Spring 3-2018

Feeling Valued, Supported, and Satisfied: Perceptions of Special Educators and Principals

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Recommended Citation

Feeling Valued, Supported, and Satisfied: Perceptions of

Special Educators and Principals

by

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March 2018

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in

partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

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This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment

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Doctor of Education

Lindenwood University, School of Education

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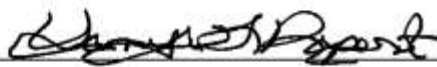   Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express gratitude to my dissertation committee, Dr. Kathy Grover, Dr. Terry Reid, Dr. Sherry DeVore, and Dr. Lisa Christiansen. I am truly blessed for having the opportunity to work with Dr. Kathy Grover, my dissertation advisor and mentor, who provided kind and diligent support and guidance during my dissertation journey. I would like to thank the special education teachers and principals for taking the time to complete the surveys to provide their insight.

I would not have been able to persevere on this journey without the love and constant support of my family. I am deeply appreciative to my husband and partner, Kevin Rapert, for providing encouragement, patience, and even the promise of a trip to Hawaii for motivation to complete my dissertation. I am blessed to have wonderful children, Nathan and Alexis Rapert, who provided love and support, in the way only teenagers do, by asking when I would be finished so the kitchen table could be cleared of my stacks of papers and books and the walls in our home free from charts hanging everywhere. Finally, I am thankful for the love I received from my parents, Gerald and Trudy Broombaugh, for supporting me and making me believe I could accomplish anything.

Abstract

High teacher attrition and low teacher retention rates continue to plague the field of special education, which leads to teacher shortages year after year (Andrews & Brown, 2015; Vittek, 2015). Solutions for increasing special education teacher retention continue to be explored (Billingsley, 2005; Brownell & Sindelar, 2016; Tyler & Brunner, 2014). The purpose of this study was to discover trends or themes connecting special education teacher work conditions and job satisfaction, principal support, and decisions of teachers to continue teaching special education. Participants for this study were special education teachers and principals from 60 accredited public K-12 school districts in Missouri. Participants received an online survey to provide their perceptions of special education work conditions, needs, and supports. Frequencies and percentages of responses were calculated and categorized. Findings revealed, overall, special education teachers need more time to complete paperwork, develop lessons and activities, and collaborate with teachers. Special education teachers did not receive additional compensation for extra workload responsibilities. Special education teacher job satisfaction was 76.6%, and while the majority of teachers reported plans to continue teaching special education, 11.4% of teachers did not plan to continue. Principals did not perceive a need for special education teachers to have additional time to complete paperwork, develop lessons and activities, or collaborate with other teachers. Principals did not perceive the need for special education teachers to receive additional compensation for their workloads, and they perceived special education teacher job satisfaction at 100%.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The field of special education appears to have a revolving door with teachers entering on one side and exiting on the other (Owen, 2015). Across the United States, the need to find certified and qualified special education teachers to fill vacant teaching positions continues to be a focus for states and schools (Holdheide & DeMonte, 2016). This attrition problem is not new (Tyler & Brunner, 2014). Andrews and Brown (2015) reported, "The field of special education continues to have lower teacher retention rates compared to general education" (p. 126). For several years, many researchers have investigated and reported the need to address the shortage of teachers in the field of special education and the need to support and develop teachers to retain them in the field (Billingsley, 2005; Brownell & Sindelar, 2016; Hale, 2015; Sweigart & Collins, 2017; Tyler & Brunner, 2014). Why are special education teachers leaving the field? Is it due to job dissatisfaction, lack of personal growth and fulfillment, or interest in other career areas?

Vittek (2015) conducted a review of research literature on special education teacher attrition and retention from 2004 to 2015 and stated, "The factors that contribute to the teacher shortage in special education are wide reaching, ranging from preparation programs to the support a teacher receives their first few years as an educator" (p. 1). Major themes found in the review and reasons teachers left special education were "poor job satisfaction, stress, overworked, [and] lack of support from administration" (Vittek, 2015, p. 4). Vittek (2015) concluded, "Future research in this area should focus on the four areas that researchers have found to help teacher retention: job satisfaction, induction programs, mentoring, and administrative support" (p. 5).

This chapter includes background information on the shortage of special education teachers and the importance of keeping teachers in the field of special education. A review of Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs set the framework for development of research questions for the study. The problem statement, purpose of the study, and questions answered through the study are outlined. Finally, the chapter includes definitions of key terms utilized in the research and the limitations of the study in regard to the participants' demographics and the survey instrument.

Background of Study

Each year, teachers choose to leave the field of special education (Tyler & Brunner, 2014). The National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services stated 12.3% of special education teachers leave the field, which is almost "double the rate of general education teachers" (Hale, 2015, p. 2). Shortages in certain educational fields are reported annually (Brunsting, Sreckovic, & Lane, 2014). The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education (2016) reported shortages in special education year after year in the *Teacher Shortage Areas Nationwide Listing for 1990-1991 through 2016-2017*. Shortages of teachers affect the ability of school districts to fill vacancies with qualified teachers as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) (2004). Bettini and Murphy (2016) reported, "A shortage of special education teachers is threatening the ability of schools in many states to provide high-quality education to students with disabilities" (p. 1). School leaders struggle to find skilled and qualified teachers to fill teaching vacancies due to attrition (Bettini & Murphy, 2016).

Special education teachers have lower teacher retention rates than general educators (Andrews & Brown, 2015). Special educators report high levels of stress and burnout (Wong, Ruble, Yu, & McGrew, 2017). According to Conley and You (2016), workplace factors which appear to impact special education teacher attrition include "administrative support, teacher team efficacy, job design/autonomy, student disengagement, and poor socioeconomic/human conditions" (p. 3). Tyler and Brunner (2014) reported factors contributing to special education teacher attrition include demanding workplace conditions such as excessive caseload size, compliance paperwork, and meetings; insufficient time, space, supplies, and materials; insufficient administrative support; lack of professional development and collaboration; lack of induction programs and mentoring; insufficient teacher preparation programs; and lack of inclusion in workplace decision-making.

Brownell and Sindelar (2016) suggested, "A more systematic approach to solving the teacher shortage problem in special education is needed – one that will increase the likelihood that an adequate supply of fully prepared special education teachers enters the classroom and remains there" (p. 1). Holdheide and DeMonte (2016) proposed creating "school environments where special educators and their students can thrive" by "forging collaborative partnerships" with agencies and school districts; "creating collaborative school cultures" among general education, special education, and principals; and "strengthening leadership support" so principals can provide support to special education teachers (p. 2). Vittek (2015) recommended the focus for improved teacher retention should be on "job satisfaction, induction programs, mentoring, and administrative support" (p. 5).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks of Frederick Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, also known as the Two-Factor Theory, and Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory guided the research approach and analysis for this study (Pullen, 2014). These specific frameworks were selected because the focus for the research was on keeping special education teachers teaching in the field of special education by examining work conditions, basic and psychological needs, supports, and job satisfaction. Both Herzberg and Maslow addressed human needs and the necessity to have needs fulfilled or met (Pullen, 2014).

In 1987, Herzberg wrote a retrospective commentary titled *One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?* and further discussed his motivation-hygiene theory. In this commentary, Herzberg (1987) included explanations regarding an earlier 1968 article in which he stated:

> The factors involved in producing job satisfaction (and motivation) are separate and distinct from the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction… Two different needs of human beings are involved here. One set of needs can be thought of as stemming from humankind's animal nature-the built-in drive to avoid pain from the environment, plus all the learned drives that become conditioned to the basic biological needs… The other set of needs relates to that unique human characteristic, the ability to achieve and, through achievement, to experience psychological growth. The stimuli for the growth needs are tasks that induce growth; in the industrial setting, they are job content. Contrariwise, the stimuli inducing pain-avoidance behavior are found in the job environment. (p. 9)

Herzberg (1987) stated, "Motivation is a function of growth from getting intrinsic rewards out of interesting and challenging work… Motivation is based on growth needs. It is an internal engine, and its benefits show up over a long period of time" (p. 14). Herzberg (1987) described motivator or growth factors as intrinsic and specific to job content, such as "achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility, and growth or advancement" (p. 9). Herzberg (1987) suggested the work or job should "be *enriched* to bring about effective utilization of personnel. Such a systematic attempt to motivate employees by manipulating the motivator factors is just beginning" (p. 10). Herzberg (1987) continued by stating, "Job enrichment provides the opportunity for the employee's psychological growth" (p. 10). Herzberg (1987) concluded his commentary by stating, "Job enrichment remains the key to designing work that motivate employees" (p. 16).

The hygiene or dissatisfaction-avoidance factors were described by Herzberg (1987) to be extrinsic and a part of the job environment or context such as "company policy and administration, supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, salary, status, and security" (p. 9). These hygiene or environmental factors, although necessary, "can at best create no dissatisfaction on the job, and their absence creates dissatisfaction" (Herzberg, 1987, p. 15). Thus, according to Herzberg (1987), changing the hygiene factors will not lead to job satisfaction, only to no dissatisfaction; "…what makes people happy on the job and motivates them are the job content factors (motivators)" (p. 15).

Pullen (2014) defined Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation as having "two distinct sets of factors that contribute to either 1) the presence of employee job

satisfaction (motivation factors) and/or 2) the absence of job satisfaction (hygiene factors)" (p. 1). Motivation factors include recognition, achievements, level of responsibility, and need for personal growth (Pullen, 2014). Hygiene factors include working conditions, salary and job status, company policy and benefits, and working relationships (Pullen, 2014). Dininni (2017) described the hygiene factors as the "…extrinsic conditions, or environmental factors, that determine the satisfaction or dissatisfaction level of employees… Motivation factors are the positive, either extrinsic or intrinsic, influences that cause an employee to want to do a better job" (p. 1).

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory contains similar themes to Maslow's concept of hierarchy of needs (Pullen, 2014). Psychologist Abraham Maslow introduced the concept of five levels of needs in 1943 (Cherry, 2017). Maslow's five levels of needs in the hierarchy included (a) basic physiological needs such as breathing, water, food, air, warmth, and sleep; (b) basic safety needs such as safety, security, employment, insurance, and shelter; (c) psychological, belongingness, and love needs such as intimate relationships, friendship, and family; (d) psychological esteem needs such as prestige, feeling of accomplishment, self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, and respect by others; and (e) self-fulfillment, self-actualization needs such as achieving one's full potential, morality, creativity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, and acceptance of facts (Cherry, 2017; Heffner, 2014; McLeod, 2017). Initially, Maslow suggested people needed to fulfill lower-level basic physiological and safety needs before being able to grow and fulfill a higher need such as self-actualization; however, later Maslow clarified it did not mean lower needs were met 100% because it was not an "all or nothing phenomenon" (McLeod, 2017, p. 1).

Tanner (2017) applied each of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to the workplace. Physiological needs in the work setting include "salary and stable environment;" security needs include "benefits, pension, safe work environment, and fair work practices;" belongingness needs include "friendship and cooperation on the job;" esteem needs include "job titles, nice work spaces, and prestigious job assignments;" and self-actualization needs include "workplace autonomy, challenging work, and subject matter expert status on the job" (Tanner, 2017, p. 2). Tanner (2017) stated, generally, a person new to a career will be more concerned with physiological needs such as pay and benefits, and once those needs are met, the employee will want belongingness needs met such as being accepted by people in the organization and having positive interactions with co-workers. Esteem and self-actualization needs are met from expansion of duties, completion of special tasks and assignments, participation in decision making on operational matters, completion of further education, and "autonomy to define his own processes for meeting organizational objectives" (Tanner, 2017, p. 3).

Nieminen (2016) noted the Herzberg two-factor theory of motivation and hygiene has "a lot in common with the earlier work of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in that both claim that people won't, in the long run, be motivated just by external aspects of the job, such as pay or job security" (p. 1). Pullen (2014) stated he "made the connection between Herzberg's motivation factors and the esteem and self-actualization needs components of Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs" (p. 1). The theories are similar because they "emphasize the important psychological needs, which serve as motivators and contribute to feelings of satisfaction within workplace environments" (Pullen, 2014, p. 2). Pullen (2014) stated the motivation theories of Herzberg and Maslow:

…suggest practical implications for those tasked with recruiting and retaining human capital resources. Employers not only need to signal to prospects and current employees that they will offer opportunities for personal growth, achievement, recognition, and self-fulfillment, but also a positive company culture, work environment, and compensation that is competitive within the industry. (p. 2)

Identifying employees' needs in the workplace (Herzberg's hygiene factors and Maslow's physiological, security, social needs) and providing opportunity for growth to allow for greater job satisfaction (Herzberg's motivation factors and Maslow's esteem and self-actualization needs) appear be vital in the quest for retaining quality employees (Pullen, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Special education continues to be a field with a high rate of teacher attrition and turnover (Williams & Dikes, 2015). Shortages of teachers to fill special education teaching positions have been reported for many years (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). According to the *Teacher Shortage Areas Nationwide Listing 1990-1991 through 2016-2017*, there were shortages of special education candidates across the nation each year (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Hale (2016b) stated:

All over the United States, schools are scrambling to find qualified special education teachers. There just aren't enough of them to fill every open position. That means schools must often settle for people who are under-certified and inexperienced. Special ed is tough, and those who aren't ready for the challenge may not make it past the first year or two. (p. 2)

Brownell and Sindelar (2016) wrote, "A systemic approach to improving the profession is needed to develop an adequate supply of effective special education teachers" (p. 2). One strategy states or school districts could consider is providing financial incentives as "an effective strategy to recruit and retain teachers" (Aragon, 2016, p. 1). Woods (2016a) suggested states consider alternative routes for teacher certification to assist with teacher recruitment. Wixom (2016) stated, "Providing leadership opportunities to teachers can be an effective strategy to recruit and retain them" (p. 1). Providing opportunities for new teachers to participate in induction programs with mentors can also be an effective retention strategy (Woods, 2016b). Workman and Wixom (2016) suggested, "Providing teachers with ongoing feedback and targeted professional development following evaluations can be an effective strategy to retain teachers" (p. 1).

Beginning and veteran special education teachers report lack of administrative support, excessive paperwork, difficult student behavior, lack of time, and lack of resources as reasons to leave special education (Brunsting et al., 2014). According to Collins, Sweigart, Landrum, and Cook (2017), the first couple of years of teaching can be very challenging for special education teachers, and beginning teachers "need a variety of supports to develop skills, manage stress, and consequentially persist in the teaching profession" (p. 214). Brunsting et al. (2014) reported shifting the question from "How do we recruit more teachers?" to "How can we best train and support our teachers?" (p. 682). The problem explored for this study was how special education teachers can be supported to increase job satisfaction in order to reduce the number of special education teaching vacancies each year.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to discover trends or themes connecting special education teachers' work condition needs, job satisfaction, systematic supports provided by principals, and the decisions of teachers to continue teaching in the field of special education. An attempt was made to investigate specific work conditions for special education teachers from the teachers' and principals' perspectives. Finally, the overall job satisfaction of special education teachers was considered.

Research questions. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What do special education teachers believe are their greatest work condition needs?

2. What do principals believe are the greatest work condition needs for special education teachers?

3. How do special education teachers feel supported at school?

4. How do principals provide support to special education teachers?

5. How closely do supports provided by principals match the needs identified by special education teachers?

6. How are opportunities for personal growth provided for special education teachers?

7. How can job satisfaction for special education teachers be improved?

Significance of the Study

The attrition of special education teachers from the field of special education is significant, and some researchers have even labeled it a "pervasive problem in the United States" (Williams & Dikes, 2015, p. 337). Special education teachers just beginning their

teaching careers appear to be most vulnerable and are 2.5 times more likely to leave the classroom than other teachers (Sweigart & Collins, 2017). Lack of support during the first few years of teaching, along with a shortage of applicants in teacher preparatory programs, have contributed to special education teacher shortages across the nation (Vittek, 2015). Shortages when attempting to fill special education positions with qualified teachers are reported year after year (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Special education teachers leaving the classroom and a lack of qualified teachers ultimately impact the ability of schools to provide quality instruction to students with disabilities (Bettini & Murphy, 2016). Additionally, when teachers leave the classroom, it reportedly costs school districts anywhere from $2.2 billion each year (Phillips, 2015) to $7.3 billion each year (Greenberg, Brown, & Abenavoli, 2016).

In an interview Phillips (2015) conducted with Richard Ingersoll, professor at the University of Pennsylvania researching teacher turnover and retention, Ingersoll reported teacher salary is not the biggest reason teachers leave the profession. Ingersoll asserted, "…Most of the turnover is driven by school conditions…issue of voice, and having say, and being able to to [sic] have input into the key decisions in the building…" (as cited in Phillips, 2015, p. 4). Bettini and Murphy (2016) reported special education teachers leave because of unsupportive conditions such as exhausting workloads, lack of collaboration with colleagues, and lack of administrator support.

How can work conditions for special education teachers be improved? What can administrators do to provide better support for special education teachers? How can job satisfaction for special education teachers be improved so they will want to continue teaching? These questions were the rationale behind the study.

Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Collective teacher efficacy. Collective teacher efficacy is "a group's beliefs in its competence for successful outcomes… teachers in a school characterized by an attitude that together they can make a difference for students" (Donohoo, 2017, p. 3).

Individualized education program (IEP). An individualized education program is an educational plan for a student with a disability identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act (IDEA) (Individuals with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act [IDEA], 2004).

Induction. Induction includes a variety of supports for teachers such as "workshops, collaboration, orientation seminars, and especially mentoring" (Tyler & Brunner, 2014, p. 288).

Job enrichment. Job enrichment occurs when continuous management functions effectively when utilizing personnel, which allows the opportunity for employees to achieve, take responsibility for their work, and receive recognition (Herzberg, 1987).

Mentoring. A mentor is a veteran teacher "who supports the skill and knowledge development" of a beginning teacher, "providing guidance to that individual based on his or her own experiences and understanding of best practices" (American Institutes for Research, 2015, p. 1). Mentoring is the "assignment of experienced colleagues or collegial teams to novice teachers for guidance and support for an extended period of time" (Tyler & Brunner, 2014, p. 288).

Peer coaching. According to Donohoo (2017), "Peer coaching is a professional learning structure that employs teachers as partners in developing and trying new strategies and analyzing student learning resulting from classroom instruction" (p. 64).

Qualified teacher. A qualified teacher:

… has obtained full State certification as a special education teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes to certification), or passed the State special education teacher licensing examination, and holds a license to teach in the State as a special education teacher. (IDEA, 2004, §300.18(b)(i))

Systematic supports. Systematic supports are organized, purposeful, and planned supports that can be replicated to meet a need (Billingsley, 2005; Council of Administrators of Special Education [CASE], 2013; Donohoo, 2017; Woods, 2016b).

Teacher attrition. Teacher attrition occurs when special education teachers leave the field of education (Vittek, 2015).

Teacher induction program. A teacher induction program is a "…multi-year, structured program of mentorship and professional development in which trained mentors provide constructive feedback to new teachers" (Woods, 2016b, p. 2).

Teacher self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy is "a teacher's belief that he or she can perform the necessary activities to influence student learning" (Donohoo, 2017, p. 3).

Limitations and Assumptions

The following limitations were identified in this study:

Sample demographics. The study was limited to one Midwestern state. A smaller sampling of the population was utilized and did not include all special education teachers and principals in the Midwestern state.

Instrument. The survey questions were created by the researcher. Responses to the survey were dependent upon participants agreeing to complete an online survey.

The following assumptions were accepted:

1. The participants were serving as special education teachers or principals in their districts.

2. The participants' responses to the survey were honest and without bias.

Summary

In the field of special education, researchers continue to investigate and report the need to address the lack of special education teacher candidates and the need to keep special education teachers in the field by providing more support and professional learning opportunities (Bettini & Murphy, 2016; Brownell & Sindelar, 2016; Conley & You, 2016; Vittek, 2015). A review of Herzberg's motivational theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs was outlined to establish a theoretical framework to substantiate the importance of analyzing job satisfaction and fulfillment of employees' personal needs in the journey of improving job satisfaction and retention of special education teachers (Pullen, 2014).

Chapter Two begins with a review of literature on the significance of special education teacher retention and attrition. The chapter contains information on the importance of identifying special education teachers' needs in relation to work conditions, professional development, collaboration, and supports. Information on different supports and professional growth opportunities provided to special education teachers such as induction and mentoring programs, job coaching and training, and

professional development, are explored. The review of literature contains information on how other career fields work to support and retain their employees.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The need to analyze attrition and retention problems in the field of special education has been cited by several researchers across the United States in the last 10 years (Bettini & Murphy, 2016; Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Holdheide & DeMonte, 2016; McLeskey & Billingsley, 2008; Thornton, Peltier, & Medina, 2007; Vittek, 2015). McLeskey and Billingsley (2008) suggested work conditions and teacher responses to stressors are preventable contributors to the attrition rates of special education teachers. In this chapter, the main topics investigated include job satisfaction, special education teacher attrition and retention, special education teacher work conditions and needs, special educator professional growth, principal support, and employee retention strategies utilized outside the field of education.

Theoretical Framework

Frederick Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, also known as the Two-Factor Theory, and Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory were selected as frameworks for the study in order to examine special education teacher work conditions, basic and psychological needs, supports, and overall job satisfaction (Cherry, 2017; Pullen, 2014). Pullen (2014) described two sets of factors in Herzberg's theory of motivation. One set contributes to the presence of employee job satisfaction and are called motivation factors, and one set contributes to the absence of job satisfaction and are called hygiene factors (Pullen, 2014). Motivation factors that can lead to job satisfaction include recognition, achievement, level of responsibility, and need for personal growth (Pullen, 2014). Hygiene factors that can lead to a lack of job satisfaction include working conditions,

salary and job status, company policy and benefits, and working relationships (Pullen, 2014).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory contains similar components to Herzberg's theory (Pullen, 2014). Maslow's hierarchy of needs include the following: (a) basic physiological needs such as breathing, water, food, air, warmth, and sleep; (b) basic safety needs such as safety, security, employment, insurance, and shelter; (c) psychological, belongingness, and love needs such as intimate relationships, friendship, and family; (d) psychological esteem needs such as prestige, feeling of accomplishment, self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, and respect by others; and (e) self-fulfillment, self-actualization needs such as achieving one's full potential, morality, creativity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, and acceptance of facts (Cherry, 2017; Heffner, 2014; McLeod, 2017). Pullen (2014) noted the theories of Herzberg and Maslow can assist employers as they recruit and retain employees. When employers are able to identify and address employees' needs in the workplace and provide opportunities for growth, employees may experience greater job satisfaction and potentially decide to stay in the positions (Pullen, 2014).

Attrition and Retention

According to numbers compiled by the National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services (as cited in Hale, 2015), 12.3% of special education teachers leave teaching, which is almost double the rate of general education teachers. McLeskey and Billingsley (2008) reported, "One of every four special education teachers leaves his or her teaching position each year" (p. 301). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) (as cited in Sweigart & Collins, 2017), noted, "…Beginning special

education teachers are about 2.5 times more likely than other beginning teachers to leave the profession" (p. 209). Tyler and Brunner (2014) reported approximately 50% of special education teachers leave during the first five years of teaching. Andrews and Brown (2015) reported, "The field of special education continues to have lower teacher retention rates compared to general education" (p. 126).

Griffin, Winn, Otis-Wilborn, and Kilgore (2003) declared the lack of special education teachers remaining in the field "directly impacts the quality of education provided [to] students with disabilities by limiting the expertise that develops with experience" (p. 6). Kaff (2004) stated, "If the growing shortage of qualified special education teachers is to be ameliorated, the attrition/retention issue must be addressed" (p. 16). Billingsley (2005) wrote in order for school districts to improve special education teacher retention and lower attrition, intervention "requires a holistic view of new teachers' needs, an understanding of the contexts in which they work, as well as the types of support that are needed" (p. 3).

Ingersoll, Merrill, and May (2014) noted some attrition is absolutely normal and beneficial to both the employee and employer. However, when the number of qualified teachers leaving the field is greater than the number of qualified teachers entering the field, a shortage of teachers occurs (Bettini & Murphy, 2016; Tyler & Brunner, 2014). Hale (2016a) stated, "It's getting harder and harder to find quality special education teachers, which is why 49 out of 50 states report shortages" (p. 2). Brownell and Sindelar (2016) reported, "…A more systematic approach to solving the teacher shortage problem in special education is needed – one that will increase the likelihood than an adequate supply of fully prepared special education teachers enters the classroom and remains

there" (p. 1). Boe et al. (2008) stated, "It is reasonable to expect that dramatic improvements in induction programs, working conditions, administrative support, and salaries would reduce the attrition of a sizable percentage of this group" (p. 25).

