

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-EFFICACY
TEACHING STUDENTS WITH DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR IN THE RURAL
INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

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HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-EFFICACY TEACHING
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CLASSROOM

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Abstract

The passing of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) has increased the duties of general education high school teachers in the inclusive classroom. These federal mandates add to the need for increased pre-service instruction, continued professional development, and additional administrative support for general educators. The lack of preparedness can cause stress, burnout, and attrition of teachers. Rural communities lack human capital; this leaves general educators without necessary support; this consequently causes stress and teacher attrition. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine general educators' perceptions of self-efficacy and preparedness instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the rural inclusive classroom; it also focused on analyzing general educator's perceptions of administrative support of inclusive instruction. Two instruments, an electronic survey and interview, were used to collect data for this study. Twenty-eight general educators from a minimum of four and a maximum of eight rural high schools across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania participated in the survey; four general educators participated in the interview. An analysis of data revealed general educators do not feel adequately prepared to instruct students who are disruptive in their inclusive classroom. There is also insufficient teacher professional development. Administrators are not able to support general educators to meet the needs of students and lessen stress on those general education teachers due to inclusive teaching practices.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to Dr. Elizabeth Weber. You were my biggest cheerleader even in times of your own trials. Your motivation, expertise, and assistance will never be forgotten.

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Chapter One - Introduction

Overview

Disruptive behaviors in school classrooms have become increasingly concerning to educators, administrators, and mental health professionals, according to a research study by Jacobson (2013). The researcher found that teachers spend a great deal of time disciplining students, which results in less instructional time in their classes due to “off task and poor behaviors” (Jacobson, 2013, p. 5). There are several reasons that students display disruptive behavior. According to Akinbami, Lui, Pastor, and Reuben (2011), Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) are major contributors to disruptive behavior with attention deficit hyperactive disorder reported as the leading mental health disorder for children. Conduct Disorder and Oppositional Defiant Disorder are also among the top causes for student disruption in the classroom (Jacobsen, 2013). Other causes of disruptive behaviors include student exposure to alcoholism and drug abuse in the student’s household (NACoA, 2001) as well as a student’s diagnosis of depression and anxiety (Jacobson, 2013). In addition, Sitler (2008) stated that students who have undergone trauma in their childhood exhibit disruptive tendencies that mimic disruptive disorders.

The practice of inclusion of students with disabilities who exhibit disruptive behaviors in the general education high school classroom has been commonplace since the passing of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. This inclusive practice was further enforced with the enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 and its renewal in 2004 (IDEA, 2004; Idol, 2006). IDEA

requires that all children with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994).

According to Idol (2006), high school general education teachers serving students with disruptive behaviors in the classroom caused by disabilities or other situations are offered support mechanisms that include (a) consulting teacher models, (b) cooperative teaching models, (c) supportive resource programs, and/or (d) instructional assistants. This ensures that students with disabilities, identified or not, or with other conditions, are receiving the support necessary to succeed within inclusive classes (Obiakor, Harris, Mutua, Rotatori, & Algozzine, 2012). When necessary supports are not available to high school general education teachers in inclusive classrooms, it is possible that many general educators do not feel prepared; they struggle to provide the level of instruction necessary for student learning within this student demographic.

Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016) indicated that rural communities often struggle to find general and special education teachers to teach secondary education curricula due to a lack of human capital in more remote areas. A 2017 study conducted by Wong, Ruble, Yu, and McGraw showed that special educators report more stress on the job than general educators. This stress includes demands by administrators and parents leading to high attrition rates in a field already compromised with personnel shortages due to fewer individuals entering the special education profession (Conley & You, 2016). Sindelar, Pua, Fisher, Peyton, Brownell, and Mason-Williams (2018) found that the shortage of both special education and general education teachers places stress on current general educators in rural communities who must often instruct unassisted in the inclusive classroom. Further exacerbating the shortage is a 19%

-30% general education teacher attrition rate within the first five years of teaching; two-thirds of general education teachers leave prior to retirement due to job dissatisfaction (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Job dissatisfaction can be affected by the instruction of a particularly difficult demographic of adolescent children who are disruptive due to EBD and/or students who are diagnosed as disruptive due to a multitude of identified and unidentified causes (Koenen, Vervoot, Keichtermans, Verschueren, & Spilt, 2017). Wilcox, Angelis, Baker, and Lawson (2014) reported on rural communities that host students who often view their rural environment as inferior; these students lack a sense of value in education. This inferiority creates a lack of confidence in students; this presents further challenges to educators due to lack of student engagement. Emotional exhaustion felt by general educators is related to less student engagement (Wong et al., 2017). Emotional exhaustion felt by students consequently leads to classroom misbehavior and verbal aggression towards teachers and other students (Taylor & Smith, 2017; Wilcox et al., 2014).

Luecken, Roubinov, and Tanaka (2013) and Wilcox et al. (2013) reported that students with disruptive behaviors often come from complex home lives plagued with alcohol, drug abuse, and other dysfunctions. Federal mandates like No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) promote teacher preparedness to instruct all students within the inclusive classroom. This is not only ethical but also mandatory, whether the instructor is supported by special educators or not (Sindelar et al., 2018).

Students with disruptive behaviors require teachers who are skilled in dealing with emotional and behavioral problems; these teachers must simultaneously attend to the

remaining students in the classroom (Klopfer, Scott, Jenkins, & Ducharme, 2017). Freeman, Simonsen, Briere, and MacSuga-Gage (2014) conducted a review of state accreditation policies regarding teacher preparation programs by “sampling legislative and policy documents” (p. 109). The study covered all 50 states and Washington D.C. The researchers analyzed the accreditations of programs to identify which classroom management practices were required. The study revealed that pre-service teachers “may not be prepared to effectively manage student behavior upon completion of a teacher preparation program due to lack of exposure to content” (p. 115) on classroom management. Only 28 states required that the pre-service training include research-based classroom management instruction at the high school level. Twenty-two states did not require this instruction for pre-service teachers (Freeman et al., 2014).

A randomized control study which evaluated classroom management coursework for pre-service teachers was conducted by Klopfer et al. (2017). Eighty-two teacher trainees were required to take a best practice class dealing with students with emotional and behavioral problems versus an alternative elective. Those taking the classroom management course dealt more positively with psychological pressure in the classroom simulations with disruptive students. In this study, teachers who took other electives felt that they did not have the skills necessary to handle this challenge. According to Das, Gichuru, and Singh (2013) and Madni, Baker, Chow, Delacruz, and Griffin (2015), this lack of preparation affects teacher self-efficacy.

Additionally, a lack of self-efficacy exists for teachers instructing students with disruptive behavior when unsupported by special education teachers co-teaching in the classroom environment. According to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014) and Wong et al.

(2017), this leads to increased stress for the isolated general education instructor, job dissatisfaction, burnout, and increased turnover. High school general education teachers of students with EBD and students who are disruptive without a diagnosed disorder have unique challenges in the inclusive classroom, especially in rural community schools (Boe & Cook, 2006; Sindelar et al., 2008). Jennings and Greenberg (2009) reported that the needs of this demographic of students are demanding even for the most well-trained and seasoned special educator and, in particular, for a general education teacher assigned to an inclusive secondary classroom.

Sutcher et al. (2016) reported that successful administrative leadership is a major component of a successful general educator in the inclusive classroom. These researchers also found that a teacher's decision to leave the profession due to lack of resources is not as high as their need to feel positive about the support of their administrative staff. Berkovich and Eyal (2017) reported "empathetic listening" and responsive communication and support, which include listening and providing feedback, are characteristics of a good leader. Administrative staff should not underestimate the role of teacher mental health in student learning (Wong et al., 2017). Berkovich and Eyal also addressed the need for principals to be trained in "the communication of empathetic listening" (p. 12).

Need for the Study

This study is needed to gain an understanding of the perceptions that general education teachers in rural high schools have of their self-efficacy when educating students with disruptive behaviors. Much research has been conducted detailing the need to include students with disabilities such as EBD or other disruptive issues in the least

restrictive environment, in particular, the general education classroom (Idol, 2006).

According to Sindelar et al. (2018), an area that has not been researched in depth is the self-efficacy of general education teachers in rural communities who are unassisted by special education teachers due to a shortage of human capital in these more remote areas. Azano and Stewart (2015) claimed their research indicated that rural students are the “forgotten minority” (p. 1). Rural schools have unique challenges that their suburban and urban counterparts do not. Recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers in rural communities have always been and remain an issue.

In addition to recruitment of highly qualified teachers in rural areas, proper preparation of teachers to instruct students in this demographic has been overlooked (Azano & Stewart, 2015). Understanding the pre-service best practice needs and administrative support needs of rural educators instructing students with disruptive behaviors will lead to the improved learning of students. Further knowledge will aid with enhanced training at the pre-service level or through ongoing professional development; this will ultimately assist the teachers with insuring that students with disruptive behavior stay in school, successfully learn, and avoid potential future dysfunctional outcomes (Azano & Stewart, 2015).

Another need for a study on this topic was to assist in addressing the shortage of general education instructors in rural communities (Yettick, Baker, Wickersham, & Hupfeld, 2014). According to Fuller and Pendola (2020), there is currently a teacher shortage in Pennsylvania in both urban and rural areas. This shortage is said to persist and it will create a void that impedes the ability of districts to meet the mandates set forth by the federal government (Boe & Cook, 2006; Sutchter et al., 2016). Preparing teachers

adequately may assist teachers with increased self-efficacy, thus decreasing teacher burnout and their attrition rate.

Statement of Problem

NCLB (2001) is a federal mandate designed to ensure the success of all students in all classrooms across America. This federal mandate is coupled with statutes implemented to assure that students with disabilities receive what they need to succeed alongside their peers in the least restrictive environment; this challenges school districts to recruit highly qualified teachers (Idol, 2006; Sindelar et al., 2018).

A shortage of general education and special education teachers in rural communities creates a problem meeting the needs of individual students with disabilities, including students with EBD or who are disruptive (Sindelar et al., 2018). Additionally, teacher perceived inadequate pre-service training or insufficient ongoing professional development of general educators to instruct students with disruptive behavior in the inclusive classroom leads to teacher stress, burnout, and attrition (Wong et al., 2017).

Boe and Cook (2006) reported that the general education teacher training to meet the needs of the students with disruptive behaviors is more critical in areas of the country with higher risk students and lower human capital to retain highly qualified teachers. According to Azano and Stewart (2015), “Staffing classrooms with ill-prepared teachers is detrimental to students and novice teachers” (p. 1). When teachers are thrust into general education high school classrooms without the proper credentials or assistance to instruct students with disruptive behavior, self-efficacy suffers; teacher stress can cause burn-out and turnover, further increasing the difficulties in retaining teachers in areas where there is a teacher shortage (Robertson, McFarland, Sciuchett, & Garcia, 2017;

Wong et al., 2017). This creates a crisis in providing the necessary learning for all students in all classrooms.

Twenty percent of children in the United States are reported to have at least some classification of an Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD) (Klopfer et al., 2017). The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2009) found that students with EBD are more likely to be incarcerated as juveniles and placed in adult correctional facilities in the future (Lewis, McIntosh, Simonsen, Mitchell, & Hatton, 2017). One-fifth of EBD students have issues involving law enforcement during their school years and 70% of EBD dropout students have been arrested (Lewis et al., 2017).

The shortage of general education and special education teachers in rural communities hurts the students they serve in multiple ways (Boe & Cook, 2006; Sutchter et al., 2016). One way that student learning suffers is due to general education teachers feeling ill-prepared to instruct students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom (Madni et al., 2015). In addition to this lack of self-efficacy, teacher stress can lead to teacher burnout and attrition; this results in the need for highly qualified teachers in these already under-represented rural areas (Conley & You, 2016). According to Ulfert (2016), despite the high cost of an undergraduate education, 9.5% of teachers quit before the end of their first year teaching. Huysman (2008) stated, “The most valuable and accessible resources located within a rural school district are the teaching staff” (p. 31). The purpose of this study is to obtain the perceptions teachers have regarding their self-efficacy to instruct students with disruptive behaviors in rural inclusive classrooms, their preparedness to instruct these students, and their perceptions of administrative support.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined below and used in this study to assure consistency and clarity:

Aggression – any behavior directed toward another individual that is carried out with immediate intent to cause physical or psychological harm (Taylor & Smith, 2017).

Burnout – a psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job (Maslach & Leiter, 2001).

Consulting Teacher Models – form of indirect special education service delivery in which a special education teacher serves as a consultant to a classroom teacher (Idol, 2006).

Disruptive Behavior – Students are disruptive if they exhibit any inappropriate behavior in the classroom as follows: (a) horseplay, (b) rule violation, (c) disruptiveness, (d) class cutting, (e) cursing, (f) bullying, (g) defiance, (h) refusal to work, (i) fighting, (j) vandalism, and (k) verbal aggression to fellow students and teachers. (Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010).

Empathetic Listening – “a form of responsive communication that indicates an understanding and acknowledgment of another person’s point of view and emotions.” (Berkovich & Eyal, 2017, p. 3)

Emotional and Behavioral Problems – externalizing characteristics of patterns of aggression, defiance, disruptive behavior, hyperactive behavior, poor academic achievement, high rates of dropping out of school, substance abuse, and delinquency; internalizing characteristics of negative states of inner emotional well-being (anxiety, fearful, sad, or depressed) (Trach, Lee, & Hymel, 2017).

Emotional and Behavioral Disorder (EBD) – a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance (IDEA, 2004):

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (IDEA, 2004)

Emotional Intelligence - is the “emotional competencies that facilitate the identification, processing, and regulation of emotion” (Vesely, Safske, & Leschied, 2013, p. 72).

Emotional Labor – workplace settings that include social interactions that elicit emotions (Lee, 2017; Nizielski, Hallum, Lopes, & Shutz, 2012).

High Risk Students – a student who is likely to fail at school (NCES, 1992).

Highly Qualified Teachers – A teacher, defined by NCLB as fulfilling three requirements: having a bachelor’s degree, full state certification, and demonstrated by competency, as defined by the state, in each core academic subject he or she teaches (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Human Capital – productive wealth embodied in labor, skills, and knowledge (Tan, 2014).

Inclusion – the student with special education needs is attending the general education school, enrolled in age appropriate classes 100% of the school day (Idol, 2006).

Least Restrictive Environment – the requirement in federal law (IDEA) that students with disabilities receive their education, to the maximum extent appropriate, with nondisabled peers and that special education students are not removed from regular classes unless, even with supplemental aids and services, education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994).

Social and Emotional Learning -the capacity to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others (Zins & Elias, 2007).

Teacher Effects – teacher contributions to student outcomes (Blazar & Kraft, 2017).

Teacher Self-efficacy – individual teacher beliefs about their own abilities to plan, organize, and carry out activities required to attain given educational goals. (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003).

Teacher Shortage - the extent to which teaching positions are not filled by teachers (Boe & Cook, 2006).

Work Stress – a complex, relational psychological concept arising from the dynamic interactions between the individual and their working environment (Mullholland, McKinlay, & Sproule, 2013).

Limitations

Prior to the start of the study, the researcher anticipated limitations. One limitation, which may have surfaced was researcher bias. This researcher has taught

primarily in private secondary schools with a brief assignment as a long-term substitute teacher in public school. Therefore, the researcher may have an expectation of behavior issues that were experienced in short term encounters with students who are disruptive in an inclusive classroom. This bias could create a misinterpretation of collected data. However, to minimize bias, the researcher quoted the words and phrases of the participants to the greatest extent possible and used an expert panel to examine the language of the instruments for any bias. Also, the study was limited to perceptions of teachers only and could deliver more insight had the researcher included administrators or other participants.

Another limitation may have been the honesty of respondents; they may have felt vulnerable in admitting they have experienced stress or feelings of inadequacy in teaching students with disruptive behaviors. The study was conducted exclusively in rural districts of Pennsylvania. Therefore, it may not be transferable to other geographical areas. Another limitation could occur from the researcher's perceptions of readiness through personal pre-service teacher training experiences. Many of the participants in the study may have experienced different teacher training programs and curriculums. Assuming most are the same in scope might have shed undue bias on the study.

An additional limitation could have arisen from the variety of teachers' personal backgrounds. Some teachers who participated in the study will have transferred from non-rural areas where other personnel were home-grown and experienced upbringings in similar schools with students who are disruptive. Teachers familiar with students with disruptive behavior in the inclusive general education classroom may have found it more

normal behavior. Teachers, who transferred from other socioeconomic, cultural, and geographical demographic areas or who have taught exclusively in the private sector could have possibly viewed inclusion much differently. One last potential limitation that could have occurred with the survey instrument and participants' ideas of what a student with disruptive behaviors looks like. Careful attention to the definition of what a student with disruptive behavior was given in the instrumentation.

Research Questions

Due to the need for further research concerning general education teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy, preparedness, and their perceptions of administrator support instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the general education classroom, this study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of general education high school teachers regarding their preparedness to teach students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom?
2. What are the perceptions of rural general education high school teachers regarding their self-efficacy teaching students with disruptive behaviors?
3. What are general education teachers' perceptions of administrator support for teaching students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom?

Summary

The assurance that every student in American classrooms is receiving the best education possible through highly qualified teachers in the least restrictive environment is of national importance (IDEA, 2004). The link between teacher quality and student achievement is of such importance in assuring the education of students that the self-

efficacy of a teacher in their environment must not be overlooked. Pre-service training and continued professional development are a means to ensure that teachers feel that they are capable and confident to instruct as highly qualified teachers. When teachers are placed in inclusive classrooms with students having disabilities and/or emotional problems, it is important to know that they feel they have the knowledge and skills necessary to instruct all students in their charge (Klopfer et al., 2017).

When teachers reside in rural communities where human capital is low and general and special educators are in short supply, the self-efficacy of the inclusive classroom teacher could suffer when left without proper resources and support to effectively instruct each pupil (Sindelar et al., 2018). The subjects of this study were teachers in inclusive classrooms in rural communities in Pennsylvania. The purpose of this study is to obtain the perceptions teachers have regarding their self-efficacy to instruct students with disruptive behaviors in rural inclusive classrooms, their preparedness to instruct these students, and their perceptions of administrative support. Chapter Two presents the research literature base that informs the research questions in the study.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

Introduction

Gupta and Rani (2014), in describing the role of the teacher, said,

A teacher occupies an important place in the educational process. In the field of education or in a specific teaching learning situation, the teacher is the ultimate agent who dispenses knowledge, frames the time schedule, selects reading materials, plays the role of subject specialist, evaluates learning outcomes and helps pupils to overcome their difficulties and personal problems and thus plays an important role in the success of any educational program. (p. 2)

These tasks that teachers undertake create one of the most demanding professions one can enter due to the academic, social, and emotional responsibilities of a teacher to their students (Abenavoli, Jennings, Greenburg, Harris, & Katz, 2013). Teacher preparedness, teacher self-efficacy, and administrative support are the factors that this study will investigate to gain a better understanding of the needs of secondary general education teachers in inclusive classrooms of students with disruptive behavior in rural school districts.

The stress of meeting the needs of students is further exacerbated by the legal demands placed upon school districts by a long legislative history of state and federal mandates such as IDEA (1975) and NCLB (2001) that also become the responsibility of the teacher. NCLB mandates that all teachers must be highly qualified; regulations of IDEA (2018) require that students with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment. For most students with disabilities, this means their education will occur in the classroom with their peers (IDEA, 2018). The demands of NCLB require that teachers be highly qualified; teachers who are considered highly qualified meet the

requirements that include a bachelor's degree, state certification, and demonstrated knowledge in core academic subjects (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Increasing the number of students with diverse learning needs in the classroom adds stress on teachers; this can lead to decreased self-efficacy (Abenavoli et al., 2013).

The teacher has been cited as the most important factor in student learning and achievement (Vesely et al., 2013). Research has established that for teachers to be effective in the classroom they must have a set of traits and characteristics (Steele, 2010). Therefore, there is a need for a high level of teacher self-efficacy. Bandura's (1986) research claimed that behavior and emotions affect successes and failures. In addition to a high sense of self-efficacy, a teacher's emotional intelligence has been shown to increase their ability to deal with a profession that involves a high degree of emotional labor (Nizielski et al., 2012).

For teachers, a high degree of self-efficacy and characteristics to deal with the pressures placed upon them in an inclusive classroom are imperative when dealing with a population of students, particularly those with disruptive behaviors (Obiakor et al., 2012). This student demographic is represented in the inclusive classroom. Such students have diagnosed mental health disabilities such as EBD; there are students, not identified under IDEA, whose disruptive behavior in the classroom emanates from environmental factors (Conroy & Sutherland, 2012). Students exhibiting disruptive behavior in the classroom, whether due to a disability or to environmental sources, influence a teacher's feelings regarding inclusion in the classroom; this in turn can affect the teacher's self-efficacy (Cassady, 2011). High teacher self-efficacy and strong emotional intelligence prove to increase student achievement; however, the need for teachers to feel capable of

instructing students with disruptive behavior in the inclusive classroom is also necessary to avoid teacher stress and burnout (Busch, Pederson, Espin, & Weissenburger, 2001). Teachers of students with emotional behavioral disorders are more likely to leave the teaching profession due to stress (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Students with EBD and students who are otherwise disruptive in the classroom often receive support through Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and are supported by special educators. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of special educators in rural school districts (Yettick et al., 2014). This shortage contributes to the burden that regular education teachers experience in their classrooms.

The requirements of NCLB (2001) for general and special educators and the need to recruit highly qualified teachers leave rural districts at a disadvantage due to lack of human capital (Sutcher et al., 2016). Retaining teachers once recruited is another issue for rural districts. Regular education teachers in rural districts often lack effective assistance from special educators due to a shortage in that area (Conley & You, 2017; Sindelar et al., 2018). The dynamics of this shortage impact general education rural educators, especially new and less experienced ones, causing a 13.2 % turnover rate compared to 11% in other professions (Bland, Church, & Luo, 2014).

According to Bandura (1986), teacher attrition and turnover have also been attributed to a teacher's sense of self-efficacy. A teacher who feels inadequately prepared to instruct students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom is more likely to become stressed and ultimately leaves the profession (Latouche & Gascoigne, 2017). IDEA (2018) stated, "IDEA and its implementing regulations require a school district to ensure that all teachers and other personnel necessary to implement a student's IEP are

appropriately and adequately prepared” (p. 1). Increased preparedness through additional training at the pre-service level and continuing professional development regarding student mental illness will better address the needs of the students and well-being of teachers in rural districts (Barley, 2008). Another element crucial to teacher success instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom is support by administrators. The support given to teachers by school principals helps to reduce a teacher’s stress (Berkovick & Eyal, 2017; Cassady, 2011). Berkovich and Eyal (2017) stated that empathetic listening, providing feedback, and setting goals to alleviate emotional distress are all support mechanisms shown to reduce teacher stress; this leads to an increase in teacher self-efficacy.

