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Emily Marie Paz
Loyola Marymount University, empaz@me.com

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LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

From Inclusion for Some to Inclusion for All:

A Case Study of the Inclusion Program at

One Catholic Elementary School

by

Emily Paz

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the School of Education

Loyola Marymount University,

In partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

2013

From Inclusion for Some to Inclusion for All:

A Case Study of the Inclusion Program at

One Catholic Elementary School

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by

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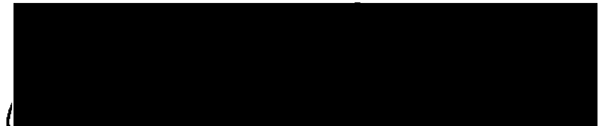
This dissertation written by Emily Henning Paz, under the direction of the Dissertation Committee, is approved and accepted by all committee members, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

June 11, 2013
Date

Dissertation Committee



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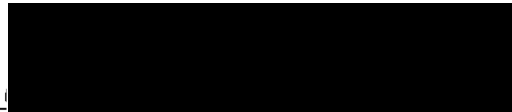

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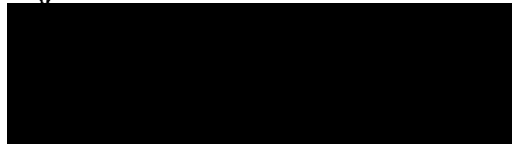

Brian Leung, Ph.D., Committee Member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the personal and professional support of numerous individuals. I would like to offer special thanks to:

Dr. Candace Poindexter, for your unwavering support throughout the many stages of formulating and producing this study.

Dr. Brian Leung, for your insights into special education policy and child psychology.

Dr. Jill Bickett, for your meticulous eye, high expectations, and leadership of the doctoral program.

To the faculty and administration at the school site where this case study took place, for inspiring me to undertake this project in response to the phenomenal dedication I witness every day as the school strives to serve and embrace all children.

My husband, Michael, for his companionship and support throughout this journey.

My parents, Thomas and Claire Henning, for encouraging me to pursue this degree and supporting the research process.

The School of Education at Loyola Marymount University, for their commitment to helping doctoral students navigate and complete the dissertation process.

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ABSTRACT

From Inclusion for Some to Inclusion for All:

A Case Study of the Inclusion Program at

One Catholic Elementary School

by

Emily Paz

Catholic schools in the United States have grappled with how to serve students with disabilities without the funding sources available to public schools. This mixed methods case study examines the driving forces, restraining forces, and social justice issues that influenced the development of an inclusion program at one Catholic elementary school.

The case analyzed is the inclusion program at "St. Ignatius" Elementary School. Fourteen interviews with individuals heavily involved in the program were triangulated with qualitative analyses of the content of artifacts from the inclusion program and quantitative data from a rating scale on ideal inclusive practices completed by ten teachers at the school site. Themes from the literature on Catholic inclusive education were also used to illuminate the findings.

The study identified the driving forces of leadership, teacher buy-in, the partnership between the school and parents, and the concept of the parish as "one big family." Restraining

forces included negative parent perceptions and deficits in capacity and resources. Current practices included increased professional development and resources, honest assessment, and the concept that inclusion serves all students. Interview participants felt that Catholic beliefs and teachings provided the social justice framework.

The school site and archdiocese can further examine the paradigm shift required to implement Catholic school inclusion, increasing teacher professional development, the role of charismatic leadership, and serving gifted students. Further studies could explore socioeconomic variables, how inclusion affects other students, and whether the Catholic school environment provides advantages in implementing inclusion.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Catholic schools in the United States have a rich tradition of serving students marginalized by race, poverty, and immigrant status—but not students with disabilities (Buetow, 1985; Martin & Litton, 2004). Some Catholic elementary schools enroll and educate students with disabilities; others do not (Bello, 2006). Unlike public schools, Catholic schools bear little legal obligation to serve students with special needs (DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Martin & Litton, 2004; Russo, Massucci, Osborne, & Cattaro, 2002; Shaughnessy, 1998; USCCB, 2002), but some within the Catholic educational community believe that Church teaching obligates Catholic schools to serve students with disabilities (Baxter, 2009; Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Martin & Litton, 2004; Russo et. al, 2002; Scanlan, 2009; Shaughnessy, 1998; USCCB, 2005; Weaver, Adams, & Landers, 2006).

Before the 1960s, students in the United States with disabilities were educated in educational environments separated from their non-disabled peers (Osgood, 2005). In the 1970s, the "mainstreaming" movement sought to end segregation of disabled students by integrating them into the regular classroom when feasible (Anderson, 2006; Menzies & Falvey, 2008). By the 1980s, advocates of disabled students pressed for full integration of all students regardless of their disability (Osgood, 2005).

Legislation

Successive pieces of legislation have sought to protect the rights of disabled students and define how such students are served in educational settings. This study will utilize the term

“disability” as it is defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004: an impairment that adversely affects educational performance in one of the following thirteen areas: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment.

The implications for Catholic schools versus public schools vary. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973) defines requirements that most directly affect Catholic schools in terms of accommodating students with special needs (Russo et al., 2002; Scanlan, 2009). According to Section 504 (1973), persons cannot be excluded from federally funded programs solely due to disability. Under Section 504 (1973), Catholic schools do not have to adapt admissions policies to accept all students, but they also cannot revise their admissions policies in response to an applicant with special needs. As private school providers, Catholic schools are obligated to pursue an inclusive setting as much as possible in academic, non-academic, and extracurricular activities (34 CFR 104.34 (a-b)). Catholic schools must make minor adjustments and accommodations unless doing so alters the nature of the program, is unduly burdensome, or would result in risk of injury to the school community (34 CFR 104.39 (b)).

In 1975, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (EHA) guaranteed “free and appropriate education (FAPE)” for all students with disabilities to be delivered in the “least restrictive environment (LRE)” with their non-disabled peers. The EHA introduced the Individualized Education Program (IEP), which details how students are to be served in the least restrictive environment. The concept of the “least restrictive environment” did not specifically

mandate inclusion, but supported the practice of incorporating students in the regular classroom (Menzies & Favley, 2008).

The Regular Education Initiative of 1986 created a bridge between regular and special education in public schools. Students in residential schools moved to neighborhood schools and were placed in special classes, while students in special classes were mainstreamed into general education classes (Menzies & Falvey, 2008). The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) required Catholic schools to make reasonable accommodations for disabled employees and families.

In 1997, the EHA was reauthorized as IDEA: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. IDEA defined how special education operated and drew funding from both state and local educational agencies to provide "free, appropriate, public education" in the "least restrictive environment" (DeFiore, 2006; Scanlan, 2009; USCCB, 2002). IDEA discouraged separate settings and led to the concept of inclusive education, including students with special needs as full members of the general education classroom (Halvorsen & Neary, 2009). In 2004, IDEA was reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA).

Terminology

In the 1990s, the term "inclusion" superseded the term "mainstreaming," although the meaning remained ambiguous with regards to partial or full integration (Osgood, 2005). Even today, no legal or universally agreed upon definition of inclusion or inclusive education currently exists (Booth, 2005; Gravois, Rosenfield, & Vail, 1999 Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Osgood, 2005). The term "inclusion" operates along a spectrum of meanings. The spectrum reflects philosophical and ideological stances toward general and special education.

Any analysis of inclusive programming or philosophy must take into account how individuals and institutions define and understand the terminology.

The varying definitions of the term “inclusion” fall into three categories. The first and foremost use of the term “inclusion” relates to the placement of students with disabilities in the general education classroom and out of resource rooms and special schools (Artiles, Harris-Murri, & Rostenberg, 2006; Chmiliar, 2009; Halvorsen & Neary, 2009; Menzies & Falvey, 2008; National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1994; Ruddell, 2002). The second definition equates “inclusion” with serving the educational needs of entire student populations (Slee, 2001). In this understanding, “inclusion” becomes a continuum of support for the heterogeneous learning needs of both disabled and non-disabled students. The third use of the term “inclusion” indicates a radical cultural shift that transcends the boundaries of the education model and celebrates diversity across all socially constructed lines: ability, culture, race, and gender (Artiles et al., 2006; Corbett, 2001; Kugelmass, 2004).

Catholic Schools and Students with Disabilities

As seen above, over the last quarter of the twentieth century, public schools in the United States grappled with various options for inclusion of students with disabilities. Catholic schools, on the other hand, largely failed to craft service delivery models for students with special needs (Alliance for Catholic Education, 2009). In recent years, Catholic schools and diocesan departments of education have increasingly recognized the need to develop service delivery models for Catholic students with special needs (Barton, 2000; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002).

Inspired by the social consciousness raised by Vatican II, the Catholic Church began to directly address the inclusion of Catholics with disabilities in the worship life of the Church in the later half of the 20th century (Bello, 2006). Publications from 1972 to 2002 provided guidelines for including disabled persons in the sacraments and parish life (National Council of Catholic Bishops 1972,1978,1995). In 1981, The Vatican identified disabled persons as fully human and created in the image of God (John Paul II, 1981). The Committee for the Jubilee Day (2000) pronounced that the Church must protect the rights of disabled persons in all educational and formational environments.

Catholic awareness of the need and responsibility to better include and serve disabled members of the community began at the parish level and eventually led to the crafting of educational policies in diocesan departments of education. Inspired by the Vatican II awareness of the sanctity of human value, a few select Catholic schools began exploring ways to expand services to students with disabilities as early as the passage of 1975's Education for All Handicapped Children Act. In 1990, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued *In Support of Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*, acknowledging the unique nature of each child, the importance of responding to individual learning differences, and the right of all baptized children to Catholic education (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1990). The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (later the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB) continued to support the concept of inclusive education by declaring in 1990 that all baptized children have a right to Christian education (Bello, 2006). In 2002, the USCCB commissioned a large-scale study, *Catholic School Students with Disabilities*, to quantify the number of students with disabilities enrolled in Catholic schools, and the manner and extent to

which Catholic school students receive special education services (USCCB, 2002). In 2005, the USCCB called upon Catholic schools to look for ways to better include and serve children with special needs (Long & Schuttloffel, 2006).

The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) has supported the growth of inclusive practices in Catholic schools. NCEA's 1991 National Congress on Catholic Schools for the Twenty-First Century emphasized that Catholic schools should strive to educate all Catholic children, including those with special needs (Crowley & Wall, 2007). 1998's *Is There Room for Me?* provided practical ideas for incorporating special education practices into Catholic Schools, and pushed the issue to the forefront of the NCEA's agenda. The NCEA organized two conferences in 2000 and 2001 titled "Making Room for Me" to share local and individual school models for other Catholic schools to emulate, and in 2004 the NCEA briefed Catholic superintendents on exemplary inclusive practices (DeFiore, 2006).

Current Practices in Catholic Schools

By 2002, approximately 7% of all Catholic school students were clinically diagnosed as having learning disabilities (USCCB, 2002). For a variety of reasons, Catholic schools receive little public assistance in serving these children (DeFiore, 2006). IDEA provided services and proportionate funds for children placed by their parents in Catholic schools, but less than 1% of children with disabilities in Catholics schools received services under IDEA (USCCB, 2002).

Despite limited resources, individual Catholic schools in various dioceses of the country have utilized a variety of approaches to incorporate students with disabilities into their kindergarten through eighth grade programs. These approaches have included in-class accommodations, resource rooms, contracting with specialists, and reduced class size (Crowley

& Wall, 2007). Some of the more effective models have centralized services and used collaborative instructional teams. Most Catholic schools today utilize some sort of collaborative problem solving team to design services for individual students with disabilities (Barton, 2000; Lawrence-Brown & Muschaweck, 2004).

While individual Catholic schools create innovation in the inclusion of students with special needs, the collective Catholic community has made little progress toward developing a nation-wide policy for Catholic schools in this area (Scanlan, 2009). Catholic school inclusion practices remain fragmented and lack unification (Bello, 2006; Weaver et al., 2006). No prescribed framework exists for structuring inclusion programs in Catholic schools (Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Weaver et al., 2006). Very few dioceses have centralized special education services, so efforts to expand special education services continue to develop in individual school-by-school scenarios (DeFiore, 2006). "Islands of success" do exist in various Midwestern dioceses that have successfully implemented effective inclusion programs (Baxter, 2009; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Scanlan, 2009; Weaver et al., 2006). The Archdiocese of St. Louis, for example, provides affordable assessments for students, while other dioceses provide special needs coordinators and advisors (DeFiore, 2006).

The financial burden of an inclusion program is frequently cited as the greatest obstacle to implementing effective inclusive practices in Catholic schools (Baxter, 2009; Bellow, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006). With the faculty transition from religious to lay teachers, growing faculty costs have led many Catholic schools to conclude that they cannot afford programs to serve students with special needs (Durrow, 2007).

Another often cited obstacle to Catholic School inclusion is a lack of practical knowledge and confidence to deliver special education services (Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Scanlan, 2009). While it is true that the success of a Catholic school inclusion program depends on the knowledge and skills of both teachers and administrators (Bello, 2006), it is equally imperative that Catholic educators and parents balance their desires to enroll students with disabilities with the realities of available resources. Inclusion may be consistent with Church teaching, but schools must be able to provide adequate levels of support (DeFiore, 2006; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006). The demand to serve students with special needs in Catholic schools almost always exceeds the capacity to respond (DeFiore, 2006). Inclusion may not be possible for all children in Catholic schools (Russo et al., 2002). Even principals in schools that provide inclusive curriculum must be prepared to advise parents to enroll their child in a public school if it can better meet that child's specific needs (O'Keefe, 2000).

As mentioned above, lack of funding presents a tangible obstacle, but a lack of stakeholder buy-in can be equally formidable. Unlike public schools, Catholic schools have no legal mandate to tackle the full spectrum of learning disabilities present in their parish populations. Catholic schools have historically "passed the buck" because public schools have more resources. In order for Catholic schools to reverse this historical mindset, stakeholders including clergy, parishioners, parents, teachers, and administrators must accept a new educational paradigm in order to tackle the challenges inclusion presents to a school and parish community (Baxter, 2009; Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Scanlan, 2008). Weaver et al. (2006) suggest that special education comes from a culture of inclusiveness, not from a specific level of resources.

Scanlan (2008, 2009) asserts that some Catholic educators do not believe they have a responsibility to serve the disabled, and that Catholic educators must look critically at the lack of willpower as much as the lack of resources. According to Scanlan (2008), the "capacity excuse" reflects a poor knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching (CST), and allows schools to blame outside elements for the disconnect between values and practice.

The School Site

Despite these obstacles, some parish schools have voluntarily chosen to expand the level of support available for students with learning disabilities and other educational challenges. This study will look at one school that has committed extensive time, energy, and resources into their parish school's inclusion program.

The school site for this study, "St. Ignatius," is a Catholic, Pre K through 8th grade elementary school. The school is located in an affluent community on the outskirts of a large urban area. There are high levels of parent participation in all aspects of school life. The school raises additional funds to supplement tuition and various other school programs. The parent organization funds full-time classroom aides in grades K-3, part-time aides in the 4th and 5th grades, and one part-time middle school aide. The school hires teachers for physical education, music, computers, and Spanish. The classroom aides and special subjects teachers provide classroom teachers with ample planning time.

The school has had an inclusion program in place for approximately 13 years. The program started as a small group of teachers and administrators meeting to discuss one or two students with disabilities. Over the years, the school refined and formalized the inclusion program to its current state, which involves grade level coordinators, formal documentation of

students' education plans, and a team that includes teachers, administrators, an inclusion coordinator, and a school counselor.

In the past three years, the archdiocese has developed and mandated policies and forms for implementing basic inclusive educational practices at all Catholic elementary schools in the archdiocese. Since this mandate, St. Ignatius has referred to its inclusion program as the "STEP" program. STEP stands for "Support Team Education Plan." Using monies from fundraisers, the school has hired an inclusion coordinator and increased resources for inclusive practices. The practice of inclusion has grown to serve approximately 80 students with identified disabilities as defined by IDEA (1997) as well as other educational challenges.

There are many features of the St. Ignatius inclusion program that are unique or unusual within its archdiocese. Although the archdiocese now mandates some form of inclusive practice in its elementary schools, St. Ignatius is unique in that it aggressively pursued an inclusion program before the mandate. The high socioeconomic status of the parish families allows the school to fundraise and offset the costs of special education personnel and resources. As the program has grown, the faculty and administration have grappled with issues of social justice as it relates to special education practice, their understanding of Church teaching in relation to disabled persons, and the realities and constraints of available resources.

Statement of the Problem

The practice of inclusion remains limited in Catholic schools despite the Church's history of advocacy for the marginalized, and recent emphasis on serving persons with disability. Catholic schools that choose to engage inclusion face deficits in resources, expertise, and stakeholder buy-in. Public schools appear to have more resources for special education services.

Inclusion presents a social justice conundrum: do Jesus' teachings morally obligate Catholic schools to serve all those who desire a Catholic education?

Research Questions

This study intends to answer the following research questions:

1. What driving and restraining forces influenced the evolution of the inclusion program at this school over the past thirteen years?
2. How did these forces influence the current practice of inclusion at the school?
3. How have social justice issues impacted these forces?

Purpose of the Study

The inclusion program at this school site offered a unique opportunity to study how internal and external pressures influenced the development of an inclusion program in one Catholic school setting. The unique experiences and decisions made by the pastor, teachers, administrators and parents shaping this program over the past thirteen years offered insights into negotiating inclusive education practices with the unique set of demands placed on Catholic schools. The process of developing an inclusion program was influenced by stakeholder's opinions and perceptions of a wide variety of issues including fairness, the goals and purposes of education, Church teaching, personal and community responsibility, and a variety of other educational and moral issues. Using Lewin's (1942/1951a) framework of force field analysis, this study identified and clarified the driving and restraining forces that influenced the development of the St. Ignatius inclusion program.

Significance of the Study

The history of the unique and relatively isolated inclusion program at St. Ignatius illustrates a "critical case" of bottom-up policy change in a parish/school community. The school grappled for over a decade with a variety of driving and restraining forces that led to the creation of a stable inclusion program. Identifying and describing the driving and restraining forces of this transition can provide insights for other Catholic schools developing inclusion programs. Although data from a case study cannot be generalized in the strictest sense of the word, insights can directly influence policy, procedures, and future research (Merriam, 2009). Case study data resonates with readers' experience, facilitating a greater understanding of the phenomenon (Stake, 1995). This school has committed time, energy, and resources into its inclusion program. The experiences of participants who have navigated the challenges in developing this program should be documented and shared with other Catholic schools undergoing a similar process.

This study also explored the social justice issues that arose when integrating students with disabilities into Catholic schools settings. Linking the driving and restraining forces to social justice concerns illustrated how moral dilemmas affect decision-making. Social justice notions such as individual rights, the rights of the community, and Church teaching influence the discussion of inclusion in Catholic school settings, and affect how schools resolve challenges. The unique culture of Catholic schools makes the implementation of inclusion more complex, and a more accurate understanding of current school-wide inclusion practices can help support future planning (Bello, 2006).

Social Justice

The conversations, conflicts and decisions guiding the development of this inclusion program were a constant evaluation of the "right" thing to do. According to Christensen and Dorn (1997), social justice is always implicit in discussions of special education, but rarely discussed openly. Consciously or unconsciously, the teachers, parents, pastor, and administrators grappled with social justice views of inclusion. The social justice inclinations of pro-inclusion arguments are characterized in the literature as either individualistic/justification centered or communitarian/implementation oriented (Artiles et al., 2006; Christensen & Dorn, 1997; Dyson, 1999). In addition to these two potential frameworks, participants in this study were influenced by their interpretation of Church teaching.

Individualistic/justification discourses focus on rights, ethics, moral activism, and ending the segregation of students in special education (Artiles et al., 2006; Thomas & Glenny, 2002). Building on the concept of rights and ethics, an efficacy discourse emerged critiquing the creation of a parallel special education system, and influenced traditional special education reform focused on redistributing resources to benefit the disadvantaged (Artiles et al., 2006; Christensen & Dorn, 1997).

Implementation/communitarian discourses focus on either political action or the pragmatics of practice (Artiles et al. 2006). Implementation views tend to embrace the concept of communitarianism, a vision of social cohesion reflected in the values and beliefs of the community (Artiles et al., 2006; Christensen & Dorn, 1997). In communitarian views, social justice and inclusion stem from collective belonging and the creation of just relationships (Christensen & Dorn, 1997; Thomas & Loxley, 2007). Communitarian views critique the

emphasis on individual "rights" for discounting the importance of interpersonal and communal connections, a concept that runs counter to Western individualism (Anderson, 2006, 2010). Communitarian views are criticized for lacking standards and structure, and asserting a naïve assumption that adopting new inclusive vocabulary and structures will change attitudes and create inclusive communities (Artiles et al., 2006; Christensen & Dorn, 1997).

Most of the literature on Catholic school inclusion links some form of Church teaching to the concept that Catholic schools must answer to more than the letter of secular law, and are morally obligated to serve students with disabilities (Baxter, 2009; Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Hallinan, 2000; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Martin & Litton, 2004; Russo et al., 2002; Scanlan, 2009; Shaughnessy, 1998; USCCB, 2005; Weaver et al., 2006). A limited number of sources directly cite Catholic Social Teaching (CST) as the grounding philosophy for inclusive practice in Catholic schools (DeFiore, 2006; Russo et al., 2002; Scanlan, 2009). Although the literature on Catholic school inclusion references Catholic Social Teaching, the Gospel message, and social justice, there is no consistent reference to a specific mandate to practice inclusion found in the literature.

Implementing a Catholic school inclusion program can present difficult decision-making scenarios for educators and parents. For example, wanting to enroll a student that the school does not have the resources to adequately serve (DeFiore, 2006; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006, Russo et al., 2002). Catholic schools do not have the same resources as public schools, and will never be able to serve every child (Baxter, 2009). Many Catholic schools presume that they lack the resources to serve students with disabilities (Baxter, 2009; Durrow, 2007; Scanlan, 2008), but

the mandates of special education in public schools also exceed federal and state funding (Freedman, Bisbicos, Jentz, & Orenstein, 2005).

Despite the reality of limited resources, many sources criticize the overemphasis on capacity issues. Scanlan (2008, 2009) critiques the construct of capacity and states that the "capacity excuse" reflects a poor knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching (CST), and stems from a conceptual barrier. Scanlan states that some Catholic educators do not believe they have a responsibility to serve the disabled, causing them to blame outside elements and operate under the illusion that they are achieving optimally.

Theoretical Framework

Kurt Lewin's force field theory (Lewin 1942/1951a, 1943/1951c, 1947/1959) provided the theoretical framework for examining the change process at St. Ignatius School. According to Lewin, change can be understood in terms of driving forces and factors and resisting forces and factors (Lewin, 1942/1951a; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). By identifying and plotting the strengths of these forces one can understand why individuals, groups, and organizations act as they do (Owings & Kaplan, 2010).

According to Lewin, institutional changes can be described as a three-part process: unfreezing the status quo, moving, and refreezing to create a new equilibrium. (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008, Owings & Kaplan, 2010). The unfreezing process at St. Ignatius School began thirteen years ago when a small group of four teachers and administrators met to discuss how to help one student. The moving process was influenced by numerous driving and resisting forces that ultimately resulted in the definition of "inclusion for all" which was "refrozen" in the school's inclusion mission statement describing inclusion as differentiated instruction.

When designing the study, it was assumed that driving forces would include parents of students with special needs, administrator support, and buy-in from teachers. The allocation of money and resources was also assumed to be a factor in both driving and restraining forces. Teacher buy-in from the entire faculty would also have been necessary to create complete institutional change of this import. To map the organizational and philosophical change that occurred at this school site, all factors were considered.

Research Design and Methodology

This mixed methods case study of the inclusion program at St. Ignatius analyzed three sources of data: qualitative interview data, site artifacts, and quantitative data from a rating scale on inclusive practices completed by ten teachers at the school. This study described the driving and restraining forces that influenced the evolution of the inclusion program at this school site. The essence of this social/institutional change was understood in light of each participant's perspective on the experience (Groenewald, 2004; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

The primary source of data was qualitative, semi-structured interviews. After securing permission from the principal and participants, the researcher conducted separate in-depth interviews with each participant. Interviews were semi-structured, formal interviews utilizing open-ended, guiding questions that encouraged informants to share their unique perspectives. Additional questions were generated depending on participants' responses (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2009).

