A SURVEY OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS CONCERNING
OPINIONS AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT BULLYING

By

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The purpose of this study was to analyze the opinions and perceptions of regular education and special education teachers concerning bullying. The research includes findings that answer the question, “Is there a difference of opinion about bullying in schools between regular classroom teachers and special education teachers?” The research was conducted using an anonymous survey distributed to teachers at two Missouri school districts. The findings were analyzed through Microsoft Excel and A Statistical Program (ASP) software. After compiling and reviewing the findings of this study as well as current literature and research, it is found that there is a difference of opinion about bullying in schools between regular classroom teachers and special education teachers. Further training in effective anti-bullying practices is necessary.
INTRODUCTION

Background, Issues and Concerns

Bullying is identified as one of the most predominant problems faced by children in the United States educational system as well as one of the most significant health risks to children (Raskauskas & Modell, 2011). Bullying can have severe effects on students’ performance, emotional health, and ability to reach their potential. The Supreme Court ruled schools have the responsibility to prevent bullying and protect students from the physical and emotional harm it may cause or they may be held liable in Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education (1999). Although schools have this accountability, teachers often overestimate their effectiveness in identifying and intervening in bullying situations (Kennedy, Russom, & Kevorkian, 2012). An educator’s perception of the seriousness and definition of bullying can predict the success in decreasing the occurrence of bullying in schools.

Students with disabilities have been shown to be targeted as victims of bullying at higher rates than their non-disabled peers. Such victimization can result in the student with a disability not receiving an appropriate education that is vital to his or her development. School districts may be found liable for failing to ensure provisions of free appropriate public education (FAPE) under IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to a student with a disability because of harassment (Maag & Katsiyannis, 2012). Due to the large population of students with disabilities that are bullied, schools need to be aware of the potential applicability of these anti-discriminatory laws (Maag & Katsiyannis, 2012). This project will involve a survey of existing perceptions of faculty members
from two schools. The analysis of results will differentiate between regular education teachers and special education teachers who complete the survey.

**Practice under Investigation**

The practice under investigation is how regular education and special education teachers perceive bullying. There will be an investigation to see if regular classroom teachers have a different opinion of what bullying is, how well they are trained, and their responsibility than special education teachers.

**School Policy to be Informed by the Study**

The two schools that participated in the study utilize various programs and practices as their approach to decreasing the occurrence of bullying. If there is a significant difference in the perception and opinion of bullying between regular education and special education teachers, schools should ensure they are providing appropriate training for staff and students.

**Conceptual Underpinning**

Every student has the right to receive an education in a safe environment. The presence of bullying can disrupt the education process as well as create a less than comfortable learning environment for students and teachers. The Supreme Court ruled in *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education* (1999) that schools have the responsibility to prevent bullying and protect students from the physical and emotional harm it may cause or they may be held liable (Maag & Katsiyannis, 2012). Schools and teachers must attempt to discourage bullying at school to ensure students have the best chance to be successful. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs supports that schools and teachers must work to prevent bullying. According to Maslow’s theory, individuals
must reach the safety and security level before they can move on. Students that are bullied do not feel safe or comfortable at school. This in turn has an impact on student achievement, engagement, and motivation. Schools and teachers must meet a student’s need of safety and security to allow information to be retained by the student.

Statement of the Problem

Bullying is a serious problem in American schools that schools and teachers perceptions and opinions can influence their ability to prevent and intervene.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine regular education and special education teachers’ opinions and perceptions about the severity, types, training, and teacher responsibility related to bullying.

Research Question

RQ #1: Is there a difference of opinion about bullying in schools between regular education teachers and special education teachers?

Null Hypothesis

Ho: There is no difference of opinion about bullying between regular education teachers and special education teachers.

Anticipated Benefits of the Study

The results of this study will inform school personnel about the understandings of regular education and special education teachers concerning bullying. It will help school personnel
determine what training teachers should receive in order to implement best practices in anti-bullying education.

Definition of Terms

Bullying: Any aggressive behavior that has the intent to harm that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

Direct Bullying: Also referred to as Overt Bullying. Often the most obvious form of bullying, and can include physical attacks or verbal abuse.

Emotional Bullying: Also referred to as Relational Bullying. It involves hurting someone’s reputation or relationships by leaving someone out on purpose, spreading rumors, or embarrassing someone in public.

