throughout the year, you were able to recognize academic progress in the areas your student(s) received special education instruction for: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Math				
Grade Levels	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Totals for Reading	1 (7%)	3 (20%)	5 (33%)	6 (40%)	15
Totals for Writing	0 (0%)	6 (43%)	5 (36%)	3 (21%)	14
Totals for Spelling	1 (8%)	3 (23%)	4 (31%)	5 (38%)	13
Totals for Math	1 (7%)	3 (21%)	4 (29%)	6 (43%)	14

The most frequently observed areas of academic growth came in the areas of reading, math, and spelling. Writing growth was sometimes observed by 43% of parents. This table also shows that the largest area students receive support in is the area of math followed by writing and math finally spelling.

Key question two of the evaluation asked: Are there open lines of communication between home and school that support the student? More specifically it asked if parents knew what learning or activities were taking place with their child, if the IEP coordinator was in communication with the parents regarding areas of strengths and areas of improvement, and did they IEP coordinator providing prompt feedback (see Table 32)?

Table 32

Communication

	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
As a parent I felt like I knew what was happening at school with my child	1 (6%)	5 (29%)	7 (41%)	4 (24%)	17
As a parent I felt like I could contact my student's IEP Coordinator/Special Education teacher	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	4 (24%)	11 (65%)	17
The special education teacher communicated with me positives/strengths my students displayed	1 (6%)	2 (12%)	8 (47%)	6 (35%)	17
The special education teacher communicated with me any areas of concerns/behaviors/weaknesses my student displayed	0 (0%)	2 (12%)	9 (53%)	6 (35%)	17
Questions/Comments/Concerns were addressed by the special education teacher in a timely manner	0 (0%)	2 (12%)	8 (47%)	7 (41%)	17

The majority of parents, 65% of them often or almost always observed that they knew what had been happening at school concerning their child. The majority of parents, 89% often observed or almost always observed that they could contact their student's IEP coordinators. Of the parents who took the questionnaire 14 of the 17 parents agreed that they often observed or almost always observed that positives/strengths were shared with them by the special education teacher which correlated with the ease of being able to communicate with their student's IEP

coordinator. Of the parents who took the questionnaire 15 of the 17 parents agreed that they often observed or almost always observed that concerns/behaviors/weaknesses were shared with them by the special education teacher again correlating with the question relating to communicating strengths and ease of communication. Parents often and almost always observed that their Questions/Comments/Concerns were addressed by the special education teacher in a timely manner. This data demonstrated that the overall observation of communication was often or almost always observed by parents.

The third key question the evaluation sought to answer asked: To what extent do parents see that their child is included within the different environments in McLane Elementary? More specifically the evaluator asked the parents if they observed their child being part of the general education classroom, and part of the "McLane Family" (see Table 33).

Table 33

Inclusion

Parents	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
As a parent you felt like your child was a part of the general education classroom when appropriate	0 (0%)	2 (12%)	7 (41%)	8 (47%)	17
As a parent you felt that your child was part of the "McLane Family" and included in events non-disabled peers participated in	0 (0%)	3 (19%)	3 (19%)	10 (62%)	16

Parents reported that they often and almost always observed that their child was included in the general education classroom when appropriate. Two parents observed that this was only sometimes done with their students. Although 62% of the parents almost always observed that

their child was part of the "McLane Family," 38% of the parents sometimes or often observed that their students were apart of the "McLane Family." This data differs from the previous question. More parents only sometimes or often observed their students being a part of the "The McLane Family."

The fourth key question the evaluation sought to answer was: Is the current behavior model of Dubuque understood and effective for their children? The evaluator asked parents to recall what they observed regarding their general understanding of Dubuque, the level of motivation the tool provided, the daily communication it provided, and the overall effectiveness on their children's behavior (see Table 34).