The interviews utilized critical case, purposive sampling (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009; Hatch, 2002). Interviews were conducted with the current principal, the previous principal, the

principal who initially started the inclusion team, the pastor, the teachers who have been members of the inclusion team, parents who were on the Inclusion Committee, and a selection of teachers who have been at the school for over thirteen years and had experienced the entire transition.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed. During the interview process, the researcher also recorded memos in a notebook. Memos helped provide insights and guide the following stage of data analysis (Hatch, 2002; Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Merriman, 2009). The researcher utilized interpretive analysis and general qualitative data analysis procedures including coding and creating categories. The interview and artifact data were coded and then organized into categories (Johnson & Christensen; 2008; Merriman, 2009). The "naming" of categories served as the inductive construction of typologies to illustrate themes and findings (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Lewin, 1942/1951a; Merriman, 2009).

The second qualitative data source was a dataset of site artifacts gathered from the interview respondents. After each interview, the respondent was asked to provide non-confidential artifacts that could be utilized by the study. Desired artifacts included guidelines, structures, procedures, and mission statements for the inclusion program set in place by the school. One of the interview participants, Inclusion Committee Member 1 provided the majority of the artifacts. Inclusion Committee Member 1 had kept thorough records of Committee meeting minutes, and a comprehensive collection of all materials and publications related to the inclusion program over the years. An additional artifact used in the study was the inclusion mission statement posted on the schools' website.

The third data source was quantitative data gathered from a short survey completed by a sample of teachers, wherein they were asked to rate how well the program implemented ideal inclusive education practices. Ten teachers completed the "Rating Scale of Components of a Responsible Inclusion Program for Students with High-Incidence Disabilities" designed by Vaughn, Schumm, and Brick (1998). (See Appendix A.) The quantitative data generated by these ten teachers provided insights into the practice of inclusion at the school. Finally, themes from the literature on inclusion and Catholic schools found in Chapter 2 were used to analyze all three of the data sources: qualitative interviews, artifacts, and quantitative rating scale survey results.

Assumptions

Several assumptions influenced the design, data collection, and data analysis of this study. The researcher has been employed at the school as a third grade teacher for the past eight years. The researcher's assumptions as a participant-observer affected data collection and interpretation.

Limitations

Reliance on participant recall and memory limited internal validity. The greatest limitation to external validity is that case study results cannot be generalized. This case study cannot be generalized to all Catholic school settings due to the high level of resources this school was able to apply toward the inclusion program. The goal of this research was to achieve transferability through the use of "thick" descriptions of the setting, participants, and findings of the study (Merriman, 2009). Rigor was derived from the researcher's adherence to strict data collection protocols, triangulation and interpretation of data, and thick descriptions (Merriman, 2009).

The use of artifacts presented further limitations. These documents were not created for research and were therefore neither complete nor designed to address the research questions (Merriman, 2009). Interpreting artifacts and connecting them to relative contexts was highly inferential (Hatch, 2002). Due to these limitations, the artifacts served as a secondary data source, used primarily to triangulate the interview data.

Reliability can be achieved in case study through the use of formal case study protocols and the development of a case study database (Yin, 1993), and further insured by the use of an audit trail (Merriman, 2009). The researcher kept a research journal of memos and a record of their interaction with the data. Through use of this journal, the researcher described how data were collected, categories derived, and decisions were made throughout the inquiry (Merriman, 2009).

Researcher bias was another potential limitation of this study, and steps were taken to combat and minimize its impact. Personal dispositions and assumptions may have affected interpretation of the data (Merriman, 2009). The researcher is employed at the school site and directly involved in the inclusion program through her responsibilities as a classroom teacher. Respondents may not have explained explicitly things they believed the researcher already knew. To combat this, the researcher asked respondents to clarify their definitions of inclusion and statements regarding the program.

Delimitations

The research population was limited by the boundaries of the case. Participants were selected utilizing critical case, purposive sampling. The sample consisted of individuals critical to the importance of the phenomenon being studied (Hatch, 2002). The study was limited to one

school site. Case takes root in the context of the phenomena to be studied (Gay et al., 2009; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriman, 2009). The boundaries between the phenomenon and the context of the school site were not clearly evident, as is typical of case study research, (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Yin, 1993).

Definition of Terms

Force

Lewin (1942/1951a) defines forces as "directed entities" in the change process (p. 83). Forces can either be positive or negative. Positive/driving forces move a person in the direction of a desired change. Negative/restraining forces interfere and move an individual away from desired change.

Inclusion

This study used term inclusion to describe the practice of integrating students with learning disabilities and other educational challenges into Catholic school classrooms. Most Catholic school inclusion literature utilizes this definition (Bello, 2006). Participants in this study were asked to clarify their definition of the term. Many utilized a different definition of the term, and understood "inclusion" to mean meeting the needs of all students through differentiated instruction.

Disability

An impairment that adversely affects educational performance in one of the following thirteen areas: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment,

specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment (IDEA, 1997).

Organization of the Study

This mixed methods case study examined the development of the inclusion program policy at one Catholic elementary school. Chapter 1 introduced the study, giving a background on the topic; a statement of the problem; the purpose and significance of the study; the research questions; an overview of the methodology; assumptions, limitations and delimitations affecting the study; and the organization of the study.

Chapter 2 will provide a review of the relevant literature in the areas of special education, inclusion in Catholic schools, differentiated instruction, social justice frameworks in special education, and force field theory. Chapter 3 will provide greater depth into the methodologies and protocols used for collecting and analyzing the qualitative data of the study. In Chapter 4, the findings of the study will be presented as themes or typologies, including a diagram to illustrate the flow of driving and restraining forces. The study will conclude in Chapter 5 with a discussion of the study's implications and suggestions for future studies and recommendations for inclusive policy in Catholic school settings.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This mixed methods case study described the driving forces, restraining forces, and social justice issues that influenced the evolution of the inclusion program at one Catholic elementary school. This study answered the following research questions:

1. What driving and restraining forces influenced the evolution of the inclusion program at this school over the past thirteen years?
2. How did these forces influence the current practice of inclusion at the school?
3. How have social justice issues impacted these forces?

This chapter begins by revisiting the history of special education and inclusive practices in Catholic school settings, and the social justice issues that arise from this context. This is followed by a discussion of the term "inclusion," and how a spectrum of definitions reflects the variety of philosophical approaches found when attempting to meet the needs of students with disabilities. A description of differentiated instruction will follow. To provide relevant background for the third research question, the next portion of the literature review will address how competing social justice orientations have influenced the debate over special education. The literature review will conclude with a description of Kurt Lewin's force field theory, which provided the theoretical framework for the study.

Special Education

Over the years, changes in the education and placement of students with disabilities has reflected an evolving debate of their needs and rights. The Kennedy administration of the

early1960s expanded the role of government in serving the needs of disabled students, particularly children with mental retardation. At the same time, the concept of other types of learning disabilities led to discussions of how students' needs could be met in the classroom, and broadened the concept of disability beyond mental retardation (Osgood, 2005).

Through the 1960s, students with disabilities in the United States were primarily served in separate special educational environments–a practice frequently criticized in terms of efficacy and ethics (Osgood, 2005). The movement to include individuals with disabilities in mainstream society originated in Scandinavia and migrated to the United States in the early 1970s (Menzies & Falvey, 2008). Subsequent legislation began moving students with physical and learning disabilities into the regular classroom. The initial mainstreaming/inclusion movement viewed separate placement as segregation, and inclusion as a civil rights issue. The movement sought to desegregate schools by moving students with various disabilities into the regular classroom as much as possible (Anderson, 2006). By the mid 1970s, the concept of "mainstreaming*,"* or placing student with disabilities into the regular public school classroom as much as possible, had taken a firm hold on special education policy and practice (Osgood, 2005). The 1980s saw a call for aggressive, full integration of students into the regular classroom regardless of disability. By the 1990s, the term "inclusion" had superseded "mainstreaming" as the preferred terminology, although the meaning of the term varied from partial to full integration (Osgood, 2005).

Catholic School Inclusion

Catholic schools have no tradition of hiring personnel to support special learning needs. Catholic students with learning disabilities and other educational challenges have historically enrolled in their local public schools, which offered an array of special education services. The

literature on Catholic schools enrolling students with learning disabilities does not necessarily use the term "inclusion." When the term does appear, it is generally used to mean the most basic use of the term: moving students with disabilities into the general education classroom (Artiles et al., 2006; Chmiliar, 2009; Halvorsen & Neary, 2009; Menzies & Falvey, 2008; National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1994; Ruddell, 2002). This bears mentioning as varying definitions of the term "inclusion" reflect differing philosophies of school culture and educational practice.

In the later half of the twentieth century, the Catholic Church began addressing the needs of Catholics with disabilities. The social consciousness raised by Vatican II pushed Catholic schools in the direction of re-addressing their purpose (Bello, 2006). The Vatican identified disabled persons as fully human and created in the image of God (John Paul II, 1981). The Committee for the Jubilee Day (2000) pronounced that the Church must protect the rights of disabled persons in all educational and formational environments.

Catholic schools have a history of both inclusive and exclusive practices (Scanlan, 2008). Separate Catholic day schools and facilities for disabled students have operated in the United States since 1842 (DeFiore, 2006). With the passage of 1975's Education for All Handicapped Children Act, some Catholic schools began exploring ways to expand services, and were encouraged by the statements of the Catholic bishops (DeFiore, 2006). Very few dioceses had centralized special education services, so efforts in expanding special education services relied on the actions of individual Catholic school principals and teachers (DeFiore, 2006). With the faculty turnover from religious to lay teachers, the growth of faculty costs increased immensely,

leading many Catholic schools to conclude that they could not afford programs to serve students with special needs (Durrow, 2007).

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (formally the National Conference of Catholic Bishops), National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), and Council of American Private Education (CAPE) all work to support the interests of Catholic schools (DeFiore, 2006). In 1972, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops released *To Teach as Jesus Did,* advocating for the right of students with special needs to receive religious education appropriate to their special needs (NCCB, 1972). In 1978, the NCCB released a pastoral statement regarding people with disabilities and mandated the development of plans and programs to address their needs (NCCB, 1978). In 1990, the National Conference of Catholic bishops declared that all baptized children have a right to Christian education (Bello, 2006). In 1995, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued guidelines for celebrating the sacraments for people with disabilities (NCCB, 1995).

The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) developed a special education department in 1954. The NCEA organized conferences and distributed publications such as 1998's *Is There Room for Me?* to provide practical ideas for Catholic schools and superintendents wishing to implement inclusive practices (DeFiore, 2006). In 2005, the U.S. Conference of Catholic bishops called upon Catholic schools to look for ways to better include and serve children with special needs (Long & Schuttloffel, 2006).

Legislation

Section 504 and the ADA. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was designed to protect the rights of disabled persons participating in programs receiving federal funds.

According to section 504, otherwise qualified people cannot be excluded from federally funded programs due solely to their disability. Section 504 (1973) further required that school districts provide Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) to all disabled students. Students who qualify under the Section 504 definitions are entitled to reasonable accommodations to help them access school programs.

Section 504 covers a broader range of impairments including psychological, mental, and psychological disorders (Russo et al., 2002; Scanlan, 2009). Section 504 (1973) broadly defines impairment as any physical or mental impairment that limits one or more of life's activities. Elementary schools adhering to section 504 are prohibited from discriminating against any individual with or perceived as having a "physical or mental impairment" that "substantially limits one or more major life activities."

Section 504 pertains to both public and private schools that receive federal assistance, including grants, loans, and contracts. Therefore, it applies to most Catholic schools and almost all dioceses (Russo et al., 2002; Scanlan, 2009). When Catholic schools do not receive federal assistance, according to Section 504 they must provide comparable programs and materials to non-disabled students, and these should not be delivered separately unless necessary (Russo et al., 2002). Catholic schools must pursue an inclusive setting as much as possible for students with special needs, but do not have to make accommodations that would fundamentally alter the nature of a program or be overly burdensome (Scanlan, 2009).

Although Section 504 applies to most Catholic schools, it does not do so in a uniform fashion. Private school providers have fewer obligations to identify and serve qualified students. Although schools cannot change their admissions policies in response to an applicant with

special needs, they do not legally have to adapt their admissions policies to accept all students (Scanlan, 2009).

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires offering disabled persons accommodations that are reasonable for an institution to fund (Shaughnessy, 1998). The ADA, therefore, requires Catholic schools to make reasonable accommodations for employees and students (Scanlan, 2009). Neither the ADA nor Section 504 requires schools to create programs for the disabled. They require that schools not discriminate in admitting disabled students who could be reasonably accommodated by a school (Shaughnessy, 1998).

IDEA/IDEIA. 1973's Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) guaranteed "Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE)" for all students in the "Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)." Authorized approximately every seven years, it was reauthorized in 1997 as IDEA: The Individuals with Disabilities Act. IDEA defined how special education should operate. Like the EAHCA, IDEA required free, appropriate, public education in the least restrictive environment (Scanlan, 2009; USCCB, 2002). In 2004, IDEA was reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). In this reauthorization, IDEIA specified the use of the IEP (Individualized Education Program), which described how students to serve students in the Least Restrictive Environment. The IEP, which continues to be the preeminent diagnostic measure in education circles, describes the special education plan and related services individual students should receive under FAPE (USCCB, 2002).

Using the Child Find process, public schools are required to locate, identify, and evaluate all students with disabilities or suspected disabilities attending school in their district (IDEA, 1997). Although public schools are required by IDEA to make every effort to serve the needs of

the private school students living in their districts, funding restrictions result in non-public school students receiving fewer services (Russo et al., 20002). IDEIA ostensibly provides regulations for services to students parentally-placed in private schools (DeFiore, 2006; USCCB, 2002), but parents who have placed their children in private schools have waived access to FAPE, (USCCB, 2002). Once FAPE is waived, districts are not required to provide services to all eligible children or provide services for students enrolled in private schools (USCCB, 2002). The public school does not have to track a child's progress or pay tuition. Nor does the public school need to deliver services in a non-public school (Russo et. el, 2002; USCCB, 2002). The exception would be if a Catholic or private were the only option for a student with disabilities (Shaughnessy, 1998). Private and public school students have the same federal protections, but neither the public nor Catholic schools are required by law to meet the specified needs of a students once parents have waived their right to FAPE (Shaughnessy, 1998).

Public schools must make every effort to serve the needs of the private school students in their district. They have the authority to decide which students in non-public schools will be served, what services they will receive, and how services will be delivered. They may not be entitled to the same level of services as public school students, and they cannot file a lawsuit to receive services (Russo et al., 2002). According to DeFiore (2006), IDEIA did include procedural improvements to help private school students access services, but these changes were unlikely to significantly improve the ability of Catholic schools to provide services for their students.

A study by the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (2002), found that Catholic school students with disabilities were not receiving adequate or equal services through IDEA

funds. The study concluded that parentally-placed private school children form an “invisible group.” The study described the Child Find process as antagonistic to these children. Catholic school parents and educators expressed frustration with the Child Find process, which does not deal with Catholic school students in any consistent fashion. No single process exists for Catholic school students to access an evaluation for a disability, and 6% of Catholic school students referred by Child Find were denied an evaluation. Of the 6% of children denied an evaluation, 90% were later found to have a disability through a private evaluation (USCCB, 2002).

Catholic schools need to create effective partnership with public schools to maximize opportunities for their students (Baxter, 2009; Bello, 2006; Russo et al., 2002). Russo et al. (2002) encouraged Catholic schools to make best use of their resources and collaborate with the local public schools, but acknowledged that the current structure of IDEA offers limited resources.

Limited legal obligation. Catholic schools have a limited legal obligation to serve the needs of students with special needs or provide FAPE (DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Russo et al., 2002, Shaughnessy, 1998; USCCB, 2002). Students parentally placed in Catholic schools may or may not receive special education services through the public schools, depending on their eligibility through the Child Find process and whether the needed services are part of the plan negotiated with the public school officials allocating proportionate IDEIA funds.

Current Situations and Practices

Population. A study conducted by the United Sates Council of Catholic Bishops (2002) collected data on current special education populations and practices in Catholic schools and

found that approximately 7% of the 2.6 million students enrolled in Catholic schools have an identified learning disability (USCCB, 2002). Durrow's (2007) survey of superintendents in Catholic diocese in the Midwest found that 8-9% of elementary students at Catholic schools had special needs. Durrow (2007) concluded that Catholic schools serve more students with special needs than is the common perception. There is a lack of clear data on the number of parents of children with disabilities who wish to enroll their children in Catholic schools (Russo et al., 2002).

Inclusion practices. The USCCB (2002) found that due to a lack of IDEA funds, Catholic educators must utilize innovative strategies to accommodate students. Of the schools surveyed, two-thirds of students are served through pull-out, and 28% of schools use in-class accommodations. Durrow (2007) found that Catholic schools served special needs students primarily through adjustments and modifications in the regular classroom. Other common strategies included use of special materials, services through local public schools, and use of certified special educators, paraprofessionals, and learning consultants. Less frequent strategies included smaller classes and "special care" teams. According to Crowley &Wall (2007), Catholic schools rely heavily on teaching assistants to work with students with disabilities.

Funding. Catholic schools use funds from a variety of sources to offset the cost of including students with disabilities. Catholic schools provide 34% of costs, and 34% comes from state or local funds. (USCCB, 2002). Durrow (2007) found that most of the 19 school systems in a study used regular school funds such as tuition, and many used federal, state, or local resources.

IDEA funding covers approximately 13% of special education costs for Catholic school students (USCCB, 2002), far less than the documented need in Catholic Schools (DeFiore, 2006; USCCB, 2002). Although 7% of Catholic school children have a diagnosed disability, only 1% of Catholic students with disabilities receive services through IDEA. According to DeFiore (2006), affluent schools and inner city Catholic schools supported by special funds are more likely to offer reasonable inclusion programs than rural and middle class parish schools (DeFiore, 2006).

"Islands of success." Certain Dioceses in the Midwest have created systems that support successful Catholic school inclusion practices (Baxter, 2009; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Scanlan, 2009; Weaver, et al., 2006). These Midwest dioceses have formed collaborative partnerships across schools to share resources (DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Scanlan, 2009). The Diocese of St. Louis uses a special needs consultant model (DeFiore, 2006). The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri established the Foundation for Inclusive Religious Education (FIRE) to raise funding for paraprofessionals, training, materials, and certified educators (http://www.fire-program.org). The Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas provides a three-fifths time consultant to work with schools in the diocese (Durrow, 2007). These dioceses exhibit features of collaboration, strong leadership, centralization, and stakeholder buy-in.

Scanlan (2008) found that these types of schools depend heavily on a charismatic leader to guide inclusive practices. The Dioceses of St. Louis and Souix Falls have support and leadership from their bishops (Baxter, 2009). Parents wishing to support Catholic school inclusion founded the F.I.R.E. group of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri (www.fire-program.org). The University of Dayton and Xavier University in Ohio collaborated with

individual schools to develop their inclusion programs. The University of Dayton has led conferences for inclusive Catholic educators, and overseen the formation of the Network of Inclusive Catholic Educators (Weaver et al., 2006). The learning consultant model used in the Archdioceses of St. Louis and Milwaukee has been successful due to central office support, strong collaboration amongst professionals in the schools, and effective partnerships with the public school district and private service providers (Scanlan 2009).

The Midwestern dioceses emphasize professional development of teachers. The Dioceses of Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Indianapolis, Indiana use the REACH program (Recognizing Excellence in all Children) to coach teachers in brain-compatible learning differentiation and multi-sensory approaches (Durrow, 2007). In the Archdioceses of St. Louis and Milwaukee, learning consultants work with classroom teachers to structure interventions and collect data, utilizing tenants of RTI (Response to Intervention). Teachers in the Midwestern dioceses utilize heterogeneous, flexible grouping strategies and collaborate with other faculty (Scanlan, 2009).

Challenges for Catholic Schools

Catholic schools have neither the funding nor the experience of public schools in implementing special education, and will never be able to serve every child (Baxter, 2009). Implementing a Catholic school inclusion program can present educators and parents with the conundrum of wanting to enroll a student the school cannot adequately serve (DeFiore, 2006; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006, Russo et al., 2002). Lack of unity and standards, money, stakeholder buy-in, leadership, and educator experience present sizable obstacles to inclusion implementation. Discussion of these obstacles appears frequently in the literature.

On the national front, the USCCB (2002) found that states and local districts do not deal with Catholic school students in any consistent fashion, and no single process exists for Catholic school students to access an evaluation for a disability. Within the Catholic school system, inclusion practices lack consistency and unification (Bello, 2006; Weaver et al., 2006). Some Catholic schools try to meet the needs of students with special needs; others do not (Bello, 2006). According to the literature, there is no framework for structuring inclusion programs in Catholic schools (Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Weaver et al., 2006). Services have developed unevenly due to the decentralized nature of diocesan parish schools and lack of central decision-making bodies (Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Weaver et al., 2006).

Catholic schools report that capacity presents the greatest obstacle to inclusion implementation. Capacity is defined as the financial resources, human resources, and knowledge held by teachers and administrators. The financial burden of an inclusion program presents a frequently cited obstacle (Baxter, 2009; Bellow, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006). Catholic schools operate on a tuition-based system and lack the resources of the public schools, and resources will always be limited (Baxter, 2009).

Many Catholic schools presume that they lack the resources to serve students with disabilities (Baxter, 2009; Durrow, 2007; Scanlan, 2008), but the mandates of special education in public schools also exceed funding (Freedman et al., 2005). Models exist of Catholic school inclusion programs that meet the needs of special needs students without adequate funding, as in the Dayton Catholic Elementary School (Weaver et al., 2006). According to Baxter (2009), Catholic schools could theoretically increase their enrollment by adding an inclusion program, offsetting the costs.

Lack of faculty and administrator expertise presents an additional capacity obstacle (Bello, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Scanlan, 2008). Catholic schools often lack the practical knowledge and confidence to deliver special education services (Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Scanlan, 2009). Catholic schools need to increase capacity by training teachers and developing faculty knowledge (Baxter, 2009; Bello, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Russo et al., 2002). In Bello's (2006) study, teachers responded that professional development in learning strategies and differentiated instruction would have the greatest impact on their ability to serve students with special needs.

Individual schools (like the examples from the Midwest) can create innovation, but that does not progress the collective Catholic school community (Scanlan, 2009). Bello (2006) suggests that the NCEA (National Catholic Education Association) would be the best organizing body to develop such a framework. According to Scanlan (2009), the learning consultant model, where multiple schools share consultants to advise schools and develop teacher expertise, is the best model for Catholic schools, distributing responsibility and creating a professional community.

Schools need increased leadership from the clergy, grounded by increased leadership from the Church in the area of disability. Scanlan (2008) found that schools depend heavily on a charismatic leader to guide inclusive practices. With stronger leadership comes stronger stakeholder buy-in. Catholic schools need increased buy-in from all stakeholders, including the clergy, parishioners, parents, teachers, and administrators (Baxter, 2009; Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Scanlan, 2008).

According to Long & Schuttoffel (2006), debates over the practice of inclusive education must be grounded in Catholic theology and Church teaching. Disability has had a negative connotation over the centuries, despite recent proclamations of the Holy See. Long & Schuttoffel (2006) go on to say that a lack of theological research on disability needs to be corrected in Catholic institutions of higher learning from both a secular and theological perspective. The clergy leave it to the principal and teachers to integrate students with disabilities, but teachers need the support of the clergy and diocesan staff to better serve and integrate students with disabilities. A more united Church effort is needed (Weaver et al., 2006).

Inclusion and School Culture

The 1990s term "inclusion" superseded the 1970s term "mainstreaming." Both terms refer to integrating students with disabilities in the regular classroom as much as possible, but the meaning of the term varies from partial to full integration (Osgood, 2005). The literature uses the term "inclusion" inconsistently. No universally agreed upon or legal definition of the term currently exists (Booth, 2005; Gravois et al., 1999; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Osgood, 2005). Lack of clarity over the term and varying definitions have clouded debates and understanding over the efficacy, legal basis, student readiness, and cost of inclusion (Halvorsen & Neary, 2009; Slee, 2001). The absence of a language for inclusion has led to a muddled, frustrating, and antagonizing debate (Osgood, 2005; Slee, 2001).

The first and most commonly used definition of "inclusion" relates to the issue of student placement: moving students with disabilities out of resource rooms and special schools and into the general education classroom (Artiles et al., 2006; Chmiliar, 2009; Halvorsen & Neary, 2009; Menzies & Falvey, 2008; National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1994;

Ruddell, 2002). Under this definition, an inclusion program serves a minority group of students with learning disabilities and other impediments to learning. Most Catholic school inclusion literature utilizes this definition of inclusion, and discusses designing supports for students with disabilities and other educational challenges within the classroom (Bello, 2006; Long & Schuttoffel, 2006; DeFiore, 2006, Durrow, 2007; Russo et al., 2002, USCCB, 2002).