This literature review will present the following topics: Historical background; Teacher Characteristics and Traits; Self-Efficacy; Teacher Emotional Intelligence and Influences; Students with Emotional and Behavioral Problems; Students with Disruptive Behaviors; Emotional Intelligence; Teacher Burnout, Stress, and Attrition; Teacher Shortages in Rural Schools; Rural Communities; Teacher Preparation and Competencies Instructing Students with Disabilities; and Administrative Support. This research formed the foundation for the research questions this study will address.

Historical Background

According to Neill (2005), education is essential for humans; they are a species that relies on learning and experiences versus the hard-wired instincts of other animals. Dewey’s theory of experience detailed how continuity and interaction relate to a person’s experiences and how learning is necessary in shaping and educating children. Dewey (1938) explained continuity to be the process by which individuals carry every

experience, good or bad, into the future; he also noted that the interaction is the combining of past interactions with those of the present. Neill further stated that educators have control over only the present situations that they encounter with their students. Past experiences, however, will interact with those current encounters, and a good educator will understand the past to create the instruction necessary for successful learning for students.

Teachers today are tasked with the inclusion of students with a multitude of backgrounds, conditions, disabilities, and experiences in their classrooms. The interactions they have with their students will meld with the student's previous experiences and carry on into the future, shaping later skill development (Neill, 2005). Zee and Koomen (2016) studied 40 years of "quality classroom processes, students' academic adjustment, and teachers' psychological well-being" research from Internet databases including ERIC, Google Scholar, and PsycInfo that used quantitative empirical data (p. 981). The research showed the importance of the relationship that educators have with their students regarding successful learning. This applies to all students in the classroom, including students with disabilities and others who exhibit disruptive behaviors but do not qualify for special education services (Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Students with disabilities and those without disabilities were not always granted or provided an education. However, the idea of mandatory attendance in school is not a new concept. In 1910, compulsory education in public schools became mandatory throughout the United States. Parents who did not comply with the mandate had their children placed with an educator and lost rights to discipline their child to that teacher (Esteves & Rao, 2008).

According to Esteves and Rao (2008), in 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education* addressed race and the right to an equal quality education. However, this case sparked the beginnings of change in the circumstances involving students with disabilities. The ruling began conversations regarding the demographics of those with a right to public education. School districts, however, could still decide not to participate in special education services through the 1960s. In 1965, public schools began receiving federal dollars with the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, with funding becoming available for students with disabilities in 1966 (Esteves & Rao, 2008).

Momentum continued and several improvements via federal acts occurred in the 1970s; this improved circumstances for students with disabilities. One such improvement was the passing of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act in 1973. This act prevented schools from denying disabled persons benefits if the school was receiving federal funding. The passing of this act still did not address several deficiencies regarding educating disabled persons (Esteves & Rao, 2008).

Esteves and Rao (2008) found that despite some progress in the education of students with disabilities, approximately eight million public education students were being taught improperly with many not being taught at all. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA or EHA) was passed in 1975 to further address the deficiencies and is still enforced today; it later was known as IDEA. There have been many subsequent revisions. The latest IDEA revision was in 2018. The 1997 IDEA revision mandated that any public school accepting federal funds must provide equal access and at least one meal a day to students with disabilities (Govtrak, 2017). Pulliam and Van Patten (2006) offered that the need for revision was due to the need for quality

in the individual education to students with disabilities as well as all students' rights to a proper education. Esteves and Rao also reported that the act mandated the assessment and implementation of addressing a student's individual needs and placing similar mandates on non-public schools as well.

Prior to the 1997 revision of IDEA, there was a court case decided in 1982; the Board of Education of Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court (Poitras, 1983). This was the first special education case to reach this level of legal consideration. The ruling addressed the need for schools to determine the individual needs of students with disabilities and the implementation of the Individual Education Programs (IEPs) (Esteves & Rao, 2008). Cassidy (2011) found that the case further stressed that students with disabilities be placed in the least restrictive environment that would allow them to be taught with nondisabled students in the general education classroom.

NCLB was enacted by Congress in 2001 and served to enhance and update the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. This act led to the inclusion of students with disabilities in state standardized testing programs and was a call for districts to employ highly qualified teachers (McNamee, 2016; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2006). The U.S. Department of Education (2004) stated that for a teacher to be considered highly qualified, they must hold at least a bachelor's degree, have full state certification, and demonstrate knowledge in the core academic subjects assigned. Rural schools encompass one-third of the nation's schools and there is some flexibility in the hiring of highly qualified teachers in these some 5000 schools nationwide due to a shortage in human capital (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). According to Sindelar et al. (2018),

concern was shown for how NCLB's highly qualified requirements would affect rural districts.

Steele (2010) noted that the passing of NCLB has led to significant research and measurements on the effectiveness of highly qualified teachers. According to Steele, in addition to NCLB's definition of what designates a teacher as highly qualified, a teacher's characteristics have been the topic of much research. The data regarding what makes an effective teacher are not clear due to the nature of human development. Teachers bring with them to the profession a wide array of personality and environmentally learned behaviors (Steele, 2010; Warren, 2017). Blazar and Kraft (2017) affirmed that high-quality teachers do not only raise test scores, but provide emotional support, manage classroom behavior, support critical thinking, and aid in their students' social and emotional development.

Teacher Characteristics and Traits

Creating a definitive list of characteristics and traits that define the most effective teacher is a daunting task. Research conducted by Cruickshank, Jenkins, and Metcalf, as cited in Steele (2010), have shown that certain traits appear more regularly and are important for effective teaching. One effective teacher trait is leadership skills, specifically servant leadership skills. While leadership in the classroom is necessary, the type of leadership plays a crucial part in the dynamics of relationship building and student learning. A servant leader teacher focuses more on the needs of others than themselves. The servant leader manifests sincere traits that include compassion, empathy, honesty, trust, and humility (Steele, 2010).

Another commonly seen effective teacher trait is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). A teacher’s self-efficacy has many influences over student outcomes such as behavior and student achievement (Steele, 2010). Blazer and Kraft (2017) called the influences a teacher has over student outcomes “teacher effects.” They opined that the effects go beyond test scores and can influence a student’s social and emotional behavior. Teacher effects on students have been examined in isolation in past studies to determine success on improving test scores, but Blazar and Kraft (2017) researched three additional questions: (a) To what extent do teachers affect students’ attitudes and behaviors in class?; (b) To what extent do specific teaching practices affect students’ attitudes and behaviors in class? and; (c) Are teachers who are effective at raising test-score outcomes equally effective at developing positive attitudes and behaviors in class?” (Blazar & Kraft, 2017, p. 147). These researchers collected data from 310 teachers in four school districts on the East coast of the United States. Through videoing recording of teacher classrooms, analyzing teacher questionnaires, and evaluating student outcomes, they found that “teachers can and do help develop attitudes and behaviors in their students that are important for success in life” (p. 161).

Self-efficacy

Due to the influences teachers have over their students, the teaching profession has been touted as one of the most important yet demanding and challenging occupations in a community (Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Vesely et al., 2013). Vesely et al. (2013) stated the teaching profession carries evidence that the teacher is the most important aspect of

student learning and achievement. The teacher's performance has been the focus of much research due to the level of responsibility that the profession carries.

Much of the research conducted on teachers' traits and the impact of such traits on the successful, or not so successful learning, in the classroom began with theories of Bandura (Gavora, 2010). Bandura, former President of Stanford University, is credited with defining what is known as self-efficacy in his explanation of social cognitive theory. Bandura (1986) stated that people operate in what is termed triadic reciprocal causation, which encompasses a person's environment, behavior, and internal cognitive, biological, and affective processes.

These factors also determine what one believe about them and impacts their actions and choices. Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 391). Bandura asserted that an individual's beliefs affect their behavior and emotions and thus affect their successes or failures (Henson, 2001; Ross, Romer, & Horner, 2012).

Bandura (1997) assigned four sources to his theory that lead to the development of high self-efficacy. The first is mastery-teaching experience. This source is the witnessed success of expected outcomes of lessons that strengthens a teacher's perceptions about their skills and knowledge. Seeing success leads to the belief that they truly are effective in their teaching practice. The second source is vicarious experience. This source is a strengthening of self-efficacy by viewing the success of fellow teachers. Learning from their peers leads to increased confidence in teaching practice. Bandura called the third source social persuasion. Encouragement from administrators, coaches or

mentors will assist in developing a strong sense of self-efficacy. The fourth source is physiological and emotional states. A teacher approaching instruction with enthusiasm versus negativism will be more productive and create more successful lessons leading to stronger self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Gavora, 2010).

Bong and Skaalvik (2003) further defined “teacher self-efficacy” as “an individual teacher’s perceptions about their own abilities to plan, organize, and carry out activities required to attain given educational goals.” (p. 5) Teacher self-efficacy is important as it deals with the self-regulation that teachers possess that enables them to better use their knowledge and skills to increase student learning. This self-regulation applies to the perseverance that a teacher will exhibit in the profession, with stronger self-efficacy leading to a greater perseverance, and ultimately leading to increased teacher success (Gavora, 2010; Pelton, 2014; Ross et al., 2012; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

According to Gavora (2010), teacher self-efficacy is not to be confused with teacher competency, which is a teacher’s knowledge and skill. Gavora additionally stated that:

Stress, anxiety and other negative states can lead to negative judgments of teacher abilities and skills. This is in part what differentiates teacher self-efficacy, as a broader concept, from teacher confidence. A teacher who is professionally well-qualified may not be a successful teacher if personal negative or inhibiting emotional factors come into play. (p. 3)

The first research regarding teacher self-efficacy was conducted by the Rand Corporation (Gavora, 2010). The Rand Corporation, funded by the U.S. federal government, evaluated educational programs. The research was focused on teacher self-efficacy and its part in successful educational outcomes. The researchers surveyed teachers by asking

the following Likert-based items: (a) “When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can’t do much because most of a student’s motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment; and (b) “If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students” (Gavora, 2010). The Rand Corporation found that positive teacher self-efficacy was strongly related to high student achievement. Later in 1984, Gibson and Dembo, created the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES). Their 30-item scale explored personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy. This scale was later updated by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfork-Hoy (2001).

Teachers’ strong, positive self-efficacy has a direct correlation to student achievement and improved classroom behavior (Gavora, 2010; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Self-efficacy plays an important role in classroom management. Teachers who perceive themselves able to manage student behavior in the classroom deliver more effective practices, thus leading to higher student achievement (Herman, Hickmon-Rosa, & Reinke, 2017; Reinke, Herman, & Storemont, 2013; Viel-Ruma, Houchins, Jolivette, & Benson, 2010). A teacher’s beliefs about their abilities to deal with any aspect of their profession are an important part of success in the profession (Cassady, 2011; Viel-Ruma et al., 2010; Wong et al., 2017).

Teacher Emotional Intelligence and Influences

According to Vesely et al. (2013), teacher self-efficacy can be divided into internal influences and external influences. The internal influences are within the control of the teacher and include “affect, knowledge, or work ethic” (p. 75). These controls enable a teacher to self-motivate and improve classroom instruction, classroom management, and goal setting. External influences are less controlled by the teacher and

include school administrator support, availability of resources, student diversity, ability to collaborate with peers, and teaching environment. Further external influences include the emotional difficulties of students.

Dealing with the internal and external influences that affect teacher self-efficacy requires a teacher's psychological health to be considered when dealing with student success (Vesely et al., 2013). Emotional intelligence of an individual is a contributing factor in one's overall psychological well-being. A teacher's emotional intelligence needs to be considered in dealing with the teacher's ability to engage in a profession with high emotional labor (Nizielski et al., 2012; Vesely et al., 2013). According to Vesely et al. (2013), "Emotional intelligence (EI) is broadly defined as encompassing an array of emotional competencies that facilitate the identification, processing, and regulation of emotion" (p. 72). The higher the teacher's EI, the lower the teacher's stress level, which then leads to better resiliency in dealing with students with disabilities.

Vesely et al. (2013) cited that teachers with low EI are less equipped to formulate sound judgments. They further postulated that this lack in judgment affects student learning, student well-being in the classroom, and increases misbehavior in the classroom. A teacher's repeated experience with unpleasantness of events and emotions in the classroom leads to stress, burnout, and attrition, which affects the teacher's overall self-efficacy (Vesely et al., 2013; Viel-Ruma et al., 2010).

Students with Emotional and Behavioral Problems

A teacher's ability to affect so many variables in the lives of the students they serve requires a strong and high sense of self-efficacy (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Madni et al., 2015). According to Obiaker et al. (2012), whose research presented three case

studies of students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom, teachers are more challenged with the task of assuring optimum student learning. Their research has shown the positive effects of inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom but “the burden of inclusion should not rest on the shoulders of teachers and service providers alone” (p. 487).

Cassady (2011) surveyed 25 general educators from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, Massachusetts, and New York, to evaluate the differing attitudes toward the inclusion of students with autism and emotional behavioral disorder in the general education classroom. The researcher concluded that teachers were hesitant regarding inclusion due to concern over a lack of preparedness to differentiate instruction to accommodate students with disabilities. Cassady further concluded that the type of disability a student possesses influences a teacher’s feelings pertaining to the inclusion of that student in the general education classroom. Certain disabilities are more time-consuming and frustrating to some teachers than to others. Taylor and Smith (2017) stated that a disability that can pose more challenging to teachers than others are those of the students with EBD. The behavior of these students interferes with learning and decreases the amount of in-classroom instruction due to a teacher’s need to deal with behavior issues (Osher et al., 2010; Taylor & Smith 2017).

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2018), 95% of students, aged six through 21 years of age, who fell under IDEA guidelines, are taught in regular public schools. Eighty-five percent of high school students with EBD spend at least half of the school day included in the regular general education classroom. (Kern,

Hetrick, & Custer, 2018). These statistics have implications for teachers and administrators in public schools.

Students with EBD and students with disruptive behaviors exhibit some of the following behaviors which ultimately disrupt class time: (a) horseplay, (b) rule violation, (c) disruptiveness, (d) class cutting, (e) cursing, (f) bullying, (g) defiance, (h) refusal to work, (i) fighting, (j) verbal aggression to fellow students and teachers, and (k) vandalism (Osher et al., 2010). These behaviors are often excessive and require special education services. Some students with EBD are excluded from inclusion in the general education classroom or require a special education teacher in a cooperative teaching role alongside the general education teacher (Taylor & Smith, 2017).

A student who is diagnosed with EBD, by meeting the standards set forth by IDEA, Section 300.8 (2018), is defined as having “a condition in which one or more of the following characteristics are exhibited over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance:

- (a) inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
- (b) inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
- (c) inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
- (d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression;
- and (e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems” (p.1).

EBD students will often show physical aggression in addition to verbal aggression (Cassady, 2011; Taylor & Smith, 2017). Conroy and Sutherland (2012) observed that students with EBD crave attention, whether it be positive or negative, and learn to act out

in class to fulfill the desired need for any form of attention. Students with EBD often have disadvantaged behavioral, social, and educational outcomes (Bradley, Doolittle, & Bartolotta, 2008; Lewis et al., 2017). Forty-eight percent of students with EBD have shown behavioral outcomes of having been suspended or expelled at least once in their school experience (Conroy & Sutherland 2012; NREPP, 2017). The social statistics of EBD students vary widely but is seen to exhibit high rates of issues involving the law and incarceration, substance abuse, and unemployment (Kaufman & Landrum, 2009; Lewis, 2017). Academically, students with EBD do not fare much better. According to NCIE, (n.d.), 40% of students with EBD graduate compared to 76% of general education students graduating nationwide.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2017) reported that as of the 2014-2015 school year, 5% of the 6.6 million students with disabilities are categorized as emotionally disturbed. Students 15 years of age comprised the most numerous age group to have an EBD diagnosis (Cook et al., 2008; Cullinan & Sabornie, 2004). Kern, Hetrick, and Custer (2018) found that 50% of EBD students are unable to demonstrate basic reading standards; less than 34% of EBD students meet proficiency standards in mathematics. Special education services are often prescribed for students with behavioral disorders. According to IDEA (2018), students with Emotional Behavioral Disorder qualify for special education services and have IEPs. There is a group of students with disruptive behaviors who do not qualify for special education services as they do not meet the definition of EBD.

Students with Disruptive Behaviors

A demographic of students found in the inclusive classroom who may not be diagnosed with an emotional behavioral disorder are disruptive students. That student is defined by the following:

A student, in grades 6 through 12, who poses a clear threat to the safety and welfare of other students or the school staff, who creates an unsafe school environment, whose behavior materially interferes with the learning of other students, or disrupts the overall educational process. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (2015) defined disruptive students as students who exhibit to a marked degree any or all of the following conditions: (a) disregard for school authority, including persistent violation of school policy and rules; (b) display or use of controlled substances on school property or during school-affiliated activities; (c) violent or threatening behavior on school property or during school-affiliated activities; (d) possession of a weapon on school property; (e) commission of a criminal act on school property or during school-affiliated activities; (f) misconduct that would merit suspension or expulsion under school policy; and (g) habitual truancy. (PDE, 2015, p. 2)

It is very possible that a student with EBD may also meet the definition of a student with disruptive behaviors.

Obiaker et al. (2012) claimed that although the inclusion of students with disabilities or who are disruptive in the general education classroom shows more success for the student, the reality is that teachers must be prepared to meet the individual needs of each of their students. The ramifications of EBD and students exhibiting unmanaged

disruptive behaviors in the school or classroom environment place these students at risk. In addition to placing students at risk, this mismanaged behavior disrupts the learning of other students, leads to teacher stress, burnout, and teacher attrition (Taylor & Smith, 2017). Schonert-Reichl (2017) reported of the “fifty percent of teachers who leave the profession permanently, almost 35% report that their decision was related to problems with student discipline” (p. 141).

The success of students with disruptive behaviors in the general education inclusive classroom relies on a teaching professional’s capability in dealing with the needs of the students (Busch et al., 2001). Schonert-Reichl (2017) and Vesely et al. (2013) all indicated that both students and teaching professionals agree on the need for teachers to be caring, friendly, understanding, patient, and a host of other nurturing characteristics. They further stated that a teacher not only must know how to teach social and emotional skills but also need the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to do so. The ability of teaching professionals to have these characteristics is important due to the emotional labor that is part of the profession for both student and educator (Lee, 2017; Nizielski et al., 2012).

Wong et al. (2017) stated the emotional labor of the profession exhibits itself in the teacher’s role to instill practices of psychological health into their students. Teachers are not only conveying subject matter in their disciplines to students but are also placed in positions to deal with the external factors brought into the classroom by students from a myriad of environmental, cultural, and biological factors (Vesely et al., 2013; Wong et al., 2017).

Emotional Intelligence

Success of students with EBD and students with disruptive behaviors in the classroom is not only subject to a teacher's ability to identify the needs of the student, but also the teachers' own self-efficacy to aid in students' success. The self-efficacy of the teacher is affected by the teacher's own emotional intelligence. Vesely et al. (2013) defined emotional intelligence as the "emotional competencies that facilitate the identification, processing, and regulation of emotion" (p. 72). High emotional intelligence strengthens a teacher's resilience from teacher stress, burnout, and the potential to leave the profession (Nizielski et al., 2012; Vesely et al., 2013).

Vesely et al. (2013) asserted, "Individuals within the teaching profession continue to be vulnerable to high levels of occupational stress" (p. 73). The emotional intelligence of a teacher indicates the ability of the teacher to tolerate the stress and use coping mechanisms to deal with the negative emotional components that the profession will bring. Low emotional intelligence is signified by an individual's inability to cope with stress and "poor personal emotional self-regulation" (p.76). The stress teachers feel due to the deficits in preparedness, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence can lead to burnout and attrition (Vesely et al., 2013).

Teacher Burnout, Stress, and Attrition

According to Wong et al. (2017), challenges to teachers brought about by student behavior issues in the inclusive general education classroom historically have been known to be stressful and challenging. These researchers obtained data from a "secondary analysis" of two randomized controlled trials. They "analyzed parent-teacher consultation interventions called the Collaborative Model for Promoting Competence and

Success (COMPASS)” (p. 415). Seventy-nine special education teachers and a student with Autism from each of their caseloads were selected for study. Wong et al. found that “overall teacher burnout and stress influence student learning outcomes directly and indirectly through teaching quality and engagement” (p. 418).

Wong et al.’s (2017) research has indicated that as many as 40% of teachers experience burnout. Using the 22-item Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey (1999) to measure teacher burnout, the researchers found that “teachers who are stressed or experience burnout are more likely to leave school, leading to an unstable and potentially lower-quality teaching workforce” (p. 421). The survey measured three “dimensions”: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. According to Wong et al., “Higher scores in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and lower scores in personal accomplishment reflect greater burnout” (p. 417).

Teachers of students with disruptive behaviors are more likely than others to leave the profession due to stress. In a study on Social Emotional Learning, Schonert-Reichl (2017) stated that of the 50% of teachers who leave the profession permanently, 35% leave due to student behavior. This researcher suggested burnout occurs when individuals experience inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom, especially students with EBD, who pose more challenges and frustration to teachers. Those teachers are more likely to experience burnout than teachers without inclusion of EBD students.

Psychiatrists Maslach and Leiter (2016) studied job related burnout for over a decade and defined burnout as follows:

Burnout is a psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job. The three key dimensions of this response are an overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment. The significance of this three-dimensional model is that it clearly places the individual stress experience within a social context and involves the person's conception of both self and others. (p. 103)

Maslach and Leiter saw burnout as an occupational hazard, prevalent in many professions including education; this is due to the need to be selfless and put the needs of others first. Several models have been theorized regarding burnout. One developed by Maslach and Leites was the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R). The JD-R model is “a developmental model that states burnout arises when individuals experience incessant job demands and have inadequate resources available to address and to reduce those demands” (p. 19).

Classroom management can be difficult in the best of situations; inclusion of students with disruptive behaviors or EBD makes it more challenging for general education teachers (Bullock & Moreno, 2011). Students miss classes each day because of suspensions and dismissals from class; this is a direct consequence of abject refusal to comply with classroom management rules practices. Returning to class causes excess work for the general education classroom teacher. Osher et al. (2010) stated that this added stress is a further burden on teacher self-efficacy and leads to teacher burnout.

