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PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSION AND PULL-OUT  
PROGRAMS AT AN OAHU ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined how parents experienced inclusion and pull-out programs at an elementary school on Oahu. This study compared the scores from a sample of third grade students who took the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test and the Key Math Test both at the beginning and the end of the 2001-2002 school year. A sample of eight pull-out students and five inclusion students took the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test in July, 2001 and again in June, 2002. A sample of seven pull-out students and six inclusion students took the Key Math Test in July, 2001 and again in June, 2002. Results indicated that on average, students in the pull-out program made more gains in the areas of reading and math than students in the inclusion program.

In addition, interviews were conducted with parents of two third grade students and two fifth grade students who had experienced both pull-out and inclusion programs. Several themes emerged from the interviews. Parents lauded the idea of inclusion, but had many concerns regarding its implementation. Perceived downfalls of the inclusion program included smaller academic gains in the areas of reading and math and lack of adequate personnel to service students in inclusion programs. Pull-out was perceived as a much better placement for improving reading and math skills. Parents also attributed their child's higher self-esteem to the curriculum of the pull-out program. Additionally, both parents and students reported that pull-out did not, in fact, alienate special education students from their peers.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### *Statement of Need*

For decades now educators, parents, administrators and lawyers have argued over the best classroom placement option for students with disabilities (Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998; Bennet, Deluca, & Bruns, 1997). Educators had previously developed the practice of mainstreaming the students, assigning them to a general education setting, the “mainstream” of education, for part or all of the school day. The students would be pulled out for certain types of services such as language arts or math, depending on their academic ability. This pull-out model was thought to be more beneficial to the students’ academic growth. Others touted inclusion, a model that required all children to be educated in the general education classroom, regardless of their disabilities. Inclusion was thought to be more beneficial for the students’ social and emotional well being. Even after P.L 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act) was passed in 1975, the debate continued, due to ambiguous wording in the Act. The Act required children with disabilities to be placed in their least restrictive environment, or LRE. The LRE was never clearly defined because it was to be determined on an individual basis by the members of the child’s IEP team.

Here in Hawaii, many schools are beginning to implement inclusion programs. Students with disabilities are placed in the general education classrooms all day with some support from special education personnel. Most schools also offer another placement – a fully self-contained (FSC) classroom with special education services all

day alongside other students with similar disabilities. This placement is reserved for students with more severe disabilities who have difficulty handling the inclusion program, either for academic or behavioral reasons. One other option that some schools offer is pull-out, which has students removed from their general education classroom for part of the day to receive specific instruction in subjects like reading or math. However, many schools only offer inclusion classes and fully self-contained classrooms.

With only these two models of service available, it may be that students are being shortchanged. What happens to those students who are not considered severe enough to belong in a FSC classroom, but who are too far behind to benefit academically from an inclusion program? These students still need to learn to read as opposed to reading to learn. Is it right that a pull-out type program is not being offered to them? While these students might be benefiting socially from an inclusion classroom, are they losing out on the academic benefits a pull-out program can offer? Opponents of full inclusion (e.g., Baker & Zigmond, 1990; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994) perceive an inability to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general classroom. In a pull-out program, students are educated in a smaller, more structured environment with more opportunity for one-to-one interaction with the special education teacher (Salend, 1998). This placement does not have to be for the entire day, and it may even be in the form of a learning lab or content mastery lab. In addition, students are free to learn at their levels, and the teacher is able to teach and re-teach important skills such as basic phonics which may not be offered in an inclusion program (Klingner & Vaughn, 1998). The question that needs to be asked then, is whether or not all students can benefit from an inclusion program. Is inclusion a

better placement than pull-out, is pull-out a better placement, or do both have to be available?

### *Background*

Prior to the 1970's, institutional settings played an important role in the education and treatment of individuals with disabilities. However, in the early 70's there was a rise in special schools and special classes within public schools for students identified as having various types of disabilities (Salend, 1998). This movement towards special schools and classes was followed by a period of advocacy and acceptance, leading to the Congressional enactment of P.L. 94-142 in 1975, the Education For All Handicapped Children Act.