In a study completed by Kaff (2004), 341 special education teachers in Kansas completed a survey "…about their professional roles and responsibilities and their intentions to stay or leave special education" (p. 11). Kaff (2004) revealed special education teachers' most common work concerns included the following: (a) feeling a lack of support from principals, general education teachers, parents, and outside agencies; (b) frustration over increasing and complex paperwork requirements; (c) difficulty with managing multiple service delivery models; (d) lack of resources; (e) lack of monetary compensation for extra duties; (f) stress with working with difficult students and families; (g) lack of time; and (h) lack of training. Kaff (2004) recommended future research "focus[ed] on the working conditions of special educators, their roles and responsibilities, and how to prevent further erosion of the numbers of special education teachers" (p. 17).

Job Satisfaction

Vittek (2015) stated, "Many factors directly contribute to job satisfaction (e.g., administrative support, stress, and workload)" (p. 2). Billingsley (2007) (as cited in Vittek, 2015) reported special education teachers who are not satisfied leave teaching because of lack of support from administrators and parents, excessive paperwork, lack of resources available, and large numbers of students in the classroom. According to Tyler and Brunner (2014), "…Adverse workplace conditions are most often blamed for special educator dissatisfaction and attrition" (p. 287).

Work Conditions and Needs

An executive summary on an educator quality of work-life study, published by the American Federation of Teachers (2017), revealed, "Teaching is a difficult job, and working conditions are a strong predictor of teacher turnover" (p. i). Bateman and Bateman (2014) surveyed 20 special education teachers and found teachers need time for progress monitoring, time for students, mentors, communication with all stakeholders, and training. Griffin et al. (2003) reported new special education teachers experienced difficulties with the following: (a) role ambiguity; (b) students with complex challenges; (c) high caseloads; (d) insufficient resources; (e) lack of or inadequate administrative support; (f) insufficient time to plan or meet; (g) lack of opportunities to collaborate with other special education teachers, general education teachers, or paraprofessionals; (h) lack of opportunities to participate in professional development activities; (i) excessive paperwork and meeting demands; and (j) lack of adequate preparation from higher education programs for the area in which they are teaching. Billingsley (2005) reported five needs of new special education teachers include "…the need to belong, the need for collaborative school environments, the need for reasonable work assignments, the need to learn, and the need for specific assistance and feedback" (p. 4).

Workloads. Hale (2015) stated, "The IDEA and the IEP require hours and hours of filling out forms and writing reports documenting each student's progress" (p. 3). Deshler (2011) (as cited in Hale, 2016a) wanted to find out the amount of time it took for special education teachers to complete paperwork and what a typical day looked like for teachers. Deshler (2011) (as cited in Hale, 2016a) found special education teachers spent (a) 33% of their time during the day with management, paperwork, and administrative

responsibilities; (b) 27% of their time with collaboration, co-teaching, assisting, and meetings; (c) 27% of their time with instruction of students; and (d) 13% of their time testing and collecting data. Collins et al. (2017) called the responsibilities and expectations for special education teachers "daunting" and stated special education teachers need:

> …to be equipped to: (a) understand the characteristics and needs associated with multiple disabilities categories; (b) develop and implement individualized education programs; (c) collect progress-monitoring data and manage data collection systems; and (d) communicate and collaborate effectively with parents, co-teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and other stakeholders. (p. 214)

Holdheide and DeMonte (2016) concluded special education teachers have to complete "…staggering amounts of mandatory paperwork" under the IDEA (p. 2).

In a study completed by Andrews and Brown (2015), researchers found workloads are heavier than what special education teachers initially expect. Andrews and Brown (2015) stated, "Special education teachers might feel they have too much paperwork and believe they cannot successfully keep up with the continually changing requirements" (p. 130). Bettini et al. (2017) reported special education teacher workloads include the following: (a) developing accommodations and modifications; (b) implementing interventions/instruction across content areas; (c) collaborating with general education teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, and related service providers; (d) deciding what, when, and how to teach; and (e) administrative and supervisory responsibilities. Special education teachers have job responsibilities which go beyond what general education teachers are required to complete such as developing IEPs,

writing evaluation reports, creating behavior plans, and collecting data on student IEP progress (Thornton et al., 2007). Many times, additional compensation is not provided to special education teachers for these extra responsibilities (Thornton et al., 2007).

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) (2013) set guidelines for the number of minutes teachers should receive for planning time each week. Specifically, the MSIP 5 Standards and Indicators state:

> Each full-time classroom teacher, including kindergarten teachers, shall have a minimum of two hundred fifty (250) minutes of scheduled planning time each school week. It is desirable to have fifty (50) minutes of planning time each day. Planning time is calculated between the official start and close of the school day and does not include travel time, lunch time, or time before or after school. (Planning time is not required for administrators, counselors, or librarians.). (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2013, p. 6)

Guidance from the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) (2013) indicated adequate planning time for special education teachers is needed. The CASE (2013) noted teachers are not satisfied with the non-instructional aspects of special education, such as meetings and legal issues, which consume a lot of time and are not allocated for during the day. The CASE (2013) suggested administrators "…acknowledge the importance of procedural compliance and proper documentation by giving teachers time for paperwork during the day" (Tip 15, para. 10).

Supplies and materials. Kaufhold, Alverez, and Arnold (2006) completed a study of 228 special education teachers from South Texas school districts to determine

teachers' perceptions on lack of supplies as a factor in teacher attrition. The results "indicated the lack of sufficient supplies, coupled with the necessity of using out-of-pocket money in order to accomplish their teaching tasks caused a high degree of frustration which, in some teachers, led to burnout" (Kaufhold et al., 2006, p. 161). The researchers concluded one way to decrease the attrition rate for special education teachers is for administrators to support special education teachers and allocate money for necessary supplies and materials (Kaufhold et al., 2006). In a study completed by Andrews and Brown (2015), special education teachers often had to "seek out their own curriculum and resources or go without" (p. 130). The CASE (2013) suggested administrators should ensure special education teachers have an adequate supply of materials, since teachers often report not having appropriate resources.

Teacher stress. The executive summary published in 2017 by the American Federation of Teachers stated:

Districts that fail to recognize the importance of educator well-being may be faced with higher turnover, more teacher and staff health issues, and greater burnout, all of which leads to higher costs, less stability for kids and, ultimately, lower student achievement. (p. i)

Teachers have reported job-related stress (Ansley, Houchins, & Varjas, 2016). Teacher stress levels are "…now on par with the levels reported by nurses and physicians" (Arnett, 2016b, p. 1).

Wong et al. (2017) stated, "Teacher stress and burnout have a detrimental effect on the stability of the teaching workforce" (p. 412). Burnout is defined as "…the consequence of chronic work-related stress" (Wong et al., 2017, p. 412). Ansley et al.

(2016) defined stress as "…a physical and psychological response to perceived demands" (p. 177).

McDowell (2017) cited lack of resources, increasing caseloads, and low salaries as factors which lead to special education teacher burnout. Williams and Dikes (2015) reported special education teachers have "additional burdens and liability potentialities" which become stressors, such as caseload management of students across grades and subjects, IEPs, evaluation reports, functional behavioral assessments, behavior intervention plans, student accommodations, IEP meetings, due process filings, and lawsuits (p. 338). Brunsting et al. (2014) reported lack of administrative support, paperwork, challenging student behaviors, overload of responsibilities, and expectation-reality mismatch as factors leading to special education teacher burnout. In the study completed by the American Federation of Teachers (2017), an unnamed special education teacher said:

> There is no time to collaborate with co-workers. There is barely any time to even go to the bathroom. That in itself is a stressor. Also, with all the extra paperwork needed for special education students, there is minimal time to teach. (p. 5)

Williams and Dikes (2015) found special education teachers are more prone to burnout when they have high caseloads and spend multiple hours completing paperwork. The student-to-teacher ratio for special education teachers is a predictor of job stress (Williams & Dikes, 2015). The number of years a special education teacher has taught positively correlates to burnout, and older teachers are more susceptible to burnout (Williams & Dikes, 2015).

According to results from a study conducted by the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education (as cited in Breen, 2016), "Teachers who regularly use stress-reducing strategies increase their abilities to cope with the demands of the career and are positioned to do a better job educating students" (p. 1). Ansley et al. (2016) suggested special education teachers can reduce stress and build coping skills by incorporating stress-relieving strategies into their day such as physical activity, cognitive-behavioral methods, mindfulness training, and relaxation training. McDowell (2017) recommended special education teachers explore utilizing coping strategies, finding collegial support, and improving relationships with students' parents as ways to prevent burnout. McDowell (2017) reported collegial support is an important factor to prevent special education teachers from feeling isolated and experiencing burnout.

Professional Growth

Benedict, Brownell, Park, Bettini, and Lauterbach (2014) encouraged special education teachers to take charge of their own professional learning. Benedict et al. (2014) offered the following professional learning suggestions to special education teachers: (a) become an independent learner; (b) identify a growth area to target; (c) build knowledge; (d) practice; and (e) seek feedback and problem-solving support. Professional learning and growth can occur through professional development opportunities, collaboration with other teachers, and induction and mentoring programs (Bateman & Bateman, 2014; O'Connor, 2016; Vittek, 2015).

Professional development. Brownell and Sindelar (2016) reported when special education teachers have access to professional development opportunities, they become more effective and are likely to stay committed to teaching. Professional development

for teachers can assist with alleviating stress and providing knowledge to meet the

expectations of the position (Arnett, 2016b). Bateman and Bateman (2014) wrote,

"Principals need to provide special educators with the support to attend appropriate

professional development training" (p. 153). In 2013, a booklet was published by the

Council of Administrators of Special Education with tips for recruiting and retaining

special education teachers. The CASE (2013) recommended administrators:

> …provide opportunities for professional development that is directly linked to the
>
> demands of the job… Include special educators in building and district-wide
>
> professional development… Provide professional development opportunities (1)
>
> with general education teachers on general education curriculum and instruction
>
> and (2) on topics specific to the needs of special educators. (Tip 16, para. 1)

Bateman and Bateman (2014) suggested professional development topics for special

education teachers could include (a) alignment of curriculum to state standards; (b)

positive behavior interventions; (c) transition practices; (d) response to intervention; (e)

universal design for learning; (f) direct instruction; (g) technology/assistive technology;

(h) co-teaching; and (i) inclusive classroom practices.

Sometimes professional development can include "…on-going education,

training, workshops, seminars, and conferences" (Tyler & Brunner, 2014, p. 287).

However, as O'Connor (2016) wrote, professional development for teachers does not

always include training where participants sit in a large room and listen to someone speak

on a topic. Professional development can occur through planning for instruction,

reflecting on a lesson, brainstorming, discussing, analyzing data, or observing in other

teachers' classrooms (O'Connor, 2016).

Collaboration. Bateman and Bateman (2014) stated, "Collaboration between special education teachers and general education teachers is essential to truly respond to students' needs. The two groups need to have time to discuss these various needs and develop plans to respond to them" (p. 154). Collaboration can occur among teachers in the same content area, different content areas, in the same grade levels, and across grade levels (Ketterlin-Geller, Baumer, & Lichon, 2015). Collegial collaboration can foster trust, relationships, effective use of resources, problem-solving support, and sharing of instructional practices (Benedict et al., 2014; Ketterlin-Geller et al., 2015). Collaboration among special education teachers, general education teachers, and other student service providers builds effective practices and a sense of community (Steinbrecher, Fix, Mahal, Serna, & McKeown, 2015).

Donohoo (2017) wrote collaboration allows teachers to work together to build each other's capacities; develop a belief they can, as a group, work toward expectations; and learn about each other's work. When teachers have collective teacher efficacy, they believe, together through teamwork, they can make a difference (Donohoo, 2017). Structures need to be developed for teachers to practice collaboration (Donohoo, 2017). Specifically, Donohoo (2017) stated, "Teachers and administrators need time, during the instructional day, and spaces, conducive to learning, where they can meet regularly" (p. 37). Ketterlin-Geller et al. (2015) wrote, "…Administrators need to proactively restructure existing time and resources to intentionally facilitate teamwork" (p. 57).

McDowell (2017) reported, "Collegial support is also an important part of preventing burnout in special education teachers. Special educators often find themselves isolated from their colleagues" (p. 115). Conley and You (2016) found teacher team

efficacy has a direct effect on special education teachers' intentions to leave teaching. Jones, Youngs, and Frank (2013) reported beginning special education teachers "…rely heavily on their colleagues for information and support" (p. 379). In a study completed by Andrews and Brown (2015), special education teachers' "…perceptions of their current experiences with colleague support were significantly less than their ideal expectations" (p. 129). Andrews and Brown (2015) noted the difference in perceptions may be the result of special education teachers feeling "…isolated from colleagues due to a lack of time available to meet with other special education teachers who can provide insight and encouragement" (p. 129). Brownell and Sindelar (2016) reported when special education teachers have supportive and collaborative interactions with colleagues, both special education and general education teachers, special educators are more likely to become more effective, committed, and dedicated to their teaching positions.

Induction and mentoring programs. Vittek (2015) reported, "Mentoring is often used as a synonym for induction. However, mentoring is a component of an induction program" (p. 3). Special education teachers can have greater job satisfaction when provided mentoring through induction programs (Tyler & Brunner, 2014). Vittek (2015) reported:

> The implementation of a comprehensive induction program tailored specifically to the needs of first-year special education teachers can have a positive effect on their ability to perform their job and manage their stress level, and intention to stay in special education… An induction program can help a special educator through the first few years of teaching, when statistically she or he is more likely to leave the field. (p. 3)

Special education teachers need a differentiated induction program to address the unique and specific responsibilities of teaching special education (Jones et al., 2013; Thornton et al., 2007). Brownell and Sindelar (2016) stated if special education teachers participate in induction and professional development opportunities, they are more likely to be committed and continue to stay in the classroom.

Thornton et al. (2007) encouraged principals to utilize mentoring for beginning teachers. Vittek (2015) stated, "…It is beneficial to provide them [special education teachers] with a mentor from the special education department, as well as a mentor from the general education department" (p. 4). Bateman and Bateman (2014) asserted a special education teacher needs "…a mentor who is experienced and knowledgeable in special education" (p. 155). Arnett (2016b) reported collaboration with peer mentors can alleviate teacher stress and increase professional growth. Research supports the use of mentors for first-year teachers and indicates benefits for continued mentoring during subsequent years (Sebald & Rude, 2015; Vittek, 2015). Mentors can provide special education teachers with assistance, feedback, and coaching about their work and can "…encourage new teachers, discuss the thorny issues that do not have easy answers, and help the new teacher deal with the sometimes messy life of schools" (Billingsley, 2005, p. 6).

Principal Support

According to Bore and Bore (2009), "Literature from as far back as the 1980s has consistently documented a link between the lack of administrative support and teacher attrition in the field of special education" (p. 74). Principals have an influence on the emotional climate in their buildings and the longevity and success of teachers (Thornton

et al., 2007). Conley and You (2016) wrote, "Research has shown that lack of support from administrators is the most frequently cited reason for special educators to leave the profession or to indicate their intentions to leave" (p. 3). Holdheide and DeMonte (2016) also reported a relationship between special education teacher retention and administrative support.

In a study completed by Andrews and Brown (2015), special education teachers' support experiences with administrators were significantly less frequent than what they expected, and many teachers reported having little contact or encouragement. Special education teachers need principals who support them as they work to meet the challenges of special education (Thornton et al., 2007). Principals can ease the stress of special education teachers by providing "…both emotional and instrumental support (e.g., helping to secure resources, listening, and attempting to resolve their concerns)" (Brunsting et al., 2014, p. 703). Tyler and Brunner (2014) reported special education teachers want the school leader to do the following:

> …(a) share leadership's vision of the school with staff, (b) let staff members
> know what is expected, (c) speak with teachers frequently about instructional
> practices, (d) recognize staff for doing good work, (e) enforce rules for student
> conduct, and (f) vocalize appreciation and encouragement. (p. 287)

Special education teacher support needs differ between beginning and veteran teachers (Bateman & Bateman, 2014). Principals need to ensure "…they have an understanding of their [special education teachers'] various roles and responsibilities and that what they are asking special educators to do is reasonable" (Billingsley, 2005, p. 5). Leaders need to be aware of the physical and emotional needs of the special education teacher,

"…making sure new special educators have adequate physical space, necessary materials, time to collaborate, and input to scheduling their students" (Billingsley, 2005, p. 5). Kaff (2004) recommended principals provide adequate training for staff, differentiated responsibilities for special educators, compensation for the extra duties required of special educators beyond the school day, time for planning, time for collaboration, time for supervision, and communication to special educators in appreciation of work completed.

Bateman and Bateman (2014) wrote, "A principal's support of special education teachers (in regards to general education teachers and parents of students with special needs) is essential" (p. 153). Bateman and Bateman (2014) suggested:

> Principals need to provide special educators with the support to attend appropriate professional development opportunities. Principals must back special educators in their efforts to collaborate with general education teachers. Principals need to support special educators in their interactions with parents of students with special needs. (p. 153)

Bateman and Bateman (2014) continued:

> The principal needs to be prepared to help guide them [special education teachers] by assigning a mentor who is experienced and knowledgeable in special education… Special education teachers need a principal who provides ongoing and consistent feedback… Principals need to incorporate time in the master schedule for special education teachers for instruction, progress monitoring, and IEP development. (p. 155)

Aguilar (2016) suggested principals meet with new teachers for short "check-ins" on a regular basis to provide support and feedback (p. 1). Hughes, Matt, and O'Reilly (2015) noted, "A principal's main staple for improving support and having schools with a positive culture is communication" (p. 133). Gong, Zimmerli, and Hoffer (2013) reported, "Positive contact with supportive supervisors is also a strong deterrent to the factors that lead to burnout" (p. 971).

Throughout the years, researchers have reported special education teachers feel isolated (Billingsley, 2005; Futernick, 2007; Holdheide & DeMonte, 2016; McDowell, 2017). Futernick (2007) stated that while progress has been made with integrating students with special needs with students in general education programs, "far less progress has been made to fully integrate special education teachers with their general education colleagues" (p. 10). Principals can create "emotionally supportive school environments" so special education teachers feel a sense of belonging (Billingsley, 2005, p. 4). Futernick (2007) reported, "Special education teachers often feel isolated and ignored and many find themselves at odds with school principals and their general education colleagues when advocating for their special education students" (p. 10). Principals can provide the leadership support for an inclusive school by providing time and opportunities for collaboration between special education teachers and general education teachers (Billingsley, 2005).

A school leader who understands the needs of special education teachers is better prepared to provide support to teachers (Billingsley, 2005). Thornton et al. (2007) wrote, "Teachers who are prepared and have appropriate support are more likely to continue as special education instructors" (p. 236). Bettini, Cheyney, Wang, and Leko (2015)

concluded leaders who provide support to special education teachers will see efforts which "pay dividends in the long run, in the increased motivation, commitment, and retention of special educators, and improved outcomes for students with disabilities" (p. 224).

Employee Retention in Other Career Fields

The need for having satisfied and motivated employees, retaining employees, and reducing turnover rates is evident in careers other than education (Heathfield, 2017; Huhman, 2015; Martin, 2017). In a publication for city and county management employees regarding retaining and growing talent, Benest (2008) reported, "Providing competitive salaries and benefits is necessary but insufficient for attracting and retaining talented employees. Assuming that organizations provide good wages and benefits, they will either win or lose the war for talent based on organizational culture" (p. 1). Benest (2008) suggested employers should be "conducting stay interviews with employees regarding their individual hopes, dreams, and values and possible ways to fulfill their aspirations; offering people concrete opportunities to stretch and grow; and generally engaging them as part of an agency's evolving story'" (p. 6).

Heathfield (2017) reported retaining employees is critical, and when businesses fail, it is costly to the bottom line. Heathfield (2017) suggested 10 retention tips: (a) let the employee know what is expected; (b) provide quality supervision with clarity and feedback; (c) allow the employee the opportunity to give thoughts and suggestions; (d) know and use employees' talents; (e) provide fair and equitable treatment to employees; (f) provide tools, time, and training; (g) allow employees growth opportunities; (h) do not threaten the employee's employment; and (i) reward, recognize, and appreciate

employees. Huhman (2015) also stated the importance of providing growth opportunities for employees and letting them know they are valuable to the team, but also added employers should pay employees what they are worth, make employees' health and well-being a priority, and switch roles with employees occasionally to gain empathy and understanding of what they do.

Bush (2017) suggested organizations should build cultures of trust for support, provide equal treatment, and solicit two-way feedback. Martin (2017) reported some of the best ways to retain employees, beyond salary, include having transparency, keeping a work-life balance, providing growth opportunities such as training and mentoring, maintaining a positive work environment, modeling, recognizing and rewarding employees, and communicating. Half (2017) suggested an employee retention program which includes the following: (a) onboarding and orientation; (b) mentorship; (c) compensation; (d) recognition and rewards; (e) work-life balance; (f) training and growth opportunities; (g) communication and feedback; (h) a culture of collaboration; and (i) celebrations for individuals and teams. Maxfield (2016) suggested employers should gather information from current employees on their motivations to stay and from past employees on why they left and what they disliked. Additionally, Maxfield (2016) suggested employers should ensure employees get needed training, experience, and coaching; have opportunities to showcase their skills; and feel like valuable members of the team. Maxfield (2016) stated employers can assist by removing distractions and disruptions so employees can focus on the job; holding everyone accountable; and making connections more visible, personal, and frequent.

Summary

This chapter served as a review of the literature on the significance of special education teacher shortages, as well as attrition and retention issues in the field. The literature review included special education teacher work conditions and needs, job satisfaction, teacher induction and mentoring programs, and principal supports. The review of literature concluded with tips on employee retention from fields outside of education.

In Chapter Three, the research questions, design and methodology, research setting and participants, data collection procedures and instruments, and analytic procedures for the study are discussed. Chapter Four includes an analysis of data from the surveys. Conclusions and findings of the study are presented in Chapter Five.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Several researchers have reported connections among growing attrition rates of special education teachers, shortages in the field of special education, and difficulties filling vacancies with qualified personnel (Brownell & Sindelar, 2016; Vittek, 2015; Williams & Dikes, 2015). Tyler and Brunner (2014) stated, "The national average rate of special educator attrition is estimated at approximately 50% of special educators in the first five years of teaching" (p. 284). Special education teachers leave teaching for a variety of factors: job satisfaction, workplace conditions, administrative support, professional development, teacher mentorship/induction, teacher preparation, and workplace decision-making (Tyler & Brunner, 2014; Vittek, 2015). Vittek (2015) suggested future research should focus on job satisfaction, induction and mentoring programs, who provides the mentoring, administrative support, salaries, supplemental compensation, stipends, and professional learning. Chapter Three contains detail on the problem, research questions, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations of the research study.

Problem and Purpose Overview

The problem explored was how special education teachers' job satisfaction can be improved to reduce the number of teaching vacancies each year due to educators leaving the field of special education. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to discover trends or themes connecting special education teachers' work conditions and needs, job satisfaction, supports provided by school district leaders, and the decisions of teachers to continue teaching in the field of special education. Vittek (2015) suggested:

When more support is provided for these teachers, the amount of special

educators remaining in the field will begin to increase, and the gap between the

amount of special educators and the number of openings in the field will begin to

decline. (p. 5)

A systematic approach to improving the job satisfaction, supports, induction and

mentoring programs, professional learning, and retention of special education teachers is

needed (Brownell & Sindelar, 2016).

An attempt was made to analyze specific work conditions for special education

teachers from the teachers' and principals' perspectives. Work conditions included time

to develop lessons, time to complete special education paperwork, time for collaboration

with other special education teachers, time for collaboration with general education

teachers, access to necessary supplies and materials in order to provide instruction to

students, provision of adequate classroom size, support from school staff and parents,

compensation for workload required for the position, assignment of mentors for new

teachers, and professional learning opportunities. Finally, the overall job satisfaction of

special education teachers was analyzed.

Research questions. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What do special education teachers believe are their greatest work condition

   needs?