According to Sutchter et al. (2016), 55% of teachers responded in a survey where they could give multiple reasons for leaving the teaching profession due to

dissatisfaction. The additional categories for teachers leaving the profession were: family / personal reasons (43%); pursuing another job (31%); retirement (31%); and financial reasons (18%). The category of “dissatisfaction” was subdivided into the following reasons: See Table 2.1 for the dissatisfaction subdivisions.

Table 2.1
Reasons Teachers Listed as Important to Their Decision to Leave

Reason for Exit	Survey Questions in Each Category	% Rated Very or Extremely Important
Dissatisfaction (55%)	Dissatisfied because of assessments and accountability measures	25%
	Dissatisfied because not enough support to prepare students for assessments	17%
	Dissatisfied with compensation tied to student performance	8%
	Too many intrusions on teaching time	18%
	Discipline issues were an issue at school	17%

Note: Learning Policy Institute | *A Coming Crisis in Teaching?* Table 1. pg. 50

Sometimes the general education teacher will have the assistance of special education teachers or paraprofessionals to assist students with EBD in the classroom. Special educators also grapple with the same self-efficacy issues faced by general education teachers in response to students’ behavior in the classroom. According to Ruppap, Neepor, and Dalsen (2016), teachers’ perceptions about their skill level will affect whether they will implement practices recommended for students with disabilities. This practice can be seen with both general educators and special educators. The inclusive classroom has been studied to benefit student academic and social outcomes, but should the practices necessary to implement such success be compromised, success is diminished for students (Ruppap et al., 2016).

Teacher Shortages in Rural Schools

Sindelair et al. (2018) reported that the directives of NCLB (2001) requiring the recruitment of highly qualified teachers in both general and special education for better

student learning outcomes have, and continue to be, problematic for rural communities. Rural schools, especially rural secondary schools, have difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers when compared to their urban and suburban counterparts. Research conducted in 2005 after the revision of IDEA on solutions for staffing highly qualified teachers in rural schools was revisited, evaluated, and updated by Sindelar et al. (2018).

Sindelar et al. (2018) speculated that special education teacher shortages would materialize due to an increase in special education student enrollments; these shortages never materialized. There was a dramatic decrease in recruiting special educators but not for reasons predicted. Special educator employment declined by 17%; this was due to a decrease in identifying students with disabilities and the recession that developed in 2008. The 2008 recession showed a decline in the housing market, and as home values dropped, the revenue from property taxes was dramatically reduced. This reduction in school revenue repressed teacher hiring in many areas. Additionally, teachers whose retirement earnings were diminished remained in the work field, preventing new teacher graduates from finding work (Sindelair et al., 2018).

Since 2012, the recession situation described by Sindelair et al. (2018) and the team's findings have improved; however, an additional phenomenon took place simultaneously. The researchers found that the Department of Education reported a 30.4% decline in teacher education enrollments. Sutchter et al. (2016) reported several more important statistics: that there were 200,000 fewer teacher graduates entering the job market; this reduction of individuals entering the teaching profession has had detrimental effects on filling needs, especially in rural communities. Moreover, this situation was coupled with a continued high teacher attrition rate of 8%.

Conley and You (2017) asserted the shortage of teachers overall is marked; however, a trend in greater shortages of special education teachers versus general education teachers is palpable. Annual surveys by the American Association for Employment in Education have reported considerable shortages of special education teachers (Boe & Cook, 2006). Special education is seeing the greatest shortage of teacher professionals; 48 states report shortages of special education teachers with half of all schools reporting shortages and 90% of high poverty schools having special educator openings (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Bland et al. (2014) indicated rural areas are less likely to attract teachers due to the location of the district and available resources. A rural area is more inclined to have impoverished families that lead to more challenging teaching assignments. Rural communities have undergone significant changes in the past few decades and many are plagued with methamphetamine labs and heroin epidemics leading to less than desirable places for educators to seek employment (Wilcox et al., 2014). A participant in a study conducted by Azano and Stewart (2015) reported that many of their fellow students were from “broken homes, poverty, and drug abuse” (p. 6).

Multiple-subject certifications in shortage areas like special education is a solution for rural educators, but this added licensing leads to additional financial burdens to college students (Azano & Stewart, 2015). IDEA Assurance 14, an alternative special educator certification pathway, allowed rural areas to hire special education teachers with only a bachelor’s degree in another area but these teachers must receive professional development and work towards special educator certification (Jonte, Gilbert, & Sindelar, 2020).

Rural Communities

Every state in the country has areas that are considered rural. The U.S. Census Bureau defined what constitutes a rural region by looking at population densities and land usage (Sindelar et al., 2018). Gagnon and Mattingly (2015) offered that the definition of what it means to be rural is broad, as the term can have a different scope based upon what is being discussed in rural terms; however, rural communities do have marked similarities. Rural communities tend to have higher rates of poverty, concentrated pockets of poverty, and poverty that spans generations. These researchers noted similarities exacerbated by the decline in farming and mining in these areas. The removal of farming and mining created the exodus of inhabitants furthering the inability to adapt to changes in the community. Often educated rural individuals leave and poverty prevents more educated individuals from transferring to the area (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2015).

The term rural, as it pertains to education or teaching, is more difficult to address; states can vary in their definition of what it means to be rural (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2015; Sindelar et al., 2018). Sindelar et al. (2018) observed that a school district could be considered rural yet be located right outside an urban district. Such a district will have different hiring challenges than rural districts that are very distant from suburbs or cities. The rural community on the outskirts of a city may face increased student populations due to urban sprawl. The rural district much farther from an urban center faces teacher shortages due to lack of human capital (Sindelar et al., 2018).

Rural communities, in terms of education, have a range of characteristics. It is important for a state to understand its rural dynamics to better address educational needs. According to the Legislative Agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, The Center for Rural Pennsylvania, a rural county or school district is defined by the number of persons per square mile in the county or district. According to the Pennsylvania Legislature (2014), to be rural, the number of people per square mile is less than 284. The Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools (PARSS) is a consortium of schools that meet their definition of rural. PARSS is an advocacy organization that strives to ensure the Commonwealth provides a quality education to students who reside in rural districts. Currently, 170 school districts are members of PARSS. More than two thirds of Pennsylvania meets the requirement of a rural school (PARSS, n.d.)

Gagnon and Mattingly (2015) stated that the education needs of rural communities throughout the United States can differ dramatically. Teacher shortages, since the passage of NCLB, have districts scrambling for highly qualified teachers to accommodate federal mandates. Rural schools often have several teachers instructing more than one subject. The need for multiple certifications to adhere to this NCLB mandate places stress on districts and the teachers in this situation. Provisions were added to NCLB in 2004 allowing teachers to obtain additional subject specific certifications within three years, but the stressors of this mandate remain (Azano & Stewart, 2015). Sindelar et al. (2018) reported that rural communities saw moderate success from the development of various strategies to recruit and retain teachers in their schools to meet the Highly Qualified Teacher mandates. The strategies that showed success were coordinated partnerships with universities and “flexible content delivery options” (p. 15).

An additional successful strategy was the recruitment of educators who preferred a rural setting. The strategies that showed the least promise were those that provided financial incentives; teachers who received such incentives left the position after one or two years.

The challenge of recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers in rural school districts has been intensively researched. One challenge is that rural communities produce fewer teachers by nature of smaller populations overall compared to urban areas. An additional challenge is the decrease in numbers of high school graduates pursuing a college education and even fewer pursuing advanced degrees. On average, teachers prefer to remain and teach in areas where they grew up. Some rural school districts will incorporate “grow your own” teaching programs to encourage secondary students to pursue a career in education (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2015). Overall, administrators in rural schools prefer to hire local candidates versus teacher candidates from farther away or out of state. Sindelar et al. (2018) found that the reasons for this hiring practice are the cultural capital that local teachers can contribute to the culture of the school, and they better understand community needs.

In July 2014, U.S. Secretary of Education Duncan, announced the need for the educational agency of each state to create and supply a plan to ensure minority and poor students are not taught by less qualified or “out-of-field” teachers. This was not a new mandate, but fell under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, section 1111(b)(8)(C) (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2015). This attempted to prevent an equity gap among students in this country and affected students in rural communities with teacher shortages in both general and special education. Gagnon and Mattingly (2015) cited that

critics suggested that this 2014 request to prevent an equity gap did not address the complex needs and challenges of the many and varied rural school communities.

The changes in the social ecology of rural schools, with higher incidences of poverty, increases in substance abuse, and broken family home lives, present increased and additional challenges to rural educators. Many general educators lack the knowledge or experience to provide students from these environments with what they need to succeed in school. Government reforms, such as Race to the Top and its introduction of Common Core State Standards, further tax educators (Wilcox et al., 2014).

Teacher Preparation

According to Boe et al. (2007), the USDOE stated the reason for failure to produce highly qualified teachers is the “burdensome requirements” and a “shocking number of courses” at the pre-service level (p. 4). The USDOE’s report further stated that the extensive coursework in pedagogy was counterproductive to producing a highly qualified teacher. NCLB required that highly qualified teachers excel in content knowledge. Coursework in pedagogy and practice teaching were necessary for the second requirement of NCLB full certification. USDOE and NCLB leave teacher preparation programs lacking in direction as to how best prepare teachers without even considering the inclusive classroom nature (Boe et al., 2007).

Wong et al. (2007) addressed that for efforts to increase teacher self-efficacy and to create higher student achievement, even among students with EBD, teacher pre-service programs need to look closely at the preparation of both special educators and general educators in addressing the needs of the category of students with disruptive behaviors. According to Cook et al. (2008), the behaviors associated with students in this category

bring to the inclusive general education classroom a high level of classroom disruption. These disruptions are detrimental to the self-efficacy of special and general education teachers if they feel ill prepared to deal with these challenges. In 2005, The World Health Organization stated that a large number of youth mental health service needs go un-met; this becomes the responsibility of the education system. The services necessary for students with disruptive behaviors are attended to by their local school districts and, ultimately, their teachers (Trach et al., 2017). According to Trach et al. (2017), a particular environment that some schools consider is the social-emotional learning (SEL) environment. SEL improves attitudes and skills of students to prevent negative behaviors but also assists teachers with better classroom management techniques and builds better teacher-student relationships.

A 2015 review of pre-service teacher training programs in the United States, prepared by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, showed only one of three states incorporated SEL competencies in their required state teacher pre-service training (Schonert-Reichl, Kitil, & Hanson-Peterson, 2017; Trach et al., 2017). Additionally, the study sought to understand the perspectives of current teachers regarding student mental health and found that 97% of teachers expressed a critical need to better understand and recognize mental health disorders, 96% found the need to know better strategies to work with children with externalized problems, and 84% felt they needed training with classroom management. Two-thirds claimed to have not received professional development in student mental illness (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017; Trach et al., 2017).

Competencies Instructing Students with Disabilities

The U.S. Office of Education conducted a 1957 seminal study of the qualifications and preparation that teachers must have to instruct students with disabilities. Two thousand leaders in education contributed to the study with the intent to better serve students who at the time were considered socially maladjusted. The study defined socially and emotionally maladjusted children as those “who have unusual difficulty in maintaining satisfactory interpersonal relationships. Included in these two general groups would be all those children who are unable to express their feelings and needs without creating serious difficulties for themselves or others” (p. 2).

Three major sections were reported in the study. The first section consisted of a report by a National Committee on the competencies, skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary for successfully instructing socially and emotionally maladjusted children. The second section rated a teacher’s success from a list of 88 competencies. Seventy-five teachers, who were nominated by The State Departments of Education, proposed the ratings. These ratings were representatives “of superior teachers of socially and emotionally maladjusted children” (p. 65). The third section dealt with practical aspects of teacher preparation of teachers of socially and emotionally maladjusted children. The practical aspects included: (a) ratings by the teachers of the importance of a list of practical teacher preparation experiences; (b) ratings by state and local supervisory personnel of their satisfaction with certain proficiencies of recently trained teachers of maladjusted children; (c) evaluations by all three groups of the amount of regular classroom experience needed by this group of teachers; and (d) evaluations of the length of time required for student teaching with students with social and emotional

disturbances; (e) evaluations by all groups of several general patterns of preparation for work in this field (Mackie, Kvaraceus, & Williams, 1957, p. 4).

Wanyonyi-Short's (2010) dissertation investigated educators' perceptions of the importance of competencies for teachers of students with EBD. The study was a non-experimental correlational study designed to investigate educators of students with EBD. The study utilized the 88 competencies that were developed for Mackie et al.'s (1957) study. Participants were asked to rate the competencies through a survey based on a Likert-scale where 1 = not important; 2 = less important; 3 = important; 4 = very important. They were then asked to rate their perceived proficiency. Table 2.2 summarizes the data of the top-rated competencies.

Table 2.2. *Ranking and Mean Ratings of Proficiency of Top Ten Competencies*

Rank	Competency
1	The ability to tolerate antisocial behavior particularly when it is directed toward authority.
2	Knowledge or understanding of education and psychology of various types of exceptional children.
3	Knowledge or understanding of the advantages of providing experiences in which students can be successful.
4	Knowledge or understanding of techniques adaptable to classroom situations for relieving tensions and promoting good mental health.
5	The ability to interpret special educational programs for, and the problems of students with EBD to the general public, regular school personnel, and non-professional school staff.
6	Knowledge of causes of such behavior as temper tantrums, stealing, enuresis, and nail biting.
7	The ability to develop a student-centered rather than a subject-centered curriculum based on individual interests, abilities, and needs.
8	Knowledge or understanding of the advantages of flexibility of school programs and schedules to permit individual adjustment and development.
9	The ability to foster the social responsibility of students with EBD by promoting wholesome social participation and relations
10	Knowledge or understanding of differences between normal and atypical behavior at various age levels.

Note: N = 75. Wanyonyi-Short (2010).

These competencies specifically addressed the domains that teachers must possess in both knowledge and understanding along with abilities and skills to instruct students with EBD or those who are disruptive in the classroom. Wanyonyi-Short (2010) concluded that this knowledge and understanding includes: (a) growth, development, and emotional disturbances; (b) learning problems and abilities; (c) social and cultural factors; and (d) agencies and legal framework. These early studies were the framework of what would later be included in the preparation of special educators. The passing of the Training of Professional Personnel Act of 1959 (Public Law 85-926) encouraged universities to prepare programs instructing would-be educators to teach students with mental retardation (Wanyonyi-Short, 2010). In 1966 the Council for Exceptional Children implemented the first standards for the preparation of special education teachers. *A Nation at Risk* published in 1983, followed by the Educate America Act in the year 2000, prioritized quality over quantity of teachers to enhance teacher expertise assisting all students at risk (Wanyonyi-Short, 2010).

Cook et al. (2008) stated that the complexities and challenges of students with EBD puts them at high risk for a multitude of poor future outcomes. IDEA (1990) mandated specific initiatives for students with EBD to enhance their chance of success in school; one of these was providing and maintaining qualified personnel to instruct these students (Cheney & Barringer, 1995; Dixon, Yessel, McConnell, & Hardin, 2014). Wanyonyi-Short (2010) cited how special educators are trained and prepared to utilize evidence-based strategies to improve the outcome for students with EBD.

General educators instructing students with EBD or disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom without assistance of special education teachers are particularly

challenged (Green, Guzman, Didaskalou, Harbaugh, Segal, & LaBillois, 2017). The confidence a general educator has instructing this group affects their self-efficacy. Better self-efficacy leads to better student learning outcomes and less job stress, burnout, and attrition for the instructor (Latouche & Gascoigne, 2017). Being prepared and trained properly addresses these concerns while fulfilling federal mandates to facilitate the successful learning for students with disruptive behaviors, regardless of IEP status.

Boe, Shin, and Cook (2007) analyzed how much debate had arisen in the research of the last decade over what constitutes an effective teacher pre-service preparation program. NCLB's mandate to hire highly qualified teachers left the door open as to what training a teacher needs to have in order to be "highly qualified." In addition to being highly qualified by federal standards, Busch et al. (2001) posed the question of what makes a general education teacher able to instruct students with disruptive behaviors included in the general education classrooms. In 2002, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) rigorously voiced, "Teacher preparation was of little or no demonstrated value for enhancing student achievement" in both traditional and alternative teacher preparation programs (Boe et al., 2007, p. 158). Boe et al. stated that the USDOE concluded, "the best available research shows that solid verbal ability and content knowledge are what matter most" (p. 158). Boe et al. continued that the USDOE further stated that current teacher programs are failing to produce the highly qualified teachers that the NCLB legislature demands.

Researchers and educators agreed that more training is needed for teachers to better address the needs and support of students with EBD and students with disruptive behaviors (Mihalas, Morse, Allsopp, & McHatton, 2009). Osher et al. (2010) noted that

teachers in rural locations where shortages of special educator support staff are prevalent, are at higher risk of low self-efficacy leading to stress, burnout, and attrition. The effects of these manifestations lead to poor outcomes for students (Mihalas et al., 2009).

Azano and Stewart (2015) reported that some research suggested that the placement of teachers from rural communities and those who attended rural schools were more successful in educating rural school students. They also found that defining personal characteristics that suit teaching in rural areas is difficult and some educational scholars would claim that this practice would limit “teacher selection and diversity of expertise” (p. 2). Azano and Stewart set out to identify how a pre-service teacher’s awareness of their cultural contexts ties to their teaching. Three key themes were analyzed: (a) the influences of teacher candidates’ personal histories on their feelings of preparedness for teaching in rural schools; (b) teacher candidates’ beliefs about the importance of rural relationships; and (c) perceived challenges of teaching in rural schools (p. 5).

Azano and Stewart (2015) found how “all participants, regardless of how confident they felt in a rural placement, noted that they still struggled to have an appreciative effect on students who were falling behind or students who had no plans to attend college” (p. 7). They further reported how participants reported frustration with the inability to assign homework due to the lack of “parental support” (p. 7) and lack of technology. This was further exacerbated by a lack of student attendance during hunting and harvest seasons.

Administrative Support

A study conducted by Berkovich and Eyal (2017) reported that next to support of peers, the support of the school principal is key in reducing teacher stress. Listening is an important leadership quality, but empathetic listening is even more effective. An empathetic listening school administrator leads to more respect of educators towards administration. Listening must be accompanied by an administrator's return of feedback and "comforting messages" (Burlison, 2008, p. 223).

Sutcher et al. (2016) reported data regarding teacher shortages in all fifty states and the District of Columbia. These researchers examined teacher turnover data from the Schools and Staffing Survey, and the Schools and Staffing Survey Teacher Follow-Up Survey. Teacher demand and preparation program data were collected from the U.S. Department of Education under Title II of the Higher Education Act. Sutcher et al. also analyzed the data of whether teachers felt the behavior of school administration toward staff was supportive and encouraging. The findings in Pennsylvania were that 47% of teachers surveyed did not feel the administrator's behavior towards the staff was supportive and encouraging. In regard to teachers instructing in low socio-economic areas, they reported one survey response as:

I would move [to a low-performing school], but I would want to see social services for parents and children, accomplished leadership, adequate resources and facilities, and flexibility, freedom, and time. . . . One of the single greatest factors in school success is principal leadership. Effective administrators are magnets for accomplished teachers. (p. 66)

Six studies in high poverty schools evaluated by Sutcher et al. found that effective school leaders were: (a) Effective school managers with open communication and those providing teachers with necessary resources; (b) Effective instructional leaders who assist teachers to continually improve; and (c) Those who are inclusive decision-makers. Teachers who report high levels of principal support stay longer and have a greater sense of job satisfaction (Conley & You, 2017).

Conley and You's (2017) study of the decisions of special educators to leave education due to the effects administrative support have significant implications for general educators with inclusive classrooms. The study reported a “lack of support from administrators is the most cited reason special educators leave the profession” (p. 524). The original data-set was minimized from 38,240 public and private teachers to only those who worked more than ten hours per week in either a secondary level school or in a special education program. Conley and You described positive administrative support as “a principal who shows appreciation, takes an interest in teachers’ work, provides constructive feedback, and lets teachers know what is expected of them” (p. 529).

Some survey items asking participants to rate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), in regards to administrative support were:

(a) The school administration’s behavior toward staff is supportive and encouraging; (b) My principal enforces school rules for conduct and backs me up when I need it; (c) The principal knows what kind of school they want and communicated this to the school; and, (d) In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done (p. 529).

The result of the study showed that only administrative support and teacher team efficacy had direct effects on teacher turnover (Conley & You, 2017).

Summary

Teachers today are charged with the inclusion of students with a multitude of backgrounds, conditions, disabilities, and experiences. The interactions that teachers have with their students will meld with the previous experiences of the students and impact the future, shaping later skill development (Mihalas et al., 2009; Neill, 2005). Research shows the importance of the relationship that educators have with their students regarding successful learning (Mihalas et al., 2009; Zee & Koomen, 2016). This applies to all students in the classroom including students with EBD and other students who display disruptive behavior.

Research has been conducted showing that the type of disability a student possesses influences a teacher's feelings toward inclusion of that student in the general education classroom (Cassady, 2011; Cullinan & Sabornie, 2004). Certain disabilities are more time-consuming and frustrating to teachers (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Cassady, 2011). A disability that can pose more challenges for teachers are students with EBD (Cassady, 2011; Taylor & Smith, 2017). A teacher's ability to instruct and affect a myriad of other beneficial variables into the lives of the students they serve requires a strong and high sense of self-efficacy (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Madni et al., 2015).

Research has shown the positive effects of inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Obiaker et al., 2012); however, additional research has shown that teachers were hesitant toward inclusion due to concern over a lack of preparedness to differentiate instruction and to accommodate students with disabilities

(Cassady, 2011). The success of students who display disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom is not only subject to a teacher's ability to identify the needs of the student, but also the teacher's self-efficacy to do so. The self-efficacy of the teacher is affected by the teacher's own emotional intelligence. High emotional intelligence assists a teacher's resilience against teacher stress, burnout, and the potential to leave the profession (Nizielski et al., 2012; Vesely et al., 2013).

The passing of NCLB led to significant research on the effectiveness of highly qualified teachers. In addition to NCLB's definition of what designates a teacher as highly qualified, the characteristics of teachers have been the topic of much research (Steele, 2010). The data on what makes an effective teacher are not clear due to the nature of human development. Teachers bring with them to the profession a wide array of personality and environmentally learned behaviors (Steele, 2010; Warren, 2017).