In 1990, Congress discovered that there were more than 8 million children with disabilities in the United States whose educational needs were not being fully met. In addition, Congress also found that public school systems were not providing adequate services, forcing families to find services outside their school system and at great cost. Public school teachers were also found to be lacking in adequate training to provide services for children with disabilities. Congress determined that state and local agencies had a responsibility to provide education for all children with disabilities. (20 U.S.C. section 1400 [b])

PL 94-142 was then revised and renamed IDEA, Individuals With Disabilities Educational Act. With this law, Congress designed federal legislation that guarantees education to every child with disabilities in the United States. It was at this point that the Federal Government began to assist State efforts to provide programs to meet the

educational needs of children with disabilities in order to assure equal protection of the law (Smith, 1992).

IDEA not only guarantees students with disabilities access to education, it also describes the process that must be followed as the law is implemented in every school district in the United States. IDEA had seven major provisions outlined by Congress:

1. *Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):* Any special education services received by a student with disabilities must be provided at no cost to the student and family. Special education must be free, and it must be appropriate – in other words, it must suit the individual needs of the child.
2. *Parental notification and procedural rights:* Parents have the right to examine their child's records and to obtain an outside evaluation of their child. Parents must be notified and consent must be given before a child can be evaluated by the school. If a child qualifies for or is denied special education services, parents have the right to object, make formal complaints and pursue a due process hearing if they do not agree with the school's decision.
3. *Individualized education and services to all children who have disabilities:* IDEA requires schools seek out and identify all students who have disabilities. States have to make a considerable effort to identify these students.
4. *Necessary related services:* Any services related to special education which may be required by a child with disabilities such as developmental, corrective, or other support services must be provided at no cost.
5. *Individualized assessments:* To be identified as having a disability, students must be individually assessed by trained professionals to determine what type of disability the child might have and the best way of dealing with the disability.
6. *Individualized education program (IEP) plans:* Each child with a disability must have an IEP, a written plan specifically designed to meet the individualized needs of each child.

7. *Least restrictive environment (LRE)*: IDEA requires all children with disabilities to be included in the least restrictive environment to the greatest extent possible. In selecting the least restrictive environment, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services which he or she needs. (Smith, 1998)

IDEA established the concept of educating students with disabilities in the general education setting as the prevalent philosophical goal of special education. Initially, after IDEA was passed, educators, lawyers, and even the media touted inclusion as a new mandate due to the statement that all children had to be included in their least restrictive environment. Administrators began to mandate inclusion in schools all over the country, a move that was applauded by many parents and advocates, but frustrated some general education teachers who found themselves with the unfamiliar task of dealing with special education students within their classroom, often without adequate support from special education personnel. Special education teachers were also taken aback. Not only were they required to spread themselves thinly throughout all general education classrooms, they were also uncertain about how to best deliver services in a larger classroom environment with more distractions.

IDEA was said to be the motivation behind the inclusion movement. However, the actual wording of IDEA states that all children are entitled to a free, appropriate, public education in the least restrictive environment, without specific mention of what the least restrictive environment might be. This has led to considerable debate about what is actually required by law. Administrators, educators, parents, advocates and students have yet to come to an agreement as to which is more beneficial for students. This is because while the basic rule in IEP development and planning has been to base decisions on the

student's abilities and academic needs, which might dictate placement along a continuum of potential services, some case law now holds that social integration is equal to, if not more important than, academic needs.

Several court cases such *Daniel R. R. vs. State Board of Education*, 1989; *Greer vs. Rome City School District*, 1991; *Oberti vs. Board of Education*, 1993 have attempted to clarify the meaning of the mandate (Berman, 2000). Previous rulings interpreted the mandates of IDEA to mean that the general education setting would not be the appropriate setting for all children with disabilities. Rulings supported placement along a continuum of potential services, stating that students should be educated in general education settings, but only when the settings meet the students' educational and social needs. Steps first had to be taken to try to accommodate students with disabilities in the general education classroom with the use of supplementary aides and services and curriculum modification. Schools also were required to determine whether academic and social benefits were being received from the class. If students required more one-to-one assistance or different educational programming than could be offered in a general education class, a pull-out model would be their appropriate placement. If students showed the ability to perform adequately in a general education setting with special education assistance, then inclusion would be considered their appropriate placement (Yell, 1995).