FAPE: Free and appropriate education; A required component of IDEA that mandates school districts provide access to general education and specialized educational services

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Regulations enacted by Congress to ensure children with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education, just like other children.

Indirect Bullying: Also referred to as Covert Bullying. It is less obvious and might include saying mean or untrue things, spreading rumors, or ignoring someone.

Physical Bullying: Involves hurting another person’s body or possessions. Physical bullying can include hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, and taking or breaking another person’s things.
PBS: Positive Behavioral Supports. PBS is a form of applied behavior analysis that uses support at multiple levels to encourage appropriate behavior.

Regular Education Teacher: Responsible for educating the large majority of students in the general education classroom.

Special Education Teacher: Responsible for providing services and education to students with disabilities that qualify for special education.

Verbal Bullying: Involves saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying may include teasing, name-calling, taunting, or threatening to cause harm.

Summary

A study was conducted to see if there is a significant difference in the perception and opinions held in regards to bullying between regular education teachers and special education teachers. In two schools, teachers completed a survey that indicated their opinions and perceptions about bullying. This research investigates the difference of opinion and perceptions held by regular education and special education teachers in the training they have received as well as the training they desire. The research also looks at what each participant defines as bullying. A measurement Chi-Square analysis shows the difference that was found between regular education and special education teachers in these areas that were investigated.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bullying is recognized as one of the most significant health concerns facing children in the United States today and may be the most prevalent type of school violence (Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011). Bullying is defined as the systematic abuse of power which repeatedly and deliberately harms another person. It involves negative interaction in which a dominant individual, the bully, repeatedly exhibits behavior intended to cause distress to a less dominant individual referred to as the victim (Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). It occurs along a continuum, with students assuming roles that include bully, victim, and bully-victim. Bullying includes both overt behaviors such as teasing, hitting, or pushing as well as less directly confrontational behavior termed indirect aggression such as spreading rumors, excluding, and stealing (Waasdorp, Pas, O’Brennan, & Bradshaw, 2011).

According to Brown et al. (2011), bullying can result in negative physiological, emotional, and behavioral outcomes. Students who are bullied, compared to those who are not, tend to experience poorer health, more somatic complaints and greater risk of injury, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal difficulties, higher levels of loneliness and depression, increased anxiety, and score higher on measures of suicidal ideation (Cross et al., 2011). Bullying victims are also more likely to both dislike, want to avoid school, and suffer from impaired concentration in class which can result in lower school attendance and academic competence (Cross et al., 2011). On the other side, students who bully others regularly are at risk of a wide range of health, safety, and educational problems. Bullies are more likely than those students who do not bully to have low academic competence, be unhappy at school, and demonstrate an increased likelihood of engaging in delinquent behavior such as smoking, drinking, and substance abuse (Cross et al., 2011).
The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (2010) enforces several federal antidiscrimination laws related to bullying that include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Section 504 and Title II prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Schools must carefully examine the nature of misconduct itself for possible civil rights violations involving race, color, national origin, sex, or disability in accordance with antidiscrimination statutes (Maag & Katsiyannis, 2012). The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (2010) goes on to state that a school is responsible for addressing harassment incidents about which it knows or reasonably should have known as well as taking prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate any hostile environment and its effects, and prevent the harassment from recurring. In Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education (1999), the Supreme Court ruled that harassment creates a hostile environment with persistent consequences that includes a denial of educational opportunities and held the school liable because they were deliberately indifferent (Maage & Katsiyannis, 2012). Schools must ensure they are taking every step possible to prevent bullying, keep students safe, and provide them access to educational benefits.

According to Maag & Katsiyannis (2012), teachers can maintain or inadvertently reinforce bullying if they are unaware it is occurring. Before teachers can prevent or intervene in bullying situations, they have to be able to recognize it (Allen, 2010). This becomes a problem when teachers repeatedly have difficulty understanding and recognizing verbal, social, and emotional bullying is just as dangerous as physical threats (Maag & Katsiyannis, 2012). In a study by Craig, Henderson, and Murphy (2000), it was found that interactions involving physical
aggression were labeled bullying more often, viewed as more serious, and considered more worthy of intervention than verbal aggression. Boulton (1997) found that teachers tended to see more egregious behavior such as physical assault and verbal threats as bullying, but did not consider name calling, spreading gossip, or intimidating looks as bullying. It is important for teachers to be able to identify social and relational bullying as well as the more overt and obvious forms of verbal and physical bullying (Allen, 2010).