Teachers instructing students with disabilities and other disruptive behaviors in the general education classroom are likely to experience burnout at higher proportions than teachers instructing students without the inclusion of students with EBD or disruptive behaviors (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). The attrition of teachers due to burnout affects rural school districts more severely due to their already compromised teacher and special educator shortages (Sindelar et al., 2018). The lack of more experienced teachers instructing in high risk schools in rural communities begs the need to look at the quality of teacher preparation programs to possibly compensate for shortfalls that all teachers, novice teachers especially, have instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom in rural communities. In addition to shortages of special educators and a feeling of lack of preparedness among teachers in rural schools, administrator

support has been identified as a major contributing factor on the commitment of teachers remaining in low socio-economic school districts and on job satisfaction (Conley & You, 2017). Chapter Three will discuss the methods and procedures for this qualitative study.

Chapter Three: Methods And Procedures

Introduction

This chapter addresses the methodology that was used to study high school general educators' perceptions of self-efficacy while instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom in rural school districts; it also focused on analyzing general educator perceptions of preparedness to instruct students with disruptive behaviors and their view of administrative support. The goal of this study was to contribute to the body of research that informs and enhances pre-service training for educators to meet the learning needs of all students. Its focus was on educators in rural communities to help assure their readiness in managing student disruptive behavior in the classroom.

The researcher collected data from high school general educators in rural school districts in Pennsylvania. Rural schools were selected from those school districts with membership in the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small schools (PARSS) (2019). Educator perceptions were collected using an electronic survey containing questions from the Teacher Efficacy to Implement Inclusive Practices Scale (TEIP) (Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin, 2011), the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998), and open-ended interview questions reformatted from both scales that were researcher designed to elicit further information to triangulate with the surveys.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were general education high school teachers from a minimum of four and a maximum of eight consenting rural school districts and a potential

pool of 342 teachers in Pennsylvania. Since subjects were anonymous, the researcher did not know the respondents' districts and was unable to ascertain the actual number of participating districts. However, four respondents agreed to an interview, making their district contact information known to the researcher of a potential pool of 342. Only subjects whose superintendents consented to participate were contacted. Twenty-nine high school teachers participated in the survey and four teachers agreed to participate in the interview. One survey was not considered eligible, as the respondent did not meet the criteria for a general education teacher in an inclusive classroom. All other participants, regardless of length of experience, were eligible for inclusion in the study. Participation in the study was voluntary; subjects could withdraw from the study at any time. No remuneration or incentives were offered for participation in any portion of the study.

Setting

This study's setting was at least four and not more than eight school districts across Pennsylvania whose superintendents consented to participate. Districts were selected based on membership in the PARSS. High schools that participated ranged in size from 253 to 653 students. These districts qualified as rural by Pennsylvania standards and their status as a rural school was verified by the eight consenting superintendents.

Each high school in the study had an economic disadvantage rate between 37.8% and 55.3% as reported by the consenting district. Indicators of economically disadvantaged included some or all of the following: (a) temporary assistance for needy families; (b) families designated as poor by census bureau measures; (c) students receiving Medicaid; (d) children who are neglected or delinquent living in institutions; (e) students

supported in foster homes; or (f) students receiving free or reduced lunch (PDE, 2018). Additionally, students from participating high schools received special education services at a rate between 11.8% and 23.3% (PDE, 2018). Disaggregated data for each of these categories were not collected. Table 3.1 illustrates the demographics of the districts that consented to the study.

Table 3.1

Demographics of Participating Districts

District	# of H.S. Students	Grade Level	% Special Education	Economically Disadvantaged
A	253	9-12	16.2%	48.2%
B	653	9-12	*	*
C	434	9-12	15.4%	37.8%
D	378	9-12	23.3%	*
E	648	7-12	19.5%	47.5%
F	331	9-12	17.8%	55.3%
G	330	7-12	11.8%	39.7%
H	568	9-12	*	*

Note. N=8. *No data provided by three districts via PIMS (PDE, PIMS, 2018).

The researcher used a survey (Appendix A) and an interview (Appendix B) as instruments to gather data from the rural general educators to answer the three research questions. The research questions and relevant research in the literature review guided the choice of content in the instruments. The alignment of the research questions, instruments, and literature appears in Appendix C.

Instruments

The researcher used two instruments, a survey and an interview, to collect and triangulate data in this qualitative study.

Survey

Surveys alone generally lack the ability to supply adequate research data due to shortened survey length for participant convenience (Barco, 2007). This researcher chose a shorter survey format with 28 questions, a succinct instrument, and it also included researcher-designed open-response questions to elaborate on the data collected in the survey. This study's survey was comprised of nine teacher demographic questions, four open-ended questions designed by the researcher, seven Likert-scale statements (TEIP), and eight opinion-based questions (TSES). The authors' permissions were granted to use and adapt items from the TSES and TEIP. The use of multiple forms of survey response questions provided the researcher with more comprehensive feedback pertaining to the research questions in the study (Glesne, 2016); multiple forms of survey response questions appeared in this survey to accomplish that end.

Selected TEIP and TSES survey questions that pertained to this study were incorporated into Google Forms along with four relevant open-response questions created by this researcher. The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete. The demographic questions of the survey included information as follows: teacher age, years teaching, highest level of education, years teaching in a rural school district, Pennsylvania certification areas, the teachers' own high school experience classification (rural or not rural), number of students with disruptive behaviors taught, number of students with disruptive behaviors with IEPs, and the number of pre-service courses teachers had taken regarding students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom.

A researcher designed open-ended question segment of the survey asked participants to describe special educator or paraprofessional supports in their classrooms,

whether they had ever contemplated leaving the profession, description of behaviors of students in their classrooms, and whether administration ever rotated inclusive class assignments that included students with disruptive behaviors. Additionally, the survey contained seven Likert-scale statements regarding student behavior and eight opinion-based questions that focused on classroom management practices. Survey question 29 asked participants whether they would be willing to participate in a follow-up phone interview.

The survey was distributed to eight participating district high schools by one of two methods, depending on the method preferred by the superintendent. In the first method the researcher sent emails directly to general educators using email addresses obtained from the districts' on-line staff directories and containing a server link to Google Forms. Other participants received the surveys from the principal's secretary, who sent a group email containing a message from the researcher and the survey link. Participants who agreed to voluntarily participate submitted survey responses electronically and anonymously. The email contained instructions on how to access the online survey. The survey introduction stated that by completing the study, the participant was giving consent.

Google Forms is an online cloud-based software used to create free and secure surveys (Google Privacy, 2018). Participant security using the online Google Forms platform was protected through Google's data encryption security during the collection of responses. Data responses are stored on the cloud with continued Google protection (Google Privacy, 2018). Google complies with the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP, n.d.). This is a government-based program that

provides monitoring for cloud services that include FIPS 140-2 compliant encryption, dual factor authentication, antivirus, network, internal and external vulnerability scanning, intrusion detection and prevention, and firewalls (Databank, n.d.). Google recommends the respondents utilize a two-step verification process and log off one's device after completing the survey.

Interview

A six-question researcher-designed instrument was used to conduct interviews by phone with four teacher participants. The interview questions gave participants the opportunity to expand upon their responses to the survey questions. Participation in the interview was voluntary. Question 29 at the end of the survey asked the survey volunteers to participate in the interview portion of the study. A submission choice of “yes” or “no” was provided. Willing participants were asked to provide contact information so the researcher could call them to set a mutually convenient time for the interview. Participants were also asked via the survey question if they would be willing to be recorded. They were informed on the survey that their willingness to participate in this portion of the study would reveal their identity to the researcher; however, their identity and information would be held in confidence and known only to the researcher.

The researcher asked each interview participant's permission again, verbally, to be electronically recorded during the interview. All volunteers were willing to be recorded. Any quotes used were presented anonymously. Signed permission to be interviewed and recorded documents and any transcripts are stored in a locked file drawer for a period of five years; then they will be destroyed. Participants' information was

anonymous to all but the researcher who did know the contact information for the interviewees and, therefore, could associate that interviewee with their survey responses.

Reliability and Validity

Several measures in the methodology procedure enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of this qualitative study. Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggested purposeful sampling and stated that obtaining opportunities to observe phenomena from multiple perspectives leads to a more valid qualitative study. This study utilized purposeful sampling by selecting schools designated “rural” as defined by the PARSS.

Glesne (2016) stated that triangulation is “the use of multiple data collection methods, multiple sources, multiple investigators, and/or multiple theoretical perspectives” (p.53). Surveys, phone interviews, and instrument questions derived from the work of two separate research teams, each having different theoretical perspectives, helped to meet Glesne’s criteria for triangulation. The use of triangulation contributed to enhanced validity of the study.

Noble and Smith (2015) stated that a qualitative study’s validity is the accuracy in which it reflects the perceptions of participants. Two different instruments were used to accurately reflect the participant perceptions; additionally, participants held similar positions as general education teachers in rural secondary schools. Instruments used in this study contained opinion-based survey questions, Likert-scale survey questions, open-ended questions, and interview questions. These measures served to enhance the study’s accuracy in reflecting the participants’ perceptions.

To further validate the instruments used in this study, an expert panel, whose members were not included in the study, analyzed and critiqued the instrument to review

accuracy of terminology and to ensure clarity. Burton and Mazerolle (2011) suggested use of an expert panel to evaluate an “instrument’s representativeness of the topic to be studied by establishing the instrument’s credibility, accuracy, relevance, and breadth of knowledge regarding the domain” (p. 29). A group of three doctoral-level experts in the field of education served as this researcher’s panel of experienced educators; these panel members were a current principal, a retired special education supervisor, and a current assistant principal. All three-panel members had experience as general educators; two supervised general educators. The expert panel was provided Simon and White’s (n.d.) Survey/Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel (Appendix D). This rubric is in the public domain and the authors state no approval is required for use. The use of this rubric with the expert panel also enhanced the validity of the instruments.

Validity and reliability of the instruments were also enhanced through the alignment of the research questions with the instrument questions and the research presented in the literature review. This was important to assure that the researcher extracted information the researcher sought to collect through strategic instrumentation.

Consistency and soundness of procedures incorporated into a qualitative study are Noble and Smith’s (2015) definition of reliability. The use of relevant items from two sourced scales, the TEIP and the TSES, added to the reliability of the instruments in this qualitative study. The interviews were recorded electronically with the permission and consent of participants and, when possible, the researcher used exact words and phrases of participants when reporting in the data of Chapter Four.

All participants received the survey through an email link and were provided the same directions and identical questions. The time frame that teachers had to participate

in the survey was the same three weeks. All phone interview questions were the same and asked in the same manner to all participants. Further reliability was gained for the study by the researcher's self-transcription of the interview recordings. Recordings were reviewed three times against the transcripts to ensure accuracy.

Clarity of the instrument questions was assured through the selection of items from instruments that have been tested and validated by experts in the field of education. The TSES is a survey instrument created by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's updated self-efficacy scale is also known as the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale; it was examined in three separate studies. Each study reduced the number of questions asked on the scale to finalize a 24-item long form and a 12-item short form that added classroom management items due to the importance of this factor in regard to teacher self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The reliability for the 24-item scale was 0.94 and for the 12-item scale was 0.90. This study used eight of the teacher belief items from the TSES that dealt with classroom management.

The TEIP was designed specifically to measure teacher self-efficacy to teach in inclusive classrooms (Park et al., 2016). Sharma et al.'s (2012) TEIP survey was evaluated and shown to provide validity evaluating teacher self-efficacy in a study in Kentucky with 134 participants in 2016 (Park et al., 2016). The evaluation concluded that the TEIP scale would provide researchers and educators valuable information in measuring self-efficacy (Park et al., 2016). This study used seven Likert-scale items extracted from the scale in the factors of efficacy in using inclusive instruction and efficacy in dealing with disruptive behaviors. Reliability analysis for the total TEIP scale

suggested that the scale provides a reliable measure of pre-service teacher perceptions of self-efficacy for inclusion across different countries (Sharma et al., 2011).

Design of Study

The design of this study was qualitative in nature to examine perceptions of self-efficacy, preparedness, and administrative support of general education teachers instructing students with disruptive behaviors in inclusive classrooms in rural districts. A qualitative design was utilized due to the nature of purposeful sampling, open-ended questioning, and follow-up interview questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The researcher identified patterns from a collection of field data from relevant participants to address the research questions.

This study was a descriptive analysis and interpretation of rural public-school general education teacher perceptions; it utilized a survey that also included open-ended questions and interviews to triangulate data. Participating teachers in the interview portion of the study were recorded. The researcher transcribed the recorded interviews and reviewed the transcriptions three times to ensure accuracy.

The study was open to all general educators in the participating rural high schools of the consenting districts with no restriction in instructional subject areas. Rural schools were selected through the districts' membership in the PARSS. Four volunteer teachers who also participated in the survey were interviewed in this study.

Procedure

Prior to requesting permission from 114 rural Pennsylvania school district superintendents for participation in the study, an expert panel of doctoral level educators

with experiences in school and central office administration, as well as in special education and general education classroom instruction, was secured to review the survey and interview questions to enhance instrument validity. The expert panel rubric used for validity was Simon and White's (n.d.) Survey/Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel. Use of the panel guided by a validation rubric was employed to enhance the credibility of this qualitative study.

Upon feedback and revision to the instruments suggested by the panel, rural schools were selected for the study through a district's membership in the PARSS. Permission requests were emailed to the superintendents of 114 rural school districts across the Commonwealth; this request sought permission to email general education high school teachers in the district for participation in an online survey with potential for a subsequent interview. A follow-up email was sent to districts that did not respond after the first request, again asking for their participation in the study.

Having received consent from eight districts for participation in the study, the researcher submitted a proposal for the study to the Immaculata University Research Ethics Review Board (RERB); written approval from the University to conduct the study was granted. Upon approval from the RERB (Appendix E), the first step in the process of collecting data was to communicate via email to general education high school teachers in the consenting districts. Email addresses were secured by the researcher through the districts' online staff directory. High school principal secretaries from two districts sent a group email containing a link to the survey; the researcher directly contacted the teachers in the other six schools. The email invited teachers to complete an online survey; it included an introduction to the nature of the study and informed

potential participants of the anonymity of their participation. The email provided a link directing them to the online survey. Information was provided to participants that consent for participation was given by accessing the survey through the link provided.

Further information was given in the email alerting participants that they had the option to continue with the study by participating in a follow-up phone interview; instructions in survey item 29 asked their willingness to be interviewed. Participants could answer by selecting from a yes or no box. Directions were provided along with space to leave contact information indicating their willingness to participate, to be recorded, and to be quoted anonymously. Item 29 also indicated that by giving their contact information their identity would be associated with the survey and known only to the researcher; item 29 also assured the participant of confidentiality. Upon completion of the study, a thank you acknowledgement and copy of the results were sent to consenting district superintendents.

The survey remained open for three weeks. The researcher sent reminders at week two of the survey completion period. Twenty-eight eligible surveys were organized and analyzed to answer the research questions.

The second step in the data collection process involved the attainment of interviews. All surveyed teachers were given the opportunity to participate in phone interviews. Contact was made with each teacher willing to participate by phone; a convenient interview time was set. Prior to the interview, the researcher sent the volunteers an email with a formal consent form to interview, record, and quote them anonymously.

Once formal written consent from each participant was obtained, individual phone interviews were conducted. Interviews were recorded with permission. Upon completion of the study, all instrument data were secured in a locked file drawer in the researcher's home; after five years it will be destroyed by burning. At that time, audio files will be erased.

Data Analysis

Collected data were sorted into categories reflecting the research questions; perceptions of teacher preparedness instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom; perceptions of teacher self-efficacy instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom; and teacher perceptions of administrative support instructing students with disruptive behavior in the inclusive classroom.

The data collected from the demographic questions, Likert-scale responses, opinion-based questions, and the open-ended questions were transferred onto an Excel spreadsheet and further categorized; patterns and themes in the data were noted. Organization of data was driven by the alignment of the instrument questions with the research questions for this study. Responses from the interviews were organized and analyzed in the same manner. The researcher used quantitative data collected from the survey and qualitative data from the open-ended questions and interview questions to answer the research questions through the lens of the literature presented in Chapter Two.

Summary

This qualitative study examined the perceptions of self-efficacy of high school general educators instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural public high school. Teacher perceptions of their preparedness to instruct students with

disruptive behaviors in the general education inclusive classroom were also analyzed, along with teacher perceptions of administrative support to do so. This chapter described the subjects, setting of the study, instruments used to collect data, and the validity and reliability of the instrumentation. The researcher provided the design of the study and the procedural steps to collect and analyze the data.

The research design was submitted to Immaculata University's RERB for approval. Two instruments were used to collect data; these were an online Google Forms survey and phone interview to add further clarity and add rich detail to the data collected. Upon RERB approval, the researcher contacted superintendents of rural school districts; a total of 114 superintendents were invited to participate in the study.

The setting for the study was at least four and at most eight rural public school districts in Pennsylvania. Each participating school district was a district that met the requirements for membership in the PARSS in the rural designation. Subjects of the study were high school general education teachers directly involved in the teaching of students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom. Twenty-eight teachers participated in the survey out of a potential pool of 342; four of these participated in an interview. Participants in the online survey were assured anonymity and confidentiality throughout the study. Participants were asked to provide formal consent prior to an interview with the researcher. Patterns and themes were organized and analyzed to answer the researcher's questions; discrepant data were noted. Upon completion of the study, the consenting superintendents were provided a summary of results and a thank you letter. Chapter Four will describe the data resulting from the study.

Chapter Four - Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to obtain the perceptions high school teachers have regarding their self-efficacy to instruct students with disruptive behaviors in rural inclusive classrooms, their preparedness to instruct these students, and their perceptions of administrative support. Survey and interview questions were analyzed for patterns to inform the research, which may enhance pre-service training of teachers to deal with students who exhibit disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom. The research may add to the body of knowledge to decrease teacher stress, burnout, and attrition and create better student learning outcomes (Klopfer et al., 2017).

This chapter presents the results of collected data from a peer reviewed, researcher created survey and interview questions. This data represented 28 survey respondents and four interview respondents. Surveys were sent to 114 rural Pennsylvania school districts that are members of PARSS. A total of eight school districts or seven percent agreed to participate. Google Forms was the survey platform utilized to collect survey data.

The research question aligned survey was created by the researcher, with several items extracted with permission from the TSES and TEIP authors. The Survey / Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel enhanced validity. Twenty-nine educators volunteered for the survey. One respondent was disqualified for not meeting the qualifications for participation. An interview with six questions was offered on a volunteer basis to the 28 survey respondents. Four of these or 14% agreed to elaborate further through a researcher conducted phone interview.

Demographic Questions

The survey instrument used in this study asked participants for demographic information that would lend itself to potential patterns of research analysis. The questions covered the participant's age, highest level of education, number of years teaching, and teaching certifications. Table 4.1 reflects question one regarding age.

Table 4.1

Participant Age Categories

Age Category	N
Under 30	4 (14%)
30-39	8 (29%)
40-49	10 (36%)
50-59	6 (21%)
60 or over	0 (0%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Table 4.1 indicates participants' age. Fifty-seven percent of respondents were over the age of 40. Table 4.2 reflects participants' highest levels of education, demographic question two. Eighty-six percent of respondents surveyed had degrees above a Bachelor's degree.

Table 4. 2

Participant Highest Level of Education

Degree	N
Bachelor's Degree	5 (18%)
Master's Degree	21 (75%)
Doctoral Degree / Postgraduate	2 (7%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Table 4.3 reports the data for respondents' total years of teaching, which was asked in question number 3. Additional questions involved the instruction of students with disruptive behaviors. Fifty-three percent of respondents who participated in the survey have taught more than 16 years. This category of seasoned experience represents more than all other experience categories combined.

Table 4.3

Participant Total Years Teaching

Number of Years	N
Less than one year	0 (0%)
1-3 years	2 (7%)
4-6 years	2 (7%)
7-9 years	3 (11%)
10-12 years	3 (11%)
13-15 years	3 (11%)
16 years or more	15 (53%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Participants were asked to list all the areas in which they were certified to teach in the field of education. Eleven of the 28 (39%) respondents were dually certified in areas other than special education. Eleven percent of teachers who participated in the study held a special education certification in addition to their discipline certification. Thirty-two percent of respondents were certified in the sciences.

Identification of the number of students exhibiting disruptive behavior who have and who do not have IEPs was examined. Three of the 28 participants or 11% who instructed students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom claimed that their disruptive students all have IEPs. Five participants (18%) claimed students who

exhibited disruptive behaviors in their classroom had no IEPs at all and 10 respondents (or 36%) have more than 50% of students with disruptive behaviors in their classrooms without IEPs. Table 4.4 summarizes the major discipline in which they are certified and further identifies the number of educators who are dually certified in special education.

Table 4.4:

Participant Teacher Certifications

Certification Area	Number & % of Participants	Dually Certified in Special Education
Agriculture	1 (4%)	0
Art	1 (4%)	0
English/Language Arts	4 (14%)	0
Language	4 (14%)	1
Mathematics	5 (18%)	2
Sciences	9 (32%)	0
Social Studies	4 (14%)	0

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Table 4.5 shows the number of students exhibiting disruptive behaviors with and without IEPs; this table reflects the answers to question number seven and question number eight in the survey, respectively.

Question nine of the survey asked respondents to describe the behaviors of students who are disruptive in their classroom. Behaviors most frequently cited were refusing to work; verbal outbursts; talking with other students; defiance; disrespect to the teacher; talking over the teacher; inappropriate comments to gain peer attention; being off-task; cell phone usage; cursing; horseplay; and out of seat-walking around the room. To a lesser degree, the following were cited: vandalizing materials and desks; distracting others; touching other students; class-cutting; bullying; and sleeping during class. Some teachers also described students who will bang their head on the desk, scribble

excessively, become argumentative, throw objects, walk out of the room, and show their “butt crack” to other students

Table 4.5

Number of Students Exhibiting Disruptive Behaviors

Participant	Students with DB	Students with DB with IEPs
1	2	0 (0%)
2	28	11 (39%)
3	8	1 (12%)
4	16	2 (12%)
5	24	8 (33%)
6	0	0 (0%)
7	8	2 (25%)
8	10	2 (20%)
9	2	0 (0%)
10	7	3 (43%)
11	5	0 (0%)
12	5	0 (0%)
13	0	0 (0%)
14	20	20 (100%)
15	10	7 (70%)
16	10	10 (100%)
18	6	2 (33%)
19	5	4 (80%)
20	28	6 (21%)
21	7	2 (29%)
22	20	16 (80%)
24	5	5 (100%)
25	7	3 (43%)
26	20	2 (10%)
27	5	0 (0%)
28	10	7 (70%)

Note: N=26. Teacher participants. Two respondents’ (17 and 23) data for this question were eliminated due to possible misunderstanding of the question.