2. What do principals believe are the greatest work condition needs for special

   education teachers?

3. How do special education teachers feel supported at school?

4. How do principals provide support to special education teachers?

5. How closely do supports provided by principals match the needs identified by
   special education teachers?

6. How are opportunities for personal growth provided for special education
   teachers?

7. How can job satisfaction for special education teachers be improved?

Research Design

The methodology for the study was quantitative and included utilization of descriptive statistics to analyze data obtained through online surveys. The data were analyzed to reveal the frequency of trends and themes in regard to special education teachers' and principals' perceptions of teacher work conditions and needs, supports provided by building leaders for teachers, and the job satisfaction of teachers. The supports and professional learning opportunities provided and the degree of job satisfaction and feeling of value a special education teacher experiences could impact the decision to continue teaching in the field of special education (Vittek, 2015).

In order to explore the problem and answer the research questions, a quantitative research design was selected and utilized for this study. Quantitative research allowed the problem to be explored by understanding the factors and variables which may have influenced the outcome (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Creswell (2015) defined quantitative research as identifying a problem "based on trends in the field or on the need to explain why something occurs" and seeking "to establish the overall tendency of responses from individuals and to note how this tendency varies among people" (p. 13).

According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2015) and Creswell (2015), when a survey is utilized as the method to collect data and calculations include percentages of

responses on the survey, the research is considered quantitative. Fraenkel et al. (2015) reported, "The major purpose of surveys is to describe the characteristics of a population… [to] find out how the members of a population distribute themselves on one or more variables" (p. 391). Creswell (2015) stated:

> Survey designs are procedures in quantitative research in which you administer a survey or questionnaire to a small group of people (called the sample) to identity trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of a large group of people (called the population). (p. 21)

The variables studied were distributed throughout questions on the two surveys and were measured using combined scales (both categorical and continuous) to indicate the participants' degree of agreement (Creswell, 2015; Fraenkel et al., 2015). Bluman (2014) described quantitative variables as those that can be "counted or measured" (p. 6).

Fraenkel et al. (2015) reported, "In educational research, the most common descriptive methodology is the survey, as when researchers summarize the characteristics (abilities, preferences, behaviors, and so on) of individuals or groups or (sometimes) physical environments (such as schools)." (p. 15). According to Bluman (2014), surveys are utilized to obtain research information in many statistical studies. Fraenkel et al. (2015) reported a "big advantage of survey research is that it has the potential to provide us with a lot of information obtained from quite a large sample of individuals" (p. 13).

Population and Sample

According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2016, Missouri had a population of 6,093,000 people, compared to a total population of 323,127,513 people in the United States. The MODESE (2017) revealed there are 518 school districts and 2,220

principals/administrators, elementary through high school, in Missouri; however, this was

noted to be a duplicated count of principals. An unduplicated count of the total number

of principals/building leaders in Missouri was not calculated, because information

provided by the MODESE (2017) contained duplicate counts due to principals

supervising multiple building levels. According to the MODESE (2017), in 2016, there

were a total of 8,840 special education teachers in Missouri public schools K-12.

According to Bluman (2014), the population of a study is defined as "all subjects

(human or otherwise) under study" (p. 742). The population for the research study was

defined as all special education teachers and principals from accredited K-12 public

school districts in Missouri. Names of K-12 public school districts were obtained

through the MODESE (2017) website and the 2015-2016 MODESE School Directory.

Unaccredited public schools, charter schools, and preschool-only schools were removed

from the list of potential participants for this study. Additionally, the school district in

which the researcher is employed was also removed from the list of potential participants

to reduce bias. Once the population was identified, the researcher determined the

population was too large because all subjects could not reasonably be included in the

study; therefore, the decision was made to utilize a subgroup of the population as a

sample (Bluman, 2014).

The names of the accredited K-12 public school districts selected for the study

were chosen utilizing a systematic sampling method (Bluman, 2014; Fraenkel et al.,

2015). Bluman (2014) defined systematic sampling as "a sample obtained by numbering

each element in the population selecting some random starting point, and then selecting

very kth element (third or fifth or tenth, etc.) from the population to be included in the

sample" (p. 746). The names of 518 accredited K-12 public school districts in Missouri

were randomly listed on a spreadsheet, and districts were selected by looking at every

seventh district name using the systematic sampling method. School district names were

not listed alphabetically on the spreadsheet to reduce any bias of hidden order with

district names (Walonick, 2013).

After 60 accredited K-12 public school districts were identified for inclusion in

the study, the names and contact information for principals (or designees) and special

education teachers were obtained from the MODESE website, the 2015-2016 MODESE

School Directory, and public information found on districts' websites. From the 60

accredited K-12 public school districts randomly selected, 279 building principals and

932 special education teachers were identified in the sample population to receive

surveys for the study. Creswell (2015) reported approximately 350 individuals are

needed for a survey study, but the size can vary depending on other factors. Creswell

(2015) continued:

> These numbers are estimates based on the size needed for statistical procedures so
>
> that the sample is likely to be a good estimate of the characteristics of the
>
> population. They do not provide a precise estimate of the sample size available
>
> through sample size formulas. (p. 145)

Since surveys were only sent to a sample of the population in Missouri, results from the

study may not be reflective of other states or of other Missouri school districts not

selected for the sample.

Instrumentation

A survey was selected as the instrument to gather data for the study, because through surveys researchers can collect "the opinions of a large group of people about a particular topic or issue" (Fraenkel et al., 2015, p. 391). Two online surveys (see Appendices A and B) were developed by the researcher consisting of nominal scales (yes/no questions), ordinal scales (years of experience questions), interval/rating/continuous scales (Likert scale), and open-ended text questions (Creswell, 2015). This mix of scales was supported by Creswell (2015), who stated, "In educational research, quantitative investigators often use a combination of categorical and continuous scales" (p. 166). Twenty-eight survey questions were developed for special education teachers, and 28 survey questions were developed for principals based upon the research questions for the study and the review of literature in Chapter Two.

Survey questions designed for special education teachers were piloted with a group of five special educators, and survey questions designed for principals were piloted with a group of five principals. Feedback from individuals who piloted the survey questions were considered and incorporated into the final surveys. Both Bluman (2014) and Fraenkel et al. (2015) recommended conducting a pilot study to pretest a survey using a small sample of respondents similar to the population of the study to test the validity of the questionnaire by assessing the survey design and finding any poorly worded, misleading, or unclear questions.

Data Collection

Upon receipt of approval from the Lindenwood University Internal Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix C), emails were sent to 279 principals in Missouri at the beginning

of the school year, containing a letter of introduction and recruitment (see Appendix D),

letters of informed consent for the principals and special education teachers (see

Appendices E and F), and a link to the web address for the surveys. The email contained

information for principals to complete the survey and then forward the email to special

education teachers in order for the teachers to complete the survey. The survey was

distributed using an online survey tool, SurveyMonkey. The web address for the surveys

was open for 30 days for participants to respond. The participants were notified through

the letter of informed consent that all survey responses would be kept confidential, held

in a secure location, and destroyed after three years.

At the conclusion of 30 days, the response rates from principals and special

education teachers were not sufficient for a thorough analysis. The timing of the

dissemination of the surveys at the beginning of the school year may have negatively

impacted the response rates. The decision was made to revise the method of

dissemination and time of year to send the surveys.

A revised application for an Expedited IRB Review was sent to Lindenwood

University outlining the changes requested for the dissemination of emails to principals

and special education teachers with a link to the survey. Upon receipt of IRB approval

for the revisions (see Appendix G), individual emails were sent after winter break

individually and directly to each principal and special education teacher. The revised

emails contained a letter of introduction and recruitment (see Appendix H), letters of

informed consent for the principals and special education teachers (see Appendices H and

J), and a link to the web address for the survey through SurveyMonkey. The surveys

were open to participants for two weeks. The participants were notified all survey

responses would be kept confidential, held in a secure location, and destroyed after three years.

Data Analysis

Responses from special education teachers and principals to the 28 questions on each of two surveys were compiled utilizing an online survey tool, SurveyMonkey. The data from the surveys were analyzed, summarized, reported, and presented utilizing descriptive statistics. Bluman (2014) described descriptive statistics as "the collection, organization, summarization, and presentation of data" (p. 3). Responses for each survey question were reported using percentages and frequencies and were presented with a variety of graphic techniques, including frequency tables, bar graphs, and pie charts (Bluman, 2014; Fraenkel et al., 2015). Bluman (2014) reported:

> The purpose of graphs in statistics is to convey the data to the viewers in pictorial form… Graphs are also useful in getting the audience's attention in a publication or a speaking presentation. They can be used to discuss an issue, reinforce a critical point, or summarize a data set. (p. 57)

Frequency counts of responses to the survey questions were compiled by SurveyMonkey. Percentages of responses were calculated by dividing the number of responses in a certain category by the total number of participants. Fraenkel et al. (2015) reported responses from descriptive surveys are "tabulated and reported, usually in the form of frequencies or percentages of those who answer in a particular way to each of the questions" (p. 13). In the event a participant elected not to respond to a question, the total number of participants for the question was reduced by the number of nonresponses.

From the responses, the frequencies of trends and themes were revealed regarding special education teachers' and principals' perceptions of special education teachers' needs in relationship to work conditions, professional development, and paperwork requirements. Frequencies of responses also revealed trends and themes regarding teachers' and leaders' perceptions of how systematic supports benefit special education teachers and principals, and ultimately, influence a teacher's decision to remain in the field of special education.

Ethical Considerations

Safeguards were established to ensure the participants in the study were protected and responses were kept confidential and anonymous (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Participants were not asked to reveal their personal or district names. The surveys were not distributed to special education teachers or principals within the district where the researcher was employed to eliminate any bias, conflict of interest, or potential power imbalances (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Although the email addresses of participants were utilized to send emails with the link to the surveys, the surveys did not require any of the participants to provide personally identifiable information; therefore, all responses were kept confidential and anonymous. The hard copy list of email addresses will be kept confidential and held in a secure location, and any electronic storage of information will be kept password-protected during the study and for three years after the completion of the study (Fraenkel et al., 2015). All documents and files will be destroyed three years from the completion date of the research project.

Participants were provided the Informed Consent Form for the study through an email sent by the researcher. The Informed Consent Form contained information

pertaining to the purpose of the study, protections, confidentiality, and anonymity for the participants in the study (Fraenkel et al., 2015). Specifically, the Informed Consent Form detailed there were no anticipated risks associated with this research, no direct benefits for participating in the study, participation was voluntary, participants could choose not to answer any questions, and participants would not be penalized for not participating or withdrawing from the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The Informed Consent Form also notified participants their responses would be kept confidential, would be destroyed after three years from the completion of the study, and stipulated their identities would not be revealed in any publication or presentation which could result from this study (Fraenkel et al., 2015). Consent from the participant was considered signed and accepted if the participant completed the survey.

Summary

Chapter Three contained the problem and purpose of the study involving special education teachers' and principals' perceptions of teachers' needs and supports. The research questions and reasons behind the quantitative research design were discussed. The population for the study was accredited K-12 public school special education teachers and principals. Systematic sampling of the population was utilized to obtain the sample for the study. Participants for the research study received an email with a link to an online survey. The data received from the surveys were analyzed to give frequencies and percentages of responses and descriptions of perceptions and themes. Ethical considerations and reassurances for the participants were explained.

An analysis of the data collected through the surveys is presented in Chapter Four. The frequencies and percentages of responses from special education teachers and

principals to questions on the survey are presented in tables and graphs. Trends or

themes revealed from the responses to the survey about special education teachers' work

condition needs, job satisfaction, supports provided by principals, and decisions of

teachers to continue to teach in the field of special education are discussed.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

This study was designed to explore how special education teacher job satisfaction could be improved in order to reduce the number of teacher positions vacant each year due to teachers leaving the field of special education. Another purpose was to discover trends or themes connecting special education teachers' work conditions and needs, job satisfaction, supports provided by principals, and the decisions of teachers to continue teaching in the field of special education. Research questions were developed to obtain insight from special education teachers and principals.

Two surveys, each with 28 questions, were created to answer the research questions for the study. Participants for the study were systematically selected and represented 14% of the eligible population of principals and special education teachers in Missouri. The surveys were sent to 279 building principals and 932 special education teachers from 60 accredited public K-12 school districts. Principals completed the Survey for Principals (see Appendix A), and special education teachers completed the Survey for Special Education Teachers (see Appendix B). Responses from the surveys provided quantitative data which were reviewed and analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics including categorization, percentages, and frequencies.

This chapter contains the data collected from the surveys in order to answer the research questions. First, demographic information from the two groups of participants is presented. Next, each research question is posed and corresponding data from the survey responses are provided to answer the question. Finally, a summary of the chapter is provided.

Demographic Analysis of Survey Respondents

      Principal survey demographics. Two hundred seventy-nine principals, from 60 accredited public K-12 school districts, were invited to participate in the survey for this study. Of the 279 principals invited, 46 principals participated, for a response rate of 16%. When principals were asked how many years they had served as principals, 13.0% (6) indicated it was their first year; 26.1% (12) indicated they had served two to five years; 21.1% (10) indicated they had served six to 10 years; 28% (13) indicated they had served 11 to 15 years; 9% (4) indicated they had served 16 to 20 years; and 2% (1) indicated having served 21 or more years as principal. When the principals were asked the school level of their responsibilities and leadership, 43.4% (20) responded primary/elementary school; 2.2% (1) responded both primary/elementary and middle/junior high school; 2.2% (1) responded primary/elementary, middle/junior, and senior high school; 23.9% (11) responded middle/junior high school; 8.7% (4) responded both middle/junior and senior high school; 17.4% (8) responded senior high school; and 2.2% (1) responded senior and technology high school. When principals were asked how many special education teachers were in the building(s) they supervised, 13.0% (6) reported one special education teacher; 19.6% (9) reported two special education teachers; and 67.4% (31) reported three or more special education teachers in their buildings.

      Special education teacher survey demographics. Nine hundred thirty-two special education teachers, from 60 accredited public K-12 school districts, were invited to participate in the survey for this study. Of the 932 special education teachers invited, 128 special education teachers participated, for a response rate of 14%. When special

education teachers were asked how many years they had served as special education teachers, 4.7% (6) indicated it was their first year; 31.2% (40) indicated they had served two to five years; 15.6% (20) indicated they had served six to 10 years; 14.1% (18) indicated they had served 11 to 15 years; 20.3% (26) indicated they had served 16 to 20 years; and 14.1% (18) indicated they had served 21 or more years as special education teachers. Overall, of the special education teachers responding to the survey, 51.6% (66) reported teaching one to 10 years, and 48.4% (62) reported teaching 11 or more years. When special education teachers were asked the school level of students they taught, 36.7% (47) responded primary/elementary school; 3.1% (4) responded both primary/elementary and middle/junior high school; 3.9% (5) responded primary/elementary, middle/junior, and senior high school; 22.7% (29) responded middle/junior high school; 8.6% (11) responded both middle/junior and senior high school; and 25% (32) responded senior high school. When special education teachers were asked how many special education teachers were in their buildings, 5.5% (7) reported one special education teacher; 20.3% (26) reported two special education teachers; and 74.2% (95) reported three or more special education teachers in their buildings.

Research Question One

What do special education teachers believe are their greatest work condition needs?

Respondents selected the extent they agreed ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree, to strongly disagree on a variety of work condition questions, such as time to complete paperwork, time to develop lesson plans, amount of planning time, room size,

collaboration, professional learning, sense of belonging, and sense of value. The data

collected from participants' responses to each work condition survey question were

analyzed for frequencies and percentages.

       Special education paperwork. Special education teachers were asked if they

had adequate time to complete necessary paperwork required under the IDEA for IEPs,

evaluation reports, data collection, and documentation. The percentage of special

education teachers responding with strongly agree was 3.2% (4); agree was 20.6% (26);

disagree was 37.3% (47); and strongly disagree was 38.9% (49). Two participants did

not respond to the question. Special education teachers responding with disagree and

strongly disagree were at higher percentage rates than teachers responding with strongly

agree and agree (see Figure 1).
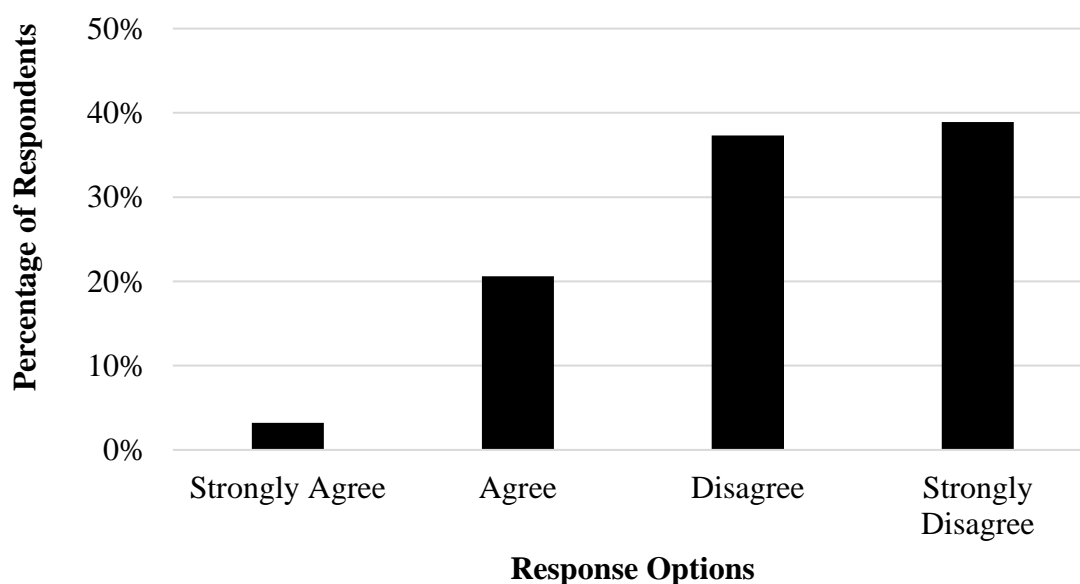
Figure 1. Special education teacher results regarding time to complete necessary

paperwork related to the IDEA.

Lessons and activities. Special education teachers were asked if they had adequate time to develop lessons and activities for students. The percentage of special education teachers responding with strongly agree was 1.6% (1); agree was 37.6% (47); disagree was 38.4% (48); and strongly disagree was 22.4% (28). Three participants did not respond to the question. Special education teachers responding with disagree were at the highest percentage rate (see Figure 2). When the combined categories of strongly agree and agree were compared to the combined strongly disagree and disagree categories, 39.2% (49) of special education teachers fell into the strongly agree/agree categories and 60.8% (76) fell into the strongly disagree/disagree categories (see Figure 3).

Figure 2. Special education teacher results regarding adequate time to develop lessons and activities.
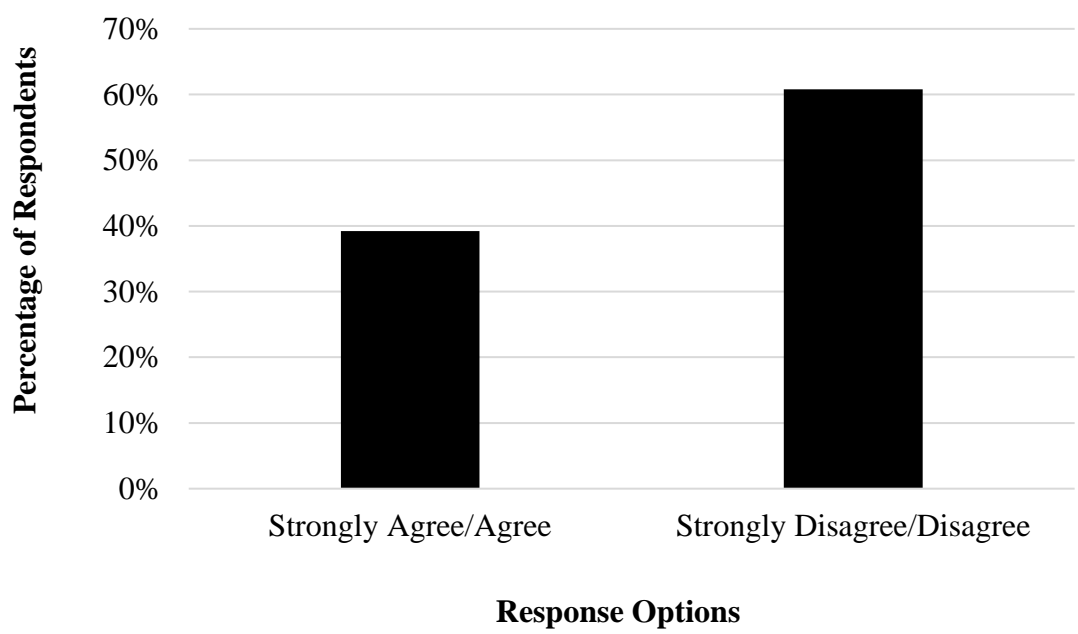
Figure 3. Special education teacher results regarding adequate time to develop lessons and activities with combined categories.

Planning time. Special education teachers were asked if they had at least 250 minutes for planning time each week, in accordance with the Missouri School Improvement Program Resource and Process Standards and Indicators (MODESE, 2013). The percentage of special education teachers responding with strongly agree was 12.9% (16); agree was 6.8% (58); disagree was 28.2% (35); and strongly disagree was 12.1% (15) (see Figure 4). Four participants did not respond to the question. When the combined categories of strongly agree and agree were compared to the combined strongly disagree and disagree categories, 59.7% (74) of special education teachers fell into the strongly agree/agree categories and 40.3% (50) fell into the strongly disagree/disagree categories (see Figure 5).
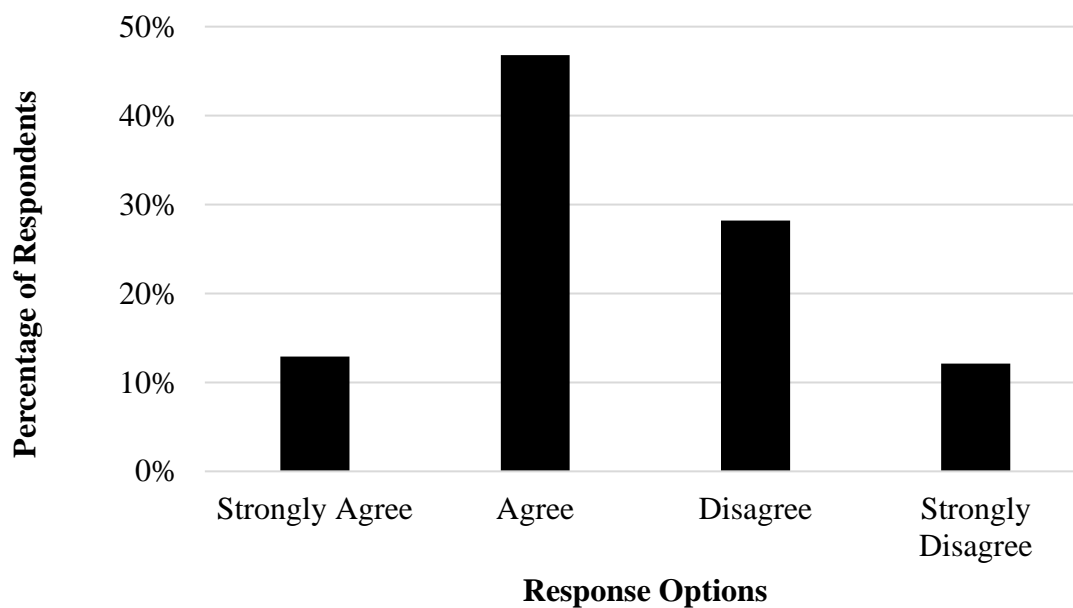
Figure 4. Special education teacher results regarding 250 minutes per week for planning time.
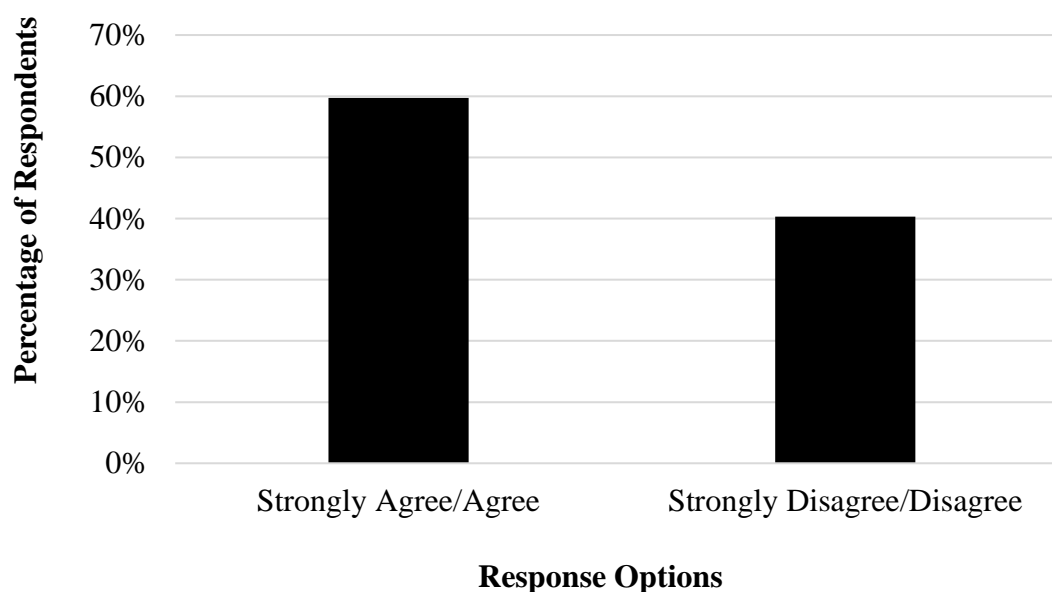
Figure 5. Special education teacher results regarding 250 minutes per week for planning time with combined categories.