Table 34

Behavior Models

Parents	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
As a parent you have a general understanding of the Dubuque system	2 (18%)	1 (9%)	5 (45%)	3 (28%)	11
The Dubuque point sheet is a good motivator for my student	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	10
The Dubuque point sheet allows me to see how my students behavior was throughout the day	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	2 (22%)	4 (44%)	9
As the year progressed my child's behavior improved during the school day	1 (9%)	6 (55%)	1 (9%)	3 (27%)	11

There was a wide variety of what parents observed regarding the Dubuque behavior models. Of the parents surveyed 27% of the parents never or sometimes observed that they had

an understanding on Dubuque while 28% almost always observed the understanding. Parents have a variety of observations regarding the point sheet component within Dubuque. While 60% of the parents often or almost always observed that point sheet was effective, 40% never or only sometimes observed that the point sheet was a good motivator for their student. These results correlate with the general understanding of Dubuque from the previous question. The majority of parents 66% agreed that they often or almost always observe that the point sheet allows them to see how their child's behavior was throughout the day. While, 33% of parents reported that they never or only sometimes were able to observe how their student's behavior progressed through the day. The majority of parents sometimes observed that their child's behavior improved during the school day while only 36% often or almost always observed an improvement in their child's behavior.

The fifth key question the evaluation sought to answer was: To what extent have parents observed additional support from the district being provided? More specifically the evaluator sought out parents to recall observed support given to strengthen parent knowledge and understanding of a variety of needs special education students have, along with being provided support from other families who have students with individual needs (see Table 35).

Parents often observed or almost always observed that the district provided opportunities for them to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of a variety of needs special education students have. Majority of parents except for one often or almost always observed that the district provided support from other parents/families of other students who have special education needs children. Two more families almost always observed getting support from other parents/families in comparison to the previous question regarding opportunities provided to strengthen knowledge.

Table 35

Support

Parents	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
The district provided opportunities for us to strengthen our knowledge and understanding of a variety of needs special education students have	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	11 (69%)	4 (25%)	16
The district provided a method of support from other parents/families of other students who have special educational needs	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	9 (56%)	6 (38%)	16

Key question six for the evaluation sought to answer: What is the observed homework load for your child in special education? Parents were asked if they observed the homework load being too heavy, reasonable, or more homework needs to be given to my students (see Table 36).

Table 36

Homework

	Please mark what best fits your opinion of your student's homework load			
Parents	Too Heavy	Reasonable	I would like my student to have more homework	n
Totals	5 (29%)	11 (65%)	1 (6%)	17

The majority of parents agree that the homework load is reasonable for their students at McLane Elementary. Almost a third reported the homework load was too heavy while only one parent thought more homework was warranted.

The final key question that the evaluator sought to answer was: Do parents feel that the new cross-categorical program model at McLane Elementary better fits the needs of the special education population? More specially, the question asked parents how they observed that the cross-categorical program model meeting the student's individual education needs (see Table 37).

Table 37

Overall Perception of the Program

	Overall the cross-categorical program model meets the needs of the student's individual education needs				
Parents	Never Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed	Almost Always Observed	n
Totals	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	10 (63%)	5 (31%)	16

Parents feel as though they often observe or almost always observe (94%) that the cross-categorical program model meets the needs of the student's individual educational needs. This correlates to what was reported by staff members at McLane Elementary.

Chapter V: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gather feedback from the 2008-2009 school year needed to improve the cross-categorical special education program model being used at McLane Elementary to service students with Learning Disabilities (LD), Emotional Behavioral Disabilities (EBD), Other Health Impairments (OHI), Cognitive Disabilities (CD) and Autism/Aspergers during the upcoming years. A management-oriented approach was used to gather feedback regarding the extent to which selected components of the cross-categorical program were observed by parents and faculty. A survey methodology was employed to gather the required data via a questionnaire.

This chapter describes the setting in which the evaluation was conducted. It will also summarize of results of the inquiry, present the conclusions that were drawn, and propose a set of recommendations for improving the program.

Setting

This project was implemented at McLane Elementary; an elementary school part of the West Bend School District in the state of Wisconsin. The school was chosen because McLane Elementary recently moved from a single-categorical program model that they have been using for the past several years to a cross-categorical program model. McLane Elementary has a population of 609 students in grades kindergarten through 5th with 10.3% designated as special needs.

Findings-Faculty Feedback

The majority of staff members almost always observed successful transitions between the general education classroom and the resource room. Higher responses (1 or more) of never and sometimes observed occurred in the transition areas of: quietness, organization of materials, and appropriately taking care of positive reinforcements that were given while being in the special education room. The strongest transition components fell into the areas of displaying a positive attitude about the resource room and integrating smoothly back into the regular education classroom after being in the resource room.