Research Question One

The data presented in this section were collected to address the first research question regarding the perceptions of general education high school teachers and their preparedness to teach students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom.

The perceptions of preparedness when instructing students with disruptive behaviors were addressed in questions 4, 5, 10, 19, and 28 of the 28 survey questions and questions 1 and 6 of the six interview questions.

Analysis of survey responses. Question four asked respondents their number of years of teaching experience in a rural school. Table 4.6 shows the teaching experience and percentage of such in a rural school for the respondent group. Fifty percent of respondents taught 16 years or more in a rural school.

Question five of the survey asked respondents to classify the type of high school they attended: rural, urban, suburban, non-public, or unsure. Twenty-one (75%) of the respondents attended a rural school; one (4%) attended an urban school; five (18%) attended a suburban school; and one (4%) attended a non-public school.

Table 4.6

Participant Experience in Rural Schools

Number of Years	N
Less than one year	0 (0%)
1-3	3 (11%)
4-6	2 (7%)
7-9	3 (11%)
10-12	3 (11%)
13-15	3 (11%)
16+	14 (50%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Question 10 of the survey asked respondents the number of courses in their pre-service training that covered best practices for dealing with students with disruptive

behaviors in the inclusive classroom. Respondents could select: 0; 1-2; 3-4; and 5 or more. Eighty-nine percent of participants in the survey claimed to have no more than two courses in their pre-service training dealing with students with disruptive behaviors.

Three respondents held a dual certification in special education with only one having had more than 5 courses dealing with students with disruptive behaviors. Table 4.7

illustrates the data.

Table 4.7

Pre-service Best Practice Courses

Number of Courses	N
0	11 (39%)
1-2	14 (50%)
3-4	2 (7%)
5 or more	1 (4%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Question 19 was a Likert-scale survey item. The statement posed to participants was: I receive ample professional development to instruct students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom. Respondents could choose from (a) Strongly Agree, (b) Agree, (c) Disagree, and (d) Strongly Disagree.

More than half the respondents, 57%, disagreed or strongly disagreed that they receive enough professional development on how to instruct students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom. Forty-three percent of respondents agreed (32%) or strongly agreed (11%). Table 4.8 summarizes the data.

Table 4.8

Participant Perception of Ample Professional Development

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I receive ample professional development to instruct students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom	3 (11%)	9 (32%)	11 (39%)	5 (18%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Table 4.9

Teacher Preparedness Instructing Students with Disruptive Behavior

Opinion	N
1 – nothing	3 (11%)
2	3 (11%)
3 – very little	4 (14%)
4	4 (14%)
5 – some	8 (29%)
6	4 (14%)
7 – quite a bit	2 (7%)
8	0 (0%)
9 – a great deal	0 (0%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

The final survey question to address perceptions of general education high school teachers regarding their preparedness to teach students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom was survey question 28. Question 28 was opinion-based.

Participants rated their preparedness through pre-service training prior to instructing students with disruptive behaviors. Table 4.9 summarizes the data.

Seventy-nine percent of the responses indicated that general educators surveyed did not feel prepared or felt somewhat prepared though pre-service training instructing students with disruptive behaviors. Fourteen percent claimed that they were more than somewhat prepared and 7% claimed they were prepared quite a bit. Four teachers agreed to elaborate on their survey responses by volunteering to be interviewed. A summary of selected responses to interview question 1 is found in Tables 4.10a, 4.10b, and 4.10c.

Analysis of interview questions. Interview questions 1 and 6 were included to elaborate on the data obtained from the survey regarding the perceptions of general

education high school teachers and their preparedness to teach students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom.

Interview question number one asked, “How well prepared did you feel through your pre-service training to instruct students who are disruptive in your inclusive general education classroom?” If the respondent answered that they did not perceive they were well prepared, the question probed for ways in which the respondent could have been better prepared. Additionally, the participant was asked if they ever sought ways to better prepare themselves on their own and how they did this.

Interviewees were asked to elaborate on their perceptions of preparedness through their pre-service training. Table 4.10a summarizes the data.

Table 4.10a

Preparedness Through Pre-service Training

Interviewee	Response
1	“Not prepared at all...Never were there specific behaviors outlined. I thought it would be kids who are not engaged or having problems at home and we get those problems but the level I would not have ever imagined. I don't even know how I made it through even my first year teaching. I think you're kind of worn down, desensitized at least, as the years go on, but I was not prepared.”
2	“I think semi-adequately.”
3	“I want to say that we've talked about it only in preparing lessons that will limit those disruptive behaviors. We did not talk about simple techniques. Not prepared in the sense of 'I have a list of tools, I know that will work that are researched based'.”
4	“No. I had a pretty good mentor teacher. She helped me understand how I handle these situations; but no, I don't think it was in the curriculum in my undergrad. We were given some techniques but it's more proactive than reactive so more along the lines of creating lesson plans.”

Note: N=4. Teacher participants

Respondents were asked to state ways in which they could have been better-prepared instructing students with disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classroom. The summary of selected responses are found in Table 4.10b

Interview question 1 also asked respondents if they seek ways to better prepare themselves to instruct students who exhibit disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classroom. If they do seek out ways, respondents were asked to give examples. A summary of selected responses appears in Table 4.10c.

Table 4.10b: How could you have been better-prepared instructing students with disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classroom?

Interviewee	Response
1	“To prepare myself better, it’s talking to colleagues. I belong to many Facebook groups and classroom management groups.”
2	“I think maybe before getting into the classroom it would have helped maybe to do some more emotional trauma training... Things like, what is the reason, more of like, not focusing on how do we stop disruptive behavior but more like, what is the reason disruptive behavior happens in the first place. Some sort of aspect of really understanding why kids act out in the first place versus logistics and squashing bad behavior.”
3	“We were very focused in math, and on the opposite side very focused on the teaching of the mathematics. We had very specific methods courses but to extend another year to pull apart some of those classes that were bunched up for 18 credits and allowed to have those courses on how to manage a class. Maybe another special education course, just something more.”
4	<p>“Honestly, by given – not so much horror stories, but in these situations, this is how I handle it, this is how I de-escalated it, scenarios and simple techniques of proximity control or being close to that student or talking with your peers and colleagues and understanding this student... kind of give me a background on these students that are going to be in your classroom. Just simple ideas of how to work with the student more. I guess just how to essentially build a relationship with them.”</p> <p>“I am in my master’s right now. It isn’t just math education. I was hoping that within the curriculum that they would cover something about, not so much disruptive behaviors but how to handle different situations in your classroom. Classroom management essentially, how to put the seats to increase participation or help with the behavior or disruptions in general.”</p>

Note: N=4. Teacher participants.

Interview question 6 asked respondents to discuss other sources of support their school could implement to assist in better managing and instructing students who exhibit disruptive behavior in their inclusive classroom. A summary of selected responses to interview question 6 is found in Table 4.11.

Table 4.10c: Have you ever sought out ways to better prepare yourself on your own and, if so, how?

Interviewee	Response
1	“I wish I had the answers but really who I reach to are my colleagues and Facebook support groups which I belong too...I don’t know maybe 10-15 that I look at regularly. I answer every survey in higher education that is trying to help us. I guess the only thing is I could go on for hours and hours about my specific experiences with students but I have a feeling you’ve heard them all – or most of them.”
2	“I think, probably, the best training is just having to do it and because each kid and each school district certainly brings their own challenges and their own unique reasons for the disruptions. I think on my own, my own research myself, like reading things and searching thing. It’s like an ongoing, an ongoing thing that I am always trying to think of ways to better reach students. Building relationships with my students, which is always an ongoing thing, and trying to look at why this would happen in the first place versus changing the environment in my room.”
3	“Talking to colleagues because they’ve done it, been through it. Talking to administration, getting their thoughts on how to handle certain situations. Each school district is a tad bit different on how to handle thing. They all have their own standard operating procedures. Doing the research on the computer, Googling different scenarios. I think teachers are getting to the point where talking we are talking more as a community. I’m fairly new in this profession but obviously getting further education; I’m in my masters now and I was looking for something along the line, for my masters that is, to help me teach more effectively. But right now, none of my courses really talk too much about behavior; they’re more content focused.”
4	“There are some teacher blogs or some blogs of teachers. I go online and You tube and hash out what they do and so I have listened to a few of those. I like to listen to podcasts. There are some pretty good podcasts. I don’t really necessarily go out and go through all the podcasts and find exactly, just whatever catches my eye. I’ve picked up a few things here and there, like what teachers do and what some of the professionals above the teacher do. I’ve kind of researched this to develop ideas.”

Note: N=4. Teacher participants.

Table 4.11

Sources of School Support

Interviewee	Response
1	“We have a group who just handle issues in our school, and they decided we would have a resource officer. We don’t have one yet, but that presence is supposed to mitigate some of our issues with disruptive students. I don’t know if that will be enough. I’ve seen models in other schools where the resource officer is more a friend. So that is the direction that our district is headed, but I’m not sold. There has to be something more.”
2	“I think if we had a more chain of command of what happens, who we speak when we have issues with students. We do loosely have a person but no clear – if a student does this, here is what will happen and here is whom you need to talk to about what will happen. So there is no clear flow chart plan. We also don’t have a clear communication plan between teachers and our social worker and our guidance counselor and parents; we don’t have a clear plan”.
3	“Having more of everyone on the same page, knowing how to handle all the same issues that everyone else is having. I have a student with a lot of disruptive behaviors, and I made my case to my administrator, an aide was put into the class. Almost flipped completely.”
4	“We track our students, which John Haddy’s research shows is not a great, positive outcome on those students. So, I think if we remove the tracking so that some of the students that have the lower math or lower emotion skills, or lower social skills aren’t all jumbled in one class. So that when they can be with students who maybe have higher math but lower social skills you can pair those two together just so they can work off each other’s positives. I work out, so providing some kind of time – whether that’s a complete change in the schedule to have common times to work on plans with the teachers, peers, colleagues, whatever you want to call them.”

Note: N=4. Teacher participants.

Summary of research question one data. Teacher responses to the survey questions examining their preparedness for instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the rural inclusive classroom revealed a significant trend, a perceived lack of preparedness from their pre-service training and a lack of ongoing professional development to do the same. One respondent emphatically stated, “Not prepared at all” when asked if they felt adequately prepared in their pre-service training.

The interview responses indicated that three of four respondents did not feel adequately prepared; one participant felt moderately prepared to instruct students with disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classroom and having to find ways to handle this on their own. The participants felt that it would have been beneficial to receive more pre-service and ongoing training. Every interviewee stated that they seek support from their peers or have joined groups to further educate themselves on practices that are successful in the classroom. One respondent stated, “I think teachers are getting to the point where we are talking more as a community.”

A strong data trend was a teacher’s need to feel that they have built a good relationship with their students who exhibit disruptive behaviors in an effort to better understand why students act as they do and to deal better with the disruptions. One teacher recommended removing the tracking of students, allowing for time to meet with colleagues, and adding aides to the classroom for assistance. Also articulated was a desire to have a better line of communication with administration relative to expectations and consequences; they felt those measures would be helpful in managing students with disruptive behaviors.

Research Question Two

The data presented in this section were collected to address the second research question regarding the perceptions of general education high school teachers' self-efficacy when educating students with disruptive behaviors in the rural inclusive classroom. The perceptions of self-efficacy when instructing students with disruptive behaviors were addressed in questions 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26 of the survey response questions and question 2 of the 6 interview questions.

Analysis of survey responses. Question 12 asked respondents if they ever contemplated leaving the teaching profession due to their level of ability in managing students with disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classroom and to explain their answers. Responses ranged from a simple “No” to “Absolutely yes.” Eight participants responded “No” with no further explanation. Respondent 8 stated, “No” but would consider moving onto higher education in the future if they feel drained, Respondent 10 stated, “No, other than my first year” of teaching. Two others responded “No” for reasons of “rarely having issues that cannot be dealt with right away” and “I worked with administration and developed my own classroom management plans. We also followed APL for years, but that practice has tapered off somewhat.” Respondent 16 stated, “No, as mentioned, they are not necessarily disruptive. They are just incredibly lazy and disrespectful to the process of education in general. As a teacher that is irritating.” Respondent 26 said, “No” and shared, “Previous job experience gave me a skill set that has helped over the years.” One respondent did not answer the question.

Forty-three percent of respondents stated that they have considered leaving the profession due to students with disruptive behavior in the inclusive classroom. Two of

the respondents who stated “no” claimed they thought about it their first year of teaching and would consider leaving the profession in the future if they felt too drained. Table 4.12 summarizes the data.

Question 14 was a Likert-scale statement asking participants to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree regarding making their expectations clear about student behavior. Twenty-one participants strongly agreed they were able to do this and seven participants agreed they could make expectations clear. No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they could make expectations clear to students.

Table 4.12

Consideration to Leave the Profession

Participant	Response
1	Yes, I am teaching a majority of students with special needs and I went to school to teach mathematics, but mainly to help students become better people. I was not taught, trained, or wanted to teach students with special needs. I have no background in that and majority of the student body I teach are students with special needs
5	Absolutely yes. It is a continuous struggle every single day to try not only to teach and meet standards but just trying to get students to listen and stay in their seats is a challenge. We are not respected and it gets hard when you feel like you put so much into teaching and preparing every lesson, only to be disrespected and continuously have to battle with students to get them to listen. It's absolutely exhausting. I have talked to many colleagues and all of them feel the exact same way. Something needs to happen; otherwise we have a lot of young teachers who will be finding different careers. It's just not worth the physical and emotional toll. The stress we have every day isn't worth it. What makes it the most challenging is that it feels like it will only get worse from here.
13	Yes. Students who take the learning away from others in the classroom make me feel horrible as a teacher. We are really strapped with what we can do in the classroom because it always seems to be deemed a “manifestation” of the disability. Therefore, these students do not get consequences and continue their behaviors or they even get worse. This makes it very hard to keep a positive attitude towards my effectiveness in the classroom.
21	I came up with a “plan B” for the first time in my career last year. I had a class full of “tech kids” who were placed together in a class of 28 students. Ninety percent were males, who refused to work and regularly told me to “F-off”. I looked into heading back to school to enter the nursing field.
25	Yes, it is frustrating when you, the teacher, care about the student's grade more than they do
27	Yes, the pressures placed on teachers now are so demanding. We are required to do so much and have very little training. It is too overwhelming to meet so many needs in one classroom. The individual needs are so diverse now and can't possibly be met. We pretend that we are doing what's best, but the schools are not.

Note: N=6. Teacher participants. Only those respondents who answered “yes” are listed.

Question 15 of the survey was a Likert-scale statement. This question asked the opinion of general educators of their ability to calm a student who is disruptive or

noisy. Nineteen respondents stated they agreed that they could calm disruptive or noisy students, seven strongly agreed, and two disagreed. Sixty-eight percent of general educators agreed and 25% strongly agreed that they were able to calm a disruptive or noisy student while 7% disagreed.

Question 16 of the Likert-scale statement sought the opinions of teachers regarding their confidence in their ability to prevent disruptive behavior before it occurs. Eighty-five percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are confident in their ability to prevent disruptive behavior in the classroom before it occurs. Fifteen percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Table 4.13 details their responses.

Table 4.13

Confidence Preventing Disruptive Behavior

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am confident in my ability to prevent disruptive behavior in the classroom before it occurs.	8 (28%)	16 (57%)	3 (11%)	1 (4%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Question 17 of the survey asked respondents if they perceive they can control disruptive behavior in the classroom. Eighty-five percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they can control disruptive behavior in the classroom; 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed they are able to do so. Teachers who stated they were in the profession for 16 or more years comprised the majority of respondents choosing “agree” (43%); 7% responded “strongly agree.” Three respondents who have taught 12 years or less chose the “agree” indicator. Table 4.14 summarizes the data.

Table 4.14

Controlling Disruptive Behavior

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I can control disruptive behavior in the classroom	5 (17%)	19 (68%)	3 (11%)	1 (4%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Question 18 of the survey sought the opinions of teachers regarding their ability to get students to follow classroom rules. Eighty-six percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed in their ability to get students to follow classroom rules. Table 4.15 below indicates the responses of the 28 participants

Table 4.15

Getting Students to Follow Classroom Rules

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am able to get students to follow classroom rules.	7 (25%)	17 (61%)	4 (14%)	0 (0%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Question 22 was an opinion-based question asking participants to rate their ability to get through to the most difficult students. Table 4.16 details the results. A rating of 1 on the scale indicates nothing, i.e. no ability; 3 indicates very little ability; 5 indicates some ability; 7 indicates quite a bit of ability; and 9 indicates a great deal of ability. Fifty-four percent of respondents perceived that they have “some ability or less” to get through to the most difficult students, with 46% stating “more than some” to a “great deal of ability.”

Table 4.16

Getting Through to Most Difficult Students

Scale	N
1 – no ability	0 (0%)
2	1 (4%)
3 – very little ability	4 (14%)
4	2 (7%)
5 – some ability	8 (29%)
6	2 (7%)
7 – quite a bit of ability	4 (14%)
8	4 (14%)
9 – a great deal of ability	3 (11%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Question 23, summarized in Table 4.17, was an opinion-based question asking participants to give their perceived opinion on how much they can do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork. Fifty-four percent perceived that they have some ability or less to motivate students versus 46% who feel they can motivate more than some. These results support the data from question 22. The predominant response was “some” for both opinions and these data support how a teacher could “get through to” the most difficult students and “motivate” them.

Question 24 was an opinion-based question asking participants to what degree general educators can establish routines to keep activities running smoothly in the inclusive rural classroom. Fourteen percent of teachers surveyed perceived that they can establish routines to keep activities running smooth. Eighty-six percent of teachers reported that they can establish routines to keep activities running smoothly some of the time (selection 5), up to a great deal (selection 9). Table 4.18 summarizes the data.

Table 4.17
Motivating Students

Scale	N
1 – no ability	1 (4%)
2	0 (0%)
3 – very little ability	4 (14%)
4	2 (7%)
5 – some ability	8 (29%)
6	6 (21%)
7 – quite a bit of ability	4 (14%)
8	2 (7%)
9 – a great deal of ability	1 (4%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Table 4.18
Establishing Routines

Scale	N
1 – no ability	0 (0%)
2	0 (0%)
3 – very little ability	0 (0%)
4	0 (0%)
5 – some	4 (14%)
6	1 (4%)
7 – quite a bit	7 (24%)
8	8 (29%)
9 – a great deal	8 (29%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Question 25 was an opinion-based survey question that sought the perceptions of general educators in their ability to keep a few problem students from disrupting an entire lesson. Sixty percent of the participants felt confident in keeping a few problem students from disrupting an entire lesson by their indicating 7, 8, or 9 from the selection of choices; 43% of respondents expressed they can do so “quite a bit.” Twelve percent of respondents do not consider themselves able to keep a few problem students from disrupting an entire lesson, having indicated choices 1, 3, and 4. Table 4.19 details the respondents’ opinions.

Table 4.19

Keeping Few Students from Disrupting Lesson

Scale	N
1 – no ability	1 (4%)
2	0 (0%)
3 – very little	1 (4%)
4	1 (4%)
5 – some	4 (4%)
6	4 (4%)
7 – quite a bit	12 (43%)
8	3 (10%)
9 – a great deal	2 (7%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

The final survey item informing research question two was number 26, an opinion-based one. It asked: “How well can you respond to defiant students?” Table 4.20 summarizes the data. Thirty-two percent perceived themselves responding to defiant students less than the “some” rating by selecting choices below and including 5 on the scale. Eighty-nine percent of respondents can respond to defiant students in the range from at least sometimes to quite a bit.

Table 4.20

Responding to Defiant Students

Scale	N
1 – no ability	0 (0%)
2	0 (0%)
3 – very little	3 (10%)
4	1 (4%)
5 – some	5 (18%)
6	4 (14%)
7 – quite a bit	12 (43%)
8	1 (4%)
9 – a great deal	2 (7%)

Note: N=28. Teacher participants.

Analysis of interview questions. Three-part interview question 2 of the six interview questions was included to elaborate on the data obtained from the survey

regarding teacher perceptions of general education high school teachers regarding their self-efficacy in teaching students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom. The interview question asked participants, “Does instructing students with disruptive behaviors cause you stress? If so, what successful strategies have you developed to manage your stress? Have you ever thought about leaving the teaching profession due to this stress?” Four teachers agreed to elaborate on their survey responses by volunteering to be interviewed. In elaborating on their responses, one interviewee stated, “I never could have imagined some of the things I’ve been faced with... When there are already stressors in terms of administrative pressure and test scores, definitely adds another foil to the mix.” Responses to interview question one, part one, two, and three are found in Tables 4.21a, 4.21b, and 4.21c.

Table 4.21a

Interview Question # 2: Does instructing students with disruptive behaviors cause you stress?

Interviewee	Response
1	“Definitely instructing students with disruptive behavior causes me stress.”
2	“Yes. Yes, definitely... looking at the emotional side, it’s something that comes home with me.”
3	“For me, yes.”
4	“Yes.”

Note: N=4. Teacher participants.

All four interviewed respondents stated that teaching students with disruptive behaviors caused them stress. Causes of stress included the concern for not being better able to help students with situations at home; not understanding the “why” behind the behaviors; inability to understand outbursts and other disruptive behaviors due to how

they were raised; bringing stress home; and the combination of the stress of students with disruptive behaviors and the stress coupled with administrative and test score stressors.

Table 4.21b

Interview Question #2: If so, what successful strategies have you developed to manage stress?

Interviewee	Response
1	“To manage stress again, I reach to these Face Book groups and to colleagues; I have a really supportive family. I talk to the students as well; I try to build rapport with those students who are deemed disruptive.”
2	“I think I could probably do better at that – reaching out to a social worker has been very helpful... We have great team meetings where we discuss particular students and what has worked in other classrooms... I have set up a ‘quote unquote’ office hours or lunch time hours where kids can just come and hang out and talk... It would be great if I had a toolbox of some sort of strategy to be able to not bring it home.”
3	“We’ve had some professional development, for test taking strategies, for anxious students, breathing techniques, just taking 5 seconds right in front of them, in front of the students, and kind of breathe, pause for a second to recollect myself so kind of like that idea of brushing it off. I do try and do a little bit of journaling. I also try to work out as much as I can. Being fairly busy, it affects me. I notice when I’m not working out or doing those reflecting or journaling I notice I get a little reactive a little bit faster to those behaviors.”
4	“I’ve done or have tried to work with meditation, yoga, and mindfulness in one’s breath. I like listening to music, so I try to pick music that is going to calm me down. Out of school I like to hike, I like to work out, read, I try to stay fairly active and I do a few adult sports leagues so I just try to be as active as I can.”