Supplies and materials. Special education teachers were asked if they had the necessary supplies and materials for instruction. The percentage of special education teachers responding with strongly agree was 9.6% (12); agree was 60.8% (76); disagree was 24.0% (30); and strongly disagree was 5.6% (7). Three participants did not respond to the question. The percentage rate of special education teachers agreeing they had necessary supplies and materials was the highest response category (see Figure 6).
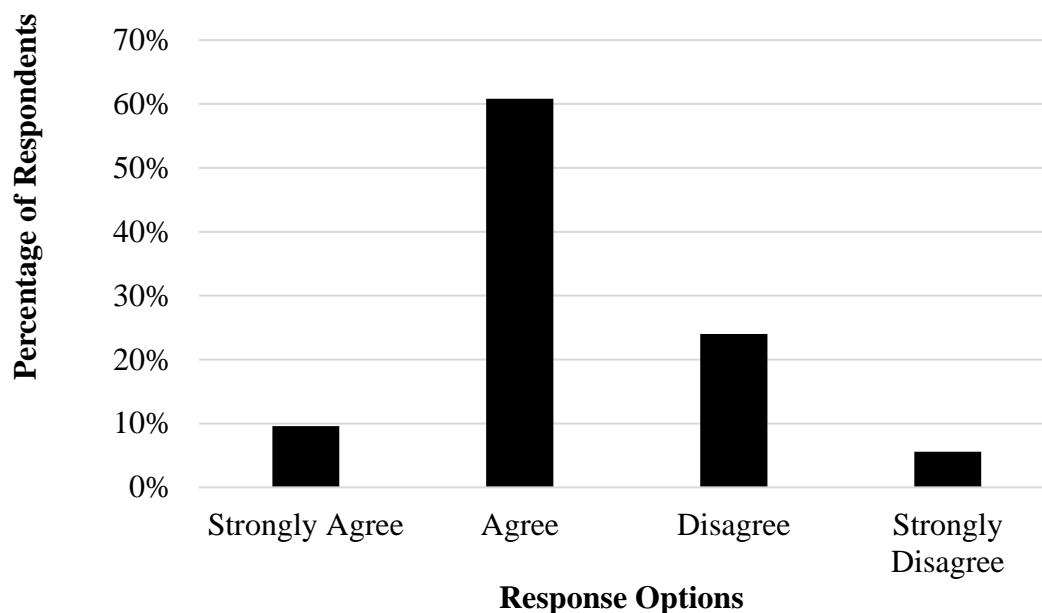
Figure 6. Special education teacher results regarding necessary supplies and materials for instruction.

Classroom size. Special education teachers were asked if they had an adequate classroom size. The percentage of special education teachers responding with strongly agree was 21.6% (27); agree was 51.2% (64); disagree was 18.4% (23); and strongly disagree was 8.8% (11). Three participants did not respond to the question. The percentage rate for special education teachers agreeing they had adequate classroom size was the highest response category (see Figure 7).
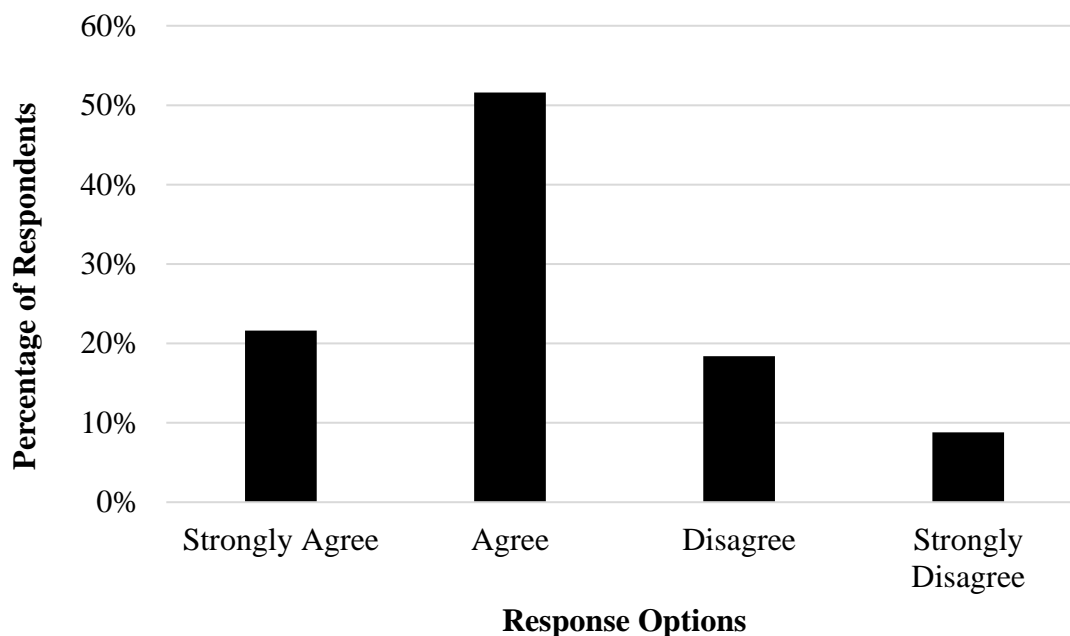
Figure 7. Special education teacher results regarding adequate classroom size.

Collaboration with special education teachers. Special education teachers were asked if they had scheduled and designated time to collaborate with other special education teachers. The percentage of special education teachers responding with strongly agree was 3.3% (4); agree was 34.4% (42); disagree was 41.8% (51); and strongly disagree was 20.5% (25) (see Figure 8). Six participants did not respond to the question. When the combined categories of strongly agree and agree were compared to the combined strongly disagree and disagree categories, 37.7% (46) of special education teachers fell into the strongly agree/agree categories and 62.3% (76) fell into the strongly disagree/disagree categories (see Figure 9).

Figure 8. Special education teacher results regarding scheduled and designated time to collaborate with other special education teachers.
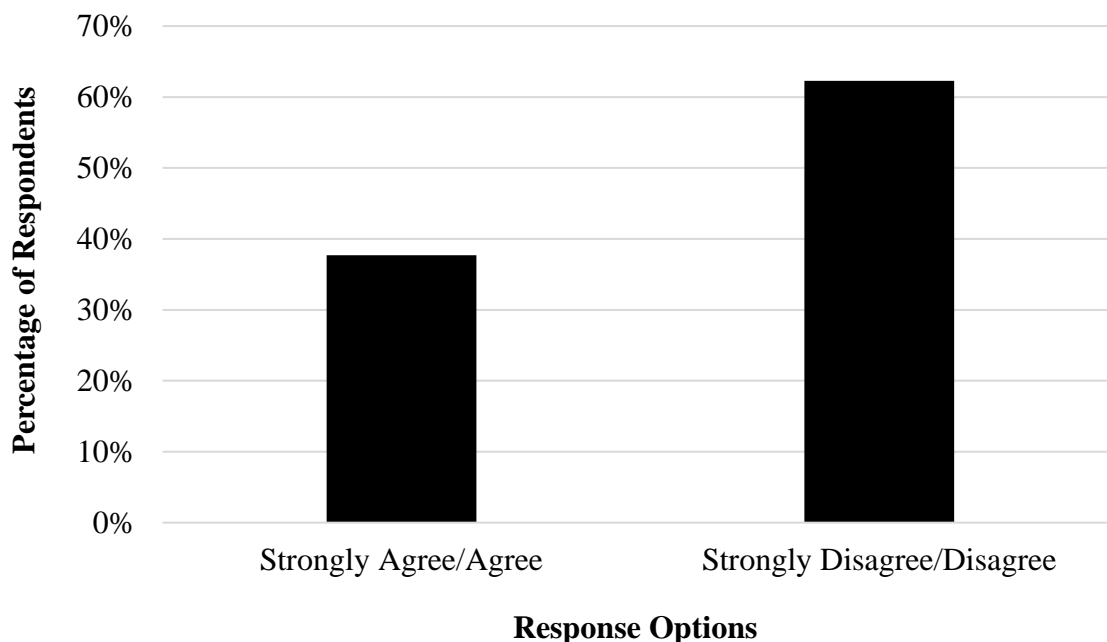
Figure 9. Special education teacher results regarding scheduled and designated time to collaborate with other special education teachers with combined categories.

Collaboration with general education teachers. Special education teachers were asked if they had scheduled and designated time to collaborate with general education teachers. The percentage of special education teachers responding with strongly agree was 4.8% (6); agree was 31.7% (40); disagree was 32.5% (41); and strongly disagree was 31.0% (39) (see Figure 10). Two participants did not respond to the question. When the combined categories of strongly agree and agree were compared to the combined strongly disagree and disagree categories, 36.5% (46) of special education teachers fell into the strongly agree/agree categories and 63.5% (80) fell into the strongly disagree/disagree categories (see Figure 11).
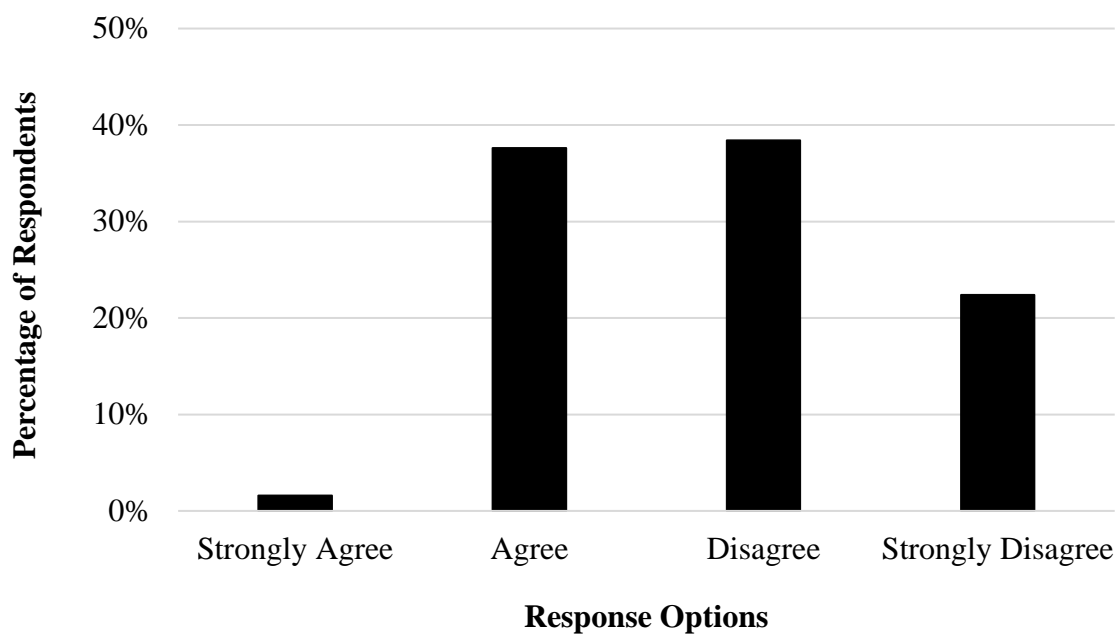
Figure 10. Special education teacher results regarding scheduled and designated time to collaborate with general education teachers.
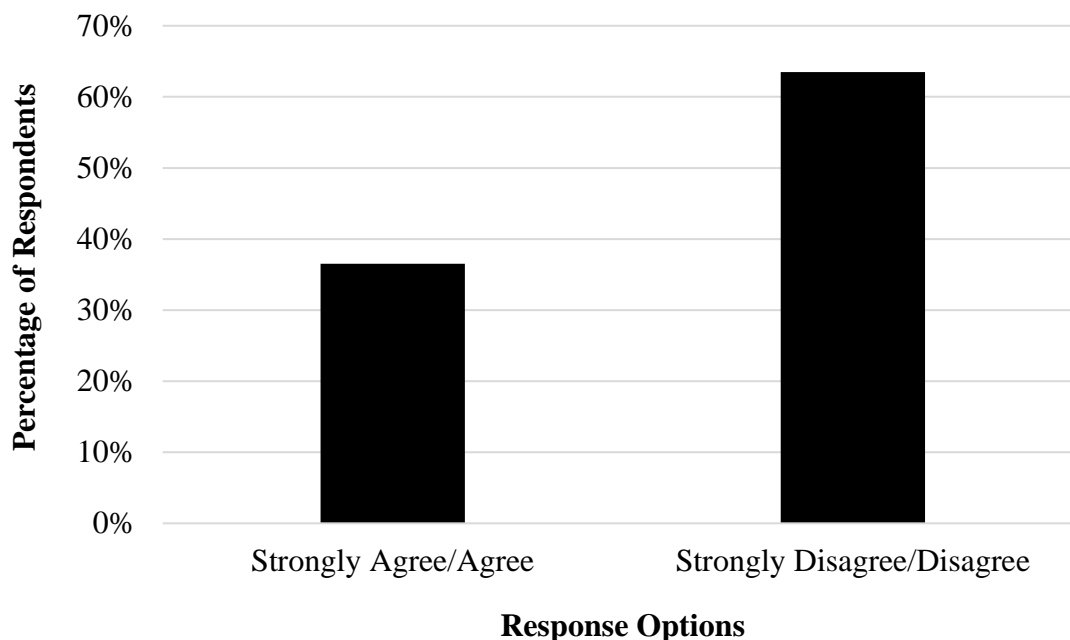
Figure 11. Special education teacher results regarding scheduled and designated time to collaborate with general education teachers with combined categories.

Collaboration with specialty teachers. Special education teachers were asked if they had scheduled and designated time to collaborate with specialty teachers (e.g., art, music, physical education, computers, etc.). The percentage of special education teachers responding with strongly agree was 0% (0); agree was 6.4% (8); disagree was 33.6% (42); and strongly disagree was 60.0% (75). Three participants did not respond. The percentage rate of strongly disagree was the highest percentage, and the percentage rate of disagree was the second highest (see Figure 12).
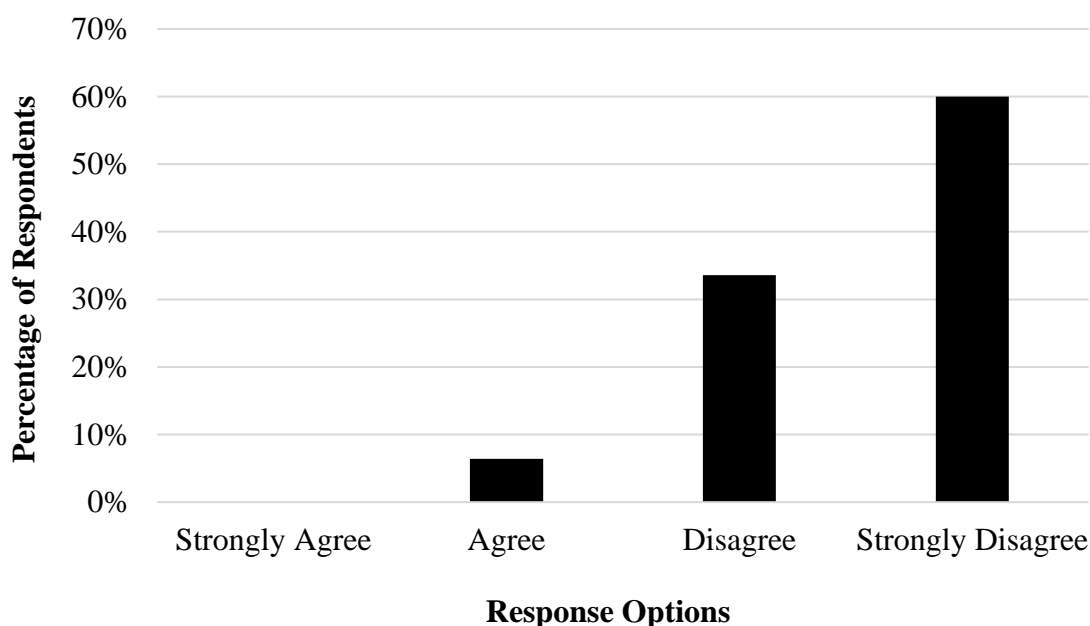
Figure 12. Special education teacher results regarding scheduled and designated time to collaborate with specialty teachers.

Professional training/learning. Special education teachers were asked if they received adequate professional training/learning in order complete their responsibilities as special education teachers. The percentage of special education teachers responding with strongly agree was 31.5% (39); agree was 58.8% (73); disagree was 6.5% (8); and strongly disagree was 3.2% (4). Four participants did not respond to the question. The percentage rate for respondents who agreed they received adequate professional learning/training was the highest percentage, and the percentage rate for teachers who strongly agreed was second highest (see Figure 13).
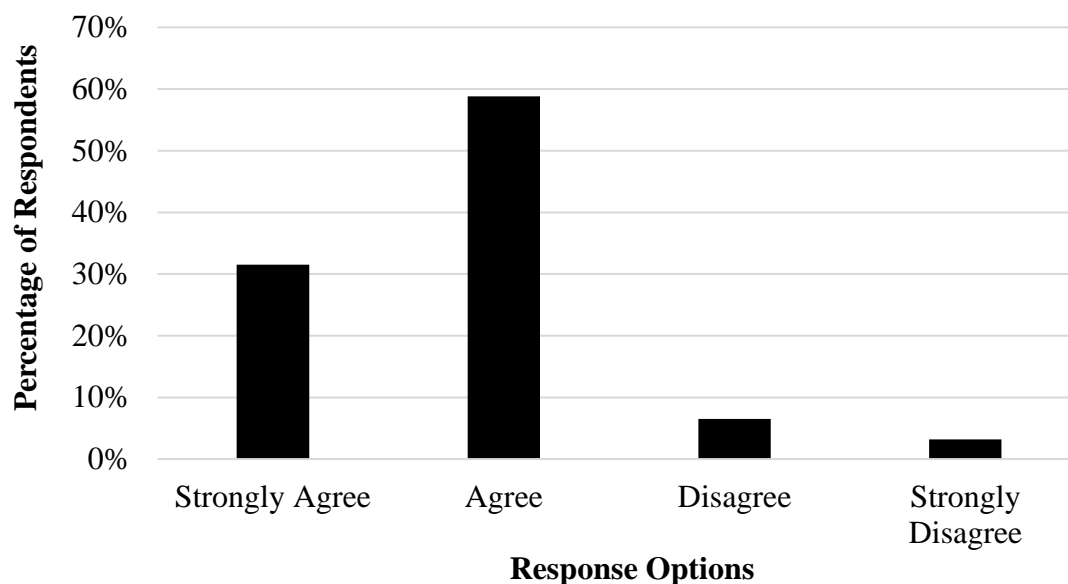
Figure 13. Special education teacher results regarding adequate professional training/learning.

Inclusion in activities and decisions. Special education teachers were asked if they were included in building activities and decisions. The percentage of special education teachers responding with strongly agree was 8.9% (11); agree was 58.9% (73); disagree was 27.4% (34); and strongly disagree was 4.8% (6). Four participants did not respond to the question. The percentage rate of special education teachers who agreed to being included in building activities and decisions was the highest percentage (see Figure 14).
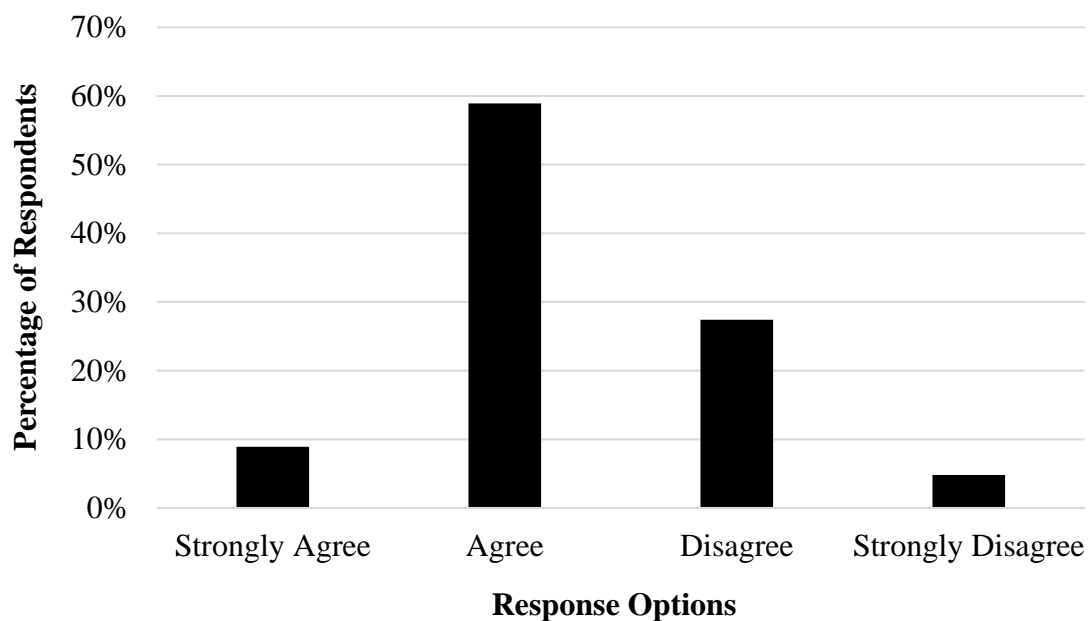
Figure 14. Special education teacher results regarding inclusion in building activities and decisions.

Value as special education teacher. Special education teachers were asked if they felt valued as a teacher in the building. The percentage of special education teachers responding with strongly agree was 13.7% (17); agree was 57.3% (71); disagree was 27.4% (34); and strongly disagree was 1.6% (2). Four participants did not respond to the question. The percentage rate of teachers who agreed to feeling valued as a teacher in the building was the highest percentage (see Figure 15).
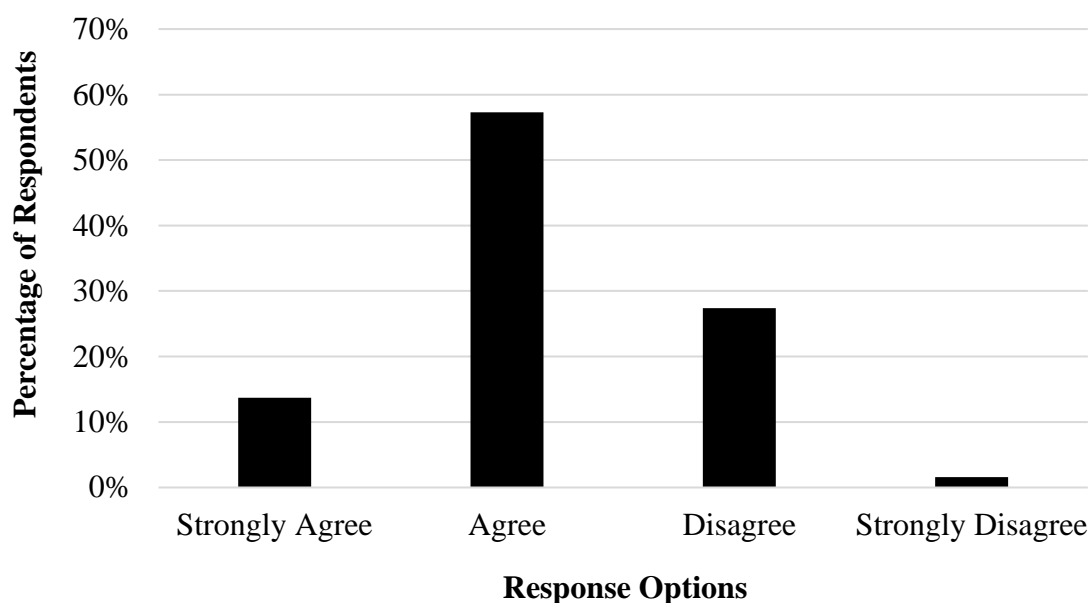
Figure 15. Special education teacher results regarding being valued as a teacher in the building.