Recent legal action (*Sacramento City Unified School District vs. Holland*; 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, 1994), however, has deemed that inclusion should be considered the least restrictive environment as long as the child receives a satisfactory education, even if it is not the best academic setting for the child. This ruling places emphasis on the social benefits of inclusion without regard for the academic well-being of the child. Is this right?

Can all special education students really benefit from being in a crowded general education classroom all day with extra assistance, or would they be better served by a pull-out program for certain classes (e.g. language arts and/or math) which would place them in a small, structured classroom environment with more opportunity for one-to-one interaction with their teacher?

Many studies have been done on the topic of inclusion. Some studies have focused on the perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers or administrators (Alghazo, 2000; Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1998). One particular study found that administrators tend to favor inclusion while special education teachers, general education teachers and other school personnel more directly involved in the implementation of inclusion models tend to favor pull-out programs (Cook, Semmel & Gerber, 1999).

Other studies have focused on the students' perceptions of inclusion and pull-out programs (Ritter, Michel & Irby, 1999; Vaughn & Klingner, 1998). Findings have varied depending on the types of programs offered and the age and grade of the students studied. It would seem that students do not particularly favor one model over the other, but see benefits and drawbacks in both programs. Younger elementary grade students with disabilities reported more frequently that they liked in-class support than did older, intermediate-grade students (Vaughn & Klingner, 1998). Older elementary grade and intermediate students more frequently identified a pull-out program as a desirable place to go where they were better able to learn because they could work at their own level and receive more help from the teacher. At the high school level, students tended to favor inclusion programs because they did not receive the negative stigma they perceived as

being associated with a pull-out program (Ritter, Michel & Irby, 1999; Vaughn & Klingner, 1998).

Yet another group of studies deals with studying the effectiveness of inclusive programs. Studies have been done on the effectiveness of inclusive programs for students with mild disabilities (Manset & Semmel, 1997) and factors contributing to successful inclusion programs (Mamlin, 1999).

A different type of study done in 1999 examined the structure of arguments used to support or oppose inclusion policies for students with disabilities (Cole, 1999). The study found four common arguments. The consequentialist argument measures the positive and negative outcomes of inclusion policies. The second is the justice argument, which focuses on the importance of equality in the delivery of services to students with and without disabilities. The third is based on rights, the view that persons with disabilities have the right to certain levels of quality service provision. The last is the needs argument, which focuses on the special needs of individuals with disabilities. According to Cole's study, all arguments for or against inclusion fall into one of these categories.

Although many studies have been done supporting either inclusion or pull-out programs (e.g. Ritter et al., 1999; Billingsley, Ryndak, & Jackson, 2000; Slee, 2001; Mamlin; 1999), there is a lack of research on the use of both inclusion and pull-out programs in the same school setting. My study will examine the benefits and drawbacks of the two programs operating within the same school, then discuss which placement is more beneficial for special education students.

### *Purpose Statement*

This study examined parents' perceived benefits and drawbacks to inclusion and pull-out programs. Through interviews, the study examined how parents experienced inclusion and pull-out programs at an elementary school on Oahu. These interviews were conducted to record responses from parents of special education students who have experienced both pull-out and inclusion programs. Through these interviews, parents discussed perceived benefits and drawbacks to both programs, and common themes were examined. A comparison of these themes was made for inclusion and pull-out programs. Unique experiences were described in the 'voice' of the participants. This study also sought to find whether there are significant differences between the academic gains of pull-out and inclusion students. Academic benefits and drawbacks of both programs were also studied. Pre and post test data were collected and analyzed to find if reading and math achievement levels of students in the inclusion program were significantly different from students in the pull-out program. These results will contribute to the field of special education by identifying qualities of inclusion and pull-out modules that are effective in improving students' academic progress and social well-being. These results will also determine whether one placement is more beneficial to students than the other.

### *Research Questions*

1. What do parents perceive as benefits and drawbacks of an inclusion program?
2. What do parents perceive as benefits and drawbacks of a pull-out program?
3. Are there differences between the academic gains of students educated in pull-out programs vs. students educated in inclusion programs?
4. Which placement is the better placement for special education students?

## *Definitions*

The definitions of terms used throughout this study are as follows.