Note: N=4. Teacher participants.

For question 2b, The strategies that respondents cited using were building rapport with students; Facebook and other online support groups; supportive family members; speaking with colleagues; exercise; meditation, yoga and mindfulness; breathing techniques; music; self-talk; and having the option and the ability to change careers.

For interview question 2c, three of the four interview respondents stated they have considered leaving the profession due to the stress of teaching students with disruptive

behaviors in the inclusive classroom. For example, one respondent stated, “I’m a cyber–security analyst, so having almost a plan B that could easily become a plan A as a career; I’ve thought about this consistently throughout my time as a teacher.” Two of the respondents explored other professions. One respondent felt the stress but believed they are in the best profession for them.

Table 4.21c

Interview Question #2: Have you ever thought of leaving the profession due to this stress?

Interviewee	Response
1	“Yes, so I had a plan B last year, it was the worst year in my entire history of teaching, and I had looked at applying to some nursing schools. I didn’t go as far as to apply because the school year kind of “timed out” and I recovered over the summer and this year has been nothing comparable. So, last year is the closest I ever came.”
2	“No, it makes me so tired, but I know that this is the very best place that I can be for my own self. I would never leave. It is very overwhelming though – there are days I leave and think, gosh, I don’t know how much good I’m doing.”
3	No answer.
4	Not so much my first year but my second year was really hard. It was just all the little things that added up and then the constant disruptions. I feel like I’m trying my best in my classroom to ensure there is order and structure and I think that comes from my background with the military and being brought up with a mother and a father who sort of structure that as well. I’m a cyber –security analyst so having almost a plan B that could easily become a plan A as a career. I’ve thought about this consistently throughout my time as a teacher... Why do I go into the classroom and feel stressed out and feel like I’m not making any changes in these students’ lives when I could double my pay, work less, and not bring it home. It crosses my mind quite a bit and I’m not sure that it’s a bad thing because I have that opportunity to go elsewhere and I’ve thought about maybe, what if I didn’t have that opportunity, would I be more willing to stick it out or put in more effort.

Note: N= 4. Teacher participants. Interviewee three was not asked interview question two, part three, due to researcher error.

Summary of research question two. The data reported in the open-ended response-exploring teachers contemplating leaving the profession due to an inability to manage students who are disruptive in the inclusive classroom showed more than 50% claiming to have wanted to leave the profession. Three of four interviewees responded

that they wanted to leave the profession. One respondent stated, “yes” to having contemplated leaving and went on to further explain,

Yes, the pressures placed on teachers now are so demanding. We are required to do so much and have very little training. It is too overwhelming to meet so many needs in one classroom. The individual needs are so diverse now and can't possibly be met.

Stress caused by students with disruptive behaviors was a significant factor for educators who teach students in the inclusive rural classroom. The respondents described continued lack of respect from students, inability to know how to deal with students with issues that they are not trained to handle, lack of support, and poor consequences for students who are disruptive. The respondents reported that they could manage the behaviors before the disruption ruins an entire lesson and they make their expectations clear, motivate students, and respond well to students who are defiant. These data appear to be contradictory.

Research Question Three

The data presented in this section were collected to address the third research question regarding teacher perceptions of administrator support for their instruction of students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom. The perceptions of administrators support for teachers instructing students with disruptive behaviors were examined in survey questions 11, 13, 20, 21, and 27 of the 28 survey response questions and 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the interview questions.

Analysis of survey responses. Open response survey question 11 asked respondents to describe any assistance of paraprofessionals, special education teachers,

therapeutic support specialists, or any other support for students with disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Fifty-seven percent of respondents reported not having any support with students with disruptive behaviors who have IEPs or do not have IEPs in the inclusive classroom. Fourteen percent claimed to have support for only students who were designated special education students and/or have IEPs. Eighteen percent of respondents stated they had support in the inclusive classroom but did not identify if the support was designated for special education students and/or have IEPs; 4% were unclear with their answer stating how it “can” be helpful to have a support person in the classroom and 7% stated “n/a.” It is unclear what n/a represented and could mean there was no support staff available. Table 4.22 summarizes the data.

Question 13 of the survey was an open-ended researcher designed question asking participants whether administrators rotate teaching assignments each year for those who teach classes that incorporate a large number of students with disruptive behaviors. If so, they were asked to describe its benefits. If not, they were asked if they feel it would be beneficial. Two respondents stated the question was not applicable to them. Ten respondents answered “no” to the question without further comment. Two respondents answered “no” and did not feel it would be beneficial to rotate classes that contained a high number of students with disruptive behaviors. One respondent stated, “No, I think that more training and more consistent consequences school wide would be more beneficial than rotating teaching assignments;” Another respondent stated,

Our school does not rotate, and teachers get burned out. I’m not sure rotation is the answer. I think it would be better to have teachers who are trained to deal with students’ issues who actually can teach them at their instructional level.

Table 4.22

Assistance

Interviewee	Response
1	None
2	I have two different paraprofessionals that come into my classroom.
3	None
4	There needs to be a place to send students (besides the office).
5	We have an emotional support teacher but only students diagnosed with ES needs (Emotional support) can utilize him.
6	Paraprofessionals often use proximity and redirection.
7	None
8	None
9	When students have IEPs, special education teachers are of great assistance. Regular education student issues receive assistance through administration, although that is less direct.
10	In past years I have had aides who have accompanied their students to class.
11	None
12	n/a
13	n/a
14	There are none available. We are too short staffed to have co-teaching possible.
15	Co-teacher
16	The special ed teacher is of great help.
17	None
18	Some students are able to go to a resource room, if they feel they need to calm down.
19	We have paraprofessionals and special education teachers who are able to assist with these issues.
20	Most disruptions can be defined as students being disruptive due to not being on task. Having another adult or adult(s) in the classroom can help all students stay on task and thus reduce disruption. Some students with more severe disruptive behaviors benefit from a paraprofessional who can provide one to one assistance and thus reduce disruptions. In previous years, I have been part of co-taught classrooms, which can minimize disruption by once again increasing engagement.
21	None
22	I do not receive assistance in my classroom for behavior-related concerns.
23	No support in my room.
24	One aide in my room.
25	None
26	No help from these professionals.
27	None
28	None, handled it myself.

Note: N=28. Teacher participation.

Table 4.23 presents some of the “no” responses for question 13 with eight respondents adding comments. Eighty-five percent of respondents reported “No” to a rotation practice in teaching assignments for classes that include a large number of disruptive students.

Of the 85% who responded that rotation was not the common practice, 43% went on to state whether it would be beneficial or not beneficial to rotate these classes. Of these 43%, 60% felt it would or could be helpful, 30% felt it would not be helpful, and 10% were not sure if it would or would not be helpful.

Question 20 of the survey was a Likert-scale statement that asked participants to rate whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement. The statement was: I feel able to dismiss a student with disruptive behavior from the classroom to administration due to a student’s refusal to do as expected. Of the 28 respondents, eight strongly agreed, 16 agreed, two disagreed, and two strongly disagreed. Eighty-six percent of participants responded that they felt they could dismiss a student to administration if the student is being disruptive versus 14% who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 4.24 summarizes the participant responses to the opinion-based survey item 21 that sought general educator perceptions of the level of administrator support and availability for teachers instructing students with disruptive behavior in the inclusive rural classroom. A rating of 1 on the scale indicates nothing; 3 indicates very little; 5 indicates some; 7 indicates quite a bit; 9 indicates a great deal. Forty-one percent of respondents perceived that administrative support and availability was “Quite a bit” and

“A great deal” and 52% of respondents perceived that support and availability from administrators is “Very little” to “Some”.

Table 4.23

Rotation of Classroom Assignments

Respondent Comments	Response
1	“No. I believe it would be helpful. Teacher burnout is a real thing and administrators have a disconnection to what teachers deal with in the classroom.”
2	“No. I think that more training and more consistent consequences school wide would be more beneficial than rotating teaching assignments.”
3	“We don’t rotate. It would help probably – help with burn out.”
4	“No. Rarely is there a large pool of disruptive students and if there are – that changes as they progress through grade levels.”
5	“No. I believe it could be beneficial because teachers would not experience “burnout” from teaching these students year after year. However, I also believe that experience is a great teacher. Teachers develop coping skills for dealing with and communicating with these students after teaching them for more than one year.”
6	“No, and it causes tension.”
7	“No. I think it would be beneficial to both teachers and students if classes that incorporate a large number of students with disruptive behaviors were distributed evenly across the teaching staff. If students are disruptive in one particular class and will all move into the same class next year, having the same teacher instructing both classes should be avoided. Instead, have two teachers each instruct one of the classes.”
8	“No. I teach the same courses, on the same schedule, year after year.”

Note: N=8. Teacher participation. Eight responses in table come only from respondents who answered “no” and added additional comments

Table 4.24

Administrator Support

Scale	N
1 – nothing	0 (0%)
2	0 (0%)
3 – very little	4 (15%)
4	1 (4%)
5 – some	9 (33%)
6	2 (7%)
7 – quite a bit	4 (15%)
8	5 (19%)
9 – a great deal	2 (7%)

N=27. Teacher participants. One teacher did not respond to the item.

Table 4.25 summarizes the participant responses to the opinion-based survey item 27 which sought general educator perceptions of how able they are to express concerns to administration regarding their instruction of students with disruptive behavior in the inclusive rural classroom.

Table 4.25

Expressing Concerns to Administration

Scale	N
1 – no ability	0 (0%)
2	0 (0%)
3 – very little ability	2 (7%)
4	1 (4%)
5 – some ability	5 (18%)
6	3 (11%)
7 – quite a bit of ability	7 (25%)
8	4 (14%)
9 – a great deal of ability	6 (21%)

Note: Q27: N=28 teacher participants.

Fifty-two percent of respondents stated that they receive “very little” to “some” administrative support with students with disruptive behaviors in the classroom.

Seventy-one percent of respondents stated they are able to express concern to administrators about students with disruptive behaviors in the classroom.

Analysis of interview responses. Interview questions 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the six interview questions were included to elaborate on the data obtained from the survey regarding teacher perceptions of administrative support instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom. Interview question 3 asked participants to explain the level of support they receive from administrators when dealing with students who are disruptive in the inclusive classroom. All four of the interview respondents stated that they would get support from administration regarding students

with disruptive behaviors, but the support is inconsistent and not very effective. The respondents did not feel the disciplinary choices made by administration for the behaviors are effective since the behaviors continue. One respondent stated that they do not know what an administrator could do that would help and that it is not administration's fault.

Three of the four respondents for interview question 4 stated that they are comfortable voicing concerns to administration regarding severe behavior issues, but feel the need to handle many issues on their own in the classroom. One interviewee stated a comfort level going to administration with all concerns and tried to start a committee to make discipline consistent across the board for all teachers with policies for the various student infractions. This respondent, however, was given pushback from other teachers stating administration would never back it up even though administration stated they would. The respondent stated that it was a "power dynamic" between teachers and administrators. Table 4.26 summarizes the data.

Table 4.26

Level of Support from Administration

Interviewee	Response
1	<p>"I feel my administrative team is mostly supportive. If I write a student up, they get In School Suspension (ISS). My support groups state that some administrative teams "scoff" at teachers who write kids up...I feel supported by my administrative team but there is only so much they can do."</p> <p>I don't want to fault my administrative team but they help me as far as they think they can. Usually the behaviors continue. I don't know what they can possibly do. They try to support though, so I appreciate that. There is an attempt, a good faith attempt."</p>
2	<p>"I know that if there was a severe issue in terms of safety, that they would have my back. It can be frustrating in terms of the inconsistencies of like interventions. Some kids get a specific kind of punishment like detention or in-school suspension versus students who do a similar infraction may not have as much or little leniency."</p>
3	<p>"When students are being super disruptive, there has to be something that is drawn in the sand. It's not defined in any way – we get support, but it matters on what the student has done before. It's a very tight community; administrators know all the families... We do get support, to certain circumstances; but then there's times when I want to say, 'You didn't help at all.' "</p>
4	<p>"My principal... there are multiple teachers who have felt this way as well, that when they send their student to him not so much gets done. I feel that the majority of the time it's just 'Hey, don't do that, kind of a slap on the wrist.' They feel like 'Oh, I'm not going to get in trouble, I'm just going to get talked to and that's it.'"</p>

Note: N=4. Teacher participation.

Interview participants were also asked to describe their level of comfort in voicing concern regarding their needs in dealing with students who are disruptive in their inclusive classroom. Responses to interview question 4 are found in Table 4.27.

Table 4.27

Comfort Level Voicing Concerns to Administration

Interviewee	Response
1	“I think just being a teacher, there is always that underlying fear. I came from a district; I’m only three years in the district that I’m in now. I previously was in another before and that was very much an issue. You’re told to “handle it in your classroom.” Administrators only see after you documented that you called home and you’ve done this and there is a paper trail and those kinds of things. At my new district, I don’t feel that way as much. I think that they don’t make me feel that way. There’s just something inside me that says “Hey, you’re a teacher, you should be handling these things.”
2	“I feel comfortable with severe, clearly inappropriate, disruptive behavior. I don’t feel as comfortable with things that I think are disrespectful only because we have a small school district and so there are certain things that I don’t tolerate that I feel like would probably metaphorically get an ‘eye roll’. “for bigger things that are clearly against school policy, I feel comfortable and have given them as much information as possible.”
3	“No issues at all.”
4	“Yes.”

Note: N=4. Teacher participation.

Interview question 5 asked respondents: “Have you ever considered leaving a rural high school to teach in an urban or suburban high school due to lack of support dealing with students who are disruptive in the inclusive classroom.” Two respondents stated “No” to the interview question. One respondent stated, “No, there have been so many other factors that have weighed in my decision that, in the end, I feel that disrespectful students or this idea that there will always be disrespectful students.” The other respondent who stated “no” said,

I used to teach in an inner-city school in another state and I actually see a lot of similarities between issues that my students struggle with from the inner city. I take my role very seriously here in the rural setting because I may be the only person these people talk to that is offering a different alternative perspective to the world and to their community and their way to live. I feel I would be doing a disservice to leaving my students and taking away another perspective. So, no, I wouldn't.

A major theme across all responses for interview question 6 was that respondents expressed ways that their school could improve managing the instruction of students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom with better consistency in the disciplining of infractions. Another theme was a better chain of command; understanding of student "issues" for better understanding of the behavior; assistance from aides in the classroom; and the dismantling of tracking in each grade. One respondent stated, "Getting an aide in the classroom is like night and day difference."

Summary of research question three. The data reported for research question 3 regarding the perceptions of administrator support for teachers instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom revealed that teachers perceived they were not given support by paraprofessionals or other aides in dealing with students with disruptive behaviors. The data also showed that administration does not rotate the classes that generally contain a greater number of students displaying disruptive behaviors; teachers feel rotation could help. Teachers who responded do feel that they can express their concerns to administration regarding students with disruptive behaviors, but the interview responses revealed the majority of concerns were those for severe student

infractions. Fifty-percent of the respondents stated they receive little to some support from administration, but 70% feel they can express their concerns. However, the results of expressing concerns over disruptive behaviors are inconsistent.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to learn perceptions of educators who instruct students exhibiting disruptive behaviors in the rural inclusive classroom. The perceptions focused on preparedness; self-efficacy; and support from administrators in dealing with these students. Survey and interview questions were analyzed for patterns to contribute to the research base; this may enhance pre-service training of teachers to better deal with students who exhibit destructive behaviors in the inclusive classroom.

This chapter presented the results of collected data from a peer reviewed, researcher created survey and interview questions. These data represented the perceptions of 28 survey respondents and four interview respondents. The setting for this study was a minimum of four and a maximum of eight participating rural public high schools across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. All participating high schools were in districts that were members of PARSS.

Data collected from the survey showed that respondents felt that it would have been beneficial to receive more pre-service and ongoing training. Stress was a major factor for educators who teach students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom and has led to more than 50% of respondents to consider leaving the teaching profession. Most respondents felt able to express concerns to administration. The results of such communication were inconsistent. Respondents expressed their administrators' inability to assist with day-to-day disruptions. A summary of the results

of the study, the relationship to prior research, and recommendations for future research are discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five - Discussion

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to obtain the perceptions high school teachers have regarding their self-efficacy to instruct students with disruptive behaviors in rural inclusive classrooms, their preparedness to instruct these students, and their perceptions of administrative support. Disruptive behavior in school classrooms has become increasingly concerning to educators, administrators, and mental health professionals (Jacobson, 2013). Since the passing of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 and the enforced updates of IDEA of 1990 and 2004 (IDEA, 2004; Idol, 2006), general educators are charged with instructing students with a variety of documented and undocumented mental health conditions in their inclusive classroom. Obiaker et al.'s (2012) research found that students with disabilities that receive the necessary supports to succeed in the inclusive classroom do better, but this is not always the case (Sutcher et al., 2016). NCLB (2001) federally mandated the success of all students in classrooms across America; students with disabilities need to succeed alongside their peers in the least restrictive environment.

Rural communities are at increased risk for not receiving the necessary supports for general educators instructing in the inclusive classroom. Sutcher et al. (2016) stated this deficiency is due to a lack of human capital in rural communities. The lack of support for teachers causes general educators stress. According to Conley and You (2016), this stress includes demands by administrators and parents and can lead to high teacher attrition rates. This attrition is due to lack of support for general educators in rural schools who already sustain a two-thirds attrition rate of general education teachers

leaving prior to retirement due to job dissatisfaction (Sutcher et al., 2016). Klopfer et al. (2017) stated that students who exhibit disruptive behaviors in the classroom require teachers who are skilled in dealing with the emotional and behavioral problems while also attending to the remaining students. According to a national study reviewing accreditation, Freeman et al. (2013) revealed that pre-service training may not be effective in preparing teachers to manage student behaviors at the completion of their teacher preparation.

This study was designed to examine high school general educators' perceptions of their preparedness, self-efficacy, and administrative support in instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom. Three research questions guided the study. The research questions aimed at examining the following: (1) rural general education high school teachers' perceptions regarding their preparedness to teach students with disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classroom, (2) rural general education high school teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy instructing students with disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classroom, and (3) rural general education high school teachers' perceptions of administrative support instructing students with disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classroom.

This study utilized two instruments to collect data, including an online survey and phone interview. A formal request was made to 114 superintendents via email across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. High schools were selected by their district's membership in PARSS as this designated the district as rural. Superintendents from eight districts granted the researcher permission to conduct the study in their district's high school. At their request superintendents from two districts were sent a link to be

distributed via email to teachers; the researcher sent direct emails to high school general educators in the remaining six districts. High school teacher emails were obtained via the public online portal on the high school website.

Twenty-nine high school teachers completed the survey. One teacher was disqualified from participating in the study for lacking the requirements as a general educator instructing in an inclusive classroom. Four teachers agreed to a recorded phone interview. The responses gathered by the online survey and interviews were analyzed and grouped by themes.

Summary of Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of general high school educators' perceptions of preparedness, self-efficacy, and administrator support instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom. Analysis of the survey and interview data revealed several themes. The themes were analyzed to uncover a possible need for better teacher pre-service training; a need to reduce teacher stress and alleviate high levels of teacher burnout and attrition; knowledge needed by teachers for more successful student learning of all students including those with emotional and behavioral issues; and to examine the level of support general educators receive instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the rural high school by both special educators and administration. The themes were guided by the three research questions.

Research question one. What are the perceptions of general education high school teachers regarding their preparedness to teach students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom?

The first research question examined the perceptions of general education high school teachers regarding their preparedness to teach students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom. The research revealed the emergence of the following themes: (a) rural school experience; (b) range of number of pre-service courses; (c) preparedness through pre-service training; (d) professional development; and (e) additional support.

Rural school experience. This researcher collected data regarding the number of years a respondent taught in a rural school. The purpose for asking this was to examine whether there were patterns showing a greater number of teachers who worked for longer periods of time in a rural school or if high turnover occurred. Fifty percent of respondents stated that they have taught in a rural school district for 16 years or more. This finding surprised the researcher as the literature expressed a high teacher turnover rate in rural areas (Sindelar et al., 2018). This researcher speculated that the percent might be high due to seasoned teachers having more time to complete a survey than their newer teacher counterparts. Twelve of the fifteen respondents who have taught sixteen years or longer in the rural school attended a rural school themselves. This researcher conjectured that teachers who are the product of a rural school education would be more comfortable and familiar with the culture and dynamics of teaching in a rural school.

To further understand teacher dynamics of longevity teaching in a rural high school, the respondents were asked the type of high school they attended: rural; urban; suburban; non-public; or unsure. Seventy-five percent of respondents attended a rural school themselves. This large percentage supported previous research for the data of “home grown” teachers for rural districts (Yettick et al., 2014). This researcher had a

suburban non-public high school education; the first experience teaching in a rural school was surprising and difficult due to the level and number of students with disruptive behaviors found in the inclusive classroom.

Range of number of pre-service courses. The number of best practice courses teachers completed in their pre-service training that dealt with students who exhibit disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom was of interest to the researcher. Eighty-nine percent claimed to have no more than two courses in their pre-service training. Two respondents or seven percent stated taking three to four courses; one respondent claimed to have had five or more courses. Three of the survey respondents held a special education certificate as well as certification in another subject. One of these dually certified respondents expressed having five or more best practice courses, which this researcher would expect. This researcher, however, would not expect that one of the dually certified respondents had only one or two courses and the third dually certified respondent reported zero pre-service courses covering best practices dealing with students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom. A further finding was that one respondent who holds a doctoral degree claimed to have had only one or two pre-service courses.

Preparedness through pre-service training. Seventy-six percent of respondents did not feel they received enough pre-service training in handling students with disruptive behaviors. Another survey question asked respondents how well prepared they were to instruct students with disruptive behaviors. Seventy-nine percent of the responses indicated that general educators surveyed did not feel prepared through pre-service training. Fourteen percent cited that they were more than somewhat prepared and 7%

cited they were prepared quite a bit. These data were consistent with the expanded interview responses that asked the same question on pre-service preparedness. This researcher's experience is aligned with the 79% who did not feel prepared. Wanyonyi-Short (2010) evaluated a nationwide 1957 study that dealt with the qualifications and preparation of special education teachers. The 1957 study found that an educator's preparation should include pre-service instruction on each disability they may encounter in their profession. The 1957 study confirmed competencies of educators the researcher, Wanyonyi-Short, found in their study that were needed for instructing students with disabilities. Competencies for educators that Wanyonyi-Short found in the study included growth, development, and study of emotional disturbances; learning problems and abilities; and social and cultural factors of communities, in addition to the legal aspects of instruction. The survey participants in this researcher's study who held dual certification in special education did not feel adequately prepared to instruct students with disruptive behaviors. This researcher had a one-semester course in a Master's program. It is this researcher's opinion that more courses should be offered at the pre-service level to understand this demographic of student.