Special education teachers were asked if they felt valued by their principals. The percentage of special education teachers responding with strongly agree was 28.2% (35); agree was 49.2% (61); disagree was 19.4% (24); and strongly disagree was 3.2% (4) (see Figure 16). Four participants did not respond to the question. When the combined categories of strongly agree and agree were compared to the combined strongly disagree and disagree categories, 77.4% (96) of special education teachers fell into the strongly agree/agree categories and 22.6% (28) fell into the disagree/strongly disagree categories (see Figure 17).
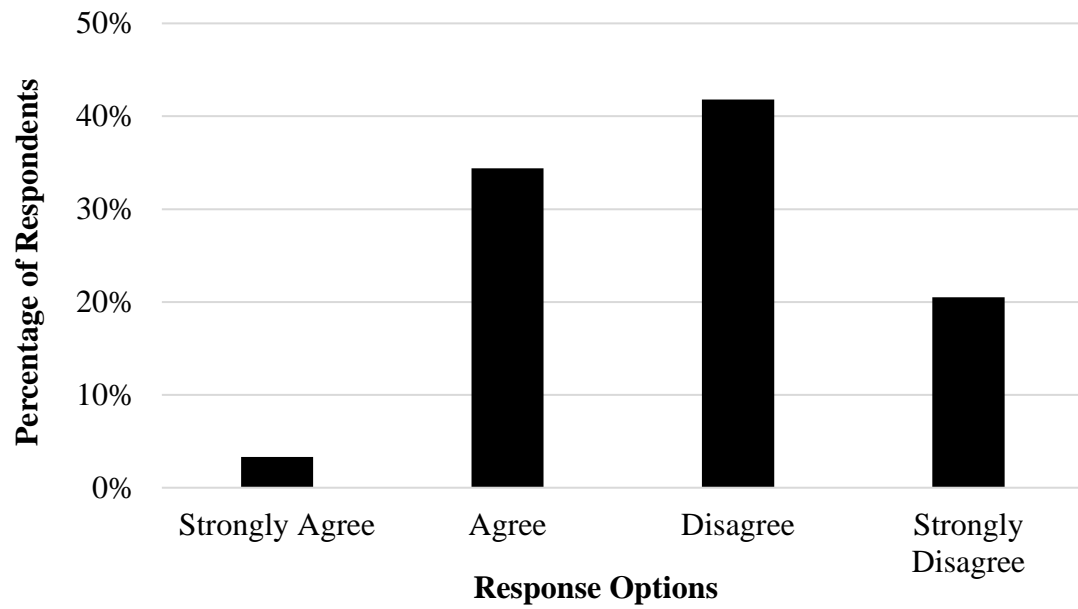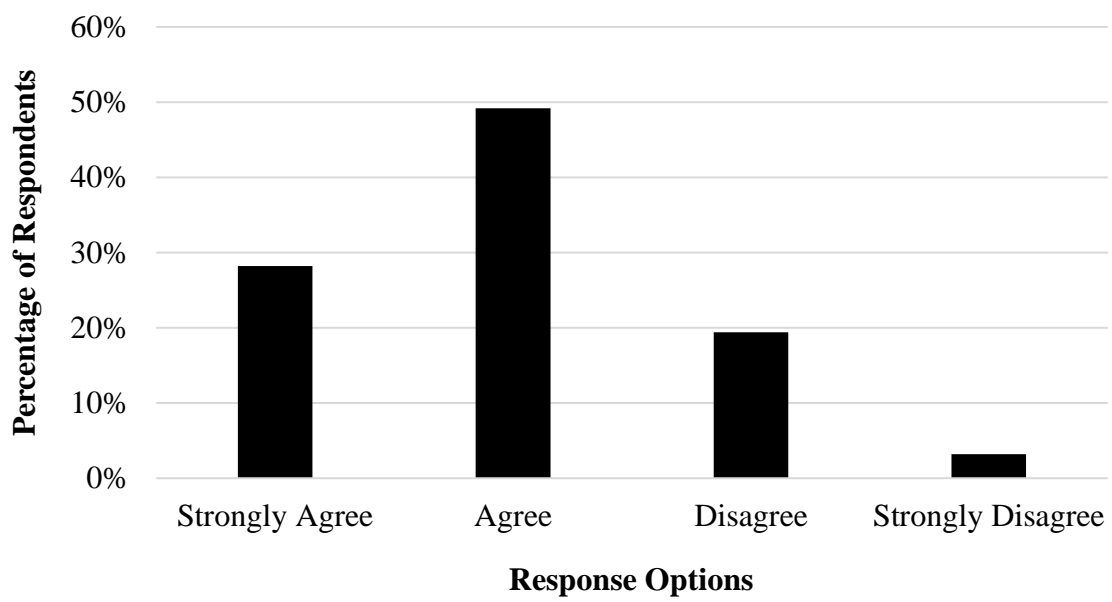
Figure 16. Special education teacher results regarding being valued by principal.
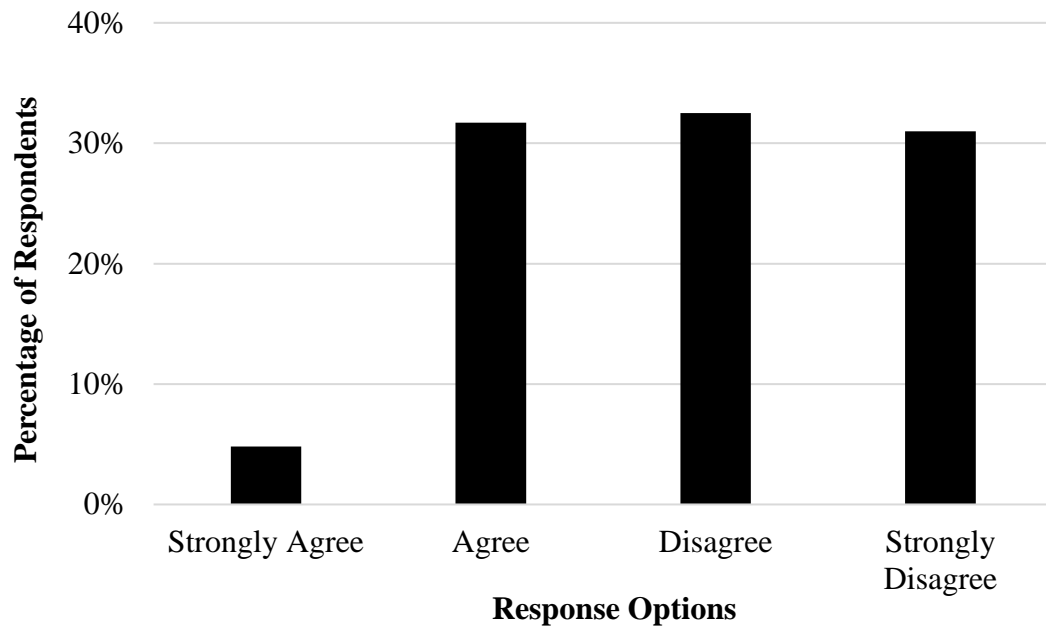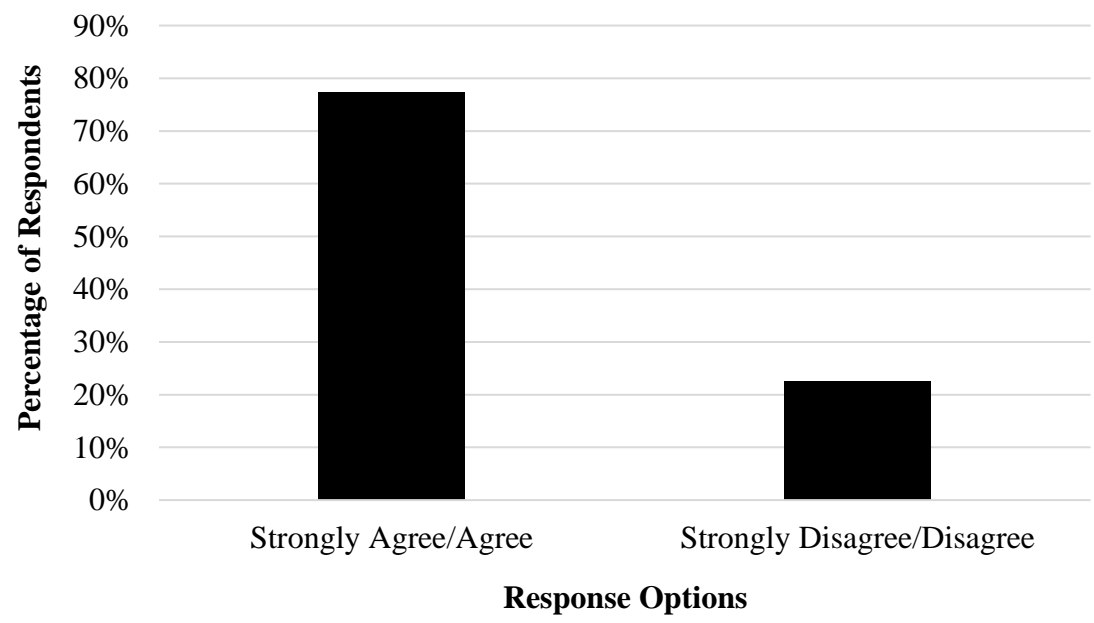

Figure 17. Special education teacher results regarding being valued by principal with

combined categories.

Summary of work condition needs identified. Special education teachers

responding to this survey reported needing the following: (a) time to complete the

paperwork associated with teaching special education; (b) time to develop lessons and

activities for students beyond the required 250 minutes of planning time per week; and

(c) time to collaborate with other special education, general education, and specialty

teachers. Special education teachers reported having adequate access to supplies and

materials, classroom size, and professional training/learning. Additionally, special

education teachers reported feeling included in building activities and decisions and

being valued by the principal and other staff members in the building.

Research Question Two

What do principals believe are the greatest work condition needs for special

education teachers?

Respondents selected the extent they agreed ranging from strongly agree, agree,

disagree, to strongly disagree on a variety of work condition questions, such as time to

complete paperwork, time to develop lesson plans, amount of planning time, room size,

collaboration, professional learning, sense of belonging, and support from other peers and

parents. The data collected from participants' responses to each work condition survey

question were analyzed for frequencies and percentages.

Special education paperwork. Principals were asked if special education

teachers in their buildings had adequate time to complete the necessary paperwork

required under the IDEA for IEPs, evaluation reports, data collection, and documentation.

The percentage of principals responding with strongly agree was 23.9% (11); agree was

60.9% (28); disagree was 13.0% (6); and strongly disagree was 2.2% (1). The highest

percentage rates were in the categories of agree and strongly agree (see Figure 18).
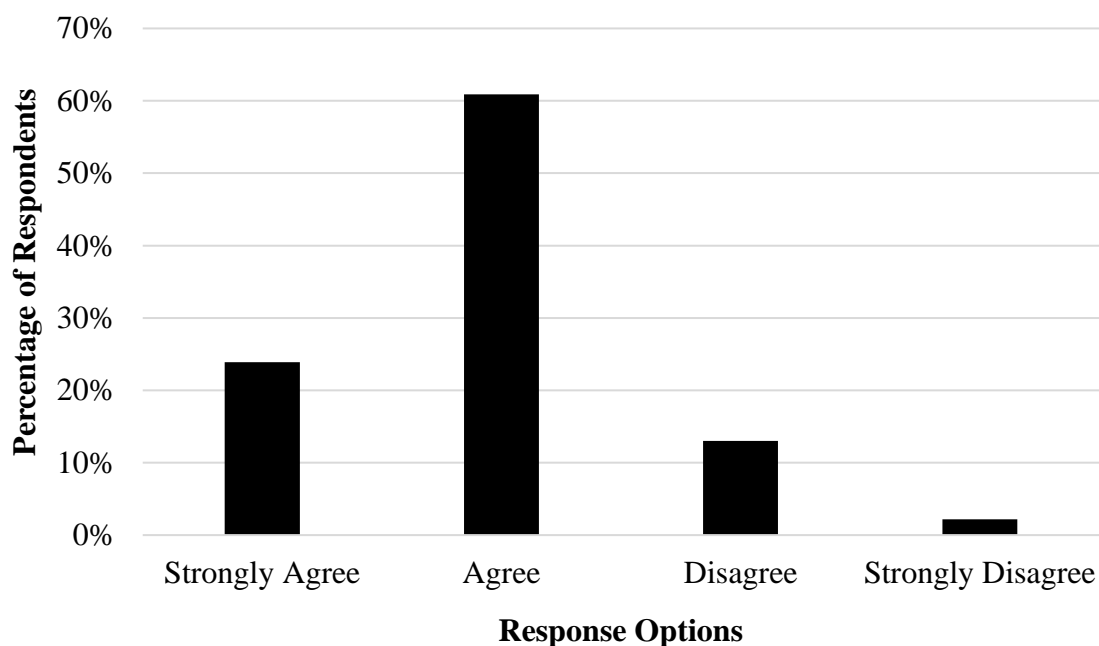
Figure 18. Principal results regarding special education teachers having adequate time to

complete the necessary paperwork required under the IDEA for IEPs.

Lessons and activities. Principals were asked if special education teachers in

their buildings had adequate time to develop lessons and activities. The percentage of

principals responding with strongly agree was 41.3% (19); agree was 54.3% (25);

disagree was 2.2% (1); and strongly disagree was 2.2% (1). The highest percentage rates

were in the categories of agree and strongly agree (see Figure 19).
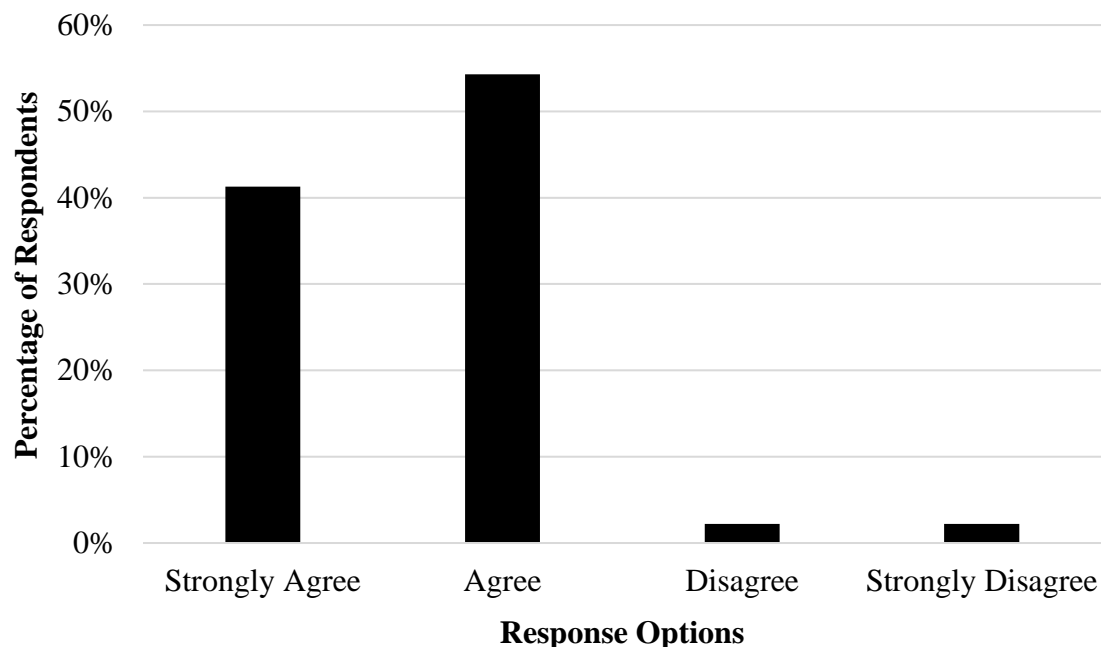
Figure 19. Principal results regarding special education teachers having adequate time to develop lessons and activities.

Planning time. Principals were asked if special education teachers in their buildings had at least 250 minutes per week for planning. The percentage of principals responding with strongly agree was 57.8% (26); agree was 37.8% (17); disagree was 4.4% (2); and strongly disagree was 0% (0). One participant did not respond to the question. The highest percentage rates were in the categories of strongly agree and agree (see Figure 20).
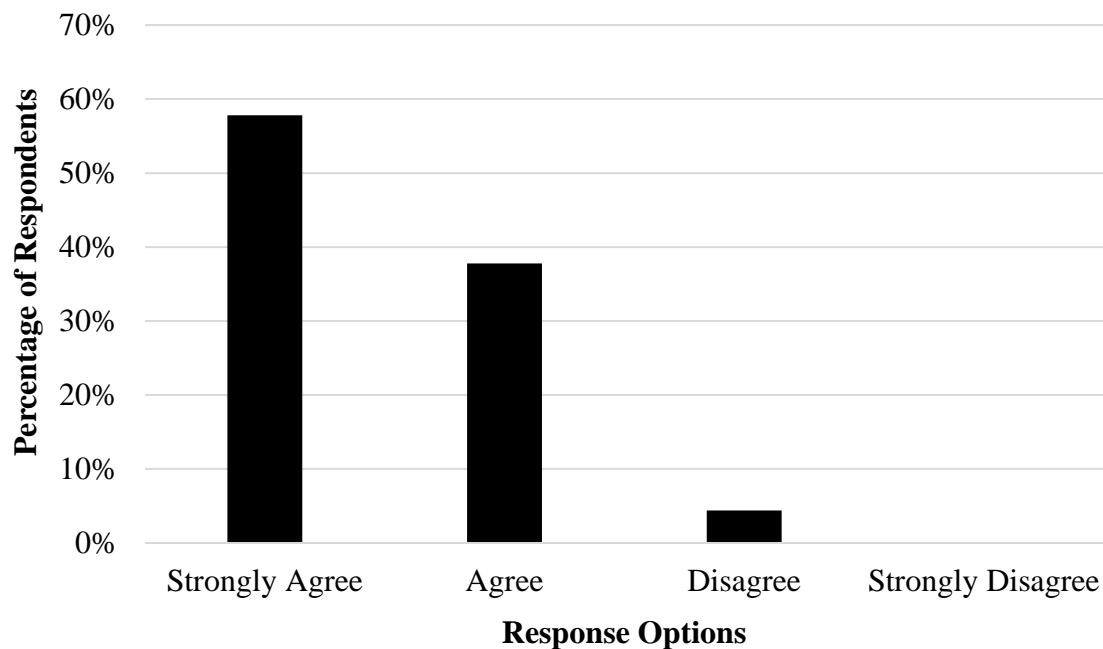
Figure 20. Principal results regarding special education teachers having at least 250 minutes per week for planning.

Supplies and materials. Principals were asked if special education teachers in their buildings had necessary supplies and materials for instruction. The percentage of principals responding with strongly agree was 58.7% (27); agree was 37.0% (17); disagree was 4.3% (6); and strongly disagree was 0% (0). The highest percentage rates were in the categories of strongly agree and agree (see Figure 21).
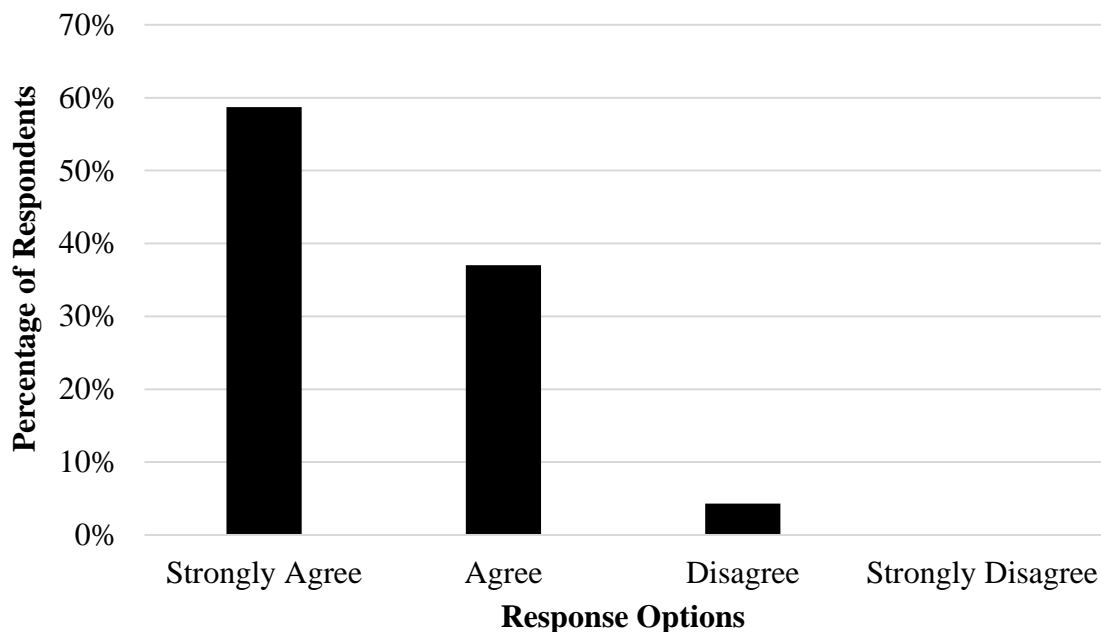
Figure 21. Principal results regarding special education teachers having necessary supplies and materials for instruction.

Classroom size. Principals were asked if special education teachers in their buildings had an appropriate classroom size. The percentage of principals responding with strongly agree was 60.9% (28); agree was 30.4% (14); disagree was 8.7% (4); and strongly disagree was 0% (0). The highest percentage rates were in the categories of strongly agree and agree (see Figure 22).
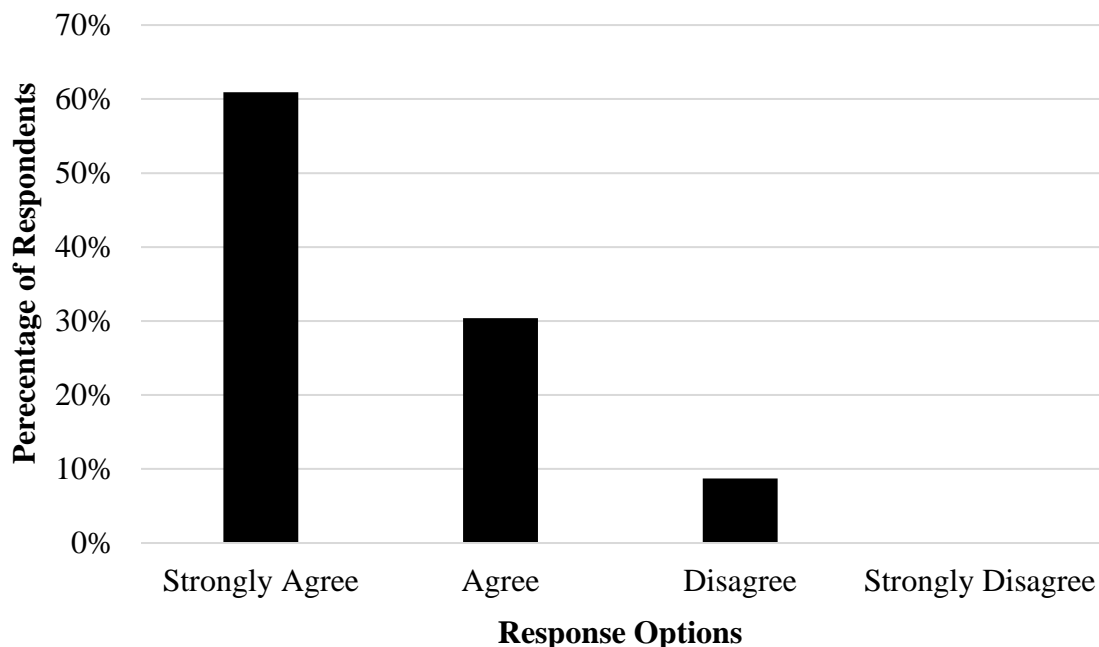
Figure 22. Principal results regarding special education teachers having appropriate classroom size.