The second definition of inclusion equates inclusion with serving the educational needs of an entire student population (Slee, 2001). Under this definition, inclusion becomes a continuum of support for the heterogeneous learning needs of both disabled and non-disabled students. The idea that inclusion benefits all students by shaping our future society comes from the intellectual tradition of Rosseau and Locke (Thomas & Glenny, 2002; Thomas & Loxley, 2007). Fisher, Sax, & Groove (2000) found that in schools practicing inclusion, both terminology and practice often evolved from serving the needs of the disabled population to serving the needs of all students through differentiated instruction. A small number of articles on Catholic school inclusion utilize this broader definition, describing inclusive practices as rippling outward to affect more than a minority group of disabled students (NCEA, 2010; Termini, 2007).

The third and broadest use of the term "inclusion" indicates a radical cultural shift to a philosophy of total inclusiveness, with inclusive placement being one part of a larger picture (Artiles et al., 2006; Corbett, 2001). In some schools, the term "inclusion" signifies an appreciation of diversity in the broadest sense: ability, culture, race, and gender (Kugelmass, 2004).

Schools could technically be serving the needs of students with disabilities in separate classrooms. Moving these students into the regular classroom requires changes in the systems of

school culture and practice (Gale, 2001; Ryan, 2006; Slee, 2001). A conservative approach to inclusion integrates students into the already existing system (Ryan, 2006). Allowing for heterogeneous learning styles, however, requires educators to move from a deficit to contributive model, characterizing difference as normal (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004; Gale, 2001).

One of the major cultural changes that must take place when implementing inclusion is embracing the idea that disabled students belong in school. Although the original motivation of special education was to serve a neglected population, the separate location perpetuated the mainstream educational system's reluctance to work with a wide range of abilities (Anderson, 2006; Artiles et al., 2006). Historically, schools were for a privileged minority. Inclusion is an ambitious undertaking in that historically, schools were never designed to accommodate everyone (Slee, 2001). When children are excluded from mainstream education it is because someone feels that they will not fit (Thomas & Glenny, 2002).

According to proponents of mainstreaming/inclusion, the exclusion of disabled students from mainstream education constitutes a form of segregation. Discussions of inclusion are usually framed around civil rights, describing special classrooms as educational ghettos (Anderson, 2006). Mainstreaming students into general education classrooms, however, does not guarantee their learning. Presence in the mainstream classroom does not necessarily equate to opportunities to communicate and learn alongside peers (Anderson, 2006; Gale, 2001; Thomas & Glenny, 2002). Inclusion recognizes that education is more than a matter of access, and becomes a matter of full participation by students with disabilities (Ryan, 2006).

An inclusion program requires grounding in a philosophy that fosters an inclusive school culture. Springing forth from a democratic philosophy whereby all students are valued,

educators normalize difference through differentiated instruction, and the school culture reflects an ethic of caring and community (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004). This requires educators to shift from a medical to social model of disability. The "medical model" locates disability within the person. This deficit view discourages practitioners from considering barriers to participation in the social context and implementing interventions that are within their control. Thus, it is an impediment to inclusion (Barr & Smith, 2009; Kinsella & Senior, 2008).

A comprehensive shift toward inclusive practices would be felt on all levels of the school. Unlike integration, which involves adapting to existing structures, inclusion extends into the community, and into attitudes and behavior. Inclusion has more layers, and involves the interaction between the institution and human interactions (Corbett, 2001).

Striving to meet the needs of all learners can result in the de-emphasis of the bell-curve mentality. The traditional, meritocratic view that schools reward the best students conflicts with the egalitarian attitude of meeting the needs of all learners (Christensen & Dorn, 1997). In this way, inclusion becomes political and challenging by not reflecting dominant social values. It holds up a way of treating people that is not based on a competitive, hierarchical model (Corbett, 2001).

Differentiated Instruction

The decision to create inclusive classrooms necessitates the practice of differentiated instruction (Gale, 2001). In differentiated instruction, teachers modify the content, process, and/or products of instruction (Tomlinson, 1999). Content refers to what students are going to learn, processes are learning activities, and products are ways students demonstrate learning. Differentiated classrooms rely on ongoing assessment to assess student readiness and target

specific interests and skills (Algozzine & Anderson, 2007; Ankrum & Bean, 2008; International Reading Association, 2000; Tomlinson, 1999). Teachers rely on flexible grouping: a combination of whole-group, small-group, and individualized lessons tailored to students' individualized learning needs (Algozzine & Anderson, 2007; Ankrum & Bean, 2008; IRA, 2000).

Classrooms in the United States group children by age, but the children in one classroom have a wide range of abilities, interests, and skills (International Reading Association, 2000; Tomlinson, 1999). "One size fits all" instruction decreases overall student achievement. Under this model, teachers tend to focus on the middle achievers, leaving out the needs of high and low learners who then do not receive the instruction needed to improve (Ankrum & Bean 2008; Tomlinson, 1999).

Teachers in a differentiated classroom must respect individual student readiness, expect all students to grow, offer opportunities at varying and escalating levels of difficulty, and offer all students equally engaging tasks (Tomlinson, 1999). Differentiated instruction respects all learners for the unique contributions they bring to the classroom by constructing difference as normal, and pushing educators to move from a deficit to contributive model regarding student difference (Algozzine & Anderson, 2007; Baglieri & Knopf, 2004, Gale, 2001).

Social Justice Issues

A variety of social justice discourses emerge from the literature on inclusion. The non-Catholic school literature focuses on the subtle differences between philosophies of special education and inclusive schooling. There is no question of these practices taking place in the public schools. The literature on Catholic schools, however, still addresses the basic question of

whether Catholic schools should attempt to adopt special education/inclusion programs in the first place.

Two major frameworks emerge in the literature on inclusion and social justice. These two frameworks can be characterized as individualistic/justification oriented or communitarian/implementation oriented (Artiles et al., 2006; Christensen & Dorn, 1997; Dyson, 1999). The individualistic/justification discourses emphasize the rights of disabled individuals, while the communitarian/implementation discourses emphasize the importance of transforming communities to create cultures of acceptance. Both of these frameworks are pro-inclusion/mainstreaming versus keeping students in separate classrooms, but the first focuses on the needs of individual students while the second focuses on the needs of the community.

Justification and Individualism

The early inclusion literature focused on ending the segregation of students in special education. Based on distributive concepts of social justice, the justification discourses focused on rights, ethics, and moral activism (Artiles et al., 2006; Thomas & Glenny, 2002). A critique grew of the parallel special education system that privileged the knowledge of school psychologists and special educators as the only persons capable of teaching students with special needs. The existence of supposedly privileged knowledge led teachers to conclude that they did not have the tools and expertise to teach all children (Artiles et al., 2006; Thomas & Glenny, 2002).

Justification discourses draw upon concepts of individualism and individual rights. Special education reform has traditionally focused on access and redistributing resources to benefit the disadvantaged (Artiles et al., 2006; Christensen & Dorn, 1997). The individualistic

approach is criticized for shortsightedness, failing to recognize the underlying power relationships and social contexts that led to inequities (Artiles et al., 2006). Individualistic discourses are viewed by many as inadequate to the task, and inappropriate for transforming the human relationships that support inclusion (Barr & Smith; 2009; Gale, 2001).

Implementation and Communitarianism

Implementation discourses divide between the political and the pragmatic. Political implementation discourses assert that some form of political action must address inequitable conditions. Pragmatic discourses describe the unique organizational traits of inclusive schools and provide practical guidelines. As with the justification discourses, both political and pragmatic implementation discourses question the assumptions that disability is located within the individual, requiring separate services by a specialized staff (Artiles et al. 2006).

Implementation views tend to embrace the concept of communitarianism, a vision of social cohesion reflected in the values and beliefs of the community (Artiles et al., 2006; Christensen & Dorn, 1997). In communitarian views, social justice and inclusion stem from collective belonging and the creation of just relationships (Christensen & Dorn, 1997; Thomas & Loxley, 2007). Communitarian views critique the emphasis on individual “rights” for discounting the importance of interpersonal and communal connections, a concept that runs counter to Western individualism (Anderson 2006, Anderson, 2010).

Communitarian views are criticized for lacking standards and structure, and having no clearly articulated beliefs that can be pinpointed beyond opposing individualism (Artiles et al., 2006; Christensen & Dorn, 1997). In addition to failing to provide guidelines and models for policy and practice, the communitarian view naively assumes that adopting new inclusive

vocabulary and structures will change attitudes and create inclusive communities (Artiles et al., 2006).

Neither individualistic nor communitarian inclusion discourses are fully adequate for justifying inclusion. Both discourses have similar goals, but arguments for inclusion need to move beyond individualism vs. communitarianism (Artiles et al., 2006, Christensen & Dorn, 1997). According to Artiles et al. (2006), a transformative view of social justice is needed to advance the cause of inclusion.

Social Justice Issues in Catholic Schools

Most of the literature on Catholic school inclusion links Church teaching to the concept that Catholic schools must answer to more than the letter of secular law, and are morally obligated to serve students with disabilities (Baxter, 2009; Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Hallinan, 2000; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Martin & Litton, 2004; Russo et. at, 2002, Scanlan, 2009; Shaughnessy, 1998; USCCB, 2005; Weaver et al., 2006). In 2005, the USCCB stated that Catholics are responsible to make a specifically Catholic education available, accessible, and affordable to Catholics.

Catholic teaching could perhaps be seen as embracing communitarian inclusion views through the concept of the “Body of Christ.” Paul teaches that “So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Rom. 12:5 NIV); “to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:7 NIV); and “God's purpose was that the body should not be divided but rather that all of its parts should feel the same concern for each other. If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts share its suffering. If one part is praised, all the others share in its happiness” (1 Cor. 12:23-26). The Church

teaches that each person is a reflection of the divine. Catholics are bound together in a community of faith, and must respect and care for one another (Long & Schuttloffel, 2006). Catholic schools "challenge students to live generously in community, motivated by their religious faith" in contrast to the at best "vague humanism" offered by the public schools (Hallinan, 2000, p.219). As stated by the Church, "Disability is a challenge to individual and collective selfishness, and a call to brotherhood" (Paul VI, 1965).

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) potentially provides a grounding philosophy for inclusive practice in Catholic schools (DeFiore, 2006; Russo et al., 2002; Scanlan, 2009). CST compels schools to affirm human dignity, serve the common good, and demonstrate a preferential option for the marginalized – thus obligating Catholic schools to serve students with special needs (Scanlan, 2009; Shaughnessy, 1998). Scanlan (2008, 2009) observes that an inadequate knowledge of CST can interfere with Catholic school leaders' awareness of their moral obligations.

Despite the potential grounding in CST and passages from the Gospels, Catholic schools lack an explicit moral framework for inclusion. Different writers identify differing and at times vague sources for the moral obligation of Catholic schools to practice inclusion. Baxter (2009) refers to inclusion as based on "Gospel teaching" and principles of "Catholic education." DeFiore (2006) connects inclusion with "Church teaching." The United States Council of Catholic Bishops describes inclusion as grounded in "Catholic principles." Long & Schuttloffel (2006) refer to the "social justice value" of inclusion. DeFiore (2006), Russo et al. (2002), and Scanlan (2009) connect inclusive practices with Catholic Social Teaching, but Scanlan (2008) also discovered that participants with CST values were ingrained into their school structures did

not identify CST as a significant influence. Although the literature refers to a variety of sources (Catholic Social Teaching, the Gospel, social justice, etc.) providing the moral groundwork for inclusion, no specific source appears consistently.

The challenges and difficulties of implementing inclusion in a Catholic school setting can seem insurmountable. Despite the concrete reality of limited resources, some voices in the literature criticize the overemphasis on capacity issues. Scanlan (2008, 2009) critiques the construct of capacity, and states that the "capacity excuse" reflects a poor knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching (CST), and stems from a conceptual barrier. Scanlan states than some Catholic educators don't believe they have a responsibility to serve the disabled, and the "grammar" of Catholic schooling allows them to blame outside elements and operate under the illusion that they are achieving optimally.

Scanlan (2008) argues that Catholic educators often believe that students with special needs belong in the public school, and that the structures of Catholic schools lead many Catholic educators to exhibit a preferential option against the disabled. Scanlan implies that stakeholder buy-in is glossed over because serving special needs students in Catholic schools is continually framed as a matter of resources, but not of willpower. Bello (2006), however, found that despite barriers of time, resources and expertise, faculty and administrators did not lack interest in inclusion.

Weaver et al. (2006) critique DeFiore's (2006) assertion that resources are the primary obstacle to Catholic school inclusion, and assert that special education comes first out of a culture of inclusiveness. In the "secular" inclusion literature, this issue emerges as well. Focusing on resources (be they for regular or special education students), leads to formulaic,

unguided attempts at redistributing resources (Thomas & Glenny, 2002). The idea that social justice requires the fair distribution of resources has merit, but does not challenge the structures that created inequities (Ryan, 2006).

Methodology as a Social Justice Issue

According to Thomas & Glenny (2002), research methodology can become a social justice issue when analyzing inclusive practices. They assert that the 20th century acceptance of empirical evidence is responsible for many of the wrong turns in the development of special education. The belief that educational questions can be answered by supposedly "objective" empirical studies disguises the political underpinnings of such research. Opponents of inclusion critique the practice as grounded in ideology rather than evidence and a dispassionate concern for truth. The approach persists because it provides explanations. Questions regarding education and inclusion, however, deal with interconnectedness and complicated human systems in which it is difficult to impossible to delineate variables for inspection. Showing that inclusion "works" is like showing that equality works—it is based on value judgments. Thomas & Glenny (2002) argue for a new epistemology of inclusion characterized not by technical questions, but by questioning the purpose of gathering children in schools and questions about what is fair and right.

Force Field Analysis

Kurt Lewin's "field theory" will provide the theoretical framework for understanding the development of the St. Ignatius inclusion program (Lewin 1942/1951a, 1943/1951c, Lewin 1947/1959). According to Lewin (1943/1951b), field theory provides a method for analyzing casual relations and building scientific constructs of complicated social situations. When

changing a social equilibrium, one has to consider the total social field: groups and subgroups involved, their relationships, and their value systems (Lewin, 1947/1951d).

According to Lewin (1942/1951a, p. 83), "all changes are due to certain forces." By identifying and plotting the strengths of these forces, one can understand why individuals, groups, and organizations act as they do (Owings & Kaplan, 2012). Forces are the factors that influence social situations. The status quo is maintained when driving and resisting forces are in balance (Lewin, 1943/1951c). Change results from an imbalance between the ratio of driving and resisting forces (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). Forces can originate from the internal or external environment of the organization, or in the behavior of a "change agent" individual seeking to foster change (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). Force field analysis can be used to understand the change process in terms of driving forces and factors and resisting forces and factors, providing complex representations of interconnected factors (Lewin, 1942/1951a; Lifter, Kruger, Okun, Tabol, Poklop, & Shishmanian, 2005; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008).

Organizational change involves a sequence of processes over time (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). Lewin's model of institutional changes follows a three-part process: unfreezing the statues quo, moving, and refreezing to create a new equilibrium. (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008, Owens, 2004; Owings & Kaplan, 2012). The initial "unfreezing" of an organization involves disturbing the status quo and breaking the equilibrium of the force field (Owens, 2004). Unfreezing schools may be in response to a crisis, or an emotional stir-up that challenges organizational complacency (Lewin, 1947/1951d; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008).

The second step in organizational change, "moving," involves the development of new values, attitudes, and behaviors through internalization, identification, or change in structure. In

order to change the status quo, leaders have three options: increase driving forces, reduce resisting forces, or consider new driving forces. Increasing driving forces without decreasing resisting forces will increase conflict and resistance. Once the "moving" process has finished, a new status quo emerges and the organization is "refrozen." Refreezing involves stabilizing the change at a new equilibrium (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008).

Various studies have utilized force field analysis to understand the complexities of organizational change. With survey data, Lifter et al. (2005) used force field analysis to examine the external and internal driving and restraining forces in the transition from a traditional classroom to primarily Web-based personal preparation program. Wagner, van Reyk, & Spence (2000) used force field analysis to investigate organizational issues in children's welfare agencies, utilizing narrative data that captured a variety of participant perspectives. Force field analysis can be used to plan and develop organizational changes and anticipate barriers or difficulties (Owings & Kaplan, 2012; Wagner et al., 2000).

Conclusion

This literature review summarized the literature on Catholic school inclusion, definitions and the practice of inclusion, differentiated instruction, social justice discourses of inclusion, and force field analysis. The information presented in Chapter 2 influenced the design of the research questions and the interview questions. The complex intersection of people, values, and perceptions warranted the collection of mixed methods data, and a theoretical framework geared at understanding the complexities of organizational change.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLGY

Introduction

Using Lewin's (1942/1951a) framework of force field analysis, this mixed methods case study identified the driving and restraining forces that influenced change at St. Ignatius School, and analyzed the relationship between these forces and social justice issues. To answer the research questions, interviews with teachers, current and past administrators, the pastor, and parents were analyzed in conjunction with program artifacts and results from a rating scale. Themes from the literature outlined in Chapter 2 illuminated the data and informed the structure of the analysis.

Research Questions

This study answered the following research questions:

1. What driving and restraining forces influenced the evolution of the inclusion program at this school over the past thirteen years?
2. How did these forces influence the current practice of inclusion at the school?
3. How have social justice issues impacted these forces?

History of the Inclusion Program at the School Site

The school used for this study was founded in 1947. Like most Catholic schools, the school historically served "typical" students from the parish community. Students with disabilities would enroll in the local public schools to receive services. The inclusion program began thirteen years ago when a parent at the school approached the principal with the idea of forming a team to brainstorm strategies for students who learned "outside of the box." The

parent had children enrolled at the school, but also had a child with Down's syndrome attending a public school where the parent was a teacher. The principal was receptive to the idea, and formed an initial team, consisting of the Vice Principal and two teachers. A student with emotional problems in the primary grades had caught their attention and the team was eager to help this student. For the first year, this small group would meet to discuss strategies for individual students in the school that had exhibited various social and educational difficulties. Their thoughts and strategies were then relayed to the students' teachers.

Over the past thirteen years, the inclusion program has undergone numerous permutations. As the years progressed, the team continued to develop routines and procedures to increase organization and accountability. For the first year, one of the team members took narrative notes on the proceedings. Another team member began developing forms and paperwork with the help of the parent who initially inspired the creation of the team. The paperwork became useful year-to-year documentation as a student progressed through different grades.

Membership on this initial inclusion team at St. Ignatius evolved. Early on when the team was developing strategies for a given student, the student's teacher was added to team meetings; and eventually so were the student's parents. Through their recommendations, the early team was highly influential in shaping how inclusion was practiced in classrooms. Teachers began to sign forms ensuring that accommodations and modifications would be implemented in the classroom. The team added follow-up meetings to evaluate progress. During the early years, the process did not necessarily meet the legal guidelines of the 504 process. Teachers were signing forms parents could technically have used to sue the school if accommodations were not met.

Members of the inclusion team visited schools in the adjacent diocese where inclusive practices were already in place. Team members attended workshops, including a conference at the University of Dayton. The principal and pastor of St. Ignatius, wanting to formalize the inclusion program, officially created an inclusion team called the "Student Support Team" (SST). The parish also held a meeting for parishioners interested in helping the school develop inclusive practices. The Inclusion Committee worked to set and meet a series of goals, such as professional development for teachers and fundraising to hire an inclusion coordinator. The Committee was disbanded once their goals had been achieved. The principal eventually passed on the SST forms and procedural concepts of St. Ignatius to their archdiocese's department of education. The archdiocese recently mandated some level of inclusion implementation in the elementary schools, resulting in the current terminology of the "STEP (Support Team Education Plan)" program.

For the past six years, the school has hosted an annual fundraiser specifically for the STEP program. The fundraiser was originally organized by an Inclusion Committee and has subsequently been organized by the administration and faculty following the disbanding of the Committee. Using monies from the initial fundraiser, the school hired a salaried inclusion coordinator four days a week. The school continues to host different fundraisers, but the funding for the inclusion program is no longer kept separate from the school's general operating funds.

The scope and practice of inclusion undergoes continual development at St. Ignatius. The program initially began to meet the needs of students with emotional problems and common disabilities such as ADD and ADHD, speech and language issues, and reading delays. In addition to a growing population of students with mild to moderate disabilities, the school

currently enrolls students with visual and hearing impairments, high functioning autism, various other mild to moderate physical, mental and emotional challenges, and some more severe disabilities such as Down's syndrome, autism, mental retardation, and multiple disabilities. Approximately 13% of the current student body has a STEP plan. The school hires a reading resource teacher, provides parents other opportunities to bring private specialists on school grounds, and provides some assistive technology.

With the assistance of the inclusion coordinator, students at St. Ignatius generally undergo an initial evaluation either through a private specialist or the local public school's IEP (Individualized Education Program) process. The STEP Team creates individualized plans for students using recommendations from the IEP report or private evaluation. The current STEP team consists of the inclusion coordinator, a grade level administrator (referred to as STEP Team Members 1 and 2 in the interviews), and the school counselor. A student's current homeroom teacher and parents also attend their STEP meeting.

The student STEP plans contain varying levels of support, depending on what individual students need to be successful at St. Ignatius. Many of the academic, behavioral, and environmental adjustments on student STEP plans are simple to implement. For example, a student with a hearing impairment requires seating at the front of the classroom. A legally blind student requires an additional desk to place a special magnifying machine he uses to see his work and the board, as well as a place to store the machine.

Many typical adjustments require small amounts of teacher time, high levels of teacher organization, but no additional resources per se. In other words, these common accommodations and modifications are feasible for the average teacher in a typical classroom. For example, a

common accommodation for students with reading challenges is to have tests read aloud. If a teacher does not have an aide, they will need to find a system for administering the test orally either at the same time as the written test or at another time. Some students in grades K-2 are pulled from class to work with the school's reading specialist. Another common adjustment is for the teacher to check a student's backpack and homework planner at the end of the day to ensure that the correct materials have been assembled. A common tool in the younger grades is a daily behavior chart. Like the homework planner, this adjustment requires the teacher to remember to take a few minutes at the end of the day to check in with individual students.

Some STEP plans are more "high maintenance" for the classroom teacher. A typical example would be a student who requires curricular materials provided in advance so that students can preview material at home with a parent, tutor, or educational therapist. This requires the teacher to have their lesson plans complete ahead of time, and to take the time to provide parents with this information. Another high-maintenance accommodation is providing a student with a "sensory diet" to help with sensory integration issues. This can look different depending on the student, but may include accommodations such as taking breaks to interact with sensory tools in the back of the classroom, carrying heavy objects, or going outside for some form of physical activity. Anything involving the student leaving the classroom requires adult supervision and therefore a classroom aide. The teacher also needs to constantly monitor and decide when the student needs a sensory break. Given the multi-tasking nature of teaching, it can be difficult to stay constantly abreast of one student's sensory needs while accomplishing all of the other tasks and monitoring the needs of the other students in the classroom, some of whom may also need frequent monitoring to ensure focus and appropriate behavior. Students

with ADHD and other behavioral issues can fall within the "high-maintenance category" when they require constant adult interaction and monitoring.

Another "high-maintenance" type of STEP plan involves modifying curriculum for students identified as gifted. The school has not developed a consistent policy or practice for how teachers are required to implement curriculum adjustments for these types of students. Teachers with students in their class identified as gifted frequently struggle with finding the time, resources, and logistical strategies for providing these students curricular materials appropriate to their needs.

Some students require such extensive attention that they need a one-on-one aide. This differs from the regular classroom aides employed by the school. The classroom aides are funded through the parent organization that is not tied to inclusion, and in fact often refuses to fund "inclusion" resources they perceive as only serving minority groups of students. The regular classroom aides are primarily instructional assistants, and also provide clerical support to teachers. Regular classroom aides provide various types of supports to students with accommodations and modifications. For example, a regular classroom aide might read a test orally to a student or students, take a child outside for five minutes on a sensory break, or call a student over to their desk to orally explain their written answers.

Students with one-on-one aides require almost constant, and at times, specialized attention that is a full-time job for the adult providing the support. These students usually require heavily modified or individualized curriculum. Some students with autism have had a one-on-one Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) specialist working with them on a part or full-time basis. Some students with autism and two students with Down syndrome have a one-on-

one aide shadowing them at all times, providing behavioral and academic supports. One-on-on aides are not common, but there are usually about three or four employed full-time in a given school year, in additional to part-time specialists such as ABA specialists, speech therapists, and occupational therapists. These one-on-one aides and specialists are employed and paid for by the families of the students requiring the aides, although the school is involved in the hiring and monitoring process.

Although the presence of one-on-one aides theoretically takes the burden off of the regular classroom teacher, students with one-on-one aides are also high-maintenance. The teacher will have regular meetings scheduled with the parents, one-on-one aide, inclusion coordinator, and other specialists employed by the family. The classroom teacher is responsible for supervising and communicating expectations to the one-on-one aide. The goal is always to include the student as much as possible in the regular classroom and phase out the use of a one-on-one whenever possible. The classroom teacher is still that student's primary teacher, interacting regularly with the student, implementing their behavior plan, and including the student in the academic and social life of the classroom.