In addition, various research suggests many teachers do not possess the knowledge or skills they need to recognize bullying behaviors among students (Allen, 2010). Bauman and Hurley (2005) conducted a study that found teachers overestimate their effectiveness in identifying and intervening in bullying situations. The same study indicated teachers underestimate the prevalence of bullying among school children (Bauman & Hurley, 2005). Having an accurate definition of the multiple forms of bullying is an essential step in ensuring teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent bullying.

Researchers have responded to the prevalence and impact of bullying by developing school-based programs, many of which take a comprehensive approach to preventing and intervening in peer aggression at multiple levels of a school’s environment (Hirschstein, Van Schoiack Edstrom, Frey, Snell, & Mackenzie, 2007). According to Hirschstein et al. (2007), examples of prevention activities at the school level include establishing anti-bullying policies and training staff to monitor and intervene, teacher implementation of curricular activities targeting student learning objectives at the classroom level, and teachers working one-on-one with students to promote behavior change among children directly involved in bully-victim problems at the individual level. Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) is another program that has been adopted by many schools to combat the problem of bullying. PBS encourages teachers to be
proactive and positive rather than reactive and negative in regards to behavioral management strategies (Allen, 2010). Some of the major recommendations of PBS focus on classroom management practices such as the development of rules and consequences, and the teaching of social skills. Classroom rules should be stated positively, posted and reviewed routinely, and practiced so that students know exactly what to do to follow them (Allen, 2010). PBS also advocates teaching students social skills such as empathy, anger management, social problem solving, and conflict resolution (Allen, 2010).
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A non-experimental, one-time survey served as the research design. The alpha level was set at 0.25 for all tests with this research. The independent variable was the faculty assignment as either a regular education teacher or a special education teacher. The survey will measure the results of several dependent variables. Tests run will include chi square to analyze the quantitative data from the study.

Study Group

The study group for this research consisted of 20 faculty members at two Missouri schools. Nine of the faculty members identified as special education teachers at various levels. Eleven regular education teachers made up the remainder of the study group.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

An anonymous survey was distributed to staff members at two Missouri schools. Regular education and special education teachers were asked to respond to all questions on the survey. With the exception of the first two questions, questions were answered with “Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree”, “Agree”, or “Strongly Agree”. Participants had one month to complete and return the survey. Twenty total teachers, 11 regular education teachers and 9 special education teachers, responded to the survey. Responses were put into an Excel spreadsheet. Words were recoded as numbers to allow for a statistical analysis. Survey can be found in Appendix A.
Data Analysis Methods

A Statistical Package (ASP) software was used to complete the statistical calculations in this study. Descriptive statistics and chi square were calculated. Additionally, Microsoft Excel was used to compile some totals used in the research.
FINDINGS

To determine the opinions and perceptions of regular education teachers and special education teachers, the survey began with a question asking teachers to indicate their area of service.

Table 1

Introduction Question: What is your current position?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE: Status</th>
<th>FRQ.</th>
<th>CUM.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>CUM.</th>
<th>FREQUENCY PLOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x &lt; 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x = 1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>******************</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x = 2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>******************</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x &gt; 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#1 = Regular Education Teachers  
#2 = Special Education Teachers

As shown in Table 1, 20 teachers responded to the survey. 11 teachers, or 55%, are regular education teachers while 9, or 45%, are special education teachers.

The next question respondents to the survey were asked was if the school where they worked had policies and rules in place for occurrences of bullying. The presence of these policies and rules may impact the opinion teachers have about bullying.
Table 2

Question 1: Does the school where you teach have policies and rules in place regarding bullying?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE: Q1</th>
<th>FRQ.</th>
<th>CUM.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>CUM.</th>
<th>FREQUENCY PLOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x &lt; 1</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x = 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x &gt; 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#1= Yes

#2= No

As shown in Table 2, all of the regular education and special education teachers responded they work in a school that has policies and rules about bullying.

The second question asked teachers if they believe bullying is a problem at their school. Both regular education and special education teachers answered this question.
Table 3

Question 2: Bullying is a problem at this school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Reg Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Spec Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Chi Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>36.4% (4)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>63.6% (7)</td>
<td>44.4% (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>55.6% (5)</td>
<td>9.71</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. ≤ 0.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 3, there was a significant difference (Chi Square (2) = 9.71, p-value = 0.007) between regular education teachers and special educations teachers perception of whether or not bullying is a problem at their school. The null hypothesis is rejected for this question. There is a difference of opinion between regular education and special education teachers about bullying in schools. There were 4 regular education teachers (36.4%) who indicated they disagree bullying is a problem at their school while 7 teachers (64.7%) in the same area indicated they agree bullying is a problem. All special education teachers thought bullying was a problem with 4 agreeing (44.4%) and 5 (55.6%) strongly agreeing. The majority of educators in both areas (63.6% of regular education teachers and 100% of special education teachers) responded to this survey that they believe bullying was a problem at the school where they work.