Interviews were conducted by phone to expand the data collected from the survey. Four volunteer participated in a recorded phone interview. Interviewees were asked to express how well prepared they felt through their pre-service training to instruct students who are disruptive in their inclusive general education classroom. The interviewees expressed preparedness ranging from "not at all" to "semi-adequately." Three of the four respondents felt they were not prepared to deal with the disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classroom. They expressed learning proactive techniques to keep disruptions at

a minimum. Respondents expressed not having knowledge of the specific behaviors that would present in their classrooms. The one respondent who described being “semi-adequately” prepared expressed it would have been helpful to understand why the students are acting out in the first place by having had emotional trauma training. Of the 81% of teachers with a degree higher than a bachelor’s degree, 85% reported taking zero to two pre-service classes dealing with disruptive behaviors. This researcher is a doctoral candidate whose pre-service training mirrors these findings in having one class that dealt with minimizing disruptive behaviors. This finding along with the interviewee responses shows a need for additional pre-service training on managing disruptive behaviors.

Professional development. In addition to pre-service instruction in best practices dealing with students exhibiting disruptive behaviors in the classroom, respondents were asked if they receive ample professional development for instructing students with disruptive behaviors. Fifty-seven percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they receive ample professional development. A 2015 research study conducted by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning reviewed the pre-service training programs in the United States. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning reported that 97% of teachers expressed a critical need to better understand and recognize mental health disorders; 96% reported needing to know better strategies to work with children with externalized problems (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). This researcher had limited knowledge in dealing with the behaviors experienced in the rural inclusive classroom due to a lack of pre-service training and professional development experience. Behaviors this researcher experienced were fighting, bullying,

profanity, disrespect, off-task behavior, verbal outcries, not showing up for class, breaking school property, and leaving the classroom unannounced.

The interviewees were asked to elaborate on their preparedness by expressing ways that they feel they could have been better prepared and how they sought out ways to better prepare themselves on their own due to a lack of pre-service training and professional development. The most frequent response for improving preparedness was additional training at the pre-service level to include emotional trauma training; this would help to better understand why students act the way they do. Respondents expressed a need for more special education and classroom management courses as opposed to so many content courses. One respondent thought an additional year of schooling to cover this topic would have been beneficial.

When asked ways the interviewees sought on their own to prepare better to deal with students with disruptive behaviors in the classroom, respondents stated: talking with colleagues, joining social media, and doing their own research on scenarios dealing with student behaviors. This included listening to podcasts and building good relationships with students. Respondents also suggested that communication from administrators and guidance counselors, giving instructors an idea of what a student may be experiencing, may assist the teacher in better understanding the causes of disruptions.

Additional support. Interviewees were asked to discuss any other sources of support that their school could implement to assist them in better managing and instructing students who exhibit disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classroom. Two respondents expressed a greater need for consistency. Having a chain of command with set consequences for disruptive behavior would be very helpful, as would consistency in

the expectations of rigor a teacher commands in their classroom. The interviewees expressed their enjoyment in the autonomy in the classroom. However, according to one interviewee, some teachers are allowed to “just show a movie;” students will act up in other classes thinking it is acceptable.

One interviewee claimed when they expressed the need for assistance of an aide in the classroom and was given an aide; that made all the difference in a student’s behavior. A different interviewee, however, asked for an aide due to a high number of students with disruptive behaviors and was granted the aide; however, the aide was pulled to do other tasks several times a week. The lack of enough special educators or paraprofessionals in rural areas creates a hardship for general educators (Sindelar et al., 2018). In addition to supports by aides in the classroom, one interviewee stated their school was bringing a resource officer onboard. The interviewee stated, “I’m not sold” on this assistance because of talk in other schools stating that resource officers end up becoming “friends” with the students and not enforcing rules.

Tracking is another issue that one respondent wished to see administration remove. The interviewee felt that if students were not grouped by performance, there would be fewer disruptive behaviors. Eliminating tracking would also alleviate some teachers having several students with disruptive behaviors all in one class. This researcher, when working in a rural public school, had several classes with greater than 50% students with disruptive behaviors, with or without IEPs. Had these students been dispersed among classes with students in other tracks who are more inclined to stay on task, students who tend to be disruptive may not be inclined to such behavior.

Research question two: What are the perceptions of rural general education high school teachers regarding self-efficacy teaching students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom? The second research question examined the perceptions of rural general educators' self-efficacy instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom. Themes that emerged were: (a) leaving the teaching profession; (b) managing classroom behavior; (c) effective teaching; and (d) teacher stress. These themes are described below.

Leaving the teaching profession. Respondents were asked if they had ever contemplated leaving the teaching profession due to their level of ability managing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom. Forty-three percent of respondents stated they had considered leaving the profession due to students with disruptive behaviors. One of the more compelling responses that indicated a great deal of teacher stress was:

Absolutely, yes. It is a continuous struggle every single day to try not only to teach and meet standards but just trying to get students to listen and stay in their seats is a challenge. We are not respected, and it gets hard when you feel like you put so much into teaching and preparing every lesson, only to be disrespected and continuously have to battle to get students to listen. It's absolutely exhausting. I have talked to many colleagues and all of them feel the exact same way. Something needs to happen; otherwise we have a lot of young teachers who will be finding different careers. It's just not worth the physical and emotional toll. The stress we have every day isn't worth it. What makes it the most challenging is that it feels like it will only get worse from here.

Managing classroom behavior. Respondents were asked how they perceived their ability to manage particular classroom behaviors. Questions were included on their perceptions dealing with day-to-day classroom management techniques. Respondents assessed the level at which they felt they were best able to make expectations clear about student behavior. All the participants agreed that they could make expectations clear

about classroom rules to their students and, of these, 21% strongly agreed they could do so. This researcher felt able to manage classroom behavior in non-rural schools where lessons were taught to students in higher tracks. The inclusive classrooms that enrolled several students with EBD or who exhibited disruptive behaviors were significantly more challenging to manage. Knowledge of how to manage the disruptive behavior was known to this researcher; however, efforts to enforce classroom rules and expectations were not always successful.

Respondents were asked their opinion of their ability to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy. Nineteen respondents stated they agreed that they could calm disruptive or noisy students, seven strongly agreed, and two disagreed. These data were not what the researcher expected based on other triangulated survey items. Forty-three percent of respondents have considered leaving the teaching profession; this researcher is inclined to think that a teacher's ability to calm a disruptive student would reflect a higher percent of teachers not willing to leave the profession.

Relative to respondents' confidence in their ability to prevent disruptive behavior in the classroom before it occurs, 57% of respondents agreed that they were confident in this ability. Twenty-seven percent strongly agreed. These data do not support other responses to questions pertaining to the management of students with disruptive behavior in their inclusive classroom. This researcher speculates that respondents could be responding that they "know" how but are not able to implement the strategies, or the few times they are not able to do so is what they reported in other survey items.

In examining perceptions of the respondents' ability to control disruptive behavior in the inclusive classroom, 85% agreed or strongly agreed they can control disruptive behavior in the classroom; 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed they are able to do so. Again, this result is unexpected due to the reported level of teacher stress and consideration given to leaving the profession. Veteran teachers comprised the majority of respondents choosing "agree" (43%); 7% responded, "strongly agree." Three respondents who have taught 12 years or less chose the "agree" indicator regarding controlling disruptive behaviors.

An additional perception on classroom management was obtained by asking respondents about their ability to get students to follow classroom rules. The majority of teachers responded "agree" (61%) with 14% disagreeing. The researcher was unable to explain the perceived success rate of managing classroom behaviors against a high desire to leave the profession as expressed by survey respondents and interviewees.

When asked "How well can you respond to defiant students?" 86% of respondents can respond well to defiant students "some" of the time to "a great bit" of the time. The question, however, does not address the success of the response to the defiant students. This researcher would respond respectfully to students exhibiting disruptions in the classroom; however, these students would in turn show disrespect and/or would exhibit passive aggressive behaviors stating that they would behave, only to continue the behaviors within seconds. Respondents could be answering this question in knowing how to respond to students but not including the success of their methods to respond to defiant student behavior.

Effective teaching. Respondents were asked, “How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?” Fifty-four percent of respondents reported they have “some ability or less” to get through to the most difficult students. These data, in this researcher’s view, do align with the other data collected in this study. According to Steele (2010), one characteristic of effective teachers is leadership; leadership is the ability to build a relationship with a student for better student learning. Not being able to get through to the most difficult students may illustrate a deficit in this ability to lead and build a relationship.

Participants were asked to give their opinion on how much they can do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork. Fifty-four percent of respondents indicated they have some ability or less to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork. Blazer and Kraft (2017), from their research on determining a teacher’s ability to improve student test scores, found that “teachers who are effective at raising test-score outcomes are equally effective in developing positive attitudes and behaviors in class” (p. 147).

Fifty-two percent of teachers who participated in this survey have sixteen or more years of teaching. Participants were asked to what degree they can establish routines to keep activities running smoothly in the inclusive rural classroom. This researcher speculates that those experienced teachers have developed the skills to keep activities running smoothly through years of working through the details. Eighty-six percent of teachers reported they can establish routines to keep activities running smoothly better than “some” of the time to “a great deal.” According to Bastian et al. (2017), new teachers leave the profession before they can establish this skill level. The reason many

experienced teachers responded to this survey could be due to the lower levels of stress upon them as seasoned teachers; they may have the time to complete a survey.

Another display of effective teaching is the ability to keep problem students from disrupting an entire lesson. Respondents were asked their perception of their ability to do so. Twelve percent did not feel able to keep these students from disrupting an entire lesson. Of this 12%, the only teacher who responded they were able to do “nothing” was a novice teacher of one to three years’ experience who held a Bachelor’s degree. This would be expected based on the research of Bastian et al. (2017), who stated novice teachers show less effectiveness than their more experienced peers. Of note, the additional three respondents stating “very little” or “some” responses had seven to nine years’ experience and sixteen or more years’ experience, respectively.

Teacher stress. Positive self-efficacy correlates to improved classroom behaviors (Gavora, 2010; Zee & Koomen, 2016) and teachers who perceive they are better able to manage classroom behaviors use more effective practices and have higher student achievement (Herman et al., 2017). Respondents were asked about their self-efficacy as it pertains to stress. The question posed to the four interviewees was, “Does instructing students with disruptive behaviors cause you stress? If so, what successful strategies have you developed to manage your stress? Have you ever thought about leaving the teaching profession due to this stress?” All four respondents to the interview question responded “yes” to having stress caused by instructing students with disruptive behaviors. Herman et al. (2017) stated how self-efficacy plays a major role in classroom management. This researcher’s experience mirrors the research; my self-efficacy as a teacher is directly tied to how well I manage my classroom. It is the belief

that the better I manage my classroom, the more student achievement is enhanced, and a lower stress level results for me.

In addition to queries about stress, interviewees were asked how they coped with stress. All interviewees' responses included healthy attempts to reduce stress. One respondent stated, "I've done or have tried to work with meditation, yoga, and mindfulness in one's breath, so a little bit of that, not so much with the students even though I have brought up test taking strategies to try and calm yourself down." Other responses included talking with colleagues. One response resonated with this researcher; an interviewee would look at the attendance list to learn who was absent from school to see if they would have a good day or a bad day.

When interviewees were asked if they ever contemplated leaving the teaching profession due to the stress, three of the four interviewees stated they had considered leaving the profession due to stress. According to Psychiatrist Kimberly Schonert-Reichl (2017), teachers of students with EBD are more likely to leave the profession due to stress. Data from this study supported the body of research regarding teacher stress and how it influences a teacher's consideration leaving the profession.

Research question three: What are general education high school teachers' perceptions of administrator support instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom? The third research question examined the perceptions of general educators' support from administration in instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the rural inclusive classroom. The researcher extracted common themes by analyzing the survey and interview responses. The themes were: (a) classroom support;

(b) classroom rotation; (c) expressing concerns to administration; (d) level of support by administration; and (e) leaving a rural school district.

Classroom support. Respondents were asked to elaborate on any assistance from paraprofessionals, special education teachers, therapeutic support specialists, or any other support for students with disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classrooms. Fifty-seven percent of respondents reported not having any support for students with disruptive behaviors who have IEPs or do not have IEPs in the inclusive classroom. Some responses from respondents who do not receive support indicated being too “short staffed” to have assistance and “no help from these professionals.” This researcher had a class of students where more than 50% had IEPs and several students with disruptive behaviors who did not have IEPs, with one paraprofessional in the classroom. Six months into the school year, a request to administration was made for additional support in the classroom. Support was given and two more paraprofessionals assisted in the inclusive classroom. The assistance of these individuals helped somewhat but not to the extent of productive learning. The assistants seemed incapable of managing some of behaviors and would often leave the classroom with an extremely disruptive student, thus leaving the class with less support. Of the 14% that claimed to have support, it was stated that there was support for students diagnosed as needing emotional support, assistance for students with autism only, and only for students who have IEPs. The data presented aligned with the body of research stating a shortage of human capital including special educators in rural communities (Sindelar et al., 2018)

Classroom rotation: Respondents were also asked if their administrators rotate teaching assignments each year for those classes that incorporate a large number of

students with disruptive behaviors. Of the 28 respondents, 10 answered with a “no” and no further comment. Eight responded “no” but had additional comments such as, “No. I believe it would be helpful. Teacher burnout is a real thing and administrators have a disconnection to what teachers deal with in the classroom;” “No, and it causes tension;” and “We don’t rotate. It would help probably – help with burn out.”

Other respondents stated “No,” but did not feel rotating the teaching assignment schedule would be beneficial. One respondent stated, “No. I think that more training and more consistent consequences school-wide would be more beneficial than rotating teaching assignments,” and the following:

No. I believe it could be beneficial because teachers would not experience burnout from teaching these students year after year. However, I also believe that experience is a great teacher. Teachers develop coping skills for dealing with and communicating with these students after teaching them for more than one year.

This researcher replaced a teacher who taught the same demographic of students for several years and expressed how they were burned out from having to do so. This teacher also expressed some resentment for the teachers who always taught the honors and AP students. It has been this researcher’s experience in changing schools that the new teacher hired always received the students with the most disruptive behaviors. Existing teachers would move up the tracking level, which contained fewer students with disruptive behaviors.

Expressing concerns to administration. Respondents were asked if they feel able to dismiss a student with disruptive behavior from the classroom to administration due to a student’s refusal to do what is expected. Eighty-six percent of participants responded that they felt they could so. Upon elaboration from the interviewees, all four responded that they felt they could send students for severe infractions but felt they must deal with

all other disruptions in the classroom themselves. This researcher's experience was sending disruptive students out of the classroom. They would go to a resource room where they would sit temporarily and then be returned to the classroom. The most severely disruptive students, this researcher was told by administration, would eventually drop out and go to an alternative night school program and to "hold tight."

Respondents were asked how able they were to express concerns to administration instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive rural classroom. Seventy-two percent of respondents felt able to express concerns to administration. The concerns, however, do not address the magnitude of the infractions teachers bring to administration. Data from the interview portion of this study make it likely that concerns of severe disruptions are what instructors express to administrators. This researcher shares this view, as the majority of disruptions are not referred to administration. The issue, in this researcher's opinion, is that several students in one classroom with mild disruptions lead to a collective of many disruptions interfering with instruction.

Level of support by administration. General educator perceptions of the level of administrator support and availability were asked of respondents for teachers instructing students with disruptive behavior in the inclusive rural classroom. Fifty-two percent stated they had very little to some support from administration. This level of response fits with the researcher's experience. A teacher can go to administration but the response or assistance that administration can give a teacher is not sufficient. This researcher's experience and the responses to interviews concur; administrators' hands are tied and they are not able to assist to a level sufficient to curb the behaviors.

Respondents were asked to explain the level of support they receive from administrators when dealing with students who are disruptive in the inclusive classroom. Three of the four interviewees stated they did feel they receive support from administration but not productive support. One respondent stated, "I want to say we do get support in certain circumstances; but then there are times when I want to say, "You didn't help at all." The fourth respondent felt they did not receive any support at all.

Interviewees were then asked what other sources of support their schools could implement to assist them in better managing and instructing students who exhibit disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classrooms. Responses included a better chain of command to access when dealing with disruptions; consistency in discipline when dealing with infractions; removal of the tracking of students into different classes based on grades; and school resource officers. All four interviewees discussed inconsistencies and lack of clear expectations of student behavior followed by inconsistent consequences for breaking rules. This researcher experienced students who received no consequences when sent to administrators for violations of classroom rules and disruptive behaviors. On occasion, this researcher had students who will mock being sent out of the room because they know they will not get into any trouble. The interviewee who mentioned a resource officer stated their school would be hiring one for this coming school year. The interviewee stated how they heard they are ineffective because they become too friendly with the students and do not impart discipline. This researcher also had experience with a school resource officer being too friendly with the students.

Leaving a rural school district. Interview respondents were asked if they ever considered leaving a rural high school for a school in the suburbs or urban areas due to

lack of support dealing with students who are disruptive in their inclusive classroom. Two of the respondents stated “no.” These two respondents felt that the disruptions would be the same in other suburban and urban districts. Two respondents stated, “yes” and actually sought out other careers. This researcher had considered other career paths than education, but remaining student loans after ten years are forgiven for higher degrees for individuals who work in public service and have stayed employed for at least ten years. Loans could be high enough for some teachers that they could not afford to leave even if they wished to take advantage of the Loan Forgiveness Program.

Limitations of the Study

Additional unanticipated limitation of the study not already described in Chapter One is the lack of survey responses from teachers who have been in the field less than 16 years. Fifteen of the 28 of respondents to the survey were teachers who have been teaching for 16 or more years. This response demographic may have been more willing to participate in the study due to lack of demands they would encounter as a more seasoned instructor. This phenomenon could shed a limited perspective on the data.

The number of respondents, particularly the interviewees, may also have been a limitation of the study. Of the 114 districts that were eligible, only eight districts agreed to participate. It was determined that a maximum of eight and a minimum of four districts actually participated. The surveys were sent prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected the normal school routine. Interviews were conducted during the quarantine. Remote learning, new to many teachers, may have prevented more teachers from conducting an interview due to time constraints. Nine interviewees agreed to participate but only four materialized.

Some survey item responses that were contradictory to other survey responses may have occurred due to the researcher's lack of elaboration on the question.

Respondents stated they were very comfortable expressing concerns to administrators, but the researcher did not ask if the response from administration to the concerns was sufficient or absent. Other instances were the respondents' interpretation of how they perceived they can handle classroom management compared to the success of their efforts.

Relationship to Previous Research

This study examined the perceptions of general high school educators' preparedness and self-efficacy instructing students with disruptive behaviors in the rural inclusive classroom. It also examined the level of perceived support these teachers have from their administrators. Teachers undertake one of the most demanding professions one can enter due to the academic, social, and, emotional responsibilities teachers have instructing their students (Abenavoli et al., 2013). In addition to the ethical responsibility to care and instruct our youth, several federal laws require that teachers must follow mandates put forth instructing students, especially students in an inclusive classroom. These demands are further exacerbated for teachers instructing in rural communities.

Blazar and Kraft's (2017) research affirmed that high-quality teachers do raise test scores, but they also provide emotional support to the classroom, manage classroom behavior, support critical thinking, and aid in their students' social and emotional development. Teachers' emotional intelligence has been researched to evaluate the support teachers provide for their students. Steele's (2010) research has shown that certain traits appear more regularly with teachers than do other traits for effective

teaching. One effective teacher trait is leadership skill, specifically servant leadership. The servant leader manifests sincere traits that include compassion, empathy, honesty, trust, and humility. Many survey responses from participants revealed their need to build relationships with their students through better understanding of the student's environment. Survey responders also expressed the need for better support from administration and guidance offices to obtain information that would lead them toward a more servant leader role.

Gavora (2010) concluded that the knowledge of skills, for instance, how to be a successful leader in the classroom, is necessary for a strong sense of self-efficacy. Survey participants were asked their opinion of the success of managing student behaviors in a variety of ways in the inclusive classroom. Surprising to this researcher, many felt strongly about their abilities to manage the inclusive classes they taught. These responses led this researcher to assume teachers had a high sense of self-efficacy, an additional effective teacher trait of highly qualified teachers that Steele (2010) observed.

Self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura (1986), has many influences on students. Bandura theorized that people operate in a triadic reciprocal causation, which encompasses a person's environment, behavior, and internal cognitive, biological, and affective processes. These processes determine a teacher's actions and emotions. Eighty-five percent of survey participants were confident about preventing disruptive behaviors in their inclusive classroom. Confidence in preventing disruptive behaviors leads to a teacher's sense of self-efficacy due to control of their environment (Bandura, 1986; Gavora, 2010).

The participants who were interviewed in this study expressed difficulties managing students in their inclusive classroom, which was contradictory to the survey responses. The interviewees desired strong empathic leadership traits but their self-efficacy was not as high as was expressed in the survey. According to Gavora (2010), “A teacher who is professionally well-qualified may not be a successful teacher if personal, negative or inhibiting emotional factors come into play” (p. 3). These inhibiting emotional factors can lead to stress and low self-efficacy. This low self-efficacy is counter-productive to better student achievement and improved classroom behaviors.

According to Vesely et al. (2013), teacher self-efficacy can be divided into internal and external influences. Cassady (2011) described that a teacher’s belief that they can deal with any aspect of their profession leads to more success and less stress. The internal influences are within the control of the teacher. External influences are of less control by the teacher. These include administrator support, ability to collaborate with peers, and teaching environment. Wong et al. (2017) stated that, historically, student behavior issues in inclusive classrooms are stressful. All respondents who participated in the interview portion of the study affirmed the research and expressed that the behaviors of the students in the inclusive class caused them stress.