Another key element of the St. Ignatius approach to inclusion is an emphasis on differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction, as described in Chapter 2, is a broad term that denotes modifying the content, process, and/or products of instruction (Tomlinson, 1999). The many accommodations and modifications mentioned above are aspects of differentiated instruction in that they allow students to approach learning in the manner that best suits their learning needs.

In addition to serving students with STEP plans, differentiated instruction at St. Ignatius serves the entire student body by providing varied learning opportunities. Teachers are expected to incorporate activities aimed at a variety of learning styles into the classroom, reaching auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learners. Students are assessed in a variety of ways, including traditional tests, projects, and oral assessments. Students are often given choices for completing larger projects. Five years ago the school began adopting Reader's and Writer's Workshop, an approach where students read and write at their own individual level while also participating in whole-group learning and activities (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). The presence of classroom aides allows teachers to utilize flexible grouping strategies to target specific needs. Students in junior high are separated by ability into different math groups. In the younger grades, students with aptitudes in math are provided enrichment activities. The practice of differentiated instruction at St. Ignatius continues to expand in a variety of ways.

Methodology

Case Study

This research can be characterized as a case study, as it is an in-depth analysis of a single unit: the inclusion program at St. Ignatius. According to Stake (2005), case study is not a methodology but a choice of what is to be studied. The inclusion program at one Catholic elementary school provides the boundaries of the case. Case takes root in the context of the phenomena to be studied (Gay et al., 2009; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriman, 2009). As described in Chapter 1, the school in this study represents a unique intersection of high stakeholder buy-in with regards to inclusion, high levels of socioeconomic power and resources, and an inclusion program unique within its own diocese.

Mixed Methods

This case study took a mixed-methods approach. The two sources of qualitative data (interviews and site artifacts) and one source of quantitative data (the rating scale) were collected concurrently, but the qualitative data held dominant status (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The rationale for this design was to allow for triangulation and corroboration of results from different data sources and methods (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

In the initial design of this study, another qualitative data source, in addition to the interviews and artifacts, was proposed to be a classroom observation piece. After initial approval of the study, it was determined that classroom observation was not germane to the study and would not provide information that would help answer the research questions. The classroom observation piece was replaced with the quantitative rating scale.

Research Sample

The interview portion of the study utilized critical case, purposive sampling (Gay et al. 2009; Hatch, 2002). The sample consisted of fourteen individuals critical to the phenomenon being studied in the judgment of the researcher (Gay et al., 2009; Hatch, 2002). These individuals included the current principal, the previous principal, the principal who initially started the inclusion team, the pastor who has been at the parish for thirty years, teachers who had been members of the inclusion team, parents who had been on the initial Inclusion Committee, and a selection of teachers who had been at the school for over thirteen years and had experienced the entire transition to date.

For the quantitative survey portion of the study, ten current teachers were asked to independently complete the "Rating Scale of Components of a Responsible Inclusion Program

for Students with High-Incidence Disabilities" designed by Vaughn et al. (1998; Appendix A). These ten teachers were selected using random sampling to incorporate as broad and representative a range of perspectives as possible. The names of all 32 full-time teachers in grades pre-K through eighth were placed in a container, and ten names were drawn at random. All ten teachers agreed to complete the rating scale. One teacher taught pre-K, three taught second grade, one taught third grade, two taught fourth grade, one taught sixth grade, and two taught seventh grade. All participants have been teaching at the school for between two to eight years. The third grade teacher is also STEP Team Member 2 from the interviews. The other nine teachers were not part of the interview process. The teachers and administrators in the interview population have generally been at the school longer than the ten teachers that completed the rating scale.

The study relied on insider knowledge of the history of the school and its inclusion program. The interview population may have been prone to a pro-inclusion bias due to their heavy involvement with the inclusion program. Teachers' responses to the rating scale provided insights into the day-to-day functioning of the inclusion program that supported findings from the qualitative data.

Researcher Positionality

As a full-time teacher at the school site, the researcher interfaces regularly with the research participants on both a professional and personal level. Educational issues are frequently discussed as part of a collaborative, professional relationship. The researcher combated researcher bias by explaining in Chapter 4 how personal dispositions and assumptions may have affected interpretation of the data (Merriman, 2009).

Data Collection

Interviews

Before beginning the study, an appointment was made by the researcher with the school principal to describe the nature of the study and solicit approval. Once permission was secured, a letter was sent to each potential interviewee (Appendix B) describing the study and asking if he/she would like to participate. Letters were sent through an e-mail attachment. Potential participants were asked to respond electronically stating their intention to accept or decline participation in the study, and to indicate a convenient time and location to conduct the interview should they choose to participate. The informed consent form (Appendix C) was included in the initial e-mail. The researcher brought a hard copy of the form to the interview in order to collect signatures.

Each interview began with a brief explanation of the research questions and purpose of the study. Interviews were recorded formally on GarageBand software. The first interview questions consisted of background and demographic questions, followed by essential questions aimed at generating the core data of the study. The essential questions were designed to elicit descriptive, structural, and contrast responses. Descriptive questions gave participants an opportunity to describe their roles and share their special knowledge. Structural questions asked participants how they organized their knowledge into categories or domains. Contrast questions used terms such as "can you compare" and "what is the difference between" to understand how participants made meaning from their experiences (Hatch, 2002).

Interviews were both formal and semi-structured, utilizing open-ended questioning to elicit participants' views and unique perspectives on the phenomenon being studied (Creswell,

2003). Guiding questions were utilized (Appendix D), and generated additional questions depending on each participant's response (Hatch, 2002; Merriman, 2009). Questions assumed that participants possessed valuable knowledge, and remained open-ended so as not to imply the existence of a "correct" answer (Hatch, 2002). "Probes," or follow up question were utilized to elicit additional details from participants as recommended by Merriman (2009). During the interview process, memos were recorded in a notebook. Memos helped provide insights and guide data analysis (Hatch, 2002; Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Merriman, 2009).

Artifacts

Artifacts were included as a data source to support/refute findings from the interview and assist with triangulation. During interviews, participants were asked if they were aware of any additional non-confidential artifacts to include in the study. One of the interview participants had been responsible for archiving meeting minutes and inclusion related materials while she had been a member of the Inclusion Committee. She provided all of these archived materials, resulting in a comprehensive collection of the publications, notes, and plans related to inclusion at the school from around 2005 to 2011. As recommended by Hatch (2002), the artifacts were photocopied and promptly returned. Copies were filed in binders and kept in the researcher's possession. In addition to these artifacts, the description of the inclusion program from the school was copied and appears in Chapter 4.

The codes used when analyzing the Inclusion Committee documents were borrowed from the pre-existing interview codes. Due to the large quantity of artifact data, only information the researcher deemed relevant to the study were coded. An artifact was determined to be relevant if it related to one of the findings from the interview data. "Relevant" artifacts generally included

goals and minutes from meetings, PR materials, surveys, etc. Artifacts determined not to be relevant included items such as menus and to-do lists for the fundraisers. Artifact analysis took place last.

Rating Scale

To better triangulate the data, a survey was administered to ten teachers selected by random sampling. The survey used was the "Rating Scale of Components of a Responsible Inclusion Program for Students with High-Incidence Disabilities" designed by Vaughn et al. (Appendix A). The scale included 47 items that described ideal inclusive practices. Each item was rated on a three-point Likert scale: 3=implements, 2=implements partially, and 1=does not implement or implements poorly. The participants were instructed to complete and return the rating scale independently.

The authors of the rating scale interviewed special and general education teachers, observed inclusion programs, met with principals and parents, and conducted focus groups. They found that educators wanted guidelines for evaluating the adequacy of their inclusion programs. The rating scale was designed using data from three sources: a four-year case study conducted at three school sites, program evaluations of over 50 schools that had restructured for inclusion, and a focus group interview of four general education teachers, three special education teachers, one school principal, and one special education director, all of whom had recently developed a program to include students with high-incidence disabilities. Using the input from these three sources, the authors designed the rating scale. The scale can be used for program development, program monitoring, and program evaluation (Vaughn et al., 1998).

Ten randomly selected teachers were sent a letter (Appendix E) and asked to complete

the “Rating Scale of Components of a Responsible Inclusion Program for Students with High-Incidence Disabilities (Appendix A), a 47 item scale that describes ideal inclusive practices. Each item is rated on a three-point scale, 3=implements, 2=implements partially, and 1=does not implement or implements poorly.

Data Analysis Procedures

Interview Transcription and Qualitative Coding

Audio files of the interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word. Next, the researcher conducted an open coding of the data. Codes were written in the margins of interview transcripts (Merriman, 2009). In accordance with the research questions, coding focused on examples of driving and restraining forces and social justice issues. Codes, comments, and terms were periodically compiled into a master list (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Merriman, 2009). Next, the transcripts and master list (Appendix F) were used to create thematic compilations of interview data. To derive findings, the compilations were used in conjunction with the original notes and coding on the data.

The codes and categories generated in the qualitative interview coding where also applied to the site artifacts (Merriman, 2009). A separate list of comments, terms, and notes were merged with the interview notations to generate a master list (Merriman, 2009). Once a scheme of categories was established, the interview data were sorted into categories (Merriman, 2009). Appendix F lists the categories used in sorting the data. When presenting data in force-field analysis, Lewin (1942/1951a) recommends characterizing the situation as a whole, then supporting this description with typologies in the form of flow charts (Johnson & Christensen,

2008; Merriman, 2009). The findings regarding driving and restraining forces are illustrated in a diagram/flow chart at the end of Chapter 4 (Figure 1).

Quantitative Analysis Procedures for Rating Scale

The data from the rating scale provided an alternative viewpoint to the interviews and Inclusion Committee documents. The rating scale addressed both broadly and specifically the various components that compromise a successful inclusion program. The teachers live the daily realities of implementing inclusive practices, and offer a different perspective than those in an administrative or committee position.

While interviews contained the primary data for the study, the findings from the rating scale provided further evidence for data triangulation, or contrary evidence to problematize interview and artifact findings. When analyzing the rating scale responses, particular attention was paid to survey items for which at least 70% of respondents gave the same rating. Situations where the responses were distributed evenly along the rating scale or were divided starkly between high and low ratings, indicating a lack of consensus or consistency in teachers' perceptions, were also of interest and are discussed in the analysis.

Triangulation

Mixed methods design allowed for data triangulation. The use of a survey in mixed methods research helps validate patterns in case studies (Gay et al., 2009). Three data sources enabled triangulation: interviews, artifacts, and a rating scale. Themes and typologies that emerged from the qualitative data (interviews and artifacts) were compared to several of the most important responses from the rating scale as well as analyzed in light of major themes addressed in previous scholarly literature on inclusion.

Methodological Issues

Guba & Lincoln (1994) propose four criteria for qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Data triangulation helps ensure that the findings of qualitative research are credible (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Triangulation can be accomplished through using data from multiple sources (Hatch, 2002; Merriman, 2009). The qualitative data in this study were generated from interviews and artifacts. The quantitative data were gathered using a survey that asked ten teachers to rate inclusive practices. The use of multiple sources of data provided opportunities for triangulation, which increases the study's credibility.

Transferability

Qualitative research cannot be generalized in a statistical sense (Merriman, 2009). Transferability takes the place of generalizability in qualitative research. By providing adequate detail, readers may judge if the findings are applicable to other settings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). "Thick" descriptions of the setting, participants, and findings of the study will ensure transferability of the research (Merriman, 2009).

Dependability

"Audit trails" provide dependability in qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Merriman, 2009; Yin 1993). A journal of memos was kept and a record of interactions with the data. From this journal, the list of categories used in organizing the data for final analysis is presented in Appendix F.

Confirmability

Self-critical analysis describing the relationship between the researcher and the context ensure confirmability of the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Due to the researcher's dual role of researcher and faculty member on the school site, the researcher brought assumptions to the data collection and analysis process. The description of these assumptions in Chapter 4 will help strengthen confirmability.

Artifacts helped establish context and history that grounded the findings from the interview data (Hatch, 2002). These "objective" documents provided descriptive information and verified emerging theories (Merriman, 2009). According to Hatch (2002), comparing the artifacts to the perspectives of the researcher and interview participants helps readers judge the relevance of the findings (Hatch, 2002).

Conclusion

This case study utilized a mixed methods approach to analyze the driving forces, restraining forces, and social justice issues that influenced the development of the inclusion program at one school site. The study relied primarily on qualitative interview data gathered form fourteen participants. The findings from the interviews were triangulated with qualitative data from artifacts and quantitative data from a rating scale to answer the research questions. Themes from previous scholarly literature on inclusion provided insight and structure into the analysis of these three data sources. Qualitative data analysis procedures resulted in the creation of categories, typologies, and themes that will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 4

REPORT OF FINDINGS

Purpose

This mixed methods study sought to identify the driving and restraining forces that influenced the development of the inclusion program at one Catholic elementary school, how these forces influenced the current practice of inclusion, and how social justice issues impacted these forces. Multiple sources of data were collected to answer the research questions. Interviews, the primary data source, were administered to fourteen individuals with strong ties to the inclusion program. Artifacts provided a supplementary source of qualitative data. A quantitative rating scale was administered to ten teachers asking them to rate inclusive practices at the school.

Chapter 4 will begin with a summary of the findings that answered the three research questions followed by a presentation of the data. The first data section will describe the qualitative interview data. This will be followed by a description of the findings from the rating scale and the artifacts. The results are then summarized in chart format (Figure 1). Finally, these interview themes are triangulated with the artifacts and rating scale, and analyzed in light of themes from literature on Catholic school inclusion.

Summary of the Findings

Research Question 1: Driving and Restraining Forces

St. Ignatius School began operating in 1947. From its inception, St. Ignatius followed the standards and expectations set down for it by the diocese, and later, the archdiocese in which it is located. As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, there were little to no overarching standards

developed for Catholic schools with regard to the inclusion of students with disabilities during this time. Historically, students who attended St. Ignatius were drawn primarily from the parish community, which is located in an affluent suburb of a metropolitan area. It may be assumed that historically, parishioners whose children had disabilities sent their children to other schools that could better provide for their needs.

The beginnings of a new philosophy about inclusion and a plan for St. Ignatius began in 1997, fifty years into the school's history, and brought with it major changes. By applying Lewin's (1942/1951a) force-field theory, the development of the inclusion program at St. Ignatius School can be understood as an interchange between driving and restraining forces. The findings of this study found four major driving forces for that change: leadership, teacher buy-in, school and parent partnerships, and a shared perception that the school and church (the parish) were a "family." The study found two major restraining forces: negative parent perceptions and conflict over resource allocation.

Research Question 2: Current Practices

The current practice of inclusion at St. Ignatius stresses that inclusion equates to serving all students—those with or without disabilities—through differentiated instruction. This stance is a direct result of two restraining forces: negative parent perceptions with regards to how the inclusion program affected the non-disabled student body and, in close connection, the allocation of resources. The school shifted the emphasis of the inclusion program from serving a minority group of students with disabilities to serving all students through differentiated instruction. A public relations campaign sought to educate the community about this shift. Professional development increased teacher expertise and confidence in accommodating students in the

classroom while the Inclusion Committee, pastor, and school worked to increase resources for inclusive practices. Through ongoing reflection, the teachers and administrators assessed how adequately the school served all of its students, and offered individual families honest advice on which educational environment might best serve their child's needs. The school's ability to offer this honest advice has improved over the years as the school has gained experience with inclusion.

Research Question 3: Social Justice Issues

A variety of social justice issues impacted the forces behind the evolution of the inclusion program. All participants who were interviewed for this study expressed their committed belief and understanding that the practice of inclusion is implicit in Catholic teaching. Three participants brought up the issue of abortion, and the obligation of Catholic schools to educate Catholic children whose parents decided to continue a pregnancy with the knowledge that their child would have special needs. Participants' perceptions of Catholic beliefs and values were aligned with their notions of social justice. Participants felt that educating all parish children followed Jesus' example and celebrated the diversity of the parish community.

Interview Data

How Respondents Define "Inclusion"

The fourteen interview participants included the pastor, five current and former principals and vice principals of the school, current teachers and members of the STEP team, members of the now defunct Inclusion Committee, and current teachers. Considerable overlap occurred between these distinctions. For example, the current school curriculum coordinator has also been a teacher, STEP team chair, classroom teacher, and vice principal at the school. For the

sake of distinguishing between interview participants, they will be identified as Teachers 1 and 2, Principals 1 through 3, Administrators 1 and 2, The Inclusion Coordinator, STEP Team Members 1 and 2, Inclusion Committee Members 1 through 3, and the Pastor. These distinctions reflect each individual's current role at the school.

Both Teachers 1 and 2 have taught at St. Ignatius since before or near the beginning of the inclusion program. Teacher 1 has taught kindergarten at the school for 27 years, and participated in one of the earliest incarnations of the team of teachers and administrators that met to discuss strategies for children with disabilities. Teacher 1 defines inclusion as "including everybody in my classroom," and teaching to everyone's "different strengths" across ability levels. Teacher 1 was also a school parent whose two children attended the school from kindergarten through 8th grade.

Teacher 2 has been a teacher and principal for over thirty years, and has taught 5th grade at St. Ignatius for the past twelve years. Teacher 2 was new to St. Ignatius during the inclusion program's beginning stages, and defines inclusion as ensuring that "everyone is included in your classroom for their educational abilities."

Administrator 1 worked at the school for twelve years, and was a parent at the school for fourteen years. Administrator 1 began as an aide, taught various grade levels for seven years, acted as vice principal for her last two years, and this year began a new position as principal of another Catholic elementary school in the vicinity. Heavily involved in the STEP team for five years as a teacher and then as vice principal, Administrator 1 describes inclusion as "where all students are given the opportunity to access the curriculum regardless of their learning styles, or their abilities."

Administrator 2 taught at St. Ignatius for ten years before becoming the school curriculum coordinator in 2012, serving as both a teacher and a vice principal for the ten years previous. Administrator 2 defines inclusion as including students who do not fall within the "norms" of a particular grade level "with whatever accommodations or modifications we can put in place so that they can succeed at their grade level."

Principal 1 was principal for fifteen years between and 1989 and 2004 and started the inclusion program. When asked to define inclusion, Principal 1 responded:

> In our case, I think it's just an extension of our ministry. You know, they're all God's children and they all belong—you know, as close to the church and—and, it's just—it seems so natural, I have a hard time describing—you know, defining it. It's the opposite, I guess, of exclusion. And, you don't exclude anyone, that's not who we are.

After Principal 1 retired, Principal 2 served for five years between 2004 and 2009. Principal 2 spoke of "inheriting" the inclusion program, and defined inclusion as:

> Very specific, with regards to students with needs, limited, mild, moderate, all those types of things, in the general-ed classroom, so, as opposed to doing pull-out, as opposed to taking kids out of the classroom to deal with their needs, which is necessary at some point, but for as much of the school day as possible, including students with special needs in the general education classroom.

Principal 3 has been school principal for four years since 2009, and describes inclusion as "creating an educational environment where every student has their needs met, and we are able to make modifications to make the content attainable to each student."

The Inclusion Coordinator was hired five years ago with monies raised by the school Inclusion Committee through fundraising efforts. The coordinator role was initially designed to "give some accountability to the STEP plans, to make sure that what was being written—what was written on paper was being implemented in the—in the classrooms." Other aspects of the coordinator role include maintaining the STEP files, observing and making recommendations to

teachers, recommending assessments for students, and meeting with parents and various therapists. The Inclusion Coordinator acts as liaison between the school and the local public schools that administer IEPs to some St. Ignatius students. The Inclusion Coordinator defines inclusion as everyone included "in the same group as their peers," with "access to the same educational opportunities as the peers in their grade, and providing them with the type of adjustments that they need to give them a level playing field so that they can access the curriculum like their peers."

STEP Team Member 1 has been heavily involved in the inclusion program since its inception. A kindergarten teacher at the school for over seventeen years, STEP Team Member 1 was a member of the first group of teachers and administrators that met to form what would eventually become the STEP team. STEP Team Member 1 eventually became the STEP team chair, and was instrumental in creating the organizational systems that supported the developing program. This year, STEP Team Member 1 became the grade level administrator for grades Pre-K through 2nd, and oversees the STEP plans for students at those grade levels. This participant describes inclusion as all students, regardless of ability, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background, being included in the educational program. "For our school…it means helping those children who learn differently than the typical student; to the best of our ability, having them in the classroom without having outside resources like public schools have."

STEP Team Member 2 has been a teacher at the school for eight years, and earned a Master's degree in Catholic Inclusive Education four years ago. This participant has been heavily involved in the inclusion program since then, and describes inclusion as:

> A broad topic that often has different definitions for individuals. At our school, it is providing students access to the curriculum who have a variety of learning needs or

> differences, so that all students, whether they struggle academically or socially, thrive academically or socially, or have some type of other difference that makes it challenging them—challenging for them to access their curriculum, they are included in our classrooms.

Inclusion Committee Member 1 was a parent at the school, chairperson of the Inclusion Committee, and currently is the president of the school board. This participant's oldest child was one of the first children served by the earliest incarnation of the inclusion program, and defines inclusion as "including children of different abilities in a regular educational setting."

Inclusion Committee Member 2 is a parishioner at St. Ignatius, but has not worked at nor been a parent in the school. This participant served as principal at a local public school for many years and has since retired. As a member of the school board, Inclusion Committee Member 2 was approached to participate in the Inclusion Committee initially directed by the school board. This participant defines inclusion as "meeting the needs of all students, not just a targeted element. And the vehicle by which you can meet this is done through differentiated instruction."

Inclusion Committee Member 3 is a current parent at the school. As a parishioner and parent of a special needs child, this participant became involved in the Inclusion Committee before the child was old enough to enroll at the school. This participant defines inclusion as "including every type of child with every different type of learning need. My philosophy is that every child learns in a different way, and not every child fits into a perfect box." Inclusion Committee Members1 and 3 are the only interview participants without a background in education.

The Pastor has been at the parish for 30 years. In addition to a background in theology and philosophy, he holds an advanced degree in religious education. He defines inclusion as:

> The way for us to recognize that Jesus sits at the table with everyone, and it is a way for us to put into action the words that we so often proclaim. We love children with special needs. We are not in any way excluding them from the opportunities that our church presents, and so, we have to, in fact, see how we can best respond to the educational needs and the religious formation of all children, including those who have special needs. And I think the other thing is, too, that sometimes, when we think of children with special needs, we think of children, maybe, who have Down's syndrome. But it's much broader than that. It's the very brilliant child or it's the child who has some learning difficulties.

Research Question 1: Driving Forces

Leadership. Interview participants identified the leadership of the Pastor, Principals, and other key individuals as the first major driving force. To multiple interview participants, the Pastor provided the parish with the scriptural and spiritual leadership that justified and compelled the school to implement inclusive practices. Teacher 2 and STEP Team Member 2 refer to the Pastor as using the term "Let the Children Come Unto Me" as the core scriptural justification of the inclusion program. Principal 3 stated that under the Pastor's leadership, "we are a parish of service, and I think that service not only extends to the outer communities, but within our own school as well."

Thirteen interview participants identified the importance of the Pastor's leadership, while he described his responsibility to lead. According to Teacher 2, "He's our leader. He is the guiding force." Principal 3 stated, "We are the school we are because of our pastor and his leadership." When asked about his role in the inclusion program, the Pastor stated that his role has been to support the program, try to bring an understanding to people of what "inclusion" meant, and provide a scriptural base.

In the experience of Teacher 2, St. Ignatius' Pastor has a higher level of involvement with the school than pastors at other Catholic schools. Teacher 2 remarked that the Pastor and Principal 3 "know every child." Administrator 2 explained that the Pastor is "very conscious of

the school as a huge part of the parish." Principal 1 noted that the Pastor "always had a very, very strong hand in admissions."

Both Teacher 2 and Principal 3 stated that the Pastor helped find resources to fund aspects of the inclusion program, "whether it be monetary or just parishioners who have different businesses who can help with our special needs population" (Principal 3). The Pastor has been behind "the hiring of an inclusion coordinator, hiring of aides, whatever it is that would make us more successful" (Administrator 2). Three years ago he supported a reduction in class size from 35 to 25 students in grades 1 and 2, two years ago in grades 3 and 4, and this year in grade 5 (Teacher 1). Principal 2 commented that the Pastor was vocally and financially supportive of the inclusion program, saying "I don't know that we could have done it with a pastor who was—who was indifferent or negative toward (the program)."