The third question asked teachers to consider if dedicating time and resources to solving the problem of bullying needs to be a high priority.
Table 4

Question 3: Dedicating time and resources to solving the problem of bullying needs to be a high priority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Reg Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Spec Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Chi Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>18.2% (2)</td>
<td>0.0%(0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>81.8% (9)</td>
<td>66.7% (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>33.3% (3)</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. ≤ 0.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chi square test of significance was calculated comparing the frequency regular education teachers and special education teachers indicated the extent they agree dedicating time and resources to solving the problem of bullying needs to be a high priority. A significant interaction was found (chi square (2) = 5.45, p-value = 0.065). The null hypothesis is rejected for this question. There is a difference in opinion between regular education and special education teachers about bullying in schools. 2 regular education teachers (18.2%) disagree dedicating time and resources to bullying is a high priority while 9 regular education teachers (81.8%) agree with the question. All of the special education teachers agreed (66.7%) or strongly agreed (33.3) it is a high priority to devote time and resources to anti-bullying activities.

The fourth question asked to what extent teachers were of the opinion teachers and administrators should be provided ongoing training regarding bullying.
As shown in Table 5, there was a significant difference (chi square (1) = 13.16, p-value = 0.0002) between regular education teachers and special education teachers perceptions of whether or not ongoing training should be provided to teachers and administrators about bullying. The null hypothesis is rejected for this question. There is a difference of opinion between regular education and special education teachers about bullying in schools. All 11 of the regular education teachers (100%) agreed ongoing training should be provided while 2 special education teachers (22.2%) had the same opinion. 7 special education teachers (77.8%) strongly agreed with this question. The overwhelming majority of educators in both areas agree further training about bullying is a positive thing.

The fifth question asked teachers to rate if the professional development they have received on bullying prevention has been adequate.
Question 5: I have received adequate professional development on bullying prevention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Reg Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Spec Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Chi Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>18.2% (2)</td>
<td>100% (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>81.8% (9)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>13.38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. ≤ 0.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chi square test of significance was calculated comparing regular education and special education teachers perceptions concerning if they have received adequate professional development on bullying prevention. A significant interaction was found (chi square (1) = 13.38, $p$-value = 0.0002). The null hypothesis is rejected for this question. There is a difference between regular education and special education teachers about bullying in schools. Special education teachers (100%) disagree they have received enough professional development while 2 regular education teachers (18.2%) have the same opinion. 9 regular education teachers (81.8 %) believe they have been given sufficient professional development on bullying prevention.

The sixth question asked teachers to indicate their level of interest in receiving more professional development on bullying prevention.
Table 7

Question 6: I am interested in receiving more professional development on bullying prevention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Reg Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Spec Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Chi Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>18.2% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>81.8% (7)</td>
<td>55.6% (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>44.4% (4)</td>
<td>7.012</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. ≤ 0.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chi square test of significance was determined comparing the perceptions of regular education and special education teachers concerning their interest in receiving more professional development on bullying prevention. A significant interaction was found (chi square (2) = 7.012, p-value = 0.030). The null hypothesis is rejected for this question. There is a difference in opinion between regular education and special education teachers about bullying in schools. 2 regular education teachers (18.2%) responded they did not have interest in further professional development while 4 special education teachers (44.4%) showed a strong interest for the same question. 9 regular education teachers (81.8%) and 5 special education teachers (55.6%) said they agree with an interest in receiving more professional development on bullying prevention.

The seventh question asked teachers to specify how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement “educators play a large role in bullying prevention.”
Table 8

Question 7: Educators play a large role in bullying prevention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Reg Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Spec Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Chi Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>81.8% (9)</td>
<td>55.6% (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>18.2% (2)</td>
<td>44.4% (4)</td>
<td>1.625</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. ≤ 0.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4, there was a significant difference (chi square (1) = 1.625, $p$-value = 0.202) between regular education and special education teachers perception whether or not educators play a large role in bullying prevention. The null hypothesis is rejected for this question. There is a difference of opinion between regular education and special education teachers about bullying in schools. 5 special education teachers (55.6%) indicated they agree with the statement while 4 special education teachers (44.4%) said they strongly agree. 9 regular education teachers (81.8%) agree educators play a considerable role in preventing bullying while 2 regular education teachers (18.2%) strongly agree.