Collaboration time. Principals were asked if special education teachers in their buildings had adequate time for collaboration with other special education teachers, general education teachers, and specialty teachers (e.g., art, music, physical education, computers, etc.). The percentage of principal responses for special education teachers having adequate time to collaborate with other special educators was 19.6% (9) for strongly agree; 58.7% (27) for agree; 21.7% (10) for disagree; and 0% (0) for strongly disagree. In regard to special education teachers having adequate time to collaborate with general education teachers, the majority of principal responses were strongly agree with 30.4% (14) and agree with 56.5% (26). The percentage of principal responses for special education teachers having adequate time to collaborate with specialty teachers was 6.5%

(3) for strongly agree; 50.0% (23) for agree; 41.3% (19) for disagree; and 2.2% (1) for

strongly disagree. The frequencies of principal responses are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Frequency Data for Principal Results: Adequate Collaboration Time

Response Options	Other Special Education Teachers	General Education Teachers	Specialty Teachers
Strongly Agree	19.6%	30.4%	6.5%
Agree	58.7%	56.5%	50.0%
Disagree	21.7%	8.7%	41.3%
Strongly Disagree	0%	4.4%	2.2%

Note. Principals were asked if special education teachers received adequate time to collaborate with

other special education teachers, general education teachers, and specialty teachers (e.g., art, music,

physical education, computers, etc.).

Professional training/learning. Principals were asked if special education

teachers received adequate professional training/learning in order to complete

responsibilities as a special education teacher. The percentage of principals responding

with strongly agree was 37.8% (17); agree was 60.0% (28); disagree was 2.2% (1); and

strongly disagree was 0% (0). One participant did not respond to the survey question.

The highest percentage rates were in the categories of strongly agree and agree (see
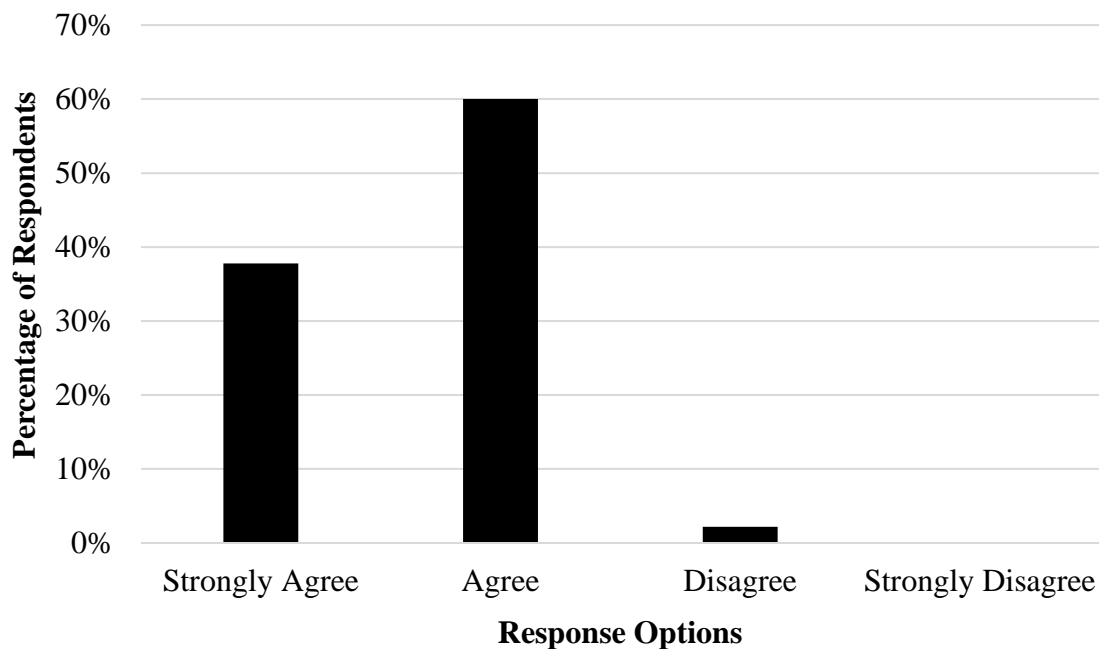
Figure 23).

Figure 23. Principal results regarding special education teachers having adequate professional training/learning in order to complete the responsibilities as a special education teacher.

Teacher support. Principals were asked if special education teachers were supported by other teachers in the building, students' parents, and principals themselves. One participant did not respond to the parent support survey question. The frequencies of principal responses are displayed in Table 2. The highest percentages were in the strongly agree and agree categories for all three groups.

Table 2

Frequency Data for Principal Results: Special Education Teacher Support

Response Option	Other Teachers	Students' Parents[a]	Principal
Strongly Agree	71.4%	37.8%	91.3%
Agree	26.1%	62.2%	6.5%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	2.2%	0%	2.2%

Note. Principals were asked if special education teachers received support from other teachers, students'

parents, and the principal. [a]One participant did not respond to the survey question.

Summary of work condition needs identified. Principals participating in this

research study reported special education teachers' needs were met in the following

areas: (a) time to complete paperwork; (b) time to develop lessons and activities for

students; (c) access to supplies and materials; (d) access to adequate classroom size; (e)

adequate time to collaborate with special education, general education, and specialty

teachers; and (f) support from the principal, other teachers, and students' parents. The

only area which was close to being identified as a need not met was adequate

collaboration time with specialty teachers. All of the other work condition needs for

special education teachers were considered met based upon principal perceptions.

Research Question Three

How do special education teachers feel supported at school?

Respondents selected the extent they agreed ranging from strongly agree, agree,

disagree, to strongly disagree on a variety of support questions, including items about

mentors, collaboration, compensation, professional learning, sense of value, and overall

support. The data collected from participants' responses to each survey question were

analyzed for frequencies and percentages.

Mentors. Special education teachers were asked if (a) they had a mentor for the

first year of teaching special education, (b) the mentor was another special education

teacher, and (c) they benefited from the mentor. The majority of special education

teachers reported they had a mentor their first year of teaching with a percentage of

83.3% (105). Two participants did not answer the question. The teachers who reported

having a mentor stated the mentor was another special education teacher with a

percentage of 84.8% (105). The percentage of special education teachers reporting

benefit from having a mentor who also taught special education was 76.0% (79). One

participant did not answer the question. The frequencies of responses from the teachers

are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Frequency Data for Special Education Teacher Results: Mentor First-Year Teaching

Response Option	Mentor	Special Education Teacher Mentor[a]	Benefit[b]
Yes	83.3%	84.8%	76.0%
No	16.7%	15.2%	24.0%

Note. Special education teachers were asked if (a) they received mentors for the first year of teaching, (b) the mentor was another special education teacher, and (c) the mentor was beneficial. [a]Two participants did not respond to the survey question. [b]One participant did not respond to the survey question.

Compensation. Special education teachers were asked, since there are extra

responsibilities and paperwork associated with teaching special education required by the

IDEA, if they (a) had the opportunity to receive additional money for compensation; (b)

chose to participate in the opportunity to receive additional money for compensation; (c)

had the opportunity to receive non-monetary compensation, such as not having other duties assigned; and (d) chose to participate in the opportunity to receive non-monetary compensation. The majority of special education teachers reported not having opportunities to receive extra monetary or non-monetary compensation for the additional responsibilities and paperwork required by the IDEA. Two participants did not answer the question regarding non-monetary compensation. When opportunity was available to receive extra money, the percentage of special education teachers choosing the benefit was 43.75% versus not choosing the benefit at 56.25%. Four participants did not respond to the question. When opportunity was available to receive non-monetary compensation, the percentage of special education teachers choosing the benefit was 80.0% versus not choosing the benefit at 20.0%. Three participants did not respond to the question. The frequencies of responses regarding special education teacher compensation are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency Data for Special Education Teacher Results: Compensation

Variable	Yes	No
Opportunity for Monetary Compensation	15.6%	84.4%
Chose to Receive Monetary Compensation[a,d]	43.75%	56.25%
Opportunity for Non-Monetary Compensation[b]	18.3%	81.7%
Chose to Receive Non-Monetary Compensation[c,d]	80.0%	20.0%

Note. Special education teachers were asked if they had the opportunity to receive monetary or non-monetary compensation and if they chose to receive the compensation. [a]Four participants did not respond to the survey question. [b]Two participants did not respond to the survey question. [c]Three participants did not respond to the survey question. [d]The choice to receive compensation question was contingent on an answer in the affirmative to having the opportunity to receive it.

Support. Special education teachers were asked to what degree they felt

supported by their principal, other teachers in the building, and the parents of the students

they served. The percentage of special education teachers responding to feeling support

from their principal with strongly agree was 29.4% (37); agree was 47.6% (60); disagree

was 20.6% (26); and strongly disagree was 2.4% (3). Two participants did not respond to

the survey question. The percentage of special education teachers responding to feeling

support from other teachers in their building with strongly agree was 21.4% (27); agree

was 57.2% (72); disagree was 19.8% (25); and strongly disagree was 1.6% (2). Two

participants did not respond to the survey question. The percentage of special education

teachers responding to feeling supported by parents of the students they serve with

strongly agree was 4.8% (6); agree was 69.4% (86); disagree was 23.4% (29); and

strongly disagree was 2.4% (3). Four participants did not respond to the survey question.

The frequencies of responses regarding special education teacher support are displayed in

Table 5.

Table 5

Frequency Data for Special Education Teacher Results: Support

Response Option	Principal[a]	Other Teachers[a]	Parents[b]
Strongly Agree	29.4%	21.4%	4.8%
Agree	47.6%	57.2%	69.4%
Disagree	20.6%	19.8%	23.4%
Strongly Disagree	2.4%	1.6%	2.4%

Note. Special education teachers were asked about support from the principal, other special teachers,

and parents. [a]Two participants did not respond. [b]Four participants did not respond.

Collaboration time. Special education teachers were asked if they had scheduled and designated time to collaborate with other special education teachers, general education teachers, and specialty teachers. In regard to collaboration time with other special education teachers, when the combined categories of strongly agree and agree were compared to the combined strongly disagree and disagree categories, 37.7% (46) of special education teacher responses fell into the strongly agree/agree categories and 62.3% (76) fell into the strongly disagree/disagree categories. Six participants did not respond to the survey question. In regard to collaboration time with general education teachers, when the combined categories of strongly agree and agree were compared to the combined strongly disagree and disagree categories, 36.5% (46) of special education teachers fell into the strongly agree/agree categories and 63.5% (80) fell into the strongly disagree/disagree categories. Two participants did not respond to the survey question. In regard to collaboration time with specialty teachers, when the combined categories of strongly agree and agree were compared to the combined strongly disagree and disagree categories, 6.4% (8) fell into the strongly agree/agree categories and 93.6% (117) fell into the strongly disagree/disagree categories. Three participants did not respond to the survey question. The majority of special education teachers responded they did not have scheduled and designated time for collaboration with other teachers. The frequency of responses regarding special education teacher collaboration are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

Frequency Data for Special Education Teacher Results: Collaboration

Variable	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Other Special Education Teachers[a]	37.7%	62.3%
General Education Teachers[b]	36.5%	63.5%
Specialty Teachers[c]	6.4%	93.6%

Note. Special education teachers were asked if they had time for collaboration with other types of teachers. [a]Six participants did not respond to the survey question. [b]Two participants did not respond to the survey question. [c]Three participants did not respond to the survey question.

Special education teachers were asked how collaboration is promoted or occurred among staff members in their building. Teachers were encouraged to select all collaboration opportunities applicable to their situations. When a participant selected the option of "Other" on the survey and included a description, the response was categorized with other similar responses to determine the frequency. Schools which implemented early out or late start release times for students had the highest number of responses from teachers, followed by common planning time (see Figure 24). Seven special education teachers reported no opportunities for collaboration. Seven participants did not respond to the survey question.
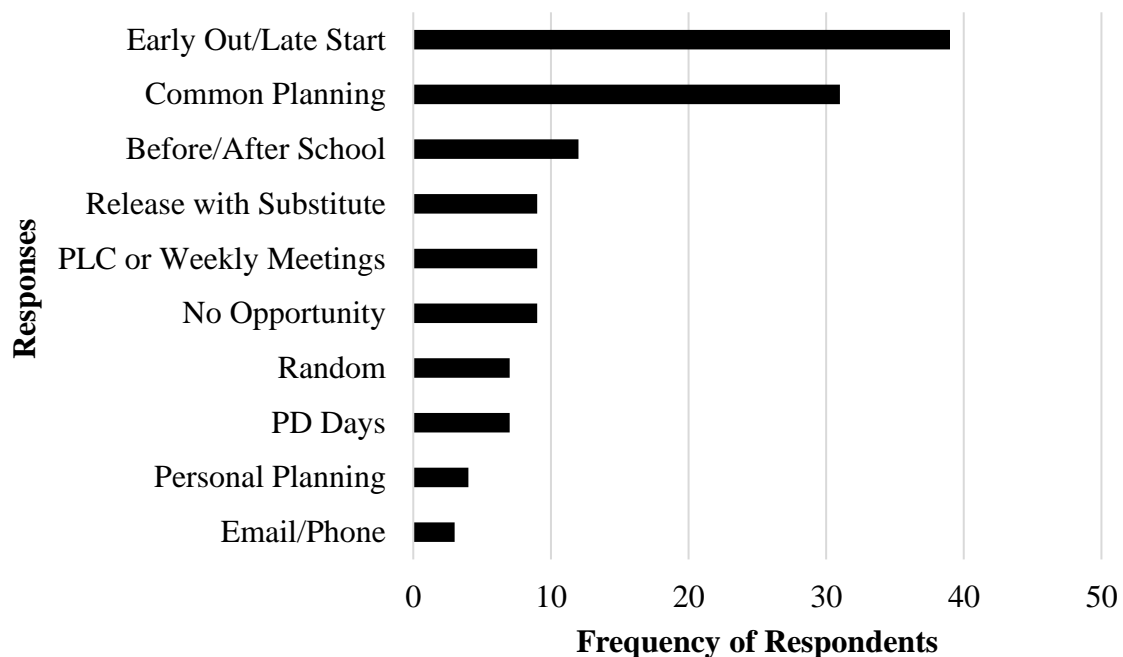
Figure 24. Special education teacher results regarding how collaboration occurred in their buildings.

Professional learning. Earlier in this chapter, data on professional training/learning for special education teachers were presented to answer research question one. The data from the professional learning question were also included in the data to analyze supports provided to special education teachers. Special education teachers were asked if they received adequate professional training/learning in order to complete their responsibilities as special education teachers. The percentage of special education teachers responding with strongly agree was 31.5% (39); agree was 58.8% (73); disagree was 6.5% (8); and strongly disagree was 3.2% (4). Four participants did not respond to the question. The frequencies of responses to special education teacher professional learning/training are displayed in Figure 13.

Summary of support needs identified. Special education teachers participating in this research study reported not receiving additional compensation as support for the added responsibilities and paperwork required for teaching special education. The teachers reported not having scheduled and designated time to collaborate with other special education, general education, and specialty teachers. Special education teachers responded they believed they had adequate professional training/learning and support from the principal, other teachers, and students' parents.

Research Question Four

How do principals provide support to special education teachers?

Respondents selected the extent they agreed ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree, to strongly disagree on a variety of questions about supports such mentors, collaboration, compensation, professional learning, perceived value, and support. The data collected from participants' responses to each survey question were analyzed for frequencies and percentages.

Mentors. Principals were asked if (a) they assigned mentors for first-year special education teachers; (b) the mentors were special education teachers; and (c) they believed mentors for special education teachers were beneficial. The majority of principals reported they assigned mentors to first-year special education teachers with a percentage of 69.6% (32). The majority of principals who assigned mentors reported the mentors were special education teachers with a percentage of 90.0% (27). Two participants did not respond to the survey question. The percentage of principals reporting they believed special education teachers benefited from having a mentor was 100% (46). The frequencies of responses from the principals are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

Frequency Data for Principal Results: Special Education Teacher Mentors

Response Option	Mentor	Special Education Teacher Mentor	Benefit
Yes	69.6%	90.0%	100%
No	30.4%	10.0%	0%

Note. Principals were asked survey questions regarding (a) providing mentors for first-year special education teachers, (b) mentors who were special education teachers, and (c) if the mentors were considered beneficial.

Special education paperwork. Principals were asked, since there are extra responsibilities and paperwork associated with teaching special education required by the IDEA, if special education teachers received (a) additional money for compensation and/or (b) non-monetary compensation, such as not having other duties assigned. The majority of principals reported special education teachers did not have opportunities to receive additional monetary or non-monetary compensation for the responsibilities and paperwork required for teaching special education required by the IDEA. The percentages of responses for the compensation questions are displayed in Table 8.

Table 8

Frequency Data for Principal Results: Provision of Special Education Teacher Compensation

Variable	Yes	No
Monetary Compensation	15.6%	84.4%
Non-Monetary Compensation	18.3%	81.7%

Note. Principals were asked survey questions regarding the provision of extra monetary and non-monetary compensation to special education teachers for the additional responsibilities and paperwork associated with teaching special education.

Compensation. Principals were asked if they believed special education teachers should receive additional money or non-monetary compensation because of the additional responsibilities and paperwork associated with teaching special education as required by the IDEA. The majority of principals reported special education teachers should not receive additional monetary or non-monetary compensation for the responsibilities and paperwork required for teaching special education. The percentages of principal responses for the compensation questions are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

Frequency Data for Principal Results: Believe in Special Education Teacher Compensation

Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Monetary Compensation[a]	11.1%	31.1%	53.3%	4.5%
Non-Monetary Compensation[b]	4.5%	36.4%	52.3%	6.8%

Note. Principals were asked survey questions regarding their beliefs about providing extra monetary and non-monetary compensation to special education teachers for the additional responsibilities and paperwork required to teach special education. [a]Two participants did not respond to the survey question. [b]Three participants did not respond to the survey question.

Support. Principals were asked to what degree they support their special education teacher(s). The percentage of principals responding with strongly agree was 91.3% (42); agree was 6.5% (3); disagree was 0% (0); and strongly disagree was 2.2% (1). The majority of principals reported supporting their special education teacher(s) (see Figure 25).
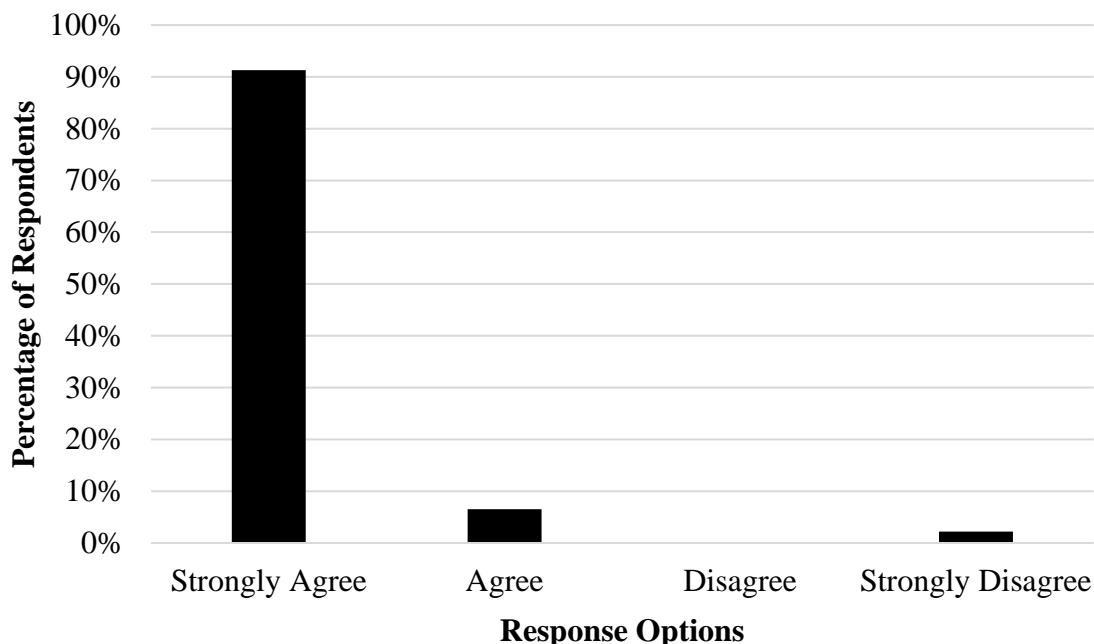
Figure 25. Principal results regarding principal support for special education teachers.

Collaboration time. Principals were asked if special education teachers in their buildings had designated time for collaboration with other special education teachers, general education teachers, and specialty teachers (e.g., art, music, physical education, computers, etc.). While most of the principals (65.2%) responded special education teachers had designated collaboration time with other special education teachers, about one-third of the principals (34.8%) answered disagree or strongly disagree. Twenty-five (54.3%) principals strongly agreed or agreed designated collaboration time was provided between special education and general education teachers, while 21 (45.7%) principals disagreed or strong disagreed. The majority of principal responses (68.9%) revealed special education teachers did not have designated time to collaborate with specialty teachers. The frequencies of principal responses are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10

Frequency Data for Principal Results: Designated Collaboration Time

Response Option	Other Special Education Teachers	General Education Teachers	Specialty Teachers
Strongly Agree	19.6%	15.2%	8.9%
Agree	45.6%	39.1%	22.2%
Disagree	32.6%	41.3%	62.2%
Strongly Disagree	2.2%	4.4%	6.7%

Note. Principals were asked if special education teachers received designated time to collaborate with

other special education teachers, general education teachers, and specialty teachers (e.g., art, music,

physical education, computers, etc.).

Principals were asked how collaboration is promoted or occurred among staff

members in their building. Principals were encouraged to select all collaboration

opportunities applicable to their situations. When a participant selected the option of

"Other" on the survey and included a description, the response was categorized with

other similar responses to determine the frequency. Schools which had common

planning time received the highest number of responses from principals, followed by

early out/late start school days for students (see Figure 26).
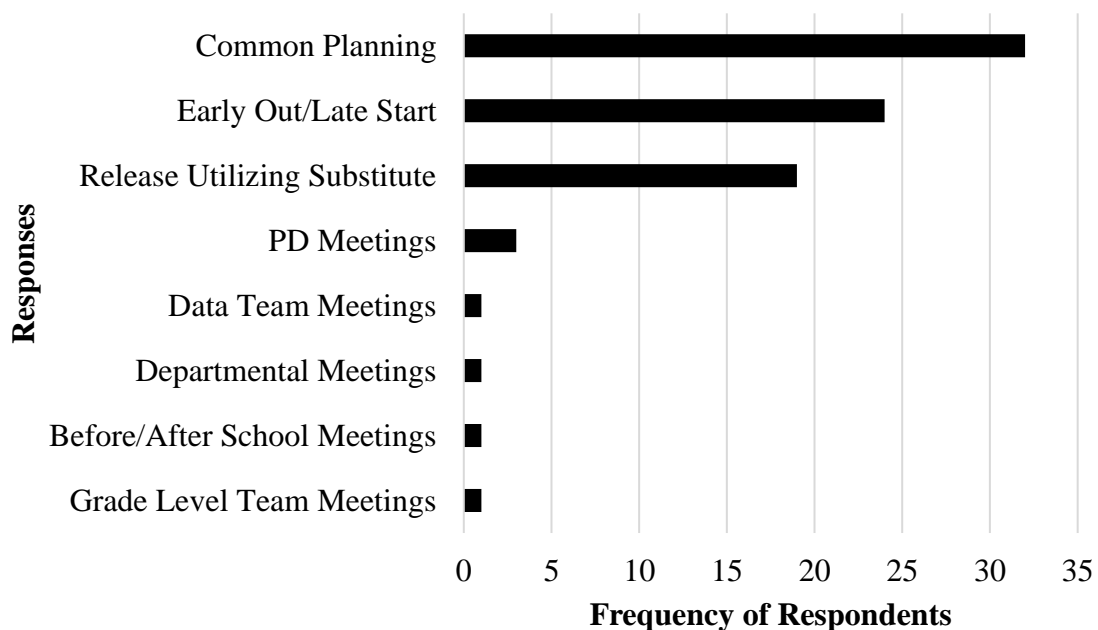
Figure 26. Principal results regarding how collaboration occurred in their buildings.