The eleven interview participants who were not principals referenced the leadership of Principals 1, 2, and 3 as a major driving force. The three principals all referred to each other as supporters of the inclusion program. One of the former vice principals self identified as "fully invested" in the program (Administrator 1). Participants stated that the inclusion program would not have worked without administrator support (Administrator 1; Teacher 2). Principal 1 describes the principal's role in the inclusion program in this manner:

> I think, probably, my biggest role was just to get it moving. Get it started. And, I believe, very much, as a Catholic school, we had no choice. We had to look at all the children that came to us, and if we could help them, then they belonged at [St. Ignatius]. And, kind of, to encourage the staff, to be accepting of this. It's one thing to have a program in place and hire people who are educated and interested and open to having children in an inclusion program, but when you have an existing staff, it's a little bit of a selling job, to convince them that this is who we are.

Principal 2 described "inheriting" the inclusion program:

> It was in place when I came on, but, but what I feel like we did was really try to enhance and –and amplify it a little bit. So we—we brought in students with, kind of, some more severe needs, Down's syndrome and autism. So we took a program that was already in place and kind of beefed it up a little bit, if you will.

Principal 3 commented that the principal's role in the inclusion program evolved as the program developed. The current role is supervisorial, although the principal must remain involved in any major adjustments or accommodations. Principal 3 receives all e-mails related to students with STEP plans, and is "constantly aware of what's going on with our students involved in the STEP program."

In addition to the Pastor and Principals, six interview participants identified STEP Team Member 1, a kindergarten teacher at the school, as a major driving force behind the program. Two of the Principals described this participant as "vehement" and "passionate" about the program. As stated earlier, this individual has been a member of the STEP team through its various incarnations, and created most of the procedures and documentation that helped formalize the implementation of the program. STEP Team Member 1 described the role as being part of the team "that sat together and talked," and then "chairing the meetings and scheduling the meetings and keeping track of all of the paperwork."

The leadership of the Pastor, Principals, and STEP Team Member 1 represent a major driving force in the formation and continuation of the school inclusion program. The strength of their convictions affected the attitudes of parents and teachers. "A tone is set by the teachers and the pastor and the principals, and kind of that philosophy has been contagious, in a good way" (Teacher 1). A pro-inclusion attitude "spread out to the staff, the teachers and the staff, by the principal setting that standard and saying, this is how we're going to run our school, that it's—it's the Christian way to run our school" (Committee Member 1). As stated by Administrator 1:

> There is always going to be—whenever there is change, or the perception of change, you'll always have some resistance, because it's uncomfortable, and so I think that in order for an inclusion program to work, and become really—become a part of the culture, the investment in the program and the approach and the philosophy and the rationale has to come from the very top, all the way down…By the top, I mean the pastor, and then the administration. Principal, vice principal, and then whatever other leadership structures you have in place.

Teacher 2 commented that the Pastor and Principals were "very much the driving force," and if they were to retire or leave the school and replaced with someone who "doesn't share the same passion," the program may not continue to grow.

There was a lack of consensus among the interview participants regarding who started the inclusion program. Teacher 2 believed that the Pastor, Principals, and one of the teachers (STEP Team Member 2) were the three individuals who initially pushed the program forward. Committee Member 2 identified the program as Principal 1's "brainchild, many, many years ago, to start exploring this whole idea of inclusion." Teacher 1 also identified Principal 1 as the founder. When asked who started the program, Principal 1 stated, "Um, I don't know, we [the Principal and Pastor] were so together, I can't really----differentiate." The Pastor identified Principal 1 as the founder. According to Teacher 1, the Pastor was initially skeptical of the program, but "once he joined the—the forces, it seemed like things took on more of a life of their own." According to Principal 1, the program began because of "one particular child."

Teacher buy-in. The interviewees reported high levels of teacher buy-in (Committee Member 1; Principal 1; Principal 2; Principal 3). Administrator 1 stated that teachers were "instrumental." Over the years the teachers became committed to implementing inclusive practices in their classrooms. STEP Team Member 2 described the teachers as "finely honed on their craft."

Principal 1 was aware that tackling inclusion would mean more work for teachers, stating that initially there was not a lot of support for teachers. They had to be willing to do their own research and professional development to support students in their classroom. Principal 3 describes teachers' dedication: "I mean, the amount of hours our teachers put in … forgetting even just in the meetings alone…and our teachers don't even question it anymore." She noted that teacher buy-in for inclusion has become a requirement when hiring new staff:

> As we have hired new teachers in, it's always a topic we talk about in interviews, and we set up situations in our interviews of asking a teacher how they would handle it, so I think we set those expectations early on now, that it's just become part of who we are.

Administrator 1 echoed this, stating "The teachers have learned that this is something that we do here, and so if you want to teach here, you have to buy into it.'

Partnership between the school and parents. Multiple interview participants referred to a positive partnership between the school and the parents as shaping and strengthening the inclusion program. Teacher 2 and Step Team Member 2 described the parents as their "partners." All participants described the parents as "supportive." Parents of students with special learning needs appreciated the program for the extra help and support their child received (Administrator 1; STEP Team Member 2; Teacher 2; Pastor). Many parents of "typical students" saw the benefit of inclusion and understood the moral and spiritual motivations behind the program (Committee Member 3; Principal 1; Principal 2; STEP Team Member 1; STEP Team Member 2; Teacher 2).

Interview participants described how the parent population was not afraid to question or challenge the program, and that this provided a needed source of constructive criticism (Administrator 1). Principal 2 and STEP Team Member 2 described the overall parent

population as educated and of high socioeconomic status, comfortable expressing their viewpoints and challenging practices at the school. STEP Team Member 2 described this as a strength:

> We're in a—an affluent socioeconomic community where people are well educated, so parents are researching things outside of school. Parents will often be coming to teachers with, kind of, articles and things that will help us, and being that these parents are socially aware, they understand that students with unique learning needs are capable of learning, and they really recognize it as a gift in our community—the majority of parents, not as something that is a deterrent. And I think, at our school, the parents are partners, and we work on it together, and that parents are really the models for their children here, and that they tend to be very accepting of students with unique learning needs.

In addition to the Pastor, administrators, teachers, and staff, many parents contributed to building the inclusion program. Initially, these were the parents of students with special needs who were personally invested in making the program work. Committee Member 2, who has a child with special needs, was the chair of the Inclusion Committee. According to Principal 2:

> Parents have been a huge influence. Inclusion initially started as a committee of the school board, and that committee was made up of mostly parents. They've really rolled up their sleeves and done a lot of the investigative work, visiting other schools, visiting high schools to see what high schools can provide.

Principal 3 stated: "the parents have made a huge impact there," initially running the "fundraiser to help us meet the needs of our inclusive population."

The Inclusion Committee helped drive the development of the inclusion program. The Committee was comprised of approximately ten individuals including parents, teachers, and administrators. Members of the Committee attended a national inclusion conference (Teacher 1). They conducted fieldwork, and determined that the school required a staff member with a speech and language credential (Committee Member 2). Various members of the Committee attended an annual conference in Dayton, Ohio for the first years of the program (STEP Team Member 1).

The Committee discussed professional development for the teachers in differentiated instruction (Committee Member 2). An inclusion library of books was developed and made available to teachers and parents (Committee Member 2). The Committee was "a big, big part of the growth of the program" (Principal 2).

STEP Team Member 1 identified the Inclusion Committee as a major driving force. It had been formed to make sure that "the inclusion process at [St. Ignatius] followed a certain path." Members of the Committee came with broad and varied experiences. The Committee set and met specific goals every year. Committee members observed various schools with inclusion programs, and were able to use those observations to help create a job description for the St. Ignatius inclusion coordinator.

The Committee initiated the annual inclusion fundraiser, "BNICE (Blessing and Nurturing Inclusive Catholic Education). Committee members modeled the idea after parent fundraising efforts in the Midwest they had experienced while attending various conferences. The primary goal of the fundraiser was to raise the funds to hire and maintain an inclusion coordinator.

The BNICE fundraiser also had the effect of increasing stakeholder buy-in in the parent population. "BNICE helped 'build momentum' and increase support. It also helped build the funding needed to support the inclusion program" (Principal 2). In addition to funding, the fundraiser helped "get it out there that inclusion was here to stay" (STEP Team Member 1). The fundraiser and the PR leading up to it had the affect of educating the community (Committee Member 1).

One big family. The fourth major driving force in the inclusion program was the notion that the school and parish was "one big family." Thirteen of the 14 interview participants referred to the importance of inclusion as a community effort. According to Principal 3, the mission of the school is to educate the children of the parish:

> We need to meet all of their needs, and we need to be able to do that if they come to us as a gifted child, if they come to us as an on-grade level child, and if they come to us with special needs.

The members of the parish support one another. Teacher 2, Principal 2, and Principal 3 commented on the close friendships among parish families, and their willingness to help each other in times of crisis. 98% of school families are parish members (Administrator 2), as well as many of the teachers. According to Step Team Member 2,

> There's not as much, kind of, red tape and paperwork and it really does come from a family approach that—that we know these families, that these children who are struggling or might need something extra, so we are always willing to go the extra mile for them.

The current principal observed that the school staff and school families are "very close within a professional boundary," and that because of that teachers view each student as "a child who has brothers and sisters that they may have taught," not just "another student in their classroom" (Principal 3).

The children are also supportive of each other. As the program started growing, parents of special needs students "saw a remarkable change in how their children were being treated, and more accepted by the other students" (Committee Member 2). Principal 2 commented on how the classmates of a student with autism protected and cared for him. They would tease each other, but not the student with special needs. On one occasion, a substitute teacher who did not understand the situation made a comment to a student that his classmates found insensitive, and

his classmates rallied around the student and "had his back" (Principal 2). Some students also participate in "Friendship Circle," an after school activity in a local park where students with and without disabilities meet and play together (Committee Member 1).

Inclusion is also seen as a tool that keeps families together by enrolling siblings in the same school (Administrator 1; Principal 3; Step Team Member 1). Principal 3 explained that the "family mentality" allows parents and school personnel to hold honest conversations about the best interests of the students:

> I don't think we ever shut our door on any family, even if we are the right place for a certain period of time, and they realize that, you know, maybe at a public school, they could get more resources, or, at another private school, they could have the smaller class size to benefit their child. I think it's a constant conversation and I think we're always connected, so even when they leave our school, they're not leaving our parish family, and I think because we have that outlook, it just creates an environment of—where we're a big family and we want to do the best for everyone in this family. (Principal 3)

Research Question 1: Restraining Forces

Negative parent perceptions. Although parents were described by the interview participants as generally supportive, the participants also explicitly identified negative parent perceptions as a restraining force in the development of the inclusion program. Principal 3 describes parent perceptions as "an ongoing battle."

Some parents expressed concern that the energy and resources directed at students with learning needs would distract teachers from the needs of "typical" students (Committee Member 2; Inclusion Coordinator; Pastor; Principal 1; Principal 3; STEP Team Member 2; Teacher 1). According to Administrator 1, when the inclusion program was first presented to parents, there was a perception given that inclusion was geared at a small but growing number of special needs students. Administrator 1 remarked that "we didn't do ourselves a favor by marketing ourselves

that way, because there was some push back where parents were concerned that we were going to be extending invitations to students with special needs" and taking away from "their own child's educational experience. " Parents wondered why resources were being directed at "the few" (Committee Member 2), and perceived that the inclusion program would only serve a minority group of students with disabilities (STEP Team Member 1).

Principal 2 stated that negative parent perceptions were generally a response to parents wondering if inclusion would somehow negatively impact their child's education. Principal 2 also reported that some parents complained when they believed that a specific student with disabilities was negatively impacting their child's educational experience (Principal 2). The Inclusion Coordinator reported that parents of "middle-of-the-road" students sometimes wondered if their student would excel with more attention and resources geared at "the middle" instead of "the low." Parents expressed concerns that an emphasis on inclusion would lower the school's academic standards (Principal 3; Teacher 1). Parents of students on the higher end who could be classified as gifted feared that the inclusion program placed too much emphasis on students at the lower end (Administrator 1; STEP Team Member 2). Another concern voiced by the Pastor was that many parents were in denial that their child had special needs.

The school parent organization raised and continues to raise significant funds every year earmarked for various projects. Traditionally, these funds had gone to the hiring of classroom aides, as well as an elementary science lab, classroom technology such as SMART boards, and a drama program. A few years ago, money was also raised for a part-time school counselor. The parent organization has never, however, donated any funds to inclusion. They will not earmark money to help pay the salary of an inclusion coordinator. STEP Team Member 1 explained that

the group perceived that a counselor would help everybody, but a inclusion coordinator would not.

Principal 3 stated that parent perceptions for the most part have evolved toward the positive, with the exception of when behavior issues arise. If their child becomes a victim of a student with behavioral issues, "their outlook on it changes rather quickly to a negative. So you'll often get the comment, "I know we're about being inclusive here, but what about keeping my child safe?" Principal 2 acknowledged the increased challenge of including students with behavior problems because those students require significant amounts of teacher time and can distract classmates.

Lack of resources. When the inclusion program began few resources were allocated to serving it. This has improved over the years, but a lack of support personnel presents an ongoing challenge for the inclusion program. In the early years, there were times when "we bit off more than we could chew," and enrolled more students with disabilities than the school was able to adequately serve (Teacher 1).

Catholic schools do not traditionally employ support service personnel for special education such as school psychologists, resource teachers, etc. The Pastor, Teacher 2, STEP Team Member 1 and STEP Team Member 2 mention that the school still does not have an adequate level of personnel to serve all students with disabilities. This shortage "holds [the program] back a little bit" (Inclusion Coordinator). According to the Pastor, "We don't have those kinds of financial resources, I wish we did. The amount of money it takes to have a child who has to have a one-on-one teacher or aide is beyond our ability," although there are students at the school with one-on-one aides paid for by that students' parents.

The school hired the Inclusion Coordinator five years ago with monies raised by the BNICE Fundraiser. Although the Inclusion Coordinator provides much needed support for the teachers, parents, and students, "she's just one person, and she's torn" (Teacher 2). Due to limitations in resources, the school must honestly assess what they can and cannot provide to students with disabilities. According to the Pastor, "We do not have all of the resources that we believe are necessary," and would be "doing an injustice to children" if we enrolled them when "we should be referring them to a system where they have the resources."

Research Question 2: Current Practices

The issues brought to light by the restraining forces — negative parent perceptions and inadequate resources — fueled a direct response to these issues. The response to the restraining forces sought to increase available resources, improve parent perceptions through public relations efforts, and develop teachers' abilities to reach all students through professional development opportunities in differentiated instruction.

Inclusion is for everyone. The predominant negative perception of the inclusion program was that it served, at best, a small group of students with disabilities. Some parents and faculty perceived that the entire program was geared toward three high-profile students with severe disabilities. Part of this was due to the fact that these three students were visible and "obvious." The students in question were not the only children with STEP plans at the time, but were highlighted on a video at the first BNICE fundraiser, giving some the impression that the fundraiser and inclusion program were designed to support only these students (Administrator 1; Committee Member 2; Inclusion Coordinator). In fact, these three students were supported with

various funds not provided by the school, and the fundraiser that year raised monies to hire an inclusion coordinator.

The Inclusion Committee made a concentrated public relations effort to change the prevailing perception. They wanted to convey to parents that "we needed to look at all angles of the continuum" of students (Committee Member 2), because all students have individual learning needs and will at one point benefit from inclusive practices (Committee Member 1). A concerted effort was made when filming the video for subsequent fundraisers to emphasize the broadness of inclusive practice. Print materials were also used throughout the school depicting how the inclusion philosophy improved classroom instruction for all students with assistive technology, flexible grouping strategies, differentiated instruction, and the hiring of a reading specialist. In addition to the efforts of the Inclusion Committee, teachers themselves made every effort to convey to parents that they personally found that inclusion was serving all students (Principal 3). The involvement of parents in the classrooms gave them the opportunity to see firsthand the positive impact of inclusion (Principal 1; Committee Member 2).

Through this public relations campaign, the school educated the parent community about inclusion (Committee Member 1; STEP Team Member 1). The current inclusion philosophy of the school stated on the website describes inclusion as a "practice that benefits all students" (STEP Team Member 1).

Increasing resources. Through the monies raised by the first BNICE inclusion fundraiser five years ago, the school was able to move the inclusion program forward. The school was fortunate to have parents, both of disabled and non-disabled students, willing to donate generous sums of money (Committee Member 2, Committee Member 3). Teacher 2

commented, "I don't know how they do it. I couldn't even imagine what our budget is. It's gotta be out—it's gotta be out the roof. But, it always seems like the bills are paid, so, God is good."

The increased level of resources directed toward inclusion enabled the school to develop the program to its current level (Principal 2). The increased level of financial support resulted in an increased number of classroom aides, smaller class sizes across the grades, sound systems for classrooms, and a paid inclusion coordinator (Administrator 2; Principal 2; Teacher 1; Teacher 2). According to Committee Member 2, parents saw the benefits of these increased resources, and "each time more successes were shown, [it] just kind of had a snowball effect."

The overall high socioeconomic status of the parish and high levels of donor generosity countered the lack of personnel and resources that constituted one of the early restraining forces. Many interview participants recognized that this would not be possible at every Catholic school (Pastor; Principal 2; Principal 3; Teacher 2). High socioeconomic status also allows some families the ability to pay for a one-on-one aide for their child, which affected the number of students with disabilities that the school could support (Committee Member 3; Pastor; Principal 2).

Although the school is well resourced, there are tangible limitations to the budget. As Principal 3 notes, "We in no way have millions and millions of dollars lying around that are just falling off trees for us." Another major source of support is the Pastor, who helps locate resources when needed (Principal 2; Principal 3; Teacher 2).

Teacher professional development and differentiated instruction. As the schools' inclusion philosophy evolved toward meeting the needs of all students and the concept that

"every child has a special need," the teachers and administrators asked themselves, "What are we doing to help all the children" (Committee Member 2)?

In order to serve the needs of all students, teachers requested professional development opportunities to learn about specific disabilities and differentiated instruction (Committee Member 1). The administration and Inclusion Committee prioritized professional development opportunities for teachers (Committee Member 2; Principal 1). The increased financial resources of the school were "a huge factor in enabling us to bring in professional development, to send teachers to workshops, and also to bring in, you know, material resources" (Administrator 1). According to Principal 2, developing teacher capacity through professional development was key in establishing an effective inclusion practice (Principal 2).

The school now places a major emphasis on differentiated instruction. Last year, the faculty underwent an intensive, five-part series of in-services on differentiated instruction. Six of the interview participants defined inclusive practices as differentiated instruction.

Honesty and fairness. Limitations in resources have forced the school to honestly assess which students they can adequately serve. Before the STEP Team meets with parents, they allot time for teachers to share their concerns privately with the STEP team and discuss what they can realistically offer in the classroom before inviting parents to join the meeting (STEP Team Member 2). Principal 2 stated, "I'd like to believe [teachers] were also very honest about what they couldn't provide." Teacher 2 stated that the school was more "realistic" now regarding how it could serve students than it had been six years ago. The current principal stated that sometimes teachers must be restrained from over-committing to avoid faculty "burn out" (Principal 3).

The school attempts to help all students on a case-by-case basis, and occasionally determines that St. Ignatius is not the right fit for an individual student (Committee Member 1; Pastor; Principal 1; Principal 2; Principal 3; STEP Team Member 2). The current principal described this as a "fluid" process, and emphasizes the need to "constantly be honest with ourselves, reflect and make the changes in the best interests of the students" (Principal 3). This "student-centered" philosophy strives to give "every student has the opportunity to succeed as much as possible" (Administrator 1).

The sense of honesty applies to parents as well. Principal 2 reflects:

> The parent has to be really honest with information they have about their child, or what they know about their child, expectations for their child, and if you're really honest, and there's trust built, then you can make anything work with any child.

Principal 1 noted that the STEP meetings with parents were a good opportunity for teachers to communicate to parents that their child "took a lot of extra time today…the nitty-gritty concrete things that—it's good for the parent to hear."

Honest self-reflection helped the school implement practices that encouraged fairness and equity. The additional "burden" on teachers and classroom aides in terms of time, energy and focus would not be equitable if it detracted from the learning experience of non-disabled students. The school has seen an increase in one-on-one aides in the past four years for students who require high levels of ongoing, individualized attention. Classroom aides, meant to serve the entire classroom, are not focused on one or two students when parents provide this valuable asset (Principal 2).

One teacher points out that when a teacher learns strategies for reaching a student with a specific disability, this can positively affect their overall teaching practice. This teacher reported having a student with autism in the classroom with specific behavior protocols she implemented

with the whole group. The protocols, such as reiterating "the instruction is…" "benefited my entire classroom. I think because we have students with special needs, it's made us better teachers to the 'mainstream' children" (STEP Team Member 2). Principal 2 felt that "when teachers are well trained …it's a classroom environment that benefits all the kids."

The one area that both Principal 2 and 3 noted as problematic in terms of fairness was students with behavior issues negatively affecting other students. The school has to ask, "To what point do we try to help an individual when it becomes a safety issue for the class as a whole?" (Principal 3). Principal 2 discussed that the school would always try to do whatever it could for a student with behavioral challenge like ADHD, but "at some point, you do have to think about the needs of everybody versus the needs of the single child."

Research Question 3: Social Justice Issues

To answer the third research question, interview participants were asked, "What social justice concerns influenced the development of the inclusion program?" The interview participants, all practicing Catholics, described social justice in a manner entwined with religious belief. As stated by STEP Team Member 1, "We come from a religion standpoint even when we're not thinking about it." Each interview participant referenced "Let the Children Come Unto Me" from the Gospel of Matthew. According to the Pastor, this passage from the Bible represents the scriptural basis of the inclusion program:

> The scriptural base is, Jesus, for me, anyway. Is Jesus. Allow the children to come to me. For of such is the Kingdom of God. And Jesus didn't say, only bring the children who are perfect to me. Allow the children to come to me. That meant, all children, from my perspective.

The Pastor also described the teachings of the Bishops on social justice as guiding the philosophy behind the inclusion program, specifically the publication "To Teach as Jesus Did"

(NCCB, 1972). For the Pastor, these teachings compel Catholic ministers and educators to meet people where they are: “You cannot begin in the second story of their life, you’ve got to go in to the ground floor.”

Catholic faith. According to many interview participants, their Catholic faith compelled them to practice inclusion (Administrator 1; Committee Member 1; Committee Member 3; STEP Team Member 1). Principal 1 believed that “as a Catholic school, we had no choice.” She also stated that as a community that values social justice, “you have to do it.” The notion of inclusion as obvious was echoed by STEP Team Member 1 who remarked, “it’s just sort of seamless…it’s just part of our faith.” Administrator 2 remarked, “It’s just so fundamental to what I believe our faith is all about that it’s hard for me to pinpoint a particular teaching.”

Echoing the message of “Let the Children Come unto Me,” many respondents referred to following Jesus’ example as a major social justice motivation (Administrator 1; Inclusion Coordinator; Principal 1; Principal 2; Teacher 2). Principal 1 commented, “He didn’t say, ‘Except for those with Asperger’s.” He didn’t say, “Only the normal children” (Inclusion Coordinator), or only the “ones who read easily” (Teacher 1). Principal 2 and Administrator 2 noted that Jesus never excluded anyone. Multiple respondents expressed that the Catholic faith compels them to serve all students, as all students are equal in the eyes of God (Administrator 1; Committee Member 2; Committee Member 3; Inclusion Coordinator Pastor; Principal 1; Principal 2; STEP Team Member 1; STEP Team Member 2; Teacher 1; Teacher 2).

Respecting life. The Catholic Church opposes abortion in all cases. Three of the interview participants discussed the importance of enrolling students with disabilities in Catholic schools as part of following Church teaching on respecting life (Administrator 1; Committee

Member 2; Principal 2). Principal 2 stated that the Catholic philosophy on respecting life compels the school to “be there to then take in that child.” To do otherwise would be hypocritical. “As Catholic schools, we have to be able to do what we can to meet those child’s needs, because [the parents] did follow the Catholic teachings of the Church” (Principal 2). Committee Member 3 remarked, “ I hope if there’s other families in our shoes, that … receive a prenatal diagnosis, they feel confident moving forward, knowing that if they’re, again, part of the parish and that—that this could be part of their path.” The Pastor remarked that parents “don’t determine that they want a special needs child. Or, neither do they determine that they have a brilliant child. So, I think that’s—it’s a great way for us to express social justice” by including all students.

Respecting diversity among parishioners. Multiple interview respondents mentioned that inclusion of students with disabilities stems from a culture of valuing diversity. The mission of the school is to educate the children of the parish (Committee Member 2; Principal 3), and by including as many parish children as possible, the school values the true diversity of the parish (Administrator 2; Committee Member 3; Principal 2; Principal 3; STEP Team Member 1). Principal 2 remarked that including students with disabilities exhibited diversity to the rest of the student body, taught them to respect others, and showed that “they all have different gifts and they bring them to the classroom.” Principal 2 explained that although the students at this parish may not be exposed to ethnic or socioeconomic diversity, the inclusion program gives the school an opportunity to show that “we’re all in communion with one another, we’re all God’s children” (Principal 2). Committee Member 2 reflected that if the school were not inclusive, it would disenfranchise students with disabilities.