The eighth question asked teachers to express the degree they feel personal responsibility to prevent bullying in their school.
Table 9

Question 8: I feel I have a personal responsibility to prevent bullying in my school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Reg Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Spec Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Chi Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>63.6% (7)</td>
<td>22.2% (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>36.4% (4)</td>
<td>77.8% (7)</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.064</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chi square test of significance was calculated to compare the feelings of personal responsibility to prevent bullying between regular education and special education teachers. A significant interaction was found (chi square (1) = 3.43, p-value = 0.064). The null hypothesis is rejected for this question. There is a difference of opinion between regular education and special education teachers about bullying in schools. 7 regular education teachers (63.6%) and 2 special education teachers (22.2%) said they feel a personal responsibility to prevent bullying in their school. 7 special education teachers (77.8%) and 4 regular education teachers (36.4%) said they strongly agree they feel a personal responsibility to prevent bullying in school.

The ninth question asked teachers to rate their ability to prevent various forms of bullying.
Table 10

Question 9: I feel I have the knowledge and skills to prevent various forms of bullying.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to Prevent Bullying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. ≤ 0.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 10, no significant difference (chi square (0) = 0.0, p-value = N/A) between regular education and special education teachers perceptions of feeling they possess the knowledge and skills to prevent various forms of bullying. There is no difference of opinion between regular education and special education teachers about bullying in schools for this question. All 20 of the participants, regular education and special education teachers (100%), responded they agree they feel capable of preventing bulling.

The tenth question for regular education and special education teachers asked whether they considered spreading rumors, excluding others from activities, refusing to talk to someone, and damaging another student’s reputation to be forms of bullying.
Table 11

Question 10: I consider spreading rumors, excluding others, refusing to talk to someone, and damaging another student’s reputation bullying.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Reg Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Spec Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Chi Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>27.3% (3)</td>
<td>0.0%(0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>63.6% (7)</td>
<td>33.3% (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>9.1% (1)</td>
<td>66.7% (6)</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chi square analysis was completed to compare perceptions of regular education and special education teachers concerning whether they believed spreading rumors, excluding others from an activity, refusing to talk to someone, and damaging another student’s reputation constituted bullying. 3 regular education teachers, or 27.3%, said that they disagreed these actions represented bullying. 7 regular education teachers (63.6%) and 3 special education teachers (33.3%) said they agree spreading rumors, excluding others, refusing to talk to someone, and damaging another student’s reputation were bullying. 1 regular education teacher (9.1%) and 6 special education teachers (66.7%) said that they strongly agree spreading rumors, excluding others, refusing to talk to some, and damaging another student’s reputation were bullying actions. As shown in Table 11, there is a significant difference (chi square (2) = 8.05, p-value = 0.017) between regular education teachers and special education teachers opinions on...
whether spreading rumors, excluding others, refusing to talk to someone, and damaging another student’s reputation represents bullying. The null hypothesis is rejected for this question. There is a difference in opinion between regular education and special education teachers on what actions are considered bullying.

The eleventh question asked regular education and special education teachers to share to what degree they considered physical behavior such as hitting, tripping, and taking other’s belongings bullying.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Bullying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. ≤ 0.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chi square analysis was completed to compare attitudes of regular education and special education teachers concerning whether they considered the physical behaviors of hitting, tripping, and taking other’s belongings bullying. All 11 regular education teachers (100%) and 9 special education teachers (100%) said they strongly agree these aggressive physical behaviors represent bullying. As shown in Table 12, no significant difference (chi square (0) = 0.0, p-value
between regular education and special education teachers perceptions of hitting, tripping, and taking other’s belongings as bullying.

The twelfth question asked regular education and special education teachers if they consider name calling and taunting forms of bullying.