Of the five categories of instruction that special education offers at McLane Elementary, the almost always observed improvements occurred in math and behaviors. Growth in reading instruction was often observed 67% of the time and almost always observed 37% of the time. Academic progress in writing was split evenly with 43% of teachers often and almost always observing growth. Spelling was the largest area of weakness with 40% often observing and 40% sometimes observing growing leaving only 20% to almost always see growth.

With the skills students were learning in the special education room, only 50% of the teachers reported they almost always observed that the students are able to generalize their skills into the regular education classroom. The other 50% are split; 17% say they sometimes observed the generalization and 33% report they often observed the generalization of skills. With the split of opinions it is surprising to see that 75% agree they the special education curriculum is almost always observed at being appropriately paced and 82% agree that it is instructionally sound.

Classroom support is one of the strengths of the program component at McLane Elementary. Of all six questions relating to this topic on the questionnaire the highest percentage score of each question fell in the almost always-observed area ranging from 86% to 100% of the

reporting faculty. Two questions regarding classroom work support, and test support had a never observed response from the specials teachers.

Program structure was the highest almost always observed response with 100% of all teachers. All faculty members responded in agreement that the special education program and structure is easily approachable, accessible for communication, and offers flexibility. The program pulled out students when appropriate, and included students in the general education setting when appropriate.

All sixteen staff members who responded observed they almost always had support 100% of the time when dealing with behaviors and 93% of fourteen observed that the line of communication was open when behavior situations arose. Areas where the almost always-observed percentages lowered were in: special education students were being held to the same social and behavioral standards (88% almost always observed and 12% often observed) and the knowledge of the Dubuque system (67% almost always observed and 33% often observed).

Parent Feedback

The components that parents had a high response percentage in the almost always-observed areas were in: reading (43%) math (43%), and spelling (38%). In the academic area of spelling 43% of parents sometimes observed growth.

No one specific area of communication stood out above the others. Overall, 24% of parents almost always observed knowing what was happening with their son/daughter at school, while the majority 41% reported often observing knowing what was occurring at school. Two interesting correlations were between how parents felt about communicating with their child's IEP coordinator and the quickness of the teacher's response to their questions/comments. The

majority or 65% of parents almost always observed they could contact the IEP coordinator while only 41% almost always observed timely feedback from the special education teacher.

Around the areas of inclusion parents reported different observations on how their children were incorporated into the general education classroom in comparison with being a part of the "McLane Family." Of the 17 parents who responded 47% almost always observed that their child was a part of the general education classroom when appropriate, while 41% often observed this, and 12% reported they sometimes observed this occurring. Sixteen parents responded to how their child felt to be included in the "McLane Family." Parents reported that 62% of them almost always observed that their child was a part of that family, 19% said they often observed this, and 19% said they only sometimes observed this happening. More parents observed their child being a part of the "McLane Family", than being a part of the general education classroom when appropriate.

Parent's response to the behavior model of Dubuque was spread across all areas from never being observed to almost always being observed through the different questions. The only percentage area above fifty occurred in response to the statement: As the year progressed, my child's behavior improved during the school day. Of the eleven parents who responded 55% agreed that this was sometimes observed. Overall, parents reported outcomes from the behavior models being often or sometimes observed by parents.

In response to both questions around the areas of additional support being given to strengthen parent knowledge and understanding of a variety of needs special education students 69% often observed the district providing opportunities to learn more while 56% often observed support being given from other parents/families. No parent reported that they never observed

support being given. However, one parent reported that they only sometimes observe additional support being given.

Of the seventeen parents who responded to the survey 65% reported that they observed the homework to be an adequate amount for their student. It was seldom reported that parents observed their children having too much, or not enough homework.

Staff members and parents feel a subtle difference about the effectiveness regarding the cross-categorical program model at McLane Elementary. While 73% of staff members feel that the cross-categorical model is almost always observed at meeting the student's individual needs, only 31% of the parents agree with this being almost always observed. When in comparison the majority of parents, 63% say that they often observe the program meeting the student's individual needs.