Rating Scale Data

A 47-item rating scale described ideal inclusive practices. The purpose of this survey instrument was to support/refute interview findings for triangulation. Responses that did not relate to the findings from the interview data were omitted from data analysis. The major findings from the rating scale are described below, with letters identifying the indicator from Table 1 that supported the conclusion. Table 1 follows this section, displaying relevant findings from the rating scale responses.

The rating scale responses confirmed high levels of administrative support for the inclusion program. Eight respondents indicated that the principal strongly supports inclusion (i), and seven respondents indicated that the principal was committed to providing adequate resources for inclusion (f). Despite the high-level of administrative support, the actual level of personnel, materials, and resources was only partially adequate (g, h). This supports the two themes from the interviews of the driving force of strong leadership and the restraining force of a lack of resources.

The rating scale responses indicated a strong relationship between the school and parent community. Parents' views were considered when student's service-delivery models were implemented (k), and a systematic, ongoing method of communication keeps parents informed of their child's placement (m). A plan was in place to gain support of parents in the community (l).

Seven of the 10 teachers indicated the school's philosophy of inclusion was clear and endorsed by stakeholders (n, o). The three teachers who did not mark "fully" on these two items (n, o) selected much lower scores. Two selected "poorly or not at all" for item n: "A written philosophy on inclusion exists that is endorsed by key stakeholders in the school," and

one selected “partially.” All three of these teachers selected “poorly or not at all” for item o: “The written philosophy on inclusion provides guidelines for the development of policy and service-delivery models.” Although the majority of the teachers indicated that the written philosophy and guidelines for inclusion were very clear, three teachers who have been at the school between two and 10 years were not aware of a philosophy or guidelines. One of the three teachers wrote question marks next to items n and o, expressing that these two questions were unclear.

According to the teachers, practicing inclusion was not optional (c). Teachers identify the importance of inclusion, and exhibit an orientation to instruction for students with disabilities and an understanding of their responsibility for students’ success (d, e). Teachers adapt instruction and materials to meet students’ learning needs (p, q). The inclusion program was student centered (b, j), and children’s social and emotional needs were considered in terms of placement (a). Nine respondents indicated that their roles as teachers versus the roles of specialists were clear (r, s). One respondent accidently skipped item s.

Item “t” states, “Adequate opportunities for the general education teacher to provide appropriate instruction for students without disabilities are available.” Eight respondents indicated that the school fully implements this item. The two outliers were one respondent that indicated “partially,” and one respondent who indicated “poorly or not at all.” The respondent who indicated “partially” is in her first year of teaching at this school. The respondent who indicated “poorly or not at all” had numerous students in her class that year that required additional attention and support, and had expressed feeling overwhelmed with the number of special needs students in her class. Although the majority of the respondents felt strongly that

the needs of students with disabilities were met, these two teachers felt otherwise, perhaps due to their years of experience or the current situations in their classrooms.

Table 1

Relevant findings from the Rating Scale

Indicator	Implements:	Poorly or not at all	Partially	Fully
a. Each student's social progress and emotional needs influence placement in an inclusion program.		0	2	8
b. Programs are designed to fit the needs of students rather than students forced to fit established programs		0	3	7
c. Teachers self-select their involvement in inclusion classrooms.		6	4	0
d. All teachers at the school identify the importance of accepting and valuing all students.		0	5	5
e. Teachers (general and special education) exhibit an orientation to instruction for students with disabilities that indicates their responsibility for the students' success.		1	3	6
f. Staff and administration are committed to providing the resources necessary to develop or maintain high-quality inclusion models.		0	2	7
g. Adequate personnel are available to provide effective inclusion models.		0	9	1
h. Adequate materials and curriculums are available to meet the needs of students with disabilities in inclusion classrooms.		0	8	2
i. Teachers and key stakeholders perceive that the school-level administrator is supportive of responsible inclusion programs.		0	2	8

j. The inclusion model reflects the needs of the students in that school	0	3	7
k. Parents' view are considered when student' service-delivery models are implemented	0	3	7
l. A plan is in place to gain the support of parents in the community	0	1	9
m. A systematic, ongoing method of communication is planned to ensure that parents are informed about the placement of their children.	0	2	8
n. A written philosophy on inclusion exists that is endorsed by key stakeholders in the school.	2	1	7
o. The written philosophy on inclusion provides guidelines for the development of policy and service-delivery models.	3	0	7
p. Teachers make instructional adaptations to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities.	0	1.5	8.5
q. Teachers make adaptations in materials to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities.	0	2	7
r. The roles and responsibilities of the special education teacher and other specialists (e.g., speech and language therapist) within the inclusion model are specified.	1	2	7
s. The role and responsibilities of the general education teacher within the inclusion model are specified.	0	2	7
t. Adequate opportunities for the general education teacher to provide appropriate instruction for students without disabilities are available.	1	1	8

Note. Adapted from "Rating Scale of Components of a Responsible Inclusion Program for Students with High-Incidence Disabilities (Vaughn, Schumm, & Brick, 1998)"

Artifact Data

Inclusion Committee Documents

Committee Member 1, the chair of the now defunct Inclusion Committee, maintained a comprehensive binder of paperwork. The binder included minutes from Committee meetings, lists of Committee goals, public relations materials, materials gathered from conferences and field work, publications created by the school regarding the inclusion program, plans for fundraisers, and numerous other artifacts. Committee Member 1 allowed the binder to be photocopied for this research. The binder contained no confidential or sensitive material.

The major findings from the Inclusion Committee documents were as follows:

- The Committee focused on raising funds to support the inclusion program.
- The Committee focused on bringing in additional support personnel such as a speech and language therapist and inclusion coordinator.
- The Committee pursued public relations campaigns to educate the school and parish community about the value of inclusion.
- The Committee pursued public relations campaigns to educate the school and parish community about the definition and actual practice of inclusion.
- Most parents on the Committee had a child with a disability.
- The Committee created opportunities for parent and parishioner input.
- From the beginning, the Committee emphasized professional development for teachers.

- The Committee recognized the importance of differentiated instruction as the means to best implementing inclusive practices, and sought professional development opportunities for teachers in differentiated instruction.
- The Committee focused on ways to meet the needs of gifted students.

An additional artifact from the Inclusion Committee documents were results from a 2008 survey administered to students, teachers, and parents regarding their attitudes toward the practice of inclusion at the school. Some of the results from this survey were incorporated into the data analysis section in Chapter 4.

Website

The other artifact of interest was found on the school website. By clicking on a link labeled "Inclusion," the website states the school's inclusion philosophy:

> Our Catholic faith teaches us the worth of every individual, and we believe all students are unique and valued. Teaching in an inclusive environment is characterized at [St. Ignatius] by differentiated instruction and teaching to the various learning styles of each student. It has touched the spiritual and academic development of every student at our school.
>
> Differentiated instruction is an instructional strategy that, in simplest terms, means revising lessons and instructional delivery to meet the individual needs of each child in the classroom. [St. Ignatius School] sees this as foundational to the inclusion program, because educationally the goal is to have all students experience measurable growth over each school year. This growth is regardless of whether a student is a high performing student or a student who needs additional assistance with key concepts. Thus, it is always important to stress to our parents, staff, and teachers that every child at [St. Ignatius] is part of the inclusion program.

Driving and Restraining Forces

As displayed in Figure 1, there were more driving forces than restraining forces at work during the early years of the inclusion program from 1997 to around 2008. Principal 1 was an internal change agent who broke the institutional status quo and began the unfreezing process by

starting the inclusion program (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). When restraining forces began to emerge, the response to the restraining forces created more driving forces that ultimately led to large-scale institutional change.

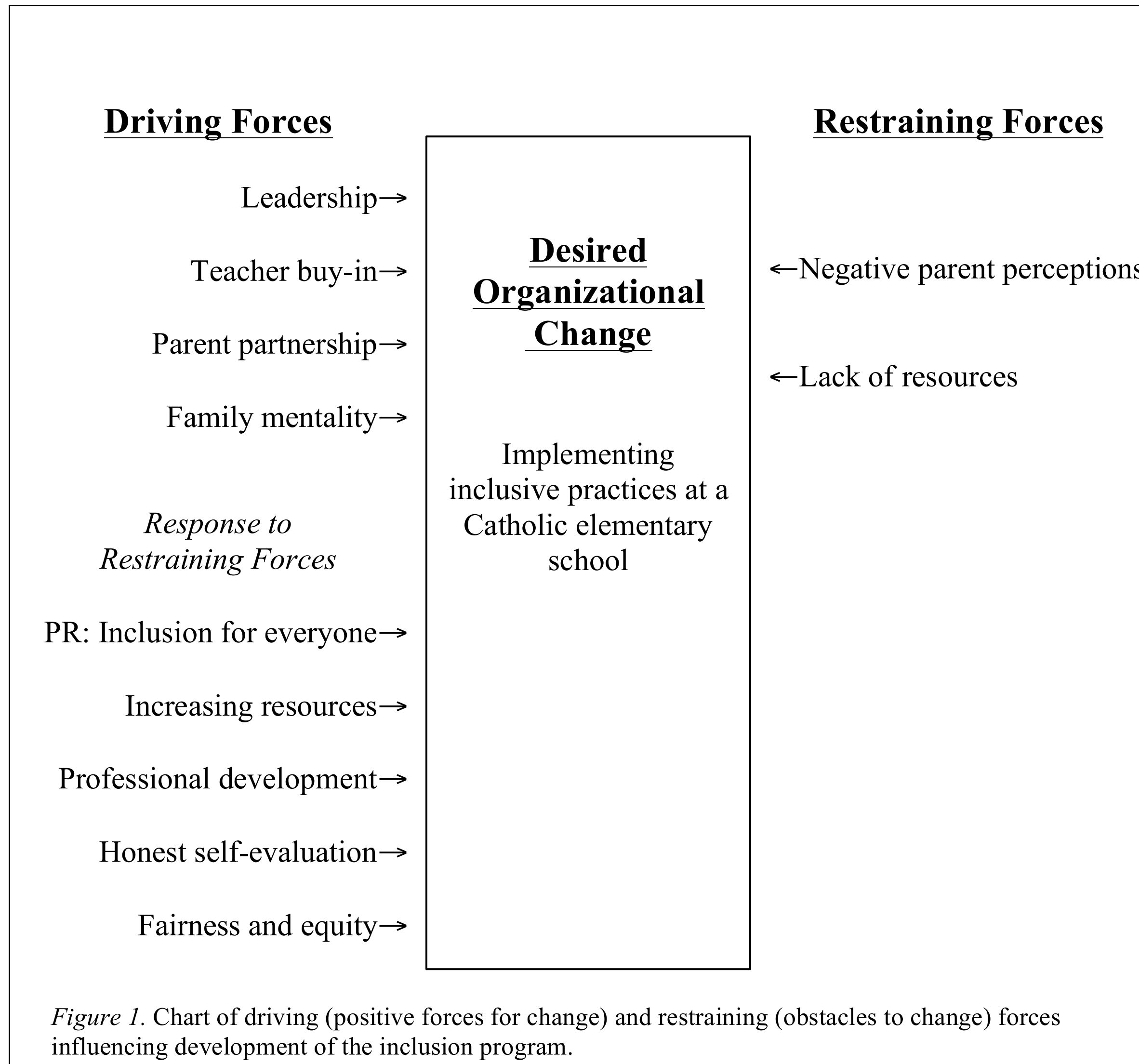

Figure 1. Chart of driving (positive forces for change) and restraining (obstacles to change) forces influencing development of the inclusion program.

Lewin's model of institutional changes follows a three-part process: unfreezing the status quo, moving, and refreezing to create a new equilibrium (Lunenburg & Orenstein, 2008, Owens, 2004; Owings & Kaplan, 2012). The data suggests that St. Ignatius, for the most part, has reached the end point of creating a new equilibrium. The concerns expressed by parents have been addressed through the responses to the restraining forces.

The concern that students with special needs take too much teacher time has been addressed with an increase in the number of one-on-one and general classroom aides (Principal 3). The concern that inclusion only served low-performing students was addressed by increasing differentiated instruction practices (Committee Member 2; Principal 3). Teacher responses on the Rating Scale indicated that teachers currently feel they have the resources necessary to serve students without disabilities. The issue of adequate resources continues to be addressed. The Inclusion Committee raised significant funds through their fundraisers, hired an inclusion coordinator, purchased technology, and created an inclusion resource library (Committee Artifacts).

The school, however, is still limited in who it can serve. St. Ignatius is not able to pay for one-on-one aides for students (Pastor), and families with children who require one-on-one attention can only stay at the school if they are able to personally afford the aide.

The change in the role of the principal reflects the new equilibrium. Principal 3 describes her role as changing, in the four years she has been principal, to a supervisory capacity. Principals 1 and 2 had to take more of an advocacy role, convincing teachers and the community of the efficacy of inclusion. Principal 3 can now act more as a supervisor since the inclusion

program has become ingrained in the school culture, and teachers are increasingly qualified and experienced in implementing inclusive practices (STEP Team Member 2; Teacher 2).

In addition to changes in the culture, inclusive practices have become ingrained in the institutional structure. Two of the Inclusion Committee Goals for March 15, 2010 include: Incorporate funding for an inclusion coordinator into the school operating budget, and transitioning the Inclusion Committee from a school board to school committee function. As of 2012, both of these goals were met. Inclusion is no longer considered a separate program with separate funding, but is now fully integrated into the school philosophically, structurally, and financially. In previous years, professional development aimed at inclusion involved two teachers attending a Down's syndrome conference, and two other teachers attending an autism in-service. In 2011-2012, the entire faculty attended a series of workshops on differentiated instruction. Although teachers still have the opportunity to individually attend specialized conferences, the greater school effort is now aimed at educating all teachers on how to reach all students through differentiate instruction. 2010 was the last year of the Inclusion Committee.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: Driving Forces

Leadership. With few exceptions, Catholic elementary schools are ministries of a parish. The pastor is charged with the spiritual and temporal welfare of everyone in the parish. The pastor's responsibilities are wide-ranging; therefore the amount of personal involvement that pastors choose to make in the day-to-day running of schools in their charge varies.

In the case of St. Ignatius School, the leadership of the Pastor and three Principals proved essential to the formation of the inclusion philosophy and curriculum. This finding coincides

with Scanlan (2008), who found that Catholic schools depend heavily on a charismatic leader to guide inclusive practices. The Pastor at St. Ignatius had a reputation for strong leadership and a charismatic personality. Teacher 2 reported watching a pastor at another Catholic school who "stood behind the fence to watch the kids play at recess." This was unlike the Pastor of St. Ignatius, who Teacher 2 views as "knowing every child." Principal 1 was unable to differentiate between the Principals' personal involvement and that of the Pastor, when asked who had started the inclusion program, describing their collaborative efforts as "so together." Principal 1 commented that the Pastor continues to have a strong hand in admissions, which is where inclusion decisions are made.

Three principals have administered at St. Ignatius since the inclusion program was inaugurated. All strongly supported the program and took decisive actions to continually develop inclusive practices. Item 18 on the Rating Scale indicated: "Teachers and key stakeholders perceive that the school-level administrator is supportive of responsible inclusion programs." Eight respondents indicated that the school implemented this practice, and two respondents indicated that the school implemented it partially.

Principal 1 was identified by eight interviewees as a major driving force in the creation of the inclusion program. According to Committee Member 2, "it was [Principal 1]'s, really, brainchild, many, many years ago, to start exploring this whole idea of inclusion." Committee Member 1 described inclusion as Principal 1's "dream," and stated that Principal 1 "gave us the driving force," and "worked with the school board and the parents to kind of put our words into action by raising the consciousness of people, the awareness, and then, helping people to come along and support them financially." Principal 1 displayed strong moral and social justice

convictions toward inclusive practices stating, “I believe, very much, as a Catholic school, we had no choice.” Principal 1 defined inclusion as “an extension of our ministry,” and social justice as “intrinsic” to inclusion.

After Principal 1 retired, Principal 2 was hired with the inclusion program already in place. Interview participants described Principal 2 as highly supportive of the inclusion program. Self-described as strongly motivated by the social justice aspects of inclusion, Principal 2 stated, “This is who we are as a Catholic community, and this is what we’re called to do for all people.”

While the first two Principals described their roles as advocates for the program, Principal 3’s role developed into a supervisory role rather than being the driving force behind the inclusion program. Principal 3’s supervisory leadership is possible now that the faculty, other administrators, and the Inclusion Coordinator have taken more responsibility for the program. It can be concluded from this evolution of the principal’s role that the inclusion program at St. Ignatius has been assimilated into the school’s culture.

This successful adaption of the inclusion program rested finally in the hands of teachers. STEP Team Member 2 described the inclusion program as initially “somewhat top-down,” but that “over time, teachers have become greater stakeholders.” She says that “the more the teachers are involved, the better the inclusion program gets here, because we’re the ones who have to make it happen.” The Inclusion Coordinator remarked that the people who ran the program before she was hired “laid the foundation for all of it and did just such a phenomenal job, that it was just kind of fine tuning.”

In addition to the Pastor and three Principals, one of the teachers (STEP Team Member 1) also filled an important leadership role. This teacher taught kindergarten at the school for

seventeen years, was a member of the initial "SST (now STEP)" team, and has been in charge of the team in some capacity since the inception of the inclusion program. STEP Team Member 1 took on the responsibility of chairing and scheduling the meetings and maintaining files and paperwork (STEP Team Member 1). Numerous interviewees identified STEP Team Member 1 as a major driving force alongside the Pastor and three Principals.

All five of these school leaders expressed strong moral convictions in favor of inclusion. As stated in Chapter 2, Catholic schools have limited legal obligation to serve the needs of disabled students (DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Russo et. al, 2002, Shaughnessy, 1998; USCCB, 2002**)**. The bulk of the literature, however, links inclusion to some form of Church teaching, and insists that Catholic schools have a moral obligation to serve students with disabilities (Baxter, 2009; Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Hallinan, 2000; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Martin & Litton, 2004; Russo et al., 2002; Scanlan, 2009; Shaughnessy, 1998; USCCB, 2005; Weaver et al., 2006).

The rating scale responses indicated that the administration at St. Ignatius strongly commits to providing adequate resources. This may not always be the case. Bello (2006) found that administrators maintained interest in inclusion despite capacity issues. Scanlan (2008) argues that an over-emphasis on resources and capacity distracts Catholic schools from addressing the issue of schools' willpower to implement inclusive practices. Weaver et al. (2006) also critique the argument that resources are the primary obstacle to Catholic school inclusion, asserting that special education comes first out of a culture of inclusiveness. It would appear that the administration at this school had the willpower.

Teacher 2 raised a concern about how future leadership might affect the program:

> Five years from now, I'm hoping that it will continue to grow, but, with—you know, the facts are that Monsignor is getting older, and he is the driving force. And our administration, very much the driving force, but, if you get a priest that doesn't share that same passion, if you don't have that principal that shares the same passion as the—or the principal and the pastor don't have that passion…

Teacher 2 implied that a change in pastor or change in principal to a less invested individual could potentially affect inclusion negatively at the school. A philosophical inclination toward inclusion is now expected in the hiring of teachers and administrators at the school (Principal 3, STEP Team Member 1), but that would not necessarily be the case in a new pastor, who would be assigned by the Archdiocese.

Teacher buy-in. For an inclusion program to succeed**,** a Catholic school needs increased buy-in from all stakeholders, including clergy, parishioners, parents, teachers, and administrators (Baxter, 2009; Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Scanlan, 2008). Findings from the interview data indicated high levels of teacher-buy in at the school site. Teacher responses to the Rating Scale supported this notion. Item 7 stated: "Teachers self-select their involvement in inclusion classrooms." Six respondents indicated "does not implement," and 4 respondents indicated "implements partially." Item 9 states: "All teachers at the school identify the importance of accepting and valuing all students. Five respondents indicated "implements," and five indicated "implements partially." Item 10 states: "Teachers exhibit an orientation to instruction for students with disabilities that indicates their responsibility for the student's success." Six respondents indicated "implements," and three indicated "implements partially." Teachers indicated that despite an understanding that inclusion is not optional at the school, teachers generally identified the importance of inclusion and exhibited an orientation to

instruction for students with disabilities. The contrast between the two responses implied that teachers are expected to practice inclusion and accept this obligation.

In the interviews, the Pastor and Principals expressed admiration for the dedication and passion of the teachers, to the point that Principal 3 felt that sometimes they had to pull teachers back from overextending themselves to help students with disabilities. This passion was also evident in the interviews with classroom teachers. Teacher 2 reflected on what she would want the teacher of her children or grandchildren to do: "…don't you want that teacher just to love your child and to provide the best education [so that] and they can feel like they're number one?"

Partnership between the school and parents. Parents were the other major driving force in the inclusion program. They were also, as will be discussed later, one of the major restraining forces. The partnership between parents and the school constituted the second major driving force in the school's inclusion program.

Although the Pastor and Principal 1 were frequently cited in the data as the originators of the inclusion program, parents were also critical in creating and maintaining the schools' inclusion program. The program was initiated when a parent approached Principal 1 to discuss enrolling their child with special needs (Principal 1). Since its inception, parents of students with special needs have been the major advocates of St. Ignatius' inclusion program.

Parent roles evolved along with the program. In the initial stages of the program, only the principal and teachers would meet to discuss and evaluate students. As the school began formalizing procedures for meetings, paperwork, and follow up, the parents of the students were included in the meetings. Parents provided constructive criticism that proved to be valuable (Administrator 1). Concerns about overburdening teachers and serving only a minority group of

students influenced the school to increase supports for teachers and the general student body. STEP Team Member 2 and STEP Team Member 2 describe the parents as their "partners."

The Inclusion Committee, a collection of parents, teachers, and administrators, illustrated the fluidity of the partnership that was created among the stakeholders. Though primarily composed of school parents with special needs children, some of the members were educators at other schools, some were teachers and administrators with children enrolled at St. Ignatius, and some had other family members with special needs. All were members of the parish (Inclusion Committee Minutes). The Committee primarily worked to find resources in the parent community and provide parent education and public relations outreach to the parent and parish community.

One big family. This St. Ignatius parish community exhibited a communitarian view of inclusion. As described in Chapter 2, the communitarian discourse views inclusion as stemming from a collective belonging and the creation of just relationships (Christensen & Dorn, 1997; Thomas & Loxley, 2007). Ten interview participants referred to the concept that the school and parish operate as "one big family" (Principal 1). Keeping siblings together at the same school was cited as a major motivation for practicing inclusion (Administrator 1; STEP Team Member 2). Teachers saw themselves as part of the parish family (Principal 3), which motivated them to "go the extra mile" for students with disabilities.

Another unique feature of the Catholic school context is the notion of the school and parish as "one big family." The many ways that this helped increased stakeholder buy-in and drove the formation of the inclusion program may not be replicable in a school environment that does not have as strong a sense of community and responsibility for the well-being of all "family

members." STEP Team Member 2 described the inclusion philosophy as coming from a "family approach" that "puts us at an advantage," because teachers are willing to "go the extra mile."

Principal 1 mentioned that a member of the school board, a public school supervisor, was initially against the idea of an inclusion program. In this school board member's estimation, the school would be subjected to the types of lawsuits that "began to run their life" in the public schools. St. Ignatius has not, as to date, had any legal issues with the inclusion program. As private school providers, they are obligated to pursue an inclusive setting as much as possible in academic, non-academic, and extracurricular activities, and make minor adjustments and accommodations (34 CFR 104.34 (a-b); 34 CFR 104.39 (b)). When parents waive FAPE at their local public school, a Catholic school is not required by law to meet the specified needs of a student outside of that student's "Private School Plan" (Shaughnessy, 1998). In reality, this requires little more than an occasional e-mail exchange between the classroom teachers and a special education teacher from the public school.

As a Catholic school, St. Ignatius has been relatively free of the litigation burden that affects public schools and drains their energy and resources. Some might worry that Catholic students with disabilities lose their rights and protections, but the freedom from litigation allows the school to focus energies on serving students. In a casual conversation with the Inclusion Coordinator, it was mentioned that working at the local public schools would never be a viable option for this person, because so much time and energy is spent dealing with lawsuits. At St. Ignatius, the Inclusion Coordinator's time and energy was spent working with children and families. STEP Team Member 2 stated that compared to public schools, St. Ignatius had "less bureaucracy," and less "red tape and paperwork."