Professional training/learning. Earlier in this chapter, data on principal perceptions of professional training/learning for special education teachers were presented in order to answer research question two. The data from the professional learning question were also included in the data to analyze supports provided to special education teachers. Principals were asked if special education teachers received adequate professional training/learning in order to complete the responsibilities of a special education teacher. The percentage of principals responding with strongly agree was 37.8% (17); agree was 60.0% (28); disagree was 2.2% (1); and strongly disagree was 0% (0). One participant did not respond to the survey question. The highest percentage rates were in the categories of strongly agree and agree (see Figure 23).

Value. Principals were asked if they valued the special education teacher(s) in their buildings. The percentage of principals responding with strongly agree was 95.6%

(43); agree was 4.4% (2); disagree was 0% (0); and strongly disagree was 0% (0). One

participant did not answer the question. The frequencies of results from the principal

survey question are displayed in Figure 27.
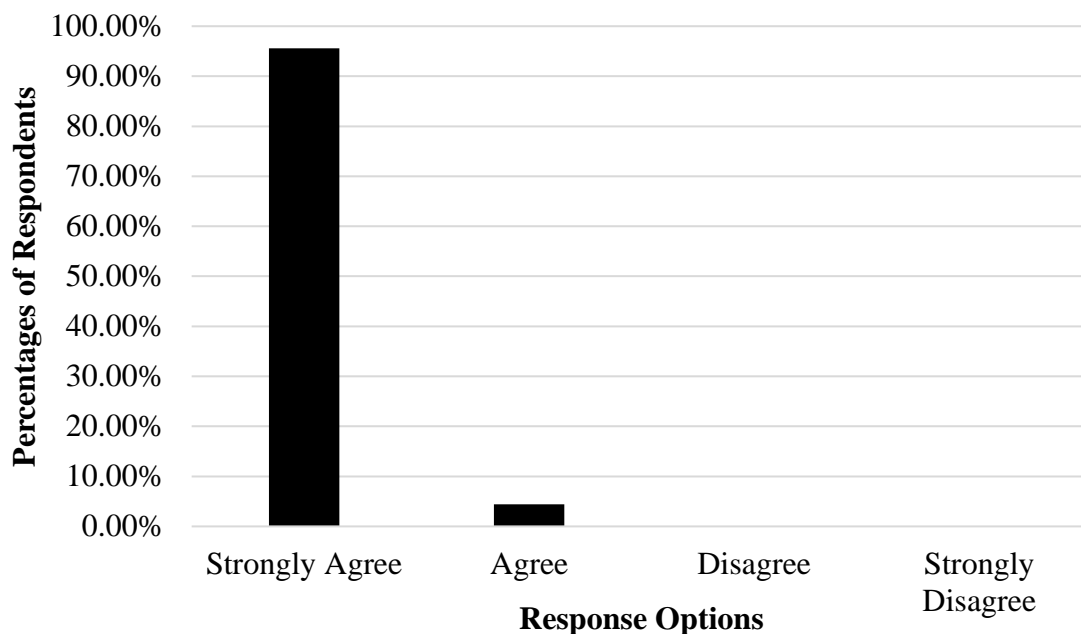
Figure 27. Principal results regarding value of special education teacher.

Summary of support needs identified. Principals reported they did not provide

additional compensation to special education teachers for the extra responsibilities and

paperwork required under the IDEA and did not provide designated time for special

education and specialty teachers to collaborate. Principals responded they provided

mentors for first-year teachers, designated time for collaboration between special and

general education teachers, and provided professional training/learning for special

education teachers. Principal perceptions included support and value for special

education teachers.

Research Question Five

How closely do supports provided by principals match needs identified by special education teachers?

Respondents selected the extent they agreed ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree, to strongly disagree on a variety of work condition and support questions, such as time, room size, collaboration, professional learning, mentors, and compensation. The data collected from participants' responses to each survey question were analyzed for frequencies and percentages.

Work conditions and supports. The majority of special education teachers reported the provision of mentors during the first year of teaching and affirmed the benefit of having mentors, which aligned with principal responses. Special education teachers reported not receiving additional monetary or non-monetary compensation for the extra responsibilities and paperwork associated with special education, and principal responses were similar. Over half of special education teachers reported not having enough time to complete special education paperwork, prepare lessons and activities, and collaborate with other teachers; however, principals overwhelmingly reported special education teachers had adequate time to complete paperwork, prepare lessons and activities, and collaborate with other teachers. In regard to teachers having the required 250 minutes of planning time each week, 59.7% of special education teachers reported having the time and 95.6% of principals reported teachers had the required time. The majority of special education teachers agreed they had adequate supplies and materials, classroom size, and professional learning/training, which was similar to the majority of principal responses. Special education teachers reported feeling valued and supported by

their principals, and principals reported valuing and supporting their teachers. The

response percentages from special education teachers and principals are displayed in

Table 11.

Table 11

Frequency Data for Special Education Teacher and Principal Results: Work Conditions and Supports

Variable	Special Education Teachers		Principals	
	Strongly Agree/Agree (Yes)	Strongly Disagree/Disagree (No)	Strongly Agree/Agree (Yes)	Strongly Disagree/Disagree (No)
Provision of Mentor				
First-Year	83.3%	16.7%	69.6%	30.4%
Special Education Teacher	84.8%	15.2%	90.0%	10.0%
Provision of Compensation				
Monetary	15.6%	84.4%	13.0%	87.0%
Non-Monetary	18.3%	81.7%	34.8%	65.2%
Adequate Time				
Paperwork	23.8%	76.2%	84.8%	15.2%
Lessons & Activities	39.2%	60.8%	95.7%	4.3%
Special Education Collaboration	37.7%	62.3%	78.3%	21.7%
General Education Collaboration	36.5%	63.5%	87.0%	13.0%
Specialty Collaboration	6.4%	93.6%	56.5%	43.5%
250 Minutes Planning	59.7%	40.3%	95.6%	4.4%
Provision of School Items				
Supplies & Materials	70.4%	29.6%	95.7%	4.3%
Classroom Size	72.8%	27.2%	91.3%	8.7%
Professional Learning	90.3%	9.7%	97.8%	2.2%
Principal				
Value	77.4%	22.6%	100%	0%
Support	77.0%	23.0%	97.8%	2.2%

Summary of work needs and supports aligning. Perceptions of special education teachers aligned with principal perceptions in the following areas: having first-year mentors, having necessary supplies and materials, having adequate classroom size, and having adequate professional training/learning. The perceptions of special education teachers and principals were also in agreement in terms of special education teachers being valued and supported. Perceptions of special education teachers and principals did not align in regard to compensation for additional responsibilities and paperwork, adequate time for completion of paperwork, adequate time to develop lesson and activities, and adequate time to collaborate with other teachers.

Research Question Six

How are opportunities for personal growth provided for special education teachers?

Respondents selected the extent they agreed ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree, to strongly disagree on questions pertaining to professional learning. The data collected from participants' responses to the survey questions were analyzed for frequencies and percentages.

Mentors. The percentage of special education teachers reporting having mentors to guide them during the first year of teaching was 83.3%. Teachers who had a mentor and reported the mentor was another special education teacher was 84.8%. The percentage of principals reporting the provision of mentors to first-year special education teachers was 69.6%. Principals reported the mentor was also a special education teacher at 90% (see Tables 3 and 11).

Collaboration. The percentage of special education teachers reporting having scheduled and designed collaboration time with (a) other special education teachers was 37.7%; (b) general education teachers was 36.5%; and (c) specialty teachers was 6.4%. The percentage of principals reporting special education teachers had adequate time for collaboration with (a) other special education teachers was 78.3%; (b) general education teachers was 87.0%; and (c) specialty teachers was 56.5%. Special education teacher and principal results from the survey are displayed in Table 11.

Professional training/learning. The percentage of special education teachers reporting having adequate professional training/learning in order to complete their responsibilities of being a special education teacher was 90.3%. The percentage of principals reporting special education teachers had adequate professional training/learning was 97.8%. The professional training/learning results from special education teachers and principals are included in Table 11.

Summary of professional training/learning. Special education teachers and principals reported professional training/learning for special education teachers was provided through mentors and professional training/learning. While principals reported special education teachers had adequate and designated time for collaboration with other special education teachers and general education teachers, providing collaboration time with specialty teachers was more difficult. Special education teachers reported not having scheduled or designated time for collaboration with other special education teachers, general education teachers, or specialty teachers.

Research Question Seven

How can job satisfaction for special education teachers be improved?

Respondents selected the extent they agreed ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree, to strongly disagree on questions concerning job satisfaction and decisions to continue teaching in the field of special education. The data collected from participants' responses to the survey questions were analyzed for frequencies and percentages.

Teacher perspective. Special education teachers were asked if they were satisfied teaching special education. The percentage of teachers reporting strongly agree was 22.6% (28); agree was 54.0% (67); disagree was 16.9% (21); and strongly disagree was 6.5% (8). Four participants did not respond to the question. Special education teachers were asked if they planned to continue teaching in the field of special education. The percentage of teachers reporting strongly agree was 37.4% (46); agree was 51.2% (63); disagree was 9.8% (12); and strongly disagree was 1.6% (2). Five participants did not respond to the survey question. The special education teacher survey results for job satisfaction are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

Frequency Data for Special Education Teacher Results: Job Satisfaction

Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Satisfied[a]	22.6%	54.0%	16.9%	6.5%
Plan to Continue[b]	37.4%	51.2%	9.8%	1.6%

Note. Special education teachers were asked if they were satisfied with their positions and if they planned to continue teaching in the field of special education. [a]Four participants did not respond to the survey question. [b]Five participants did not respond to the survey question.

Principal perspective. Principals were asked if they believed special education teachers were satisfied with their teaching positions. The percentage of principals reporting strongly agree was 60.0% (27); agree was 40.0% (18); disagree was 0% (0); and strongly disagree was 0% (0). One participant did not respond to the survey question. All of the principals answering the survey question reported special education teachers were satisfied with their teaching positions (see Figure 28).
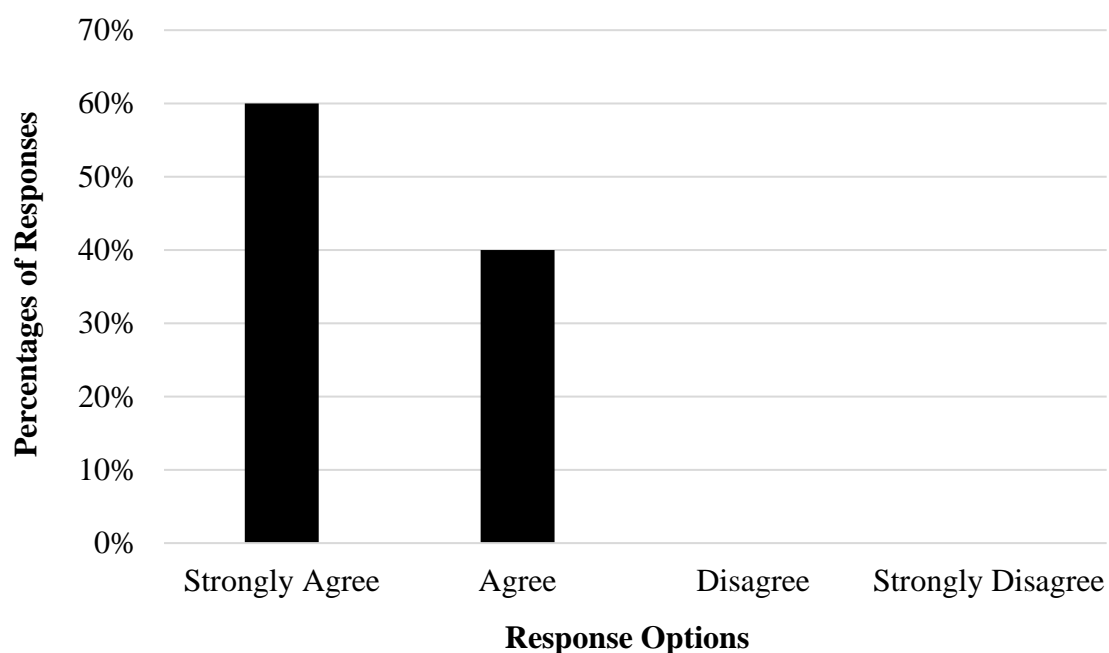
Figure 28. Principal results regarding special education teacher job satisfaction.

Summary of special education teacher job satisfaction. Special education teachers reported 76.6% were satisfied with their teaching positions, while 23.4% were unsatisfied. All of the principals reported agreement with special education teachers being satisfied with their teaching positions. The majority of special education teachers

planned to continue teaching special education, but 11.4% of teachers did not plan to continue in the field.

Summary

The research surveys were sent to 279 building principals and 932 special education teachers from 60 accredited public K-12 school districts in Missouri. Responses from the surveys provided quantitative data which were reviewed and analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics including categorization, percentages, and frequencies. Perceptions collected through the survey revealed some special education teacher work condition needs and support needs not being met or provided by principals. Special education teacher needs not met included the following: (a) time to complete special education paperwork; (b) time to develop lessons and activities for students; (c) time for collaboration with other special education teachers, general education teachers, and specialty teachers; and (d) additional compensation for the extra paperwork and responsibilities required under the IDEA in order to teach special education.

Almost one out of every four special education teachers responding to the survey reported not being satisfied with their special education teaching positions. Principals did not perceive special education teacher job satisfaction in the same manner. Principals reported special education teacher job satisfaction at 100%. Principals did not perceive there was a need for special education teachers to have additional time to complete paperwork, develop lessons and activities, or collaborate with other teachers. Principals did not perceive there was a need for additional monetary or non-monetary compensation for special education teachers.

Chapter Five contains a review of the findings from this chapter, as they pertain to each research question for the study. Conclusions are included following analysis of the research findings. Implications for practice, with suggestions regarding how to improve work conditions and supports for special education teachers, are discussed. Finally, recommendations for future research on the topic of improving job satisfaction and retention of special education teachers are offered.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

This study was designed to discover trends or themes connecting special education teachers' work condition needs and systematic supports provided by principals which may impact job satisfaction, and ultimately, the decisions of teachers to continue teaching in the field of special education. The data for this research study were collected through surveys of special education teachers and principals. Special education teachers and principals participating in the study were from 60 accredited public K-12 school districts in Missouri.

Findings

Statistical analyses of the data were completed and presented in Chapter Four. Findings from the data analyses are organized by research questions. Findings in the form of trends and themes are presented.

Research question one. What do special education teachers believe are their greatest work condition needs?

The majority of special education teachers reported having adequate access to supplies and materials, classroom size, and professional training/learning. Special education teachers reported feeling included in building activities and decisions and valued by the principal and other staff members in the building. The majority of special education teachers reported needing the following: (a) time to complete the paperwork associated with teaching special education; (b) time to develop lessons and activities for students, beyond the required 250 minutes of planning time per week; and (c) time to collaborate with other special education, general education, and specialty teachers.

Research question two. What do principals believe are the greatest work condition needs for special education teachers?

The majority of principals reported special education teachers had (a) time to complete paperwork; (b) time to develop lessons and activities for students; (c) access to supplies and materials; (d) access to adequate classroom size; (e) adequate time to collaborate with special education, general education, and specialty teachers; and (f) support from the principal, other teachers, and students' parents. The only area close to being identified as a need not being met was adequate collaboration time with specialty teachers. All other work condition needs for special education teachers were considered met according to the majority of principals.

Research question three. How do special education teachers feel supported at school?

The majority of special education teachers reported they had adequate professional training/learning and support from the principal, other teachers, and students' parents. Special education teachers reported they did not receive additional monetary or non-monetary compensation for the added responsibilities and paperwork required when teaching special education. The majority of special education teachers reported they did not have scheduled and designated time to collaborate with special education, general education, or specialty teachers.

Research question four. How do principals provide support to special education teachers?

The majority of principals reported they provide (a) mentors for first-year teachers; (b) designated time for collaboration between special and general education

teachers; and (c) professional training/learning for special education teachers. Principal perceptions included support and value for special education teachers. The majority of principals reported they did not provide additional compensation to special education teachers for the extra responsibilities and paperwork required when teaching special education and did not provide designated time for special education and specialty teachers to collaborate.

Research question five. How closely do supports provided by principals match needs identified by special education teachers?

Perceptions of special education teachers aligned with principal perceptions in the following areas: (a) having first-year mentors; (b) having necessary supplies and materials; (c) having adequate classroom size; (d) having adequate professional training/learning; (e) being valued; and (f) being supported. Perceptions from special education teachers and principals did not align in regard to the following: (a) compensation for additional responsibilities and paperwork; (b) adequate time for completion of paperwork; (c) adequate time to develop lesson and activities; and (d) adequate time to collaborate with other teachers.

Research question six. How are opportunities for personal growth provided for special education teachers?

The majority of special education teachers and principals reported opportunities for special education teacher growth through the provision of mentors and professional training/learning activities. While the majority of principals reported special education teachers had adequate and designated time for collaboration with other special education teachers and general education teachers, finding collaboration time with specialty

teachers was more difficult. The majority of special education teachers reported not having scheduled or designated time for collaboration with other special education teachers, general education teachers, or specialty teachers.

Research question seven. How can job satisfaction for special education teachers be improved?

While the majority of special education teachers reported they were satisfied with their teaching positions, almost 25% of teachers were not satisfied. All of the principals participating reported special education teachers were satisfied with their teaching positions. The majority of special education teachers planned to continue teaching special education; however, 11.4% of teachers planned to leave.

Conclusions

Conclusions for this study were formulated from the analysis of survey responses regarding special education teacher and principal perceptions of work conditions, supports, and job satisfaction. In addition, conclusions reflect findings from the review of literature presented in Chapter Two. Conclusions presented in this section are organized around each research question.

Conclusions for research question one. What do special education teachers believe are their greatest work condition needs?

Special education teacher work conditions were investigated through teacher perceptions. Special educators reported having the necessary classroom supplies and materials and adequate classroom sizes. They also reported adequate professional training/learning opportunities; however, teachers reported a need for scheduled and designated time for collaboration with other special education, general education, and

specialty teachers. Why did special education teachers indicate adequate professional training/learning opportunities while reporting the need for collaboration time? One reason could be special education teachers did not view collaboration time with other teachers in the same manner as professional learning opportunities. Collaboration time may be perceived by teachers as more informal, small group work or planning time versus professional training/learning time as more formal, intensive time with large group presentations or higher education (O'Connor, 2016). In an article by Benedict et al. (2014) on how special education teachers can take charge of their professional learning, the researchers included both collaborative planning and professional development through classes and sessions as ways teachers can cultivate special education expertise.

Special education teachers reported the need for more time to develop lessons and activities for students and to complete special education paperwork such as IEPs, evaluation reports, data collection, and progress reports. The need for more time to manage workloads and complete paperwork was also reported by several researchers (Bettini et al., 2017; Brunsting et al., 2014; Hale, 2015, 2016a; Williams & Dikes, 2015). Why did special education teachers in this study report the need for more time to create lessons and complete paperwork, when the majority of teachers reported having the required 250 minutes of planning time per week in compliance with requirements of the MODESE (2013)? There could be a number of factors influencing the need for additional time. One factor could be the required 250 minutes of planning time per week are utilized for collaborating with other teachers, communicating with parents, reviewing student progress, meeting with parents, or problem solving around student issues (Collins et al., 2017; Hale, 2016a). Another factor could be the amount of special education

paperwork required, such as number of IEPs and evaluation reports to complete (Bettini & Murphy, 2016; Collins et al., 2017; Hale, 2015, 2016a; Williams & Dikes, 2015). The amount of paperwork could be the result of a high caseload.

Special education teachers reported feeling included in building activities and decisions and being valued as special education teachers by others in the building. Previous researchers have often cited feelings of isolation as a significant issue for special education teachers (Hale, 2015; Holdheide & DeMonte, 2016; McDowell, 2017). Tyler and Brunner (2014) reported workplace decision making is an additional factor in special education teacher job satisfaction and career decisions. Bettini et al. (2015) suggested principals should "include special educators in school social networks… Include special educators in decisions about their work…Include special educators in decision making beyond special education" (pp. 222-223). Special education teacher needs for feeling included in activities and decisions and feeling valued appeared to be met for the participants in this study.

Conclusions for research question two. What do principals believe are the greatest work condition needs for special education teachers?

Special education teacher work conditions were examined through principal perceptions. Principals reported perceptions of special education teachers having adequate time for paperwork, lessons and activities, and collaboration time with other teachers. Principals reported special education teachers had adequate classroom sizes and professional learning opportunities. They may have responded in the affirmative to the questions regarding adequate time for paperwork, lessons, and collaboration because it is the principal's responsibility to ensure all teachers have the required 250 minutes per

week for planning in accordance to requirements set forth by the MODESE (2013).

Additionally, principals may not be fully aware of how special education teachers spend

the required 250 minutes of planning per week or the amount of additional time spent

completing paperwork, planning for lessons, or collaborating. Bateman and Bateman

(2014) said, "Principals need to understand the time it takes special educators to prepare

and implement the attendant legal requirements as well as educational programming and

services" (p. 153). Finally, principals reported no concerns about principals, teachers,

and students' parents supporting special education teachers.

Conclusions for research question three. How do special education teachers

feel supported at school?

Supports for special education teachers were explored through teacher

perceptions. Special education teachers reported receiving support from mentors during

their first year of teaching. The utilization and benefit of mentors for new teachers to

provide professional and emotional support has been studied by several researchers

(Arnett, 2016a, 2017; Israel, Kamman, McCray, & Sindelar, 2014; Sebald & Rude, 2015;

Vittek, 2015). The use of mentors for first-year special education teachers is beneficial

(Sebald & Rude, 2015).

The majority of special education teachers reported they did not receive additional

monetary or non-monetary compensation for the extra responsibilities required of special

education teachers. Shortages of special education teachers have been reported for

several years (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Some states have explored

providing financial incentives to recruit and retain teachers in shortage subject areas

(Aragon, 2016). Strunk and Zeehandelaar (2015) reported while some districts in

California are implementing incentive policies targeting bilingual or English as a secondary language teachers, they "…do not find similar supports for the implementation of incentives that target special education teachers" (p. 307). Providing additional monetary or non-monetary compensation for special education teachers could have a positive influence on job satisfaction and retention (Aragon, 2016; Vittek, 2015).

Special education teachers reported receiving adequate professional learning time but not having enough scheduled and designated collaboration time with other special education, general education, and specialty teachers. Teachers want more collaboration time. Special education teachers benefit from collaborative cultures in school buildings (Bettini et al., 2017; Brownell & Sindelar, 2016; Holdheide & DeMonte, 2016; Tyler & Brunner, 2014).

Special education teachers felt supported by the principal, other teachers, and students' parents. Bettini et al. (2015) stated, "Administrators play an essential role in supporting special educators" (p. 221). Support from principals is one of the most important factors impacting a special education teacher's decision to stay or to leave the field (Bettini et al., 2015; Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013, 2014; Hughes et al., 2015).

Conclusions for research question four. How do principals provide support to special education teachers?

Supports for special education teachers were studied through principal perceptions. According to principals in this study, they support special education teachers through mentors, professional learning, and designated collaboration time with other special education teachers and general education teachers. Principals reported overall support and value for special education teachers. Principals did not provide

designated collaboration time for special education and specialty teachers. Principals did not provide additional monetary or non-monetary compensation for the heavy workload special education teachers face, and this lack of support can affect teacher job satisfaction (Thornton et al., 2007). Special education teachers voiced a need to collaborate with other teachers. Administrators must serve as advocates for teacher collaboration and support collaborative efforts (Bateman & Bateman, 2014; Ketterlin-Geller et al., 2015). However, Bettini et al. (2015) noted, "Administrators play an essential role in supporting special educators, but they seldom receive adequate preparation to provide this support effectively" (p. 221).