Table 13

Question 12: I consider name calling and taunting forms of bullying.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Reg Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Spec Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Chi Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>45.5% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>54.5% (6)</td>
<td>55.6% (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>44.4% (4)</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. ≤ 0.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chi square analysis was completed to compare attitudes of regular education and special education teachers concerning whether they considered name calling and taunting forms of bullying. 5 regular education teachers (45.5%) said they disagree these actions constitute bullying. 6 regular education teachers (54.5%) and 5 special education teachers (55.6%) said they agree name calling and taunting are bullying. 4 special education teachers, or 44.4%, said they strongly agree name calling and taunting are forms of bullying. As shown in Table 13, there is a significant difference (chi square (2) = 8.98, p-value = 0.011) between regular education teacher and special education teacher opinions on whether they consider name calling and
taunting bullying. The null hypothesis is rejected for this question. There is a difference in opinion between regular education and special education teachers about bullying in schools.

The thirteenth question asked regular education and special education teachers to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed students with disabilities are bullied more often than students without disabilities.

Table 14

| Question 13: Students with disabilities are bullied more often than students without disabilities. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Reg Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Spec Ed Teachers</th>
<th>Chi Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>18.2% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>81.8% (9)</td>
<td>66.7% (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>33.3% (3)</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. ≤ 0.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chi square analysis was done to compare perceptions of regular education and special education teachers concerning whether they believed students with disabilities are bullied more often than students without disabilities. 2 regular education teachers, or 18.2%, disagreed students with disabilities are bullied more often than their non-disabled peers. 9 regular education teachers (81.8%) and 6 special education teachers (66.7%) said they agree students with disabilities are victims of bullying more often. 3 special education teachers, or 33.3%, said they strongly agree students with disabilities are bullied at higher rates than students without
disabilities. As shown in Table 14, there is a significant difference (chi square (2) = 5.45, p-value = 0.065) between regular education teacher and special education teacher opinions on whether students with disabilities are bullied more often than non-disabled students. The null hypothesis is rejected for this question. There is a difference in opinion between regular education and special education teachers about bullying in schools.

The fifteenth question asked teachers to specify if they have policies and procedures in their classroom meant to prevent bullying. Again, both regular and special education teachers answered this question.

Table 15

| Classroom Policies and Procedures |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------|--------|--------|
| Source            | Reg Ed Teachers     | Spec Ed Teachers    | Chi Sq  | df     | p-value|
| Agree             | 81.8% (9)           | 22.2% (2)           |         |        |        |
| Strongly Agree    | 18.2% (2)           | 77.8% (7)           | 7.10    | 1      | 0.007  |
| Sig. ≤ 0.25       |                     |                     |         |        |        |

A chi square test of significance was calculated to compare practices of regular education and special education teachers concerning whether they have classroom policies and procedures in place to prevent bullying. 9 regular education teachers (81.8%) and 2 special education teachers (22.2%) said they agree that there are policies and procedures in their classroom to prevent bullying. 2 regular education teachers (18.2%) and 7 special education teachers (77.8%)
said they strongly agree they have anti-bullying policies and procedures implemented in their classroom. As shown in Table 15, there is a significant difference (chi square (1) = 7.10, p-value = 0.007) between regular education teacher and special education teacher practices on whether they have policies and procedures to prevent bullying in the classroom. The null hypothesis is rejected for this question. There is a difference of opinion between regular education and special education teachers about bullying in school.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The null hypothesis stated that there is no difference of opinion about bullying between regular education teachers and special education teachers. The results of this study indicate that there are areas of significant difference of opinion between regular and special education teachers. There is a significant difference of opinion concerning whether bullying is a problem at the school where the participants teach. Regular education teachers were more likely to feel bullying was not a problem or less of a problem than special education teachers. This same trend was seen for Question 3, Dedicating time and resources to solving problems of bullying needs to be a high priority, Question 6, I am interested in receiving more professional development on bullying prevention, Question 10, I consider spreading rumors, excluding others from an activity, refusing to talk to someone, and damaging another student’s reputation bullying, Question 12, I consider name calling and taunting forms of bullying, and Question 13, Students with disabilities are bullied more often than students without disabilities. On these questions, the overwhelming majority of regular education teachers responded “Disagree” or “Agree” while all of the special education teachers responded “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”. The null hypothesis was rejected for all of the questions mentioned above.