Catholic School Advantage

At the onset of this research project, the findings from the literature and the researcher's personal experiences as a Catholic school educator had led to a conclusion that public schools were better equipped to meet the needs of students with disabilities than Catholic schools. Many of the interview participants expressed that a Catholic school can never have the same level of resources as the public school (Pastor; Principal 2; Principal 3; STEP Team Member 1; STEP Team Member 2). Students at St. Ignatius were occasionally advised to enroll in their local public school to access this supposed superior level of resources (Principal 2; Principal 3).

The findings from this study, however, imply that Catholic school environments have some advantages over public school environments when serving students with disabilities. Committee Member 2, a former public school principal from a respected and well-resourced elementary school in the area, expressed that the technology, resource library, and teacher expertise at St. Ignatius were impressive relative to Committee Member 2's public school experience. Describing the situation at her former public school, this respondent remarked:

> What I saw when I left, we were strapped for funds. And it's even more acute now. Classes are getting larger. The resources are not there. Where, I think, at [St. Ignatius], it's more manageable, just from numbers, and maybe more resources available through the generosity of the parents, or, you have different source funding sources that were not available, and are not available to—to the schools.

The public school in question had special education teachers who were well trained, but the school did not have enough resources, especially for integrating students into the regular classroom as opposed to a separate resource room. By comparison, St. Ignatius was, in her opinion, better equipped to address special needs.

Research Question 1: Restraining Forces

Parent perceptions. Negative parent perceptions of inclusion constituted the first major restraining force. According to Slee (2000), inclusion is an ambitious undertaking in that schools were never really meant for everyone. Parents expressed concern that the inclusion program would decrease the quality of the school's educational program by funneling excessive energy and resources toward a minority of students. Among the artifacts was a parent survey from 2008, which polled parent perceptions of the inclusion program. The survey indicated that 40% of the 143 respondents felt they had experienced a situation where their child's needs were met on an individual basis in the classroom, 38% had not, and 21% were unsure. In that same survey, respondents 67% of parents agreed somewhat or strongly that students with special needs benefited most from the inclusion program. 52% of parents indicated that their child did not have unique educational needs, and 21% were unsure.

Interview participants referred to a "PR" issue that arose when the video shown at the first BNICE fundraiser in 2007 emphasized three students with disabilities, giving the perception that the inclusion program and fundraising efforts were aimed solely at these students (Administrator 1; Committee Member 2; Inclusion Coordinator). The school has a separate parent organization that raises funds for various programs. According to STEP Team Member 1, the parent organization has never agreed to provide funding for inclusion, as it did not view inclusion as serving the needs of all students. This data confirmed the findings of Anderson (2006) and Artiles et. al (2006), who found that traditionally separate special education environments perpetuated the mainstream educational system's reluctance to work with a wide range of abilities.

Issues with parent buy-in were viewed by the teachers, administration, and the Inclusion Committee as an obstacle that needed to be addressed, concurring with many studies that state that Catholic schools need increased buy-in from all stakeholders, including the clergy, parishioners, parents, teachers, and administrators (Baxter, 2009; Bello, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Scanlan, 2008).

Capacity and resources. Issues with capacity–the human, fiscal, and knowledge resources of the school–presented the second major restraining force in the development of the inclusion program at St. Ignatius School. The literature indicated that the financial burden of inclusion and lack of faculty and administrator experience presented the greatest obstacle to program implementation (Baxter, 2009; Bellow, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006, Scanlan, 2008).

Communitarian views of inclusion can naively assume that adopting new inclusive vocabulary and structures will change attitudes and create inclusive communities, while failing to provide guidelines and models for policy and practice (Artiles et. al, 2006). This study revealed that during the early years there were times when St. Ignatius was unable to support the inclusion program. Teacher 1 described a brief period five years ago when the school enrolled multiple students "with issues" in kindergarten without preparing the necessary level of support to address these issues.

The Pastor and the Inclusion Coordinator readily admit that the school does not currently have the level of resources necessary to serve all the students of the parish. An Inclusion FAQ sheet from 2009 stated: "The school does not receive state or federal funds to run any of our programs." Much of the energy and time of the Inclusion Committee has been devoted to

organizing the fundraiser that brought in additional monies required for hiring personnel, funding teacher professional development, and building the inclusion library (Inclusion Committee Documents).

The results from the rating scale indicated an ongoing issue with adequate resources at the school. For item #13, "Adequate personnel are available to provide effective inclusion models," nine out of ten respondents indicated with a score of "2" that the school only partially implemented this factor. For item #15, "adequate materials and curriculums are available to meet the needs of students with disabilities in inclusion classrooms," eight out of ten respondents also indicated with a score of "2" that the school implemented this partially. These responses contrasted with item #12, "staff and administration are committed to providing the resources necessary to develop or maintain high-quality inclusion models," for which seven out of ten respondents indicated with a score of "3" that the school implemented this fully.

The rating scale responses indicated that the administration committed strongly to provide adequate resources, although they were not always able to do so. The interview data supported this finding. Principal 2 described the Pastor as "financially supportive," and Teacher 2 described the Pastor's dedication to finding resources: "Where there's a will, there's a way, and, like I say, [The Pastor] would—you know, twist an arm or—I don't know what he does, but, he—he seems to come up with it."

Capacity also refers to human resources and teacher expertise. As the inclusion program developed, teacher capacity grew through an increase in professional development opportunities. STEP Team Member 2 stated that over time teachers started "taking more of a leadership role" in inclusion. The Inclusion Committee Goals from March of 2010 referenced the Committee's

impending transition from a school board function to a school Committee, stating: "The faculty is well prepared to continue the work of this Committee."

Research Question 2: Current Practices

As the school continued developing the inclusion program, it underwent the second step in organizational change, "moving." During the moving process, leaders must either decrease resisting forces or consider new driving forces (Lunenburg & Orenstein, 2008). As described previously, there was a degree of parent pushback to the inclusion program. Parents expressed concerns that including students with special needs would negatively affect the "typical" students, either by decreasing overall classroom expectations, requiring too much teacher attention, or creating a chaotic classroom climate. Parents were concerned with issues of fairness, and questioned why energy and resources were directed at a minority group instead of distributed in a manner that benefited the entire student body. By directly addressing parent concerns, the school was able to decrease restraining forces and thereby strengthen the inclusion program. The issue of inadequate resources was addressed through fundraising and professional development.

Inclusion is for everyone. The school undertook a direct campaign to convey to the parish community that the inclusion program served all students, while taking steps internally to ensure that classroom practices lived up to this expectation. Fisher, Sax, & Groove (2000) found that in schools practicing inclusion, both terminology and practice often evolve from serving the needs of the disabled population to serving the needs of all students through differentiated instruction. As discussed in Chapter 2, definitions of inclusion operate along a spectrum of meaning. The most basic and commonly used definition of the term relates to moving students with disabilities out of resource rooms and special schools and into the general education

classroom (Artiles et al., 2006; Chmiliar, 2009; Halvorsen & Neary, 2009; Menzies & Falvey, 2008; National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1994; Ruddell, 2002). The second definition equates inclusion with serving the educational needs of entire student populations through a continuum of support for the heterogeneous learning needs of students regardless of disability status (Slee, 2000). The third and broadest use of the term "inclusion" refers to a culture of total inclusiveness across ability, culture, gender, and race (Artiles et al., 2006; Corbett, 2001; Kugelmass, 2004).

When the inclusion program began at St. Ignatius, a group met to discuss the needs of a small group of students with disabilities (Administrator 2). As the program expanded, the number of students with special "plans" increased, and the school began to look at inclusion as less of a program and more of a school-wide philosophy. Committee Member 1 stated that for the first few years, the inclusion program was geared toward the three students with severe disabilities. Moving to a philosophy of "inclusion is everyone" helped moved the program along and gain more support.

As stated in the previous section, parents did not necessarily know or perceive the philosophical shift of inclusion for "some" to inclusion for "all." Sixty-seven percent of parents believed that the inclusion program benefited students with disabilities. Students were also surveyed. Seventy-eight percent of the 215 respondents indicated "I am a part of inclusion at [the school]," but 83% of students agreed strongly or somewhat that students with special needs benefited most from the inclusion program. Sixty-three percent of students indicated that they did not always learn the same way as their peers, and only 18% said that they did. Although

parents generally did not feel that their children had unique learning needs, their children felt that they themselves did.

Teachers were administered a different survey, containing some of the same and some different questions. Fifty-four percent agreed strongly or somewhat that special needs students benefited most from the Inclusion Program. Forty-seven percent of teachers disagreed strongly or somewhat with this statement. Although agreeing least with this statement (compared to 83% of students and 67% of parents), this was the prevailing perception of about half of the faculty at that time. Given the high levels of agreement from these three key groups of stakeholders, it can be concluded that in 2008 the inclusion program mostly benefited children with special needs.

On November 18, 2009, Committee Member 2 wrote a letter to the head of the Inclusion Committee expressing her concern with the video shown at the BNICE fundraiser and posted on the school website. This member explained that if their goal was to show that inclusion benefited all students, a video that featured only three students with severe disabilities was counterproductive. The letter stated:

> I can understand the confusion parents have regarding this topic as it was but a few years ago that we were talking only about including children with special needs. Now we have expanded our thinking to demonstrate how all students benefit from an inclusive environment. It seems we have substituted vocabulary words and changed meanings, but have not fully explained this shift to our parent community.

Committee Member 2 recommended re-filming the video, better defining differentiated instruction, and providing concrete examples of differentiated instruction going on in the school.

In 2009, the Inclusion Committee created a FAQ document. The first item defined inclusion as “students of all abilities and learning styles experiencing success in the same classroom.” In bold, it stated: “Every child at [St. Ignatius] is unique and every child as [St.

Ignatius] has challenges." Further down the document stated: "All programs at St. Ignatius are part of inclusion because all students at [St. Ignatius] are part of the inclusion process."

Further data in the Inclusion Committee Documents revealed an ongoing PR effort to educate the community about the school's growing understanding of inclusive education. The Inclusion Committee Goals from March of 2010 included: "Develop the St. Ignatius Inclusion website that will be accessed from the school site and will included the Community Resource List, FAQ about Inclusion, and the BNICE DVD." The goals also stipulated providing "inclusion news on a regular basis in the school bulletin, church bulletin, Faith in Action newsletter, and the local papers."

As the program grew, the school followed the evolutionary path described in the literature. The definition and practice evolved to the current situation where the school's website defines inclusion as a program that benefits all students through the practice of differentiated instruction. Eight of the fourteen interview respondents referred to inclusion as serving "all" students. The remaining six described inclusion in broad strokes that indicated that inclusion serves "all," but defined the practice as serving the needs of students with disabilities. Despite the efforts made by the school to define and articulate "inclusion for all," these six key stakeholders and leaders still utilized the "old" definition. The ten teachers who completed the Rating Scale indicated that currently, the schools' inclusion philosophy is endorsed by key stakeholders and provides guidelines for policy and service delivery models. The school has made strides in changing the philosophy so that inclusion is understood as serving all students. The transition continues.

Increasing resources. Adequate resources presents one of the greatest obstacles to implementing a Catholic school inclusion program (Baxter, 2009; Bellow, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006). In 2007, the Inclusion Committee outlined goals to increase resources. With regards to staffing: hire an inclusion coordinator, coordinate a part time occupational therapist, establish a volunteer system to complete classroom clerical work, establish a classroom aide rotation system, and arrange for graduate students in inclusive education to complete their practicum at the school. Material support goals included: compile a list of material resources needed and establish a resource library. The financial goals included apply for grants and establish a foundation. The fundraising goal was to hold a yearly fundraiser. As described in Chapter 4, the monies raised at the "BNICE" fundraiser were funneled into providing a salary for an inclusion coordinator.

Currently, financial support for the Inclusion Program has increased. The school continues with its BNICE fundraising, and monies in the general operating budget of the school are now earmarked for the Inclusion Program. This has resulted in an increased number of classroom aides, smaller class sizes across the grades, sound systems for classrooms, and the almost full-time inclusion coordinator (Administrator 2; Principal 2; Teacher 1; Teacher 2). Seven interview participants referred to the school currently having a strong level of resources to meet the needs of inclusive education (Administrator 1; Inclusion Coordinator; Principal 2; Principal 3; STEP Team Member 2, STEP Team Member 3; Teacher 2). The Rating Scale responses, however, indicate that the actual level of personnel, materials, and resources are only partially adequate.

Teacher professional development. According to the literature, Catholic schools need to increase capacity for inclusion programs by training teachers and developing faculty knowledge (Baxter, 2009; Bello, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Russo et. al, 2002). The artifacts of the Inclusion Committee indicate a commitment to teacher professional development at St. Ignatius School from the onset of the program. When inclusion shifted from discussing the needs of a few students with disabilities to serving all students through differentiated instruction, teacher training became a clear imperative (Committee Member1; Committee Member 2; STEP Team Member 1). The findings from a 2006 survey of teachers indicated that teachers were interested in learning more about differentiated instruction through professional development opportunities.

Honesty and fairness. Catholic school parents and administrators may have the desire to enroll all students, but not the ability to serve them adequately (DeFiore, 2006; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006, Russo et. al, 2002). Multiple interview participants described trying to work with students on a case-by-case basis and occasionally coming to the realization that the student would be better served in a different school (Committee Member 1; Pastor; Principal 1; Principal 2; Principal 3; STEP Team Member 2).

Honest self-reflection and evaluation on serving the needs of all students has led the school to implement practices that encourage fairness and equity in inclusion practices. This “student-centered” way of thinking ensures that “every student has the opportunity to succeed as much as possible” (Administrator 1). The school now places more emphasis on differentiated instruction as a means to promote best learning practices for all learners. To that end, Inclusion Committee goals from March 15, 2010 include: “Differentiate classroom instruction to better accommodate high achieving and gifted students.”

Research Question 3: Social Justice Issues

The social justice concerns of inclusion discussed in Chapter 2 involved two major themes. Catholic schools experience a challenge unique for faith-based institutions, for while Catholic schools may lack the resources to serve students with disabilities, they are morally obligated to try. Scanlan (2008) argues that an overemphasis on resources may mask a lack of willpower. Weaver et al. (2006) critique DeFiore's (2006) assertion that resources are the primary obstacle to Catholic school inclusion and assert that special education comes first out of a culture of inclusiveness.

The interview data that answered question three found that:

- Participants perceived that the Catholic faith compels the practice of inclusion: "We come from a religious standpoint even when we're not thinking about it. We're coming from our Christian religion standpoint, and how we've been brought up" (STEP Team Member 1).
- "Let the Children Come Unto Me" provides the scriptural foundation for inclusion.
- The Catholic Church's stance on abortion compels Catholic schools to educate children with disabilities.
- Parish schools are compelled to serve the diverse needs of parish children.

The "secular" literature on inclusion focuses on competing social discourses. One side emphasizes individual rights, the other side emphasizes community ((Artiles et. al, 2006; Christensen & Dorn, 1997; Dyson, 1999). Neither individualistic nor communitarian inclusion discourse is fully adequate for justifying inclusion. Though both have similar goals, the argument for inclusion needs to move beyond individualism vs. communitarianism to a

transformative view of social justice in order to advance the cause of inclusion (Artiles et. al, 2006, Christensen & Dorn, 1997).

St. Ignatius appears to have embraced a transformative view of social justice and inclusion based on Catholic values. The school's discourse balanced individualistic and communitarian viewpoints with a spiritual foundation that emphasized the needs of all individuals though differentiated instruction, but also appreciated the need for resources and additional faculty support.

The faculty also experienced transformation through the inclusion philosophy at St. Ignatius. The existence of a separate education system for students with disabilities and the supposedly privileged knowledge of special educators can lead teachers to conclude that they do not have the personal tools and expertise to teach all children (Artiles et. al, 2006; Thomas & Glenny, 2002). A teacher survey from 2006 corresponded with this finding. On that survey, teachers indicated that they felt insecure in inclusion meetings, did not feel that they had mastered inclusive practices, and needed more support. Currently, teacher responses from the rating scale indicate higher levels of teacher buy-in, and the teachers interviewed for this study expressed confidence and enthusiasm for teaching students with disabilities after years of increased support and training (STEP Team Member 2; Teacher 1; Teacher 2).

The best example of transcending the potential conflict between the rights of the individual and the rights of the group comes from the students. As early as 2008, 78% of students indicated, "I am part of inclusion at [St. Ignatius]." Sixty-three percent of students indicated that they did not always learn the same way as their peers. The students recognized the uniqueness of their own learning needs before their parents did. In addition to a growing

understanding of their own needs and rights as individuals, the students overall exhibited a preferential option for the disabled in the way they treated classmates with disabilities (Committee Member 1, Committee Member 3, Principal 2). STEP Team Member 2 describes:

> In the classes that have children with the most significant needs, for example, classes where there's been a child with autism or Down's syndrome, or someone who's visually impaired, the children in those classes are so considerate and kind, and that's where you really see the social justice component come in is when you see it in action with the students.

Like the interview participants, the students' Catholic spirituality provided their moral foundation. Committee Member 3 recalled a student in a class raising his hand and declaring he knew why Committee Member 3's son was different:

> I thought, "Oh God, what's the answer going to be?" And he said, "Because God made all of us special and different," and I got, like, immediately choked up, but I thought, that's what makes this school so special is like, those ingrained things that, you know, if you do truly believe, then, God did make all of us, and, I feel like [son's name] made it through a full term pregnancy, and God created him as much as He created everyone, so I feel like, kind of, those philosophies and knowing that Jesus suffered for all of us, and that we're all different, but those differences are to be appreciated. I feel like that's ingrained here.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 began with a restatement of the research questions and introduced the fourteen interview participants. The major findings from the interviews were organized around the three research questions. The findings from the supplementary data (the rating scale and artifacts) were then analyzed to triangulate the findings from the interview data. Figure 1 provided a visual representation of the driving and restraining forces described by research questions 1 and 2.

Mixed-methods data collection in the form of interviews, a rating scale, and artifacts provided a broad data set for answering the research questions of this case study. Interview participants' responses were consistent. When triangulated with data from the rating scale and

artifacts and analyzed in light of themes from previous literature, the interview findings revealed implications for the implementation of inclusion programs in Catholic elementary schools on both a practical and moral level. These implications will be discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This mixed methods case study of the inclusion program at a Catholic elementary school set out to answer the following research questions:

1. What driving and restraining forces influenced the evolution of the inclusion program at this school over the past thirteen years?
2. How did these forces influence the current practice of inclusion at the school?
3. How did social justice issues impact these forces?

The school in this case study overcame restraining forces, developed an inclusion program, and achieved institutional change in the process. This change occurred because of visionary, long-term leadership, stakeholder buy-in, ethical motivation, and significant funding capabilities within the parent population. The previous chapter presented and analyzed the data collected for the study. This chapter will first summarize the major findings for the study. Next, recommendations will be offered for the school site and archdiocese in which the school is located, based on the implications of the study. Chapter 5 will end with suggestions for future research based on gaps from this study as well findings that would benefit from further exploration.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: Driving and Restraining Forces

Driving forces. This study identified four major driving forces for change in the development of the St. Ignatius inclusion program: leadership, teacher buy-in, the partnership

between the school and parents, and the concept of the parish as "one big family." The findings from this study support the related literature with regards to the importance of strong, charismatic leadership (Scanlan, 2008). Long and Schuttoffel (2006) reported that in many Catholic schools, the clergy rely on the principal and faculty to integrate students with disabilities. Teachers often require the support of clergy and diocesan staff to serve and integrate students with disabilities (Long & Schuttoffel, 2006). St. Ignatius has a supportive pastor who, in his role as leader of the parish, has continually guided the parish toward implementing inclusive practices. Given the hierarchical nature of Catholic parishes, the leadership and buy-in of the pastor are essential for an inclusion program to survive.

None of the three Principals in this study came from inclusion or special education backgrounds, yet all exhibited high levels of buy-in and strong leadership. Other leaders, such as STEP Team Member 1 and the members of the Inclusion Committee, brought exceptionally great passion, dedication, and knowledge to the program. The faculty eventually accepted the new school culture around inclusion and most exhibited high levels of buy-in and confidence in implementing inclusive practices. St. Ignatius met and surpassed the critical mass of leadership needed for the development of an inclusion program.

The success of the inclusion program would not have been possible without the support and efforts of the parent population. A core group of dedicated parents helped steer the Inclusion Committee and generated funds to support inclusive practices. By providing the school with constructive criticism (Administrator 1), the school was able to respond to parent concerns in a manner that ultimately strengthened the inclusion program.

The notion that the school and parish were part of "one big family" constituted the last major driving force. Teachers wanted to "go the extra mile" for students (STEP Team Member 2), and parents were motivated to provide resources for all children in the parish. All four of these driving forces—leadership, teachers, parents, and community—illustrate how Catholics are bound together in a community of faith and must respect and care for one another as members of the Body of Christ (Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Rom. 12:5 NIV).

Restraining forces. The two major restraining forces affecting the development of the inclusion program at St. Ignatius were negative parent perceptions and a lack of resources. During the early years of the program, many parents expressed concern that inclusion was negatively affecting the overall quality of the school's academic program and draining available resources. The school garnered a negative response from the parent population when the administration communicated the goals of inclusion in a way that over-emphasized the experiences of three students with severe disabilities. The school was actually building its capacity to serve a much larger population of students with less "obvious" mild to moderate disabilities, but this was not visible to the parent community.

During the early years of the inclusion program, the school struggled to provide teachers with the level of resources needed to adequately implement inclusive practices. Teachers did not feel that they had adequate levels of support to serve the increasing number of students with disabilities in their classrooms (Teacher 1). According to the rating scale, the teachers still do not consider the level of resources entirely adequate.

Research Question 2: Current Practices

As the school moved through the process of organizational change, the school leadership had to decrease resistance or consider new driving forces (Lunenburg & Orenstein, 2008). The school decided to embrace the philosophy that inclusion served all students, both in policy and practice. It undertook a public relations campaign to educate the community about this concept, placing greater emphasis on differentiated instruction as a means to reach all students. Professional development was increased to help teachers develop their capacity to implement inclusive practices and differentiated instruction techniques.

According to the literature, issues surrounding resources provide the greatest obstacle to implementing Catholic school inclusion programs (Baxter, 2009; Bellow, 2006; DeFiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006). St. Ignatius addressed the issue of inadequate resources by hosting an annual fundraiser to raise monies for the inclusion program. These funds were used to hire an inclusion coordinator, purchase technology and other materials, and fund teacher professional development. Even with greater levels of resources, the school felt the need to be honest about how well they were addressing the needs of students with disabilities. The current STEP team meets frequently to evaluate student progress and provide clear, honest feedback to parents, teachers, and administrators.

Research Question 3: Social Justice Issues

The interview participants in this study felt morally compelled by their Catholic faith to practice inclusion (Administrator 1; Committee Member 1; Committee Member 3; STEP Team Member 1), and every interview participant referenced “Let the Children Come Unto Me” from the Gospel of Matthew as the scriptural basis for inclusion. Interview participants used phrases

such as, “As a Catholic school, we had no choice” (Principal 1), “You have to do it” (Principal 1), “It’s just sort of seamless…it’s just part of our faith” (STEP Team Member 1), and “It’s just so fundamental to what I believe our faith is all about that it’s hard for me to pinpoint a particular teaching” (Administrator 2). Grounded in their Catholic faith, respondents also identified the Church’s teachings on respecting life and accepting the diversity of all Catholics as major social justice influences.

The literature on Catholic school inclusion links Church teaching to a moral obligation to serve students with disabilities (Baxter, 2009; Bello, 2006; Defiore, 2006; Durrow, 2007; Hallinan, 2000; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Martin & Litton, 2004; Russo et. at, 2002, Scanlan, 2009; Shaughnessy, 1998; USCCB, 2005; Weaver, Adams & Landers, 2006). Principal 2 stated that when people questioned the inclusion program, it was important to explain: “We’re a Catholic school, not a private school,” that strives to teach “the whole child…the education is not just the curriculum.” The stakeholders in this study might argue that Catholic schools are obligated to practice inclusion, regardless of the challenges.

Recommendations for the School Site

Gifted Students

One of the major growth areas mentioned by interview respondents and frequently mentioned in the Inclusion Committee documents was the need for the school to better address the academic needs of bright and gifted students. Parents of gifted students were initially skeptical of the inclusion program (Administrator 1; STEP Team Member 2), and the Inclusion Committee explicitly stated a need to “differentiate classroom instruction to better accommodate high-achieving and gifted students.”

Teachers at St. Ignatius struggle with locating and providing meaningful activities and resources for gifted students. There is currently no uniform policy at the school for addressing the needs of students identified as gifted. Some parents express dissatisfaction with the school's curriculum in meeting the needs of high-achieving students. The school struggles with some parents' eagerness to have their child identified as gifted. Parents of gifted students frequently request alternative curriculum for their child. As one teacher remarked, "they just want them to be doing something different, they don't care what it is—just that it's different" (STEP Team Member 2).