Conclusion

The idea of having a cross-categorical program model in which a resource room is utilized to accommodate those students who need extra help in specific academic areas creates the component of transitioning from room to room. The strength in the area of transitions is that staff often observed students abilities to integrate themselves back into the classroom after returning from the special education room. Students positive attitudes were also observed when going to the special education room to receive academic instruction or additional. Staff members have not observed that students are able to independently organize their materials to go into the resource room or transition quietly between the two rooms.

The component of the cross-categorical program model that had the least amount of observation occurring, causing a rise of concern, was in the behavior model. Parents reported

that their knowledge ability, motivation for their children, and improved behavior was only almost always observed 40% of the time.

A theme that had some inconsistencies fell under the category of classroom work receiving support from special education teachers/aides. The classroom teachers reported that they had almost always observed support being given while specials teachers did not. Specials teachers reported they did not observe classroom work being completed in an appropriate time frame, classroom work receiving support from special education teachers/aides, and student's receiving adequate/appropriate supports when studying and taking tests.

Recommendations

With the number of special education students increasing in public education every year, it is important to create an optimal program that best fits the needs of the students attending that school. Parents and staff have a difference of opinions in some areas; however both are important in creating a positive learning environment for students. Some ways to enhance the cross-categorical program model at McLane Elementary are:

1. Increase communication between home and school: An open line of communication often lets parents feel as though their input is just as important as the teachers. Create and write in a weekly or daily journal/report cards depending on the students, to allow communication to take place. Make an attempt to call home with five good news reports for every one negative news report.
2. Parent Dubuque Training: Offer a time before and/or after school where parents who have students on the Dubuque behavior model can learn the basics of the system.

3. Staff Dubuque Training: Offer a time prior to the school year starting where staff members who want to gain knowledge about the use of Dubuque in their classrooms can come and be taught.
4. Model Transition Times: The first few weeks of the school year have the students practice what they should do when moving from their regular education classroom to the special education resource room. Offer checklists to place on desks to ensure that students have all necessary materials when going from room to room.
5. Academic Areas: Consult as a special education team regarding resources in the areas of writing, and spelling. Discuss with regular education teachers the curriculum they utilize in their classrooms and how that can be adopted into the special education curriculum.
6. Support for Specials Classes: The special education staff should sit down with the specials teachers and discuss where more support needs to be given in their classrooms.

Choosing a special education program delivery model is not is a task that is not easy nor should be taken lightly. Constant communication between general education teachers, parents, and administration creates opportunities for growth and development throughout the year. Special education is constantly changing therefore so are the programs in which students with special needs are serviced. However most importantly, the student's needs are what must be considered when developing the model at any school.

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Appendix A

Parent Survey

Parent Survey

Please complete the following survey using the scale below:

0 = never observed
1= sometimes observed
2= often observed
3= almost always observed

Special Education Instruction

Throughout the year, you were able to recognize academic progress in the areas your student(s) received special education instruction for:

Reading	0	1	2	3	N/A
Writing	0	1	2	3	N/A
Spelling	0	1	2	3	N/A
Math	0	1	2	3	N/A

Communication

a. As a parent I felt like I knew what was happening at school with my child	0	1	2	3
b. As a parent I felt like I could contact my student's IEP Coordinator/Special Education teacher	0	1	2	3
c. The special education teacher communicated with me positives/strengths my student displayed	0	1	2	3
d. The special education teacher communicated with me any areas of concerns/behaviors/weaknesses my student display	0	1	2	3
e. Question/Comments/Concerns were addressed by the special education teacher in a timely manner	0	1	2	3

Inclusion

a. As a parent you felt like your child was a part of the general education classroom when appropriate	0	1	2	3
b. As a parent you felt that your child was a part of the "McLane Family" and included in events non-disabled peers participated in	0	1	2	3

Behavior Models

a. As a parent you have a general understanding of the Dubuque system	0	1	2	3	NA
b. The Dubuque point sheet is a good motivator for my student	0	1	2	3	NA
c. The Dubuque point sheet allows me to see how my students behavior was throughout the day	0	1	2	3	NA
d. As the year progressed my child's behavior improved during the school day	0	1	2	3	NA

Support

a. The district provided opportunities for us to strengthen our knowledge and understanding of a variety of needs special education students have 0 1 2 3

b. The district provided a method of support from other parents/families of other students who have special educational needs 0 1 2 3

Homework: Please mark what best fits your opinion of your student's homework load

_____ Homework load is too heavy,

_____ Homework load is reasonable.

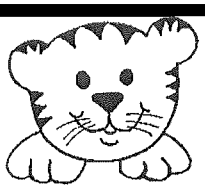
_____ I would like my students to have more homework.