Emotional intelligence needs consideration by teachers for a higher sense of self-efficacy due to a teacher’s engagement in a profession with high emotional labor (Nizielski et al., 2012; Vesely et al., 2013). According to Vesely et al. (2013), a teacher’s ability to regulate their emotions is necessary for less stress, higher self-efficacy, and greater student achievement. A teacher’s repeated experience with the unpleasantness of events and emotions in the classroom leads to eventual burnout and attrition. All

interviewees claimed they sought ways to manage stress outside of the classroom. The emotional intelligence of a teacher indicates the ability of the teacher to tolerate the stress and use coping mechanisms to deal with the negative emotional components that the profession will bring. Music, self-talk, yoga, mindfulness, participating in Facebook teacher groups, exercise, and speaking with colleagues were all ways teachers in this study expressed to manage the stress; this increases their emotional intelligence.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (2015) defined disruptive students as having some of the following behaviors that disrupt class time: (a) horseplay, (b) rule violation, (c) disruptiveness, (d) class cutting, (e) cursing, (f) bullying, (g) defiance, (h) refusal to work, (i) fighting, (j) verbal aggression to fellow students and teachers, and (k) vandalism. Data collected from this survey aligned with the behaviors that define disruptive behavior with some additional behaviors noted as well. For instance, survey respondents stated disruptive behaviors they have experienced were bullying, cursing, disruption to the lesson, refusing to work and others. More than 50% of survey respondents stated they had considered leaving the profession and two of the four interviewees stated they had considered leaving the teaching profession due to the inclusion of students with disruptive behaviors in their classrooms. These qualitative data are higher than the quantitative results reported by Schonert-Reichl (2017) who reported 50% of teachers who leave the profession permanently and 35% of those who leave the profession leave due to problems with student discipline.

Schonert-Reichl (2017) reported that EBD students not receiving services and students with disruptive behaviors not qualifying for an IEP are often left to the exclusive care of the general education teacher. Schonert-Reichl's study is supported by this

researcher's study. This study found 36% of general educators had more than half the students in their classroom with disruptive behaviors without IEPs. Eighteen percent claimed none of the students with disruptive behaviors in their classroom had IEPs and 11% of respondents stated all the students with disruptive behaviors have IEPs.

Sindelair et al. (2018) described the challenges rural schools have recruiting highly qualified teachers and special educators. Previous research by Sutchter et al. (2016) reported fewer teachers entering the field of education; Conley and You (2017) stated the shortages were "palpable." This researcher's study asked the respondents about assistance in the classroom from special educators, paraprofessionals, or other support persons; 57% of respondents reported not having any support in their classrooms to assist with students with disruptive behaviors. During the interview portion of the study, interviewees stated there were not enough and those who were granted assistants in the classroom would frequently lose them due to shortages elsewhere where the assistants would be reassigned.

Rural districts with shortages will allow teachers without certification to instruct and states often allow for alternative pathways for certification as was reported by Azano and Stewart (2015). NCLB (2001), with its highly qualified teacher mandates created a more significant challenge to rural districts. This study did not support the research and reported a 100% certification rate among respondents with 36% holding additional certifications; however, respondents were not asked their certification pathway. Fuller and Pendola (2020) reported a significant teacher shortage in Pennsylvania with only a slight increase in teachers entering the field of education in the next five to ten years. Gagnon and Mattingly (2015) reported on "Grow Your Own" teaching programs to

encourage secondary students to pursue a career in education. This study reported 75% of respondents were educated in a rural school. Gagnon, Mattingly and Bastian et al. (2017) also reported the phenomenon of rural schools having more novice teachers and teachers without advanced degrees. This study in at most eight districts in Pennsylvania did not mirror these findings. Other states may identify more with these trends.

Jonte et al. (2020) reported how rural areas are allowed to hire special education teachers with only a bachelor's degree in another area but these teachers must receive professional development and work towards special educator certification. Seventy-nine percent of respondents reported feeling unprepared to teach students with disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Respondents (57%) reported that they do not receive ample professional development instructing this student demographic, with 89% taking two or fewer classes in instruction in this area at the pre-service level.

Professional development is an instructional enhancement determined by administrators. Significant research has been conducted regarding administrative support for teachers. When respondents in this study were asked about other sources of support their school could implement to assist teachers in better managing and instructing students who exhibit disruptive behaviors, clear communication, a better chain of command, consistency, and removal of tracking practices were some suggestions.

Bland et al. (2014) suggested not assigning newer teachers to more difficult class assignments so they can build confidence and sustain better self-efficacy early on in their profession; this would help retain teachers in these rural areas. This study reported a trend of newer teachers "Not being rotated" as a cause of stress and also more seasoned teachers not being rotated. This is a cause of stress to those assigned classes with a high

number of students with disruptive behaviors. Sixty percent of the 43% of respondents who elaborated on rotation felt that practice would be beneficial. This supports Bland et al.'s research findings.

According to Sutchter et al. (2016), of the 55% of teachers who leave the profession due to dissatisfaction, 17% leave due to issues with student discipline. While teachers in this survey were all still employed in their districts; 35% have considered leaving the profession due to issues surrounding student discipline. Two of the study respondents have a "Plan B" in place should they desire to leave in the future. This study's results affirmed the desire of teachers to leave the profession due to student behaviors in the classroom.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to obtain the perceptions high school teachers have regarding their self-efficacy to instruct students with disruptive behaviors in rural inclusive classrooms, their preparedness to instruct these students, and their perceptions of administrative support. This study did not include administrators' perceptions of their support towards general educators. Future studies investigating the perceptions of administrators' own self-efficacy, support, and preparedness in their management of students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom would be beneficial.

An additional future recommendation would be to evaluate college-level pre-service education instruction. A better understanding of the pre-service instruction general educators receive could lead to more standardized and comprehensive instruction. Equipping general educators with more special education and social emotional learning techniques could lead to better teacher self-efficacy and student learning. A more

comprehensive examination of professional development provided rural teachers would also be beneficial to assess its role in providing best practices for instructing students with disruptive behaviors.

A study analyzing districts that do not track students but vary the academic levels of all students within the same inclusive classroom could prove valuable. Examining districts that rotate teaching assignments to see if stress, burnout, and attrition are less than in those districts that do not, could also add to best practices instructing students with disruptive behaviors. Finally, studies seeking to find additional sources of administrator support and the success of “Grow Your Own” (Gavora, 2010) programs could prove helpful.

Conclusion

Federal mandates such as NCLB (2001) and IDEA (1986) incorporated major changes to the field of education. These changes created the need to evaluate and implement practices that would enable the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education classroom. In addition to the inclusion of these students, the behaviors of students without disabilities who are disruptive in the classroom place further stressors on general educators.

Rural communities have challenges that are unique due to cultural, geographical, and socio-economic factors (Wilcox et al., 2014). Recruiting and retaining general educators and special educators are difficult for rural districts. Sindelar et al. (2018) stated that teachers who do find themselves employed in a rural districts grapple with self-efficacy. Stress and burnout accompany low self-efficacy. Stress and burnout also lead to a higher rate of teacher attrition, especially in rural communities (Maslach &

Leiter, 2016). According to Vesely et al. (2013), a teacher's emotional intelligence contributes to their ability to manage the stress of the profession and seek means to alleviate that stress.

Sindelar et al. (2018) reported that low self-efficacy is exacerbated by a general educator's lack of preparedness to instruct students with or without disabilities who exhibit disruptive behaviors. A majority of teachers, especially novice teachers, do not feel adequately prepared through pre-service instruction to teach students with emotional disorders. This study showed that teachers do not feel they receive enough instruction at the pre-service level dealing with classroom management. This lack of preparedness exacerbates stress for teachers, causing them to leave the profession (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Wong et al. (2007) reported the need for examination of educator pre-service training to increase teacher self-efficacy for improved student learning. Mihalas et al. (2009) opined that more training is needed.

Administrator support of general educators has been a topic of interest to researchers. Berkovich and Eyal (2017) reported that administration's focus on minimizing teacher stress levels is second in importance only to support from their peers. Administrators are responsible for implementing professional development to provide assistance for a wide range of teacher needs (Barley, 2008). The general educators who participated in this study do not feel they receive sufficient and appropriate professional development in dealing with classroom management and students with disabilities or other emotional problems.

Stress is exacerbated by the lack of assistance from special educators or other support personnel in the classroom (Green et al., 2017). A shortage of special educators

and other classroom support staff leaves general educators alone in the classroom without necessary support. This lack of assistance coupled with a shortage of support personnel only further contributes to a teacher's stress level, leading to burnout. Azano and Stewart (2015) reported how rural districts have tried to overcome the shortages by instituting "Grow Your Own" programs to encourage rural high school students entry into educational programs at the college level; however, according to Sutchter et al. (2016), fewer students are enrolling in education programs.

The purpose of this study was to obtain the perceptions high school teachers have regarding their self-efficacy to instruct students with disruptive behaviors in rural inclusive classrooms, their preparedness to instruct these students, and their perceptions of administrative support. Two instruments, an online survey and interview questions, were used to collect data for this study. The survey data showed that general educators in eight rural communities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania feel efficacious in the knowledge they have to manage classroom behaviors and provide the necessary instruction to students regarding expectations. The survey data also showed that instructing students with disruptive behaviors is stressful and that several teachers have considered leaving the profession. Teachers feel they know how to deal with the stress outside the classroom to effectively manage it. According to respondents in this study, administrators endeavor to assist general educators assigned to the inclusive classroom but are unable to do so effectively; respondents seek more consistency from their administrators in dealing with disruptive behavior consequences.

Participants in this study stated they were not prepared to instruct students who are disruptive in the inclusive classroom. They also stated that they do not receive

adequate professional development to counter the lack of pre-service training. In addition to a dearth of administrator support, teachers do not receive the in-classroom support personnel they need for a better learning environment for their students. Burnout and stress are often a result of the demands placed on these educators who instruct students exhibiting disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classrooms in rural communities. It is this researcher's hope that this qualitative study will add to the research base of best practices for pre-service training for new teachers and that administrators can find better ways to support their general education teachers through focused professional development on instructing students with disruptive behaviors. The ability to relieve the stress placed upon general educators will lead to better self-efficacy and, in turn, a better learning environment for students in rural communities.

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Appendix A

Survey

SURVEY OF GENERAL EDUCATION HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF SELF-EFFICACY INSTRUCTING STUDENTS WITH DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS IN THE RURAL, INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

You have been invited to complete this survey, as you are a general education teacher who may have students exhibiting disruptive behavior in your inclusive general education classroom. A student is disruptive if they exhibit any inappropriate behavior in the classroom as follows: (a) horseplay, (b) rule violation, (c) disruptiveness, (d) class cutting, (e) cursing, (f) bullying, (g) defiance, (h) refusal to work, (i) fighting, (j) vandalism, and (k) verbal aggression to fellow students and teachers (Osher et al., 2010). These students may or may not have IEPs.

This survey will take approximately twenty minutes to complete. You may withdraw from taking this survey at any time without penalty. Your participation is confidential, and your responses are anonymous. You will be given the opportunity at the end of this survey to voluntarily contact the researcher to participate in a telephone interview. If you choose to participate in the interview, your anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. You will be asked the best form of contact and a mutually convenient time for the phone interview will be chosen. Thank you for your time and participation. Your name will only be known to the researcher.

By responding to the questions, you are giving your consent to participate in the research study. You may contact Julie McElro, Department of education, 484-706-0313; jdesorbo@mail.immaculata.edu or Dr. Elizabeth Weber, Dissertation Chairperson, 610-517-5232 if have any questions.

Any questions about your rights as a research subject may be directed to Dr. Marcia Parris, Chair of the Research Ethics Review Board, at 610-647-4400 ext. 3222, mparris@immaculata.edu. Dr. Parris's office is Room 130, Loyola Hall.

Please indicate your responses by choosing a single choice from the answer options provided unless otherwise noted.

1. What is your age category?
 - Under 30
 - 30-39
 - 40-49
 - 50-59
 - 60 or older

2. What is your highest level of education you have completed?
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree

- Doctorate / other postgraduate
3. What is the total number of years you have been teaching (including this school year)?
 - Less than one year
 - 1- 3 years
 - 4-6 years
 - 7-9 years
 - 10-12 years
 - 13-14 years
 - 15 years or more
 4. How many students exhibit disruptive behavior in your general education classroom are you instructing this year? These students may or may not have IEPs.
 5. Total number of students with disruptive behaviors this year that have IEPs?
 6. Describe the behaviors of students who are disruptive in your classroom.
 7. What is the total number of years that you have taught in a rural school district? Pennsylvania defines a school district as rural if the number of persons per square mile within the county or school district is less than 284.
 - Less than one year
 - 1-3 years
 - 4-6 years
 - 7-9 years
 - 10-12 years
 - 13-15 years
 - 15 years or more
 8. Please list your PA teacher certification areas.
 9. I attended a _____ when I was in school.
 - Rural high school
 - Urban high school
 - Suburban high school
 - Unsure
 10. How many courses in your pre-service training covered best practices for dealing with students with disruptive behaviors in the inclusive classroom?
 - 0
 - 1-2
 - 3-4
 - 5 or more

11. Describe any assistance of paraprofessionals or special education teachers in your classroom.
12. Have you ever contemplated leaving the teaching profession due to an inability to manage students who are disruptive in your inclusive classroom due to lack of preparedness?

For the items that follow, please indicate how you feel regarding each statement provided.

SA- strongly agree; A-agree; D-disagree; SD – strongly disagree

13. I can make my clear expectations about student behavior.
SA A D SD
14. I am able to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy.
SA A D SD
15. I am confident in my ability to prevent disruptive behavior in the classroom before it occurs.
SA A D SD
16. I can control disruptive behavior in the classroom.
SA A D SD
17. I am able to get students to follow classroom rules.
SA A D SD

Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.

Nothing Very Little Some Quite A Bit A Great Deal

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

18. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

19. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

20. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

21. How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

22. How well can you keep a few problem students from disrupting an entire lesson?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

23. How well can you respond to defiant students?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

24. This study is requesting willing participants to volunteer for a 30-minute follow-up interview at a mutually convenient time. If willing to participate in this portion of the study, please click the link below where you will be directed to instructions on interview participation. Thank you for your time and contribution to this study.

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. How well prepared do you feel through your pre-service training to instruct students who are disruptive in your inclusive general education classroom?? If not, can you state ways in which you feel you could have been better prepared? Have you sought out ways to better prepare yourself on your own and if so, how?
2. Does instructing students with disruptive behaviors cause you stress?

*Work stress: a complex, relational psychological concept arising from the dynamic interactions between the individual and their working environment.

If so, what successful strategies have you developed to manage your stress? Have you ever thought about leaving the teaching profession due to this stress?
3. Please explain the level of support you receive from administrators when dealing with students who are disruptive in the inclusive classroom.
4. Describe your comfort level in voicing concern regarding your needs in dealing with students who are disruptive in your inclusive classroom?
5. Have you ever considered leaving a rural high school to teach in an urban or suburban high school due to lack of support dealing with students who are disruptive in the inclusive classroom? Explain your response.
6. Can you discuss other sources of support your school could implement to assist you in better managing / instructing students who exhibit disruptive behavior in your inclusive classroom? Please elaborate.

Appendix C

Relation of Research Questions to the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, Interview Questions, and Literature

Research Questions	Instrument Questions/Statement	Research
What are the perceptions of general education high school teachers regarding their preparedness to teach students with disruptive behavior in rural schools?	Do you possess certification or an additional degree in special education in addition to another degree?	Conley & You, 2016 Sindelar et al., 2018 Klopfer et al., 2017 Boe & Cook, 2006 Ruppar et al., 2016 Gagnon & Mattingly, 2015
	Did you attend a rural high school in a rural community?	Sutcher et al., 2016 Sindelar et al., 2018 Gagnon & Mattingly, 2015 Wilcox et al., 2014 Taylor & Smith, 2017 Boe & Cook, 2006 Robertson et al., 2017
	How many courses in your pre-service training covered best practices for dealing with students with disruptive behavior in the inclusive classroom?	Jackson et al., 2013 Eisenman et al., 2015 Wayoni-Short, 2010 Wong et al., 2017 Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017 Trach et al., 2017
	IQ: 1. Do you feel prepared you were prepared through pre-service training to instruct students who are disruptive in your inclusive general education classroom?? If not, can you state ways in which you feel you could have been better prepared? Have you sought out ways to better prepare yourself on your own and if so, how?	Obiaker et al., 2012 Bastian et al., 2017 Boe et al., 2007 Busch et al., 2001 Erling et al., 2007 Cassady, 2011
	IQ; Have you ever	Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014 Wong et al., 2017

<p>What are the perceptions of general education high school teachers regarding self-efficacy instructing students with disruptive behavior in the inclusive rural general education classroom?</p>	<p>contemplated leaving the teaching profession due to an inability to manage students who are disruptive in your inclusive classroom due to lack of preparedness?</p> <p>How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?</p> <p>I can make expectations clear about student behavior</p> <p>I am able to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy.</p> <p>I am confident in my ability to prevent disruptive behavior in the classroom before it occurs.</p> <p>I can control disruptive behavior in the classroom.</p>	<p>Wilcox et al., 2014 Bastian et al., 2017</p> <p>Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001 Bandura, 1986 Blazar & Kraft, 2017 Vesely et al., 2013</p> <p>Obiakor et al., 2012 Sharma et al., 2011 Park et al., 2016 Herman et al., 2017 Reinke et al., 2013 Viel-Ruma et al., 2010 Vesely et al., 2013</p> <p>Park et al., 2016 Sharma et al., 2011 NCTSN, 2008 Garland et al., 2013 Taylor & Smith, 2017 Lee, 2017 Nizielski et al., 2012</p> <p>Sharm et al., 2011 Park et al., 2016 Sharma et al., 2011 Park et al., 2016 Lee, 2017 Nizielski et al., 2012 Wong et al., 2017</p> <p>Park et al., 2016 Sharma et al., 2011 Herman et al., 2017 Reinke et al., 2013 Viel-Ruma et al., 2010 Lee, 2017 Nizielski et al., 2012 Wong et al., 2017</p>
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	I am able to get children to follow classroom rules.	Park et al., 2016 Sharma et al., 2011 Lee, 2017 Wong et al., 2017
	<p>How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?</p> <p>How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</p> <p>How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson? (need?)</p> <p>How well can you respond to defiant students?</p> <p>IQ: Does instructing students with disruptive behaviors cause you stress? If so, how have you managed your stress? Have you ever thought about leaving the teaching profession due to this stress?</p>	<p>Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001 Zee & Koomen, 2016 Gavora, 2010 Cassidy, 2011 Cullinan & Sabornie, 2004 Oher et al., 2010 Taylor & Smith, 2017 Trach et al., 2017 Cook et al., 2008</p> <p>Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001 Wilcox et al., 2014 Mihalas et al., 2009 Neill, 2005</p> <p>Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001 Bullock Moreno, 2011</p> <p>Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001 Wong et al., 2017 Cook et al., 2008 Trach et al., 2017</p> <p>Vesely et al., 2013 Chang, 2009 Nizielski et al., 2012 Wong et al., 2017 Schonert-Reichl, 2017 Maslach & Leiter, 2016 Osher et al., 2010 Latouche & Gascoigne, 2017</p>

<p>What are the perceptions of general education high school teachers regarding administrative support instructing students with disruptive behavior in the rural inclusive general education classroom?</p>	<p>IQ: Please explain in more detail how administration supports you or does not support you dealing with students who are disruptive in the inclusive classroom.</p> <p>IQ: Do you fear voicing too much concern to administration over an inability to deal with students who are disruptive in your inclusive classroom? Please explain.</p> <p>IQ: Have you ever considered leaving a rural high school to teach in an urban or city high school due to lack of support dealing with students who are disruptive in the inclusive classroom?</p> <p>IQ: Can you discuss ways your school assists you to better address managing/instructing students who exhibit disruptive behavior in your inclusive classroom? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>Steele, 2010 Vesely, et al., 2013 Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017 Trach et al., 2017</p> <p>Sindelair et al., 2018 Boe & Cook, 2006 Robertson et al., 2017 Wilcox et al., 2014 Gagnon & Mattingly, 2015</p> <p>Mihalas et al., 2009 Conley & You, 2017</p>
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Appendix D

Survey/Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel - VREP©

By Marilyn K. Simon with input from Jacquelyn White

<http://dissertationrecipes.com/>

Criteria	Operational Definitions	Score				Questions NOT meeting standard (List page and question number) and need to be revised. Please use the comments and suggestions section to recommend revisions.
		1=Not Acceptable (major modifications needed)	2=Below Expectations (some modifications needed)	3=Meets Expectations (no modifications needed but could be improved with minor changes)	4=Exceeds Expectations (no modifications needed)	
		1	2	3	4	
Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The questions are direct and specific. Only one question is asked at a time. The participants can understand what is being asked. There are no <i>double-barreled</i> questions (two questions in one). 					
Wordiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are concise. There are no unnecessary words 					
Negative Wording	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are asked using the affirmative (e.g., Instead of asking, "Which methods are not used?", the researcher asks, 					

	“Which methods <i>are</i> used?”)					
Overlapping Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No response covers more than one choice. • All possibilities are considered. • There are no ambiguous questions. 					
Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The questions are unbiased and do not lead the participants to a response. The questions are asked using a neutral tone. 					
Use of Jargon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The terms used are understandable by the target population. • There are no clichés or hyperbole in the wording of the questions. 					
Appropriateness of Responses Listed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The choices listed allow participants to respond appropriately. • The responses apply to all situations or offer a way for those to respond with unique situations. 					
Use of Technical Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of technical language is minimal and appropriate. • All acronyms are defined. 					
Application to Praxis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The questions asked relate to the daily practices or expertise of the potential participants. 					
Relationship to Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The questions are sufficient to resolve the problem in the study 					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The questions are sufficient to answer the research questions.• The questions are sufficient to obtain the purpose of the study.					
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Appendix E

Research Ethics Review Board Approval

**IMMACULATA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW BOARD
REQUEST FOR PROTOCOL REVIEW--REVIEWER'S COMMENTS FORM
(R1297)**

Name of Researcher: Julie DeSorbo

Project Title: High School Teachers Perceptions of Self-Efficacy Teaching Students with Disruptive Behaviors in the Rural Inclusive Classroom

Reviewer's Comments:

Your proposal is **Approved**. You may begin your research or collect your data.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS APPROVAL IS VALID FOR ONE YEAR (**365 days**) FROM DATE OF SIGNING.

Reviewer's Recommendations:

<input type="checkbox"/> Exempt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve
<input type="checkbox"/> Expedited	<input type="checkbox"/> Conditionally Approved
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Do Not Approve

Marcia Parris

Marcia Parris, Ed.D.,
Chair, Research Ethics Review Board

December 19, 2019

Date