Over the years, the school has substantially developed its capacity to meet the needs of students with attention deficits, learning disabilities, and physical impairments. Teachers have amassed considerable experience and numerous professional development hours on how to better meet the needs of students with academic, social, and behavioral challenges. The school quickly identifies students with issues and implements the assessment process efficiently to make sure that these students are properly evaluated and have a STEP plan firmly in place.

The school does not, however, exhibit, this same level of confidence and knowledge regarding the needs of gifted students. The inclusion philosophy stated on the school website clearly states that the school strives to meet the needs of all learners through differentiated instruction. To this end, the school should to continue to tackle the challenge of serving gifted students. Just as the school struggled to iron out the processes and strategies for meeting the needs of challenged learners, they must continue to muddle through the process for students on the other end.

Personality Driven Program

One of the major implications of the study was the importance of top-down leadership at this school site, starting with the Pastor, flowing down to the three Principals, and then to all other stakeholders. Although a principal began this program, the findings from this study illustrate the essential leadership role of a pastor.

The Pastor is an extremely charismatic and popular leader who plans on retiring in the next few years. As mentioned by multiple interview respondents, his support was crucial in pushing the inclusion program forward. Teacher 2 mentioned a concern about the future of the inclusion program after he retires. His replacement will certainly have less experience with inclusion and may not have a strong interest in the concept. Administrator 1 remarked that for an inclusion program to become part of the school culture, the "investment in the program and the approach and the philosophy and the rationale has to come from the very top, all the way down…By the top, I mean the pastor."

This situation leaves a question that cannot necessarily be answered empirically: would this inclusion program have been possible without this pastor? This hypothetical question illustrates the importance of introducing and "selling" the next pastor on the importance of inclusion to the St. Ignatius community. As shown by this study, the leadership of a pastor is essential for an inclusion program to develop and thrive. Fortunately, the teachers and administration at St. Ignatius exhibited high levels of buy-in, but the pastor's role will remain essential as the school continues to evolve.

Recommendations for the Archdiocese

Paradigm Shift

As stated earlier, the archdiocese in which this school is located recently mandated inclusive practice in all Catholic elementary schools. Schools are required to form a team that meets to discuss students with challenges and documents the strategies they implement to meet students' needs. The archdiocese provides forms for this documentation.

The researcher initially worked at another Catholic elementary school in the archdiocese that did not have any sort of inclusion program in place or system for setting up accommodations and modifications. Although the school could also be characterized as "one big family," and exhibited high levels of care for all students, there was a distinct attitude that students needed to fit the school. If a student was struggling with an academic or behavioral issue, the impetus was on the student and their parents to find a solution.

When the researcher moved to teach at St. Ignatius, it was clear that a significant paradigm shift was underway in attitudes towards students with disabilities and other educational challenges. The STEP program had been in place for about five years and was a formalized system with meetings, goals, and paperwork. The researcher, as a teacher new to St. Ignatius, was informed before the new school year began which students in the class had STEP plans. The STEP plans detailed the accommodations and modifications teachers were expected to implement in the classroom. The researcher was instructed to set up meetings with the parents of these students at the beginning of the school year to discuss their child's plans and receive their input on their child's needs and experiences.

The expectation at St. Ignatius was that teachers work to make the school fit the needs of students, not the other way around. At the previous school, the child was problematized, and his or her shortcomings were viewed as the family's responsibility to address. Under a student-centered paradigm, it was the responsibility of the school to alter the curriculum and learning environment to meet the needs of students, all of whom were respected as diverse learners whose individualized learning needs were accepted as a natural aspect of the human condition. Social justice discourses of inclusion question the assumption that disability is located within the individual (Artiles et al. 2006). This paradigm shift illustrated the importance of a culture of inclusiveness, not just resources, as supported by Weaver et al.'s (2006) critique of DeFiore's (2006) assertion that resources are the primary obstacle to Catholic school inclusion and assert that special education comes first out of a culture of inclusiveness.

Hopefully the archdiocese can continue to find ways to increase inclusive practices in Catholic schools, by awakening them to the moral obligation of inclusion and embracing this paradigm shift. St. Ignatius voluntarily embraced inclusion and developed their inclusion program independent of the archdiocese. Other Catholic schools may not have the same level of interest in inclusion. Will a mandate from the archdiocese be enough to create a paradigm shift? What other driving and restraining forces will come into play where there might be a lack of resources, lack of leadership, and lack of buy-in? According to the results of this study, the driving forces in this sort of situation may not be strong enough to create institutional change.

Teacher Professional Development

In order to develop inclusive practices in the archdiocese, schools will need the proper structures and resources. This study showed how increasing teacher professional development

strengthens school capacity and stakeholder buy-in. When parents see teachers successfully implementing inclusive practices in their classrooms and teachers exhibit confidence in their abilities, this provides visible evidence of programmatic success.

The concept of strengthening schools through increased teacher professional development is nothing new, but in the case of this archdiocese and its new mandate for inclusion, it is essential. As mentioned in the section above, the lack of resources in most Catholic elementary schools presents the greatest obstacle to implementing inclusion, but as Principal 2 noted, many of the accommodations and modifications in inclusive classrooms are not "resource-dependent," such as preferential seating, tests read orally, and lesson plans provided in advance for studying at home. With proper training, any teacher can implement these types of accommodations and modifications. For students with mild to moderate disabilities, "resources are necessary, are important, but they're not critical," and these strategies can be implemented through teacher professional development (Principal 2).

Professional development requires resources as well, but by funneling the funding that does exist directly into inclusive teaching strategies, the archdiocese can increase teacher capacity and confidence. The key force of teacher buy-in can help drive the cultural change toward pro-inclusion school environments. Principal 2 also noted that funding issues become a crutch if schools say to parents, "We don't get the funding from the state or from the federal government, so we can't take your child." In the 2006 survey, the teachers at St. Ignatius expressed a desire for more professional development to increase their capacities as inclusive educators. According to STEP Team Member 2, over the years the faculty has taken a leadership role in the inclusion program. Most Catholic schools will not be able to hire an inclusion

coordinator, so building the capacity and leadership of the faculty will be key in developing inclusive practice in the archdiocese.

Future Research

Socioeconomic Status

A key factor that made the school in this case study unusual in the Catholic school landscape is the high economic status it enjoys. Although almost any Catholic school might philosophically welcome students with disabilities, it is the rare Catholic school that can readily develop similar levels of resources to accommodate their needs.

Serving multiple students with diverse disabilities in a Catholic school inclusion model requires additional resources. It requires people on staff to navigate the IEP process and maintain files. It requires professional development for teachers, classroom aides, and possibly one-on-one aides. It requires quality control, goal setting, and communication with parents. It requires assistive technology, sensory tools, bouncy seat cushions, etc.

The growth of the inclusion program at St. Ignatius School cannot be separated from the simultaneous growth of funding sources. The success of this inclusion program was entwined with the high socioeconomic status of parishioners and resources parishioners were able to contribute to the school. The parents on the Inclusion Committee were professionals with advanced degrees working in diverse careers such as education, law, the entertainment industry, real estate, engineering, and aerospace. Some of these parents left their professional careers to stay at home with their children, thus freeing time up to devote to developing the inclusion program, conducting fieldwork, and planning a large-scale fundraiser. Parents in the community

had access to expensive products and services that provided items for a highly profitable silent auction. The parents at the school have disposable income to donate to the school.

Due to the unique socioeconomic advantages of this parish school, these findings are not transferrable to all Catholic school environments. St. Ignatius boasts tremendous levels of leadership and strong stakeholder buy-in. The purpose of this study was to look at the driving and restraining forces in one specific context, but it would be beneficial for a broader audience of Catholic school educators if a future study could compare two Catholic schools with similar commitments to inclusion but differing levels of resources. This might better tease out the variables that lead to success.

Effects of Inclusion on Other Students

The voices of students were not heard in this study. One exception was the old survey form 2008 discovered in the Inclusion Committee artifacts. Sixty-three percent of students believed that they had unique learning needs although only 18% of their parents felt the same. One other voice from the student body was Inclusion Committee Member 3's memory of a boy in her son's class explaining that her son had Down's syndrome "because God made all of us special and different," a belief she felt was ingrained at the school.

Just as it was necessary to bring in teachers' opinions (via the rating scale) to truly appreciate the day-to-day realities of inclusion, it would be worthwhile to include the voices of the students. A future study that would complement the findings of the present one would be to recreate the parent/teacher/student survey from 2008 and re-administer the survey to the current population of stakeholders. This would show how attitudes had changed or remained the same. Another fruitful design for future research would be to include students as interview participants

and compare the experiences of students with and without STEP plans. Such research would provide valuable data on social justice issues through the eyes of the students.

Students reflect the attitudes and dispositions of their parents and teachers, but they also possess their own agency. There is no literature on student attitudes toward inclusion in the scholarly writing on Catholic school inclusion. The field would benefit from further discussion of this topic. The faculty at St. Ignatius often marvel at how the students help implement inclusion, remarking that the students "just get it," seamlessly integrating children with disabilities into the classroom.

The students at St. Ignatius generally exhibit a balanced attitude toward students with disabilities. They display patience and kindness but are not afraid to react honestly when a student is annoying or inappropriate. Adults often treat students with disabilities with kid gloves, but peers provide real feedback, which is ultimately more helpful and more loving. Students with disabilities are frequently more comfortable interacting with safe, attentive adults. Interacting with peers provides students with disabilities both greater challenges and greater rewards.

Students with more severe disabilities frequently attract "helper" students who end up keeping an eye on that student and looking out for their best interests. Sometimes a student with aggression or behavior challenges takes on a caretaker role with a student with disabilities, behaving quite differently with that student than they do with their peers on the football field. Working with a disabled student gives them the opportunity to express their empathy and kindness.

Inclusive education can be beneficial to all students in a class, not just students with special needs. This study showed that inclusion helped students understand the importance of working together and fostered a sense of tolerance and empathy among the student body. Inclusive education forces families and educators to navigate the "interconnectedness and complicated human systems" between students and communities (Thomas & Glenny, 2002). Further analysis of the interconnected variables that affect the feasibility of Catholic school inclusion and the benefits these programs bring to all stakeholders will hopefully propel the continued development of inclusive practices in parish schools.

Catholic School Advantage

The phrase repeated by respondents was that the school was "one big family." The findings from the interview data, when triangulated with the other data, revealed characteristics unique to Catholic school environments. Catholic belief became the foundation of thought that moved the inclusion program at the school involved in this case study from its initial stance of providing an education for students with disabilities, to understanding inclusion to be meeting the needs of all students through differentiated instruction. The Catholic parish school setting, with its emphasis on community and belonging, may provide an advantage for implementing inclusion over the public school setting.

Catholic school personnel believe that the public schools have significantly more resources for serving students with disabilities (Pastor; Principal 2; Principal 3; STEP Team Member 1; STEP Team Member 2). Although this is partially true, public schools also struggle to adequately serve all students (Committee Member 2). The Catholic school environment, where parents and students feel like "one big family," leads to greater stakeholder buy-in on all

levels, and families with typical children may be motivated to donate money in addition to the parents of students with special needs. Further study is needed to determine how innovative religious-based educational settings might increase the potential for inclusion programs.

Concluding Thoughts

I had a student in my class with a variety of physical and cognitive challenges, including poor social skills. She would withdraw and avoid contact with peers, and she did not identify any of the students in our homeroom as her friends. I took a few girls aside and asked them to keep an eye on this student and include her in games. The girls heartily embraced their new responsibility, despite the hesitancy and at times hostility expressed by the student. The group of girls would come and update me on their progress, and let me know if the student was playing with them or continuing to withdraw and play alone. One of the girls frequently volunteered in class to partner with the student, who was difficult to work with. Two of the girls invited her over for a slumber party, and she said she was not interested. I was proud of the girls and their continued efforts, but I was also frustrated with my perception that the student did not fully appreciate their overtures. One day, during a bad flu season, all of the "helper" girls were absent. I asked the student what she was planning on doing during recess, and she replied, "I don't know, all of my friends are absent." Despite all of my hand-wringing and skepticism, this group of nine-year-old girls had achieved the goal of inclusionary practice: coming together as a community to embrace the process of inclusion complete with its challenges and rewards. A process that is frequently imperfect, but always worth it.

Appendix A

Rating Scale

Name:__________________________ Years teaching:______________________________

Grade Taught:____________________ Years teaching at this school:__________________

Rating Scale of Components of a Responsible Inclusion Program
for Students with High-Incidence Disabilities
Vaughn, Schumm, & Brick, 1998

Directions: Rate each item on a 3-point scale.

3 = implements
2 = implements partially
1 = does not implement or implements poorly

I. Each Student's Educational Needs Are Considered First			
1. Each student's academic progress and likelihood for success in an inclusion program influence placement in an inclusion program.	1	2	3
2. Each student's social progress and emotional needs influence placement in an inclusion program.	1	2	3
3. Alternative intervention models within the school are available for students who are not successful within an inclusion model.	1	2	3
4. Procedures for individually determining each student's progress in an inclusion setting are established and implemented (e.g., progress on a measure of oral reading).	1	2	3
5. Programs are designed to fit the needs of students rather than students forced to fit established programs.	1	2	3
II. Teachers' Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes Toward Inclusion Classrooms			
6. General education teachers who teach in inclusion classrooms demonstrate beliefs and skills that facilitate their effectiveness in addressing the diverse learning needs of students with disabilities.	1	2	3

7. Teachers self-select their involvement in inclusion classrooms.	1	2	3
8. Teachers involved in co-teaching participate in selecting their co-teaching partner.	1	2	3
9. All teachers at the school identify the importance of accepting and valuing all students.	1	2	3
10. Teachers (general and special education) exhibit an orientation to instruction for students with disabilities that indicates their responsibility for the students' success.	1	2	3
11. Inclusion programs are viewed as investments and not as ways to reduce special education costs.	1	2	3
III. Adequate Resources Are Provided			
12. Staff and administration are committed to providing the resources necessary to develop or maintain high-quality inclusion models.	1	2	3
13. Adequate personnel are available to provide effective inclusion models.	1	2	3
14. Teacher-student ratio is adequate to meet the instructional and social needs of students with disabilities in inclusion classrooms.	1	2	3
15. Adequate materials and curriculums are available to meet the needs of students with disabilities in inclusion classrooms.	1	2	3
16. Adequate technology is available to enhance learning of students with disabilities.	1	2	3
IV. Inclusion Models Are Developed and Implemented at the School-Based Level			
17. School personnel are involved in the development and implementation of the inclusion model.	1	2	3
18. Teachers and key stakeholders perceive that the school-level administrator is supportive of responsible inclusion programs.	1	2	3
19. The inclusion model reflects the needs of the students in that school.	1	2	3
20. The implications of inclusion are considered for all school personnel (bus drivers, cafeteria workers, after-care workers, etc.).	1	2	3

V. Parents Are Involved in the Development and Implementation of the Inclusion Model			
21. Parents' views are considered when students' service-delivery models are implemented.	1	2	3
22. A plan is in place to gain the support of parents in the community.	1	2	3
23. A systematic, ongoing method of communication is planned to ensure that parents are informed about the placement of their children.	1	2	3
VI. A Continuum of Services Is Maintained			
24. School personnel realize that the needs of all students with high-incidence disabilities are unlikely to be met within the inclusion model.	1	2	3
25. Alternative services (e.g., resource, pullout, or self-contained classes) are available to meet the needs of students who are not progressing adequately within the inclusion model	1	2	3
26. Students with disabilities are not placed in general education classrooms merely because alternative services are not available.	1	2	3
VII. The Service Delivery Model Is Continually Evaluated and Altered			
27. Procedures for evaluating the inclusion service-delivery model have been identified and are systematically implemented.	1	2	3
28. Effective inclusion models for high-incidence disabilities that are implemented at other sites are visited so as to identify successful components.	1	2	3
29. Procedures for fine-tuning and improving the inclusion model are considered on an ongoing basis.	1	2	3
VII. The Service Delivery Model Is Continually Evaluated and Altered			
30. The skills and knowledge needed by all the professionals at the school are assessed and considered when designing professional development experiences.	1	2	3
31. Professional development opportunities designed to meet the needs of all professionals, including support staff (cafeteria workers, after-school workers, etc.) are provided on an ongoing basis to enhance their skills with	1	2	3

students with disabilities.			
32. Opportunities to visit classrooms of teachers who are effectively meeting the needs of students with disabilities in inclusion settings are provided.	1	2	3
IX. Philosophy on Inclusion Is Developed at the School Level			
33. Opportunities to discuss issues related to inclusion are provided for all key stakeholders in the school, including teachers, parents, and support staff.	1	2	3
34. A written philosophy on inclusion exists that is endorsed by key stakeholders in the school.	1	2	3
35. The written philosophy on inclusion provides guidelines for the development of policy and service-delivery models.	1	2	3
X. Curriculum Approaches That Meet the Needs of All Students Are Developed and Refined			
36. Appropriate instructional practices that increase active and intensive participation of students with disabilities in the learning tasks are implemented.	1	2	3
37. Teachers make instructional adaptations to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities.	1	2	3
38. Teachers make adaptations in materials to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities.	1	2	3
39. Adequate teacher time is allocated to meeting the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.	1	2	3
40. Opportunities for reteaching or providing additional support for students with disabilities is evident.	1	2	3
XI. Roles and Responsibilities of the Special Education Teacher and Other Specialists (e.g., Speech and Language Therapist)			
41. The roles and responsibilities of the special education teacher and other specialists (e.g., speech and language therapist) within the inclusion model are specified.	1	2	3
42. Adequate opportunities for the special education teacher and other specialists to provide direct and intensive education for students with disabilities is available.	1	2	3

43. Adequate time is available to co-plan and collaborate with other professionals, including the general education teacher.	1 2 3
XII. Roles and Responsibilities of the General Education Teacher	
44. The role and responsibilities of the general education teacher within the inclusion model are specified.	1 2 3
45. Adequate opportunities for the general education teacher to provide appropriate instruction for students without disabilities is available.	1 2 3
46. Adequate time to co-plan and collaborate with other professionals, including the special education teacher, is provided.	1 2 3
47. Special area teachers (art, music, physical education) are provided with training and support as related to the students with disabilities in their classes.	1 2 3

Appendix B

Letter to Interview Participants

Dear Colleagues,

I hope this letter finds you well. As many of you know, I am part of Loyola Marymount University's doctoral program and am currently working toward earning an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership for Social Justice. I am preparing to formally begin my dissertation research.

My dissertation study will examine the driving and restraining forces that influenced the evolution of the inclusion program at ______ School, why the school currently defines inclusion as serving all students, and the social justice issues that have influenced the ongoing development of the program.

I will be holding confidential interviews with current and former administrators, STEP team members, and parents who have participated on the Inclusion Committee.

I hope you will join me and share your insight and knowledge on these topics. If you agree to participate in an interview, please let me know a time and location that would be convenient for you. Interviews will be recorded on audio equipment.

If you have any questions about the process and research, please call or email me at [phone number] or [email address].

Best,

Emily Paz

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Participant INFORMED CONSENT Form

Date of Preparation: September, 2012 page 1 of 2

Loyola Marymount University

Study Title: "From Inclusion for Some to Inclusion for All," A Case Study of one Catholic School

1) I hereby authorize Emily M. Paz, M.A., Ed.D. candidate to include me in the following research study: "From Inclusion for Some to Inclusion for All," A Case Study of one Catholic School

2) I have been asked to participate on a research project that is designed to examine the evolution of the inclusion program at __[insert name]____ School, and which will last for approximately two months from 1 October 2012 to 1 December 2012.

3) It has been explained to me that the reason for my inclusion in this project is because I am a person with knowledge of the development of the inclusion program due to my experiences as an administrator, teacher, member of the STEP team, or parent involved with the Inclusion Committee.

4) I understand that if I am a subject, I will be interviewed about the evolution of the schools' inclusion program. The interview contents in transcription form and audio-recorded form will be kept confidential in digital form and in archives in a locked file.
The investigator will write a case study based on interviews as well as artifacts about the inclusion philosophy at ____[insert name]____ School. The study will be part of a dissertation in partial requirements for graduation in the Ed.D. program at LMU. These procedures have been explained to me by Emily M. Paz, M.A., Ed.D. candidate, and primary researcher.

5) I agree that the tapes/digital recordings shall be retained for research and/or teaching purposes for an indefinite time.

6) I understand that the study described above may involve the following risks and/or discomforts: There are no physical or emotional risks from participation in this study.

7) I understand that I will receive no direct benefit from my participation in this study; however, the possible benefits to humanity include a more thorough understanding of how Catholic elementary schools can implement successful inclusion programs.

8) I understand that Emily M. Paz, who can be reached at empaz@me.com or 310.871.9292, will answer any questions I may have at any time concerning details of the procedures performed as part of this study.

9) If the study design or the use of the information is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained.

10) I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate in, or to withdraw from this research at any time.

11) I understand that circumstances may arise which might cause the investigator to terminate my participation before the completion of the study.

12) I understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent except as specifically required by law.

13) I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any question that I may not wish to answer.

14) I understand that I will receive no remuneration for my participation in this study.

15) I understand that if I have any further questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may contact David Hardy, Ph.D. Chair, Institutional Review Board, 1 LMU Drive, Suite 3000, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles CA 90045-2659 (310) 258-5465, dhardy@lmu.edu.

16a) In signing this consent form, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of the form, and a copy of the "Subject's Bill of Rights".

16b) In signing this consent form, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this form, and a copy of the “Subject’s Bill of Rights.”

______________________________ ______________________

Subject’s Signature Date

____

Printed Name

______________________________ ______________________

Witness Date

Appendix D
Guiding Questions

INTERVIEW WITH: ____

JOB: ____

DATE: ____

1. How long have you held this position?
2. What is your educational background as pertains to your position?
3. What has been your role in the inclusion program at this school?
4. Define the term INCLUSION in general.
5. What is the current inclusion philosophy at this school?
6. How has the inclusion philosophy at this school evolved over the years?
7. Why do you think the inclusion philosophy has evolved over the years at this school?
8. How have different stakeholders (parents, teachers, pastor, students, administrators) influenced the evolution of the inclusion philosophy at the school?
9. How would you characterize parent perceptions of the inclusion philosophy?
10. What role has social justice played in the development of the school's inclusion philosophy?
11. What direction do you feel the school's inclusion philosophy will head in the future?
12. How is this school's inclusion philosophy similar or different from other schools?
13. Does this inclusion philosophy seek to protect anyone's individual or group rights?
14. How has the social context of the school influenced the development of the school's inclusion philosophy?
15. How has Church teaching influenced the development of the inclusion philosophy?

Appendix E

Letter to Rating Scale Participants

Dear Colleagues,

I hope this letter finds you well. As many of you know, I am part of Loyola Marymount University's doctoral program and am currently working toward earning an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership for Social Justice. I am preparing to formally begin my dissertation research.

My dissertation study will examine the driving and restraining forces that influenced the evolution of the inclusion program at ______ School, why the school currently defines inclusion as serving all students, and the social justice issues that have influenced the ongoing development of the program.

You are one of ten teachers randomly selected to complete a rating scale, the "Rating Scale of Components of a Responsible Inclusion Program for Students with High-Incidence Disabilities" (Vaughn, Schumm, & Brick, 1998). This rating scale gives educators the opportunity to evaluate inclusive practices at their school site. I will use the responses from the rating scale to support or refute data from interviews.

Your responses will remain confidential, and will only be utilized for this study. If you do not wish to participate, let me know and I can select an alternative participant.

If you have any questions about the process and research, please call or email me at [phone number] or [email address].

Best,

Emily Paz

Appendix F

Categories

Driving Forces

- Inclusion Committee/ BNICE fundraiser
- Parent support
- Leadership of pastor
- Leadership of principals
- Leadership of other individuals
- Money/donations
- Hard work/ dedication
- Critical mass (more people for than against)
- Notion of family – keeping families together, the parish community as a family
- Positive attitudes of students
- Positive attitudes of teachers

Restraining Forces

- Negative parent perceptions of the inclusion program/ parent concerns
- Lack of resources at the school to support inclusion program (money, personnel, etc.)
- Lack of teacher buy-in for school inclusion program

Response to Restraining Forces

- PR campaign for the concept that “inclusion is for everyone, not just a few high-profile students
- Parent involvement in classrooms
- Reduced class sizes
- Increased staff
- Increased teacher professional development
- Being honest/realistic about what the school can and cannot do
- Differentiated instruction
- Changes in parent perceptions

Social Justice Issues

- Church teaching
- Right to Life/ pre-natal diagnosis of disability
- Rights of the individual vs. the group
- Diversity

Areas of continued need

- Needs of gifted students

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