There were five additional questions which resulted in the null hypothesis being rejected. Question 5 asked teachers if they felt the professional development they have received on bullying has been adequate. 100% of special education teachers selected “Disagree” while only 18.2% of regular education teachers selected the same answer. The majority of regular education teachers answered with “Agree”. Question 4 asked if ongoing training should be provided to teachers and administrators to address issues related to bullying. 100% of regular education teachers chose “Agree” while 22.2% of special education teachers selected the same choice. The
majority of special education teachers (77.8%) said they “Strongly Agree” with this question. Question 7 asked respondents to indicate their belief that educators play a large role in bullying prevention. The majority of regular education teachers and special education teachers responded with “Agree”, but “Strongly Agree” was a close second choice by special education teachers. Question 8 asked to what extent teachers feel they have a personal responsibility to prevent bullying in my school. 7 regular education teachers and 2 special education teachers agreed while 4 regular education teachers and 7 special education teachers strongly agreed. Question 14 asked if teachers have policies and procedures implemented in their classroom to prevent bullying. The majority of regular education teachers marked “Agree”, and the majority of special education teachers marked “Strongly Agree”.

There were two questions where there was not a significant statistical difference of opinion between regular education teachers and special education teachers. One question asked if the study contributor considered physical behavior such as hitting, tripping, and taking other’s belongings bullying. All of the regular education teachers and special education teachers indicated they “Strongly Agree”. The second question asked if the participant felt they have the knowledge and skills to prevent various forms of bullying. Again, every regular education teacher and special education teacher responded they “Agree”.

The conceptual underpinning of the Supreme Court ruling Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education is strongly supported by these research findings. The Ruling states schools have a responsibility to prevent bullying and protect students from the physical and emotional harm it may cause or be held liable (Maag & Katsiyannis, 2012). Regular education and general education teachers may not understand how their opinions and perceptions about bullying may impact their ability to prevent it. Special education teachers responding to this survey recognize
bullying as a bigger problem than regular education teachers. In addition, regular education
teachers indicated they do not put verbal and emotional bullying on the same level as physical
bullying. Preventing bullying and protecting students from the harm it may cause depends on
teachers having appropriate perspectives on the matter.

After concluding this study there are some further studies that could be conducted. A
study could be performed to investigate the practices being implemented by regular education
teachers and special education teachers. This research could show if there are differences in the
approaches they take to preventing bullying beyond their perception and opinion. A study done
on a larger scale with more regular education and special education teachers would be beneficial.
To further this line of thinking, administrators could be included to show school-wide programs
being used in schools.

More professional development needs to take place to ensure regular education and
special education teachers are knowledgeable about bullying and the impact it has on students. It
is impossible for teachers to prevent bullying if they are unaware it is occurring. A greater
knowledge on the topic would allow teachers to correctly identify bullying situations which
would enable them to intervene. It is evident regular education and special education teachers
need further training in the area of indirect bullying. Considering a substantial number of regular
education teachers indicated they do not regard spreading rumors or excluding others from
activities as bullying, school districts need to ensure they are providing their teachers with
appropriate and accurate definitions of bullying. This is the only way to ensure the problem will
be addressed effectively.
Another policy recommendation that could be made from the results of this study is for school districts to look into implementing school-wide programs that go beyond policies. Many programs that are available to schools include support to students at multiple levels including whole school, classroom, and individual. School-wide programs would be a way for the district to ensure all staff are on the same page when it comes to handling bullying situations. It would also provide sufficient training to regular education and special education teachers allowing them to recognize various forms of bullying.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Action Research Paper Bullying Staff Survey

Introduction Question: What is your current position?

a. General Education Teacher
b. Special Education Teacher

1. The school where I teach has policies and rules in place regarding bullying.
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. Bullying is a problem at this school.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly Agree

3. Dedicating time and resources to solving the problem of bullying needs to be a high priority.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly Agree

4. Ongoing training should be provided to teachers and administrators to address issues related to bullying.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
c. Agree

d. Strongly Agree

5. I have received adequate professional development on bullying prevention.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly Agree

6. I am interested in receiving more professional development on bullying prevention.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly Agree

7. Educators play a large role in bullying prevention.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly Agree

8. I feel I have a personal responsibility to prevent bullying in my school.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly Agree
9. I feel I have the knowledge and skills to prevent various forms of bullying.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly Agree

10. I consider spreading rumors, excluding others from an activity, refusing to talk to someone, and damaging another student’s reputation bullying.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly Agree

11. I consider physical behavior such as hitting, tripping, and taking other’s belongings bullying.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly Agree

12. I consider name calling and taunting forms of bullying.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly Agree
13. Students with disabilities are bullied more often than students without disabilities.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly Agree

14. I have policies and procedures implemented in my classroom to prevent bullying.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly Agree