Conclusions for research question five. How closely do supports provided by principals match the needs identified by special education teachers?

Special education teacher work conditions and supports were compared through teacher and principal perceptions. According to the findings of this study, the majority of principals reported special education teachers had the necessary supplies and materials for instruction and an adequate classroom size, which matched what the majority of special education teachers reported. The majority of principals reported special education teachers had mentors for their first year of teaching and received adequate professional learning, and the majority of special education teachers agreed. Principals reported they supported and valued special education teachers, which matched the perceptions of the teachers.

Special education teachers in this study reported not having enough time to complete special education paperwork or develop lessons and activities for students. The special education teachers' perceptions did not match the perceptions of principals.

Principals reported special education teachers had adequate time to complete workload responsibilities.

Special education teachers in the study reported they did not have scheduled and designed time to collaborate with other special education teachers, general education teachers, or specialty teachers. The majority of principals responded they believed special education teachers had adequate time to collaborate. The principals' perceptions did not match the special education teachers' perceptions.

Special education teachers reported they did not receive additional monetary or non-monetary compensation for extra workload responsibilities. Likewise, principals reported special education teachers did not receive additional compensation for extra responsibilities. Additionally, the majority of principals also reported they believed special education teachers should not receive additional compensation for the extra responsibilities. Special education teachers should continuously attempt to communicate their needs and ideas for solutions to their principals. Bateman and Bateman (2014) wrote, "It is important to remember that we are all human and not mind readers. Principals' cannot read their teachers' minds, just like teachers cannot read their principal's minds-which is why clear communication is critical" (p. 155).

Conclusions for research question six. How are opportunities for personal growth provided for special education teachers?

Special education teacher personal growth opportunities were investigated through teacher and principal perceptions. As stated earlier in this chapter, the majority of special education teachers in the study reported not having enough collaboration time, while principals reported special education teachers had adequate time. Special

education teacher and principal perceptions aligned on the use of mentors for first-year teachers and the provision of professional training/learning opportunities for teachers' personal growth.

Conclusions for research question seven. How can job satisfaction for special education teachers be improved?

Special education teacher job satisfaction was examined through teacher and principal perceptions. According to the findings of the study, 100% of principals reported special education teachers were satisfied with their positions. The principal perceptions did not match special education teacher perceptions, because 76.6% of teachers reported job satisfaction, while 23.4% of teachers reported not being satisfied. Furthermore, 11.4% of special education teachers in the study reported they did not plan to continue to teach special education. These findings suggest job satisfaction for special education teachers could be improved. Areas of improvement, based on findings in this study, include (a) time for paperwork; (b) time for lesson planning; (c) time for collaboration; and (d) compensation for extra workload responsibilities.

Implications for Practice

Based on the findings from this study, there are two main recommendations to improve work conditions and job satisfaction for special education teachers. One of the recommendations involves changes in school practices at the building level, and the other involves change at the district level. Input from special education teacher stakeholders should be sought and encouraged for buy-in and maximum benefit.

Increase special education teacher and principal communication. Some of the mismatched perceptions revealed in this study between special education teachers and

principals could be the result of a lack of communication or miscommunication. Teachers should be encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas for possible solutions to their principals. Principals should seek feedback from special education teachers on how to support their staff members and should be open to suggestions.

District-level strategic and needs-based assessments. School districts should consider constructing two strategic and needs-based assessments – one assessment for special education teachers and one assessment for principals. The teacher assessment could be utilized to identify what supports are working for special education teachers and where there may be opportunities for improvement. The principal assessment could be utilized to determine what additional professional learning would benefit principals as they support special education teachers. The assessments could also be used to establish baseline data, as well as subsequent assessment data, for district and departmental yearly growth and accountability plans.

Restructure for designated collaboration time. Principals should consider restructuring the existing school day to accommodate time for collaboration. Examples of restructuring could include implementing late start or early dismissal days for students in order for teachers to collaborate and identifying time during the day for common planning or team planning. Principals could restructure professional learning days to include a portion for teacher collaboration. This teacher collaboration could be among same subject-area teachers, across different subject-area teachers, and transverse different building levels.

Special education teacher recruitment and retention plans. School districts should consider creating a special education teacher recruitment plan to draw potential

teachers into the district. The recruitment plan could contain an increase with the salary schedule due to special education teacher shortages, a bonus incentive for signing contracts early in the hiring season, explanation of support layers available, and professional growth opportunities. Special education teacher retention plans could include additional monetary or non-monetary compensation for the extra responsibilities required of special education teachers, outlines of support layers available, and professional training/learning opportunities available.

Recommendations for Future Research

More research is needed to explore how job satisfaction can be improved for special education teachers. This research study included a sample of special education teachers and principals from accredited K-12 public schools in Missouri. Future studies could include a wider sampling of participants in Missouri and other states to gain a more comprehensive understanding of special education teacher and principal perceptions on workloads and how to provide better support. Other quantitative studies could focus on perceptions of beginning special education teachers versus more experienced teachers and of teachers in rural versus urban school districts. For quantitative studies involving surveys, careful consideration should be given to the time of the year when surveys are distributed in order to maximize the participant response rate.

Other topics pertaining to special education teacher job satisfaction and retention should be explored. Further research into compensation or incentive plans could include what schools are including in incentive plans for recruitment and retention of special education teachers. Additional research could focus on the influence or input teachers' labor unions have on compensation or incentive plans in the contract decision-making

process. Studies like these could give policymakers at the school district level helpful and necessary data to review and consider when making decisions.

Additional research studies could allow for examination of the work condition needs and supports required for specific types of special education teachers, such as teachers of students with emotional and behavior difficulties. Special education teachers serve students with a variety of disabilities and needs. While overarching teacher needs may remain the same, additional work and emotional considerations may be required due to the intensity level and significance of student needs.

Summary

For years, the field of special education has been like a revolving door where teachers enter on one side and exit on the other (Owen, 2015). Special education teacher retention rates have been lower than general education rates for years (Andrews & Brown, 2015). Many researchers have investigated the shortage of teachers in the field of special education and how to better support and develop teachers to keep them in the classroom (Billingsley, 2005; Brownell & Sindelar, 2016; Hale, 2015; Sweigart & Collins, 2017; Tyler & Brunner, 2014). A review of Herzberg's motivational theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs was presented to establish a theoretical framework to substantiate the importance of job satisfaction and fulfillment of employees' personal needs when addressing special education teacher retention issues (Pullen, 2014).

In Chapter Two, a review of literature highlighted the significance of special education teacher shortages, as well as attrition and retention issues in the field. The literature review included discussion of special education teacher work condition needs such as planning time, compensation, collaboration time, and classroom materials.

Additionally, special education teacher job satisfaction, teacher induction and mentoring programs, and principal and parent supports were discussed. The review of literature concluded with what other career fields do to retain employees.

Chapter Three contained the methodology for the study. This included the problem and purpose of the study, which involved special education teacher and principal perceptions of teachers' needs and supports offered. The research questions and reasoning behind the quantitative research design were discussed. Systematic sampling of the population was utilized to obtain the sample for the study. Participants included special education teacher and principals from 60 accredited public K-12 school districts in Missouri. Participants for the study received an online survey to complete. The data received from the surveys were analyzed to give frequencies and percentages of responses, and descriptions of perceptions and themes were developed. Ethical considerations and reassurances for participants were explained.

In Chapter Four, data were analyzed for each research question. Data collected through the survey revealed some special education teacher work condition needs and support needs not being met or provided by principals. Special education teacher needs not met included the following: (a) time to complete special education paperwork; (b) time to develop lessons and activities for students; (c) time for collaboration with other special education, general education, and specialty teachers; and (d) additional compensation for the extra paperwork and responsibilities required under the IDEA in order to teach special education. Job satisfaction percentage for special education teachers was 76.6%; however, 23.4% of teachers reported not being satisfied. The majority of teachers reported they would continue to teach special education (88.6%), but

11.4% of teachers did not plan to continue teaching. Principals did not perceive special education teacher job satisfaction in the same manner and reported special education teacher job satisfaction at 100%. Principals did not perceive there was a need for special education teachers to have additional time to complete paperwork, develop lessons and activities, or collaborate with other teachers. Principals did not perceive there was a need for additional monetary or non-monetary compensation for special education teachers.

Chapter Five contained a review of the study findings. Beginning special education teachers were supported by mentors for the first year of teaching. Special education teachers reportedly had necessary supplies and materials, adequate classroom size, and professional training/learning opportunities. Special education teachers were supported and valued by their principals, other teachers, and students' parents. However, there were special education teacher needs not met. Special education teachers needed more time to complete paperwork, develop lessons and activities, and collaborate with teachers. Special educators did not receive any additional compensation for the extra responsibilities of teaching special education. According to the results of this study, almost one in four special education teachers were not satisfied with their teaching positions, and 11.4% of teachers did not plan to continue teaching special education.

Appendix A

Survey for Special Education Teachers

The information obtained from this survey will be kept confidential. Personal information will not be published in any way in the study.

1. How long have you been a special education teacher?
   - ☐ First year
   - ☐ 2-5 years
   - ☐ 6-10 years
   - ☐ 11-15 years
   - ☐ 16-20 years
   - ☐ 21 or more years

2. What level of students do you teach?
   <u>Check all that apply:</u>
   - ☐ Primary/Elementary School
   - ☐ Middle School/Jr. High School
   - ☐ Senior High School

3. How many special education teachers are in your building?
   - ☐ 1
   - ☐ 2
   - ☐ 3 or more

4. I have/had a mentor for my first year of teaching special education.
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

5. If you have/had a mentor for your first year of teaching, is/was he/she another special education teacher?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

6. I benefited from having a mentor.
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ N/A

7. Special education teachers in my district have the opportunity to receive additional money for completing the additional responsibilities and paperwork associated with special education.
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

8. I chose to participate in the opportunity to receive additional money for completing the additional responsibilities and paperwork associated with special education.
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ N/A

9. Special education teachers in my building have the opportunity to receive non-monetary benefits (such as not having other duties assigned to general education teachers) for completing the additional responsibilities and paperwork associated with special education.
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

10. I chose to participate in the opportunity to receive non-monetary benefits (such as not having other duties assigned to general education teachers) for completing the additional responsibilities and paperwork associated with special education.
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No
    - ☐ N/A

11. I feel supported in my position by the principal.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

12. I feel supported in my position by other teachers in the building.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

13. I have adequate time to complete the necessary paperwork (IEPs, evaluations, documentation, etc.) related to special education.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

14. I have scheduled and designated time to collaborate with general education teachers.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

15. I have scheduled and designated time to collaborate with other special education teachers in my district.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

16. How is collaboration promoted among staff members in your building?
    Check all that apply:
    - ☐ Early out/late start
    - ☐ Common planning time
    - ☐ Release time utilizing a sub
    - ☐ Other: _____

17. I have scheduled and designated time to collaborate with specialty teachers (art, music, PE, computers, etc.).
    ☐Strongly Agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly Disagree

18. I have adequate time to develop lessons and activities.
    ☐Strongly Agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly Disagree

19. I have the necessary supplies and materials for instruction.
    ☐Strongly Agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly Disagree

20. I have an adequate room size.
    ☐Strongly Agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly Disagree

21. I have at least 250 minutes per week for planning time.
    ☐Strongly Agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly Disagree

22. I have parental support.
    ☐Strongly Agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly Disagree

23. I feel valued as a teacher in the building.
    ☐Strongly Agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly Disagree

24. I am included in building activities and decisions.
    ☐Strongly Agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly Disagree

25. I receive adequate professional training/learning in order to complete my responsibilities as a special education teacher.
    ☐Strongly Agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly Disagree

26. I feel valued by my principal.
    ☐Strongly Agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly Disagree

27. I am satisfied with my teaching position.
    ☐Strongly Agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly Disagree

28. I plan to continue to teach in the field of special education.
    ☐Strongly Agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly Disagree

Appendix B

Survey for Principals

The information obtained from this survey will be kept confidential. Personal information will not be published in any way in the study.

1. How long have you been a principal?
    - ☐ First year
    - ☐ 2-5 years
    - ☐ 6-10 years
    - ☐ 11-15 years
    - ☐ 16-20 years
    - ☐ 21 or more years

2. At what school level are your responsibilities and leadership?
    Check all that apply:
    - ☐ Primary/Elementary School
    - ☐ Middle School/Jr. High School
    - ☐ Senior High School
    - ☐ Other:_____

3. How many special education teachers are in your building?
    - ☐ 1
    - ☐ 2
    - ☐ 3 or more

4. I assign mentors for first-year special education teachers.
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

5. If you assign mentors for first-year special education teachers, are the mentors also special education teachers?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No
    - ☐ N/A

6. I believe assigning mentors to new special education teachers is beneficial.
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No

7. My district provides additional monetary compensation to special education teachers for the time involved in completing the additional responsibilities and paperwork associated with special education.
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

8. I provide non-monetary benefits to special education teachers for the time involved in completing the additional responsibilities and paperwork associated with special education.
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

9. I support the special education teacher in my building.
   ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

10. The special education teacher is supported by other teachers in the building.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

11. The special education teacher in my building has adequate time to complete necessary paperwork (IEPs, evaluations, documentation, etc.) related to special education.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

12. The special education teacher in my building has adequate time to collaborate with general education teachers.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

13. In my building, the special education teacher and general education teachers have designated time for collaboration.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

14. The special education teacher in my building has adequate time to collaborate with other special education teachers in the district.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

15. In my district, the special education teachers have designated time for collaboration with other special education teachers in the district.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

16. The special education teacher in my building has adequate time to collaborate with specialty teachers (art, music, PE, computers, etc.).
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

17. In my building, the special education teacher and specialty teachers have designated time for collaboration.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

18. How do you promote collaboration among staff members in your building?
    <u>Check all that apply:</u>
    ☐ Early out/late start
    ☐ Common planning time
    ☐ Release time utilizing a sub
    ☐ Other: _____

19. In my building, the special education teacher has adequate time to develop lessons and activities.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

20. In my building, the special education teacher has the necessary supplies and materials for instruction.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

21. In my building, the special education teacher has an appropriate classroom size.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

22. In my building, the special education teacher has at least 250 minutes per week for planning time.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

23. In my building, the special education teacher has support from students' parents.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

24. Special education teachers should receive additional monetary compensation for completing the additional responsibilities and paperwork associated with special education.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

25. Special education teachers should receive non-monetary benefits (such as not having other duties assigned to general education teachers) for completing the additional responsibilities and paperwork associated with special education.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

26. Special education teachers receive adequate professional training/learning in order to complete the responsibilities of a special education teacher.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

27. I value the special education teacher in my building.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

28. The special education teacher in my building appears to be satisfied with his/her position.
    ☐Strongly Agree   ☐Agree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly Disagree

Appendix C

IRB Approval Disposition

LINDENWOOD

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY ST.CHARLES, MISSOURI

DATE: June 21, 2016

TO: Tanya Rapert, Ed.D
FROM: Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board

STUDY TITLE: [906846-1] Feeling Valued, Supported, and Satisfied: Perceptions of Special
                     Educators and Principals
IRB REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: June 21, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE: June 21, 2017
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research project. Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. PLEASE NOTE SUGGESTIONS. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

SUGGESTIONS. The separate adult consent form for the teacher participants should describe the purpose and activity specific to the teacher participants, which may be mildly different than the purpose and activity specific to the principals. Though the two separate ones were requested, and they were indeed submitted as identical documents, this study shall be considered approved.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the IRB.

This project has been determined to be a   project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the completion/amendment form for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of June 21, 2017 .

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherrie Wisdom at (636) 949-4478 or swisdom@lindenwood.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

If you have any questions, please send them to IRB@lindenwood.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board's records.

Generated on IRBNet

Appendix D

Letter of Introduction and Recruitment

My name is Tanya Rapert, and I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University. As part of my program requirements, I am conducting a study for a dissertation titled *Feeling Valued, Supported, and Satisfied: Perceptions of Special Educators and Principals*. The purpose of this study is to discover trends or themes connecting special education teachers' work conditions, needs, job satisfaction, supports provided by principals, and the decisions of teachers to continue teaching in the field of special education.

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to complete a brief online survey. The amount of time required to complete the survey is approximately 10 minutes. The survey questions are focused on supports provided to special education teachers, compensation for additional responsibilities associated with special education, work conditions, opportunities for collaboration, and perceptions of feeling valued and satisfied.

The survey will not require you to provide personally identifiable information; therefore, all responses will be anonymous. Information collected will be kept confidential, stored in a locked file cabinet, and destroyed three years after completion of the study.

If you are a principal and you are willing to participate in the study, please read the attached letter of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities, click on the link in the email titled *Survey for Principals* to complete the survey, and forward the email from the researcher to the special education teachers in your building. If you are a

special education teacher and you are willing to participate in the study, please read the

attached letter of Informed Consent and click on the link in the email titled *Survey for*

Special Education Teachers to complete the survey. Your consent for the survey will be

considered signed and accepted if you complete the survey. The web address will be

open for two weeks for you to respond.

     If you have any questions about the survey or the study, please feel free to contact

me. Thank you in advance for your time and participation!

Respectfully,

Tanya Rapert, Researcher

Doctoral Student
School of Education
Lindenwood University

Appendix E

Letter of Informed Consent for Principals

LINDENWOOD

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Feeling Valued, Supported, and Satisfied: Perceptions of Special Educators and
Principals

Principal Investigator: Tanya L. Rapert
                          Telephone: ███████   E-mail: ████████████

Participant_____ Contact info _____

_____

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Tanya L. Rapert under
    the guidance of Dr. Kathy Grover. The purpose of this research is to discover trends
    or themes connecting special education teachers' work conditions, needs, job
    satisfaction, supports provided by principals, and the decisions of teachers to continue
    teaching in the field of special education.

2. a) Your participation will involve **completing an anonymous survey.**

    b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be **approximately 10
    minutes.**

    c) Sixty Missouri public school districts, with approximately 279 building principals
    and 932 special education teachers, will be involved in this research.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your
    participation will contribute to the knowledge about supporting special education
    teachers and may help society.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research
    study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any
    questions you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should
    you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation which may result from this study, and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Tanya Rapert, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Kathy Grover, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Marilyn Abbott, Provost, at mabbott@lindenwood.edu or 636-949-4912.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I may retain a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above by completing the survey.

Appendix F

Letter of Informed Consent for Special Education Teachers

LINDENW∞D

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Feeling Valued, Supported, and Satisfied: Perceptions of Special Educators and
Principals

Principal Investigator: Tanya L. Rapert
                                    Telephone: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮   E-mail: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Participant_____ Contact info _____

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1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Tanya L. Rapert under
   the guidance of Dr. Kathy Grover. The purpose of this research is to discover trends
   or themes connecting special education teachers' work conditions, needs, job
   satisfaction, supports provided by principals, and the decisions of teachers to continue
   teaching in the field of special education.

2. a) Your participation will involve **completing an anonymous survey.**

   b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be **approximately 10
   minutes.**

   c) Sixty Missouri public school districts, with approximately 279 building principals
   and 932 special education teachers, will be involved in this research.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your
   participation will contribute to the knowledge about supporting special education
   teachers and may help society.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research
   study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any
   questions you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should
   you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation which may result from this study, and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Tanya Rapert, at ████████████ or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Kathy Grover, at ██████████. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Marilyn Abbott, Provost, at mabbott@lindenwood.edu or 636-949-4912.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I may retain a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above by completing the survey.

Appendix G

Revised IRB Approval Disposition

LINDENWOOD
LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

DATE: January 26, 2018

TO: Tanya Rapert, Ed.D
FROM: Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board

STUDY TITLE: [906846-2] Feeling Valued, Supported, and Satisfied: Perceptions of Special
                               Educators and Principals
IRB REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: November 29, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE: June 21, 2017
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this research project.
Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is
based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All
research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and
insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must
continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal
regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to
initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the
appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should
also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the
IRB.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires
continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the completion/amendment form for
this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review
and continued approval before the expiration date of June 21, 2017.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Generated on IRBNet

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Leary at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

If you have any questions, please send them to IRB@lindenwood.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board's records.

Generated on IRBNet

Appendix H

Revised Letter of Introduction and Recruitment

My name is Tanya Rapert, and I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University. As part of my program requirements, I am conducting a study for a dissertation titled *Feeling Valued, Supported, and Satisfied: Perceptions of Special Educators and Principals*. The purpose of this study is to discover trends or themes connecting special education teachers' work conditions, needs, job satisfaction, supports provided by principals, and the decisions of teachers to continue teaching in the field of special education.

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to complete a brief online survey. The amount of time required to complete the survey is approximately 10 minutes. The survey questions are focused on supports provided to special education teachers, compensation for additional responsibilities associated with special education, work conditions, opportunities for collaboration, and perceptions of feeling valued and satisfied.

The survey will not require you to provide personally identifiable information; therefore, all responses will be anonymous. Information collected will be kept confidential, stored in a locked file cabinet, and destroyed three years after completion of the study.

If you are a principal and you are willing to participate in the study, please read the attached letter, Principals' Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities, and click on the link in the email titled *Survey for Principals* to complete the survey. If you are a special education teacher and you are willing to participate in the study, please

read the attached letter, Teachers' Informed Consent for Participation in Research

Activities, and click on the link in the email titled *Survey for Special Education Teachers*

to complete the survey. Your consent for the survey will be considered signed and

accepted if you complete the survey. The web address will be open for two weeks for

you to respond.

If you have any questions about the survey or the study, please feel free to contact

me. Thank you in advance for your time and participation!

Respectfully,

Tanya Rapert, Researcher

Doctoral Student
School of Education
Lindenwood University

Appendix I

Revised Letter of Informed Consent for Principals

LINDENWOOD

PRINCIPALS' INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Feeling Valued, Supported, and Satisfied: Perceptions of Special Educators and Principals

Principal Investigator: <u>Tanya L. Rapert</u>
          Telephone: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮   E-mail: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Participant_____ Contact info _____

_____

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Tanya L. Rapert under the guidance of Dr. Kathy Grover. The purpose of this research is to discover trends or themes connecting special education teachers' work conditions, needs, job satisfaction, supports provided by principals, and the decisions of teachers to continue teaching in the field of special education.

2. a) Your participation will involve **completing an anonymous survey.**

   b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be **approximately 10 minutes.**

   c) Sixty Missouri public school districts, with approximately 279 building principals and 932 special education teachers, will be involved in this research.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about supporting special education teachers and may help society.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation which may result from this study, and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Tanya Rapert, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Kathy Grover, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Marilyn Abbott, Provost, at mabbott@lindenwood.edu or 636-949-4912.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I may retain a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above by completing the survey.

Appendix J

Revised Letter of Informed Consent for Special Education Teachers

LINDENWOOD

TEACHERS' INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Feeling Valued, Supported, and Satisfied: Perceptions of Special Educators and Principals

Principal Investigator: Tanya L. Rapert

                          Telephone: █████████   E-mail: ████████████████

Participant_____ Contact info _____

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1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Tanya L. Rapert under the guidance of Dr. Kathy Grover. The purpose of this research is to discover trends or themes connecting special education teachers' work conditions, needs, job satisfaction, supports provided by principals, and the decisions of teachers to continue teaching in the field of special education.

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4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about supporting special education teachers and may help society.

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6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation which may result from this study, and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

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I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I may retain a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above by completing the survey.

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Vita

Tanya Rapert is currently the Associate Director of Special Education Services for Springfield Public Schools in Springfield, Missouri. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education with a minor in Learning Disabilities and a Master of Science degree in Reading, both earned from Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri. Additionally, Tanya holds a Master of Arts degree in Educational Administration from Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri.

Tanya has served in several special education positions with Springfield Public Schools in Springfield, Missouri. She taught special education at Reed Middle School before moving into a Special Education Process Coordinator position. She went on to become a Special Education Services Supervisor, and later accepted the position of Associate Director of Special Education Services.

Tanya lives in Nixa, Missouri, with her husband, Kevin Rapert; two teenage children, Nathan and Alexis; two dogs, Max and Miley; and three cats, Joey, Sergio, and Stella. She enjoys spending time with her family and can often be found cheering for her children from the sidelines at high school and competitive club soccer games.