Overall the cross-categorical program model meets the student's individual education needs 0 1 2 3

General comments/suggestion for more effectively meeting the needs of the special education population at McLane Elementary:

Appendix B

Letter to Parents



May 14, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Melissa Bobinski and I am the special education teacher for Kindergarten and 3rd grade here at McLane. I am currently in my last semester of graduate school at University of Wisconsin-Stout where I will graduate in August with my Masters in Education. For my thesis I am completing an evaluation of the special education cross-categorical program model at McLane Elementary. This is where I need your help.

Attached is a survey, which I am asking each family who has a student with special needs to fill out. The feedback that you are able to give me will help complete my report on the special education model. In advance, I appreciate your time and thoughts that you put into this survey. Please return the survey to your students IEP Coordinator by **Friday May 22, 2009**. If you feel that your student is unable to bring the survey back to school, please drop it off in the office or mail it to school. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call me at 335-7866 or e-mail me at mbobinski@west-bend.k12.wi.us

Sincerely,

Melissa J. Bobinski

Appendix C

Staff Survey

Staff Survey

Please complete the following survey using the scale below: **Grade level you teach_____

0 = never observed
1= sometimes observed
2= often observed
3= almost always observed

Transition between special education room and classroom

a. The students transitioned quietly between the two classrooms	0	1	2	3	
b. The students independently organized his/her materials (as able) to be carried between classrooms	0	1	2	3	
c. The students successfully/independently integrated back into classroom activities after returning from the special education room	0	1	2	3	
d. The students did not need to be reminded to appropriately handle/take are of reinforcement candy/prizes earning the in special education room	0	1	2	3	
e. The students appeared to have a positive attitude about going to the special education classroom	0	1	2	3	

Special Education Instruction

a. Throughout the year, you were able to recognize academic progress in the areas the student received instruction in the special education room:					
Reading	0	1	2	3	N/A
Writing	0	1	2	3	N/A
Spelling	0	1	2	3	N/A
Math.....	0	1	2	3	N/A
Behavior	0	1	2	3	N/A
b. The students were able to generalize skills worked on in the special education room to activities taking place in the general education classroom	0	1	2	3	
c. Special Education instruction appeared to be paced appropriately	0	1	2	3	
d. Materials used for special education instruction appeared appropriate and instructionally sound	0	1	2	3	

Classroom Work Receiving Support from Special Education Teachers/Aides

a. Classroom work was completed in an appropriate time frame 0 1 2 3
b. The students received adequate/appropriate support when completing RBT's, writing activities, and classroom assignments 0 1 2 3
c. The students received adequate/appropriate supports when completing tests 0 1 2 3
d. The students received adequate/appropriate supports when studying for tests 0 1 2 3
e. When appropriate, the students were held to the same standards/quality of work as that of his/her non-disabled peers 0 1 2 3
f. The students received adequate support from the special education room to experience success when he/she was in the regular education curriculum 0 1 2 3

Special Education Room Program/Structure

a. The Special Education teacher was easily approachable and openly accepted input from others 0 1 2 3
b. The Special Education teacher was accessible for the communication needs between special education and regular education 0 1 2 3
c. The Special Education teacher was flexible when with the general education classroom schedule 0 1 2 3
d. The Students in special education were pulled-out when appropriate 0 1 2 3
e. The Students in special educational were included in the general education classroom when appropriate 0 1 2 3

Behavioral Support

a. Special Education teachers appeared to reinforce and hold students to the same social and behavior standard as non-disabled students 0 1 2 3
b. The Special Education teacher supported me (as a teacher) with students when they had behavior difficulties 0 1 2 3
c. I felt that I had the proper knowledge of Dubuque to use it in an effective way with EBD students in my classroom 0 1 2 3
d. Communication was open between the special education and myself when behavior arose 0 1 2 3

Overall the cross-categorical program model meets the student's individual education needs 0 1 2 3