Inclusion: A model of education for all students, regardless of disability, being educated in age-appropriate general education classrooms located in schools that students would attend if they did not have a disability. Special education support services are provided within the general education classroom (Salend, 1998).

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A legal document and management tool used to identify and organize individualized educational and related services for students with disabilities (Smith, 1998).

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): A provision of IDEA mandating the education of students in special education in the least restrictive setting, choosing from a full continuum of services ranging from instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals or institutions.

Pull-Out: A model of special education servicing where students are pulled out from their general education classes for part of the day for instruction in the areas of language arts and/or math and receive services in a separate, smaller classroom alongside other students with disabilities.

Specific Learning Disability: “A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including such conditions as perceptual disabilities, such as visual and auditory processing, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia (Chapter 56).

### *Limitations*

In this study, I will be detailing the experiences of a very small population of students with learning disabilities receiving special education services in an Oahu elementary school. Students will not be interviewed directly.

This study is limited to students with learning disabilities in grades three and five. None of the students in this study are considered severely handicapped. They all have learning disabilities, a situation where the students have average intelligence, but for some reason are substantially delayed in academic achievement. All have qualified for special education under the umbrella of specific learning disability (SLD), defined as “a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including such conditions as perceptual disabilities, such as visual and auditory processing, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia (Hawaii State Department of Education, 2000). Children who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, motor disabilities, mental retardation, or emotional disturbance do not fall into this category.

The academic benefits studied will be limited to the areas of language arts and math for third grade students. No data from other subject areas such as science or social studies will be studied. Academic data regarding comparison of gains made by fifth graders in pull-out and inclusion programs were not available for this study because their test scores were not released by their special education teacher. Opinions about the social

benefits of the inclusion and pull-out programs will be given by parents, but will not be studied directly.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the early 1950s and 1960s, students with mild academic handicaps such as delays in reading, writing and math were steadily being assigned to special classes. Many believed that special classes would improve the social development of the students and also boost their self-esteem (Madden & Slavin, 1983). At the time, G. O. Johnson (1950) found that students with mild disabilities suffered frequent rejection by their peers without disabilities. He argued that a general education classroom would have an adverse effect on the self-esteem of students with mild disabilities. Thoughts regarding special education followed along those lines, and throughout the 1960s the rate of students with mild cognitive disabilities in special classes steadily grew.

By the late 1960s, however, educators began to question the practice of placing students with mild disabilities in special classes. It was noted that instruction in these special classes was often inferior to the teaching received by students with mild disabilities who were placed in general education classrooms (Dunn, 1968). Placement in these special classes was criticized as labeling students as “special,” making it difficult for them to ever reenter the mainstream (Johnson, 1969). School districts slowly began to put students with mild disabilities back into general education classrooms for part or even all of the day, and parents of students with mild disabilities began to advocate for mainstreaming their children. By 1975, PL 94-142 (renamed IDEA in 1990) was passed, mandating placement for all children in their least restrictive environment. Wording of the law however, was quite ambiguous, leaving parents, advocates, administrators and

teachers arguing about exactly what that least restrictive environment was. During this time, the battle over inclusion was born.

Was inclusion *always* the least restrictive environment? Was inclusion *always* the most appropriate placement for the child? The battle lines seemed to be drawn as most parents, advocates, and administrators supported inclusion while most general education teachers and special education teachers tended to favor a pull-out type program (Cook, Semmel & Gerber; 1999).

In 1991, Semmel, Abernathy, Butera and Lesar hypothesized that “attitudes towards inclusion vary as a function of proximity to the implementation of inclusion policies” as cited in Cook, Semmel & Gerber, 1999 p.3. Principals, for example, are relatively distant from the actual implementation of inclusion policies and are thus predicted to support the reform movement. Special education teachers and general education teachers who are directly responsible for implementing inclusion are predicted to be unsupportive.

In 1999, Cook, Semmel and Gerber tested this hypothesis by studying the attitudes of principals and special education teachers towards the inclusion of students with mild disabilities. Their results supported the hypothesis – special education teachers and principals strongly disagreed on items stating that the achievement of students with mild disabilities increases when they are fully included. Principals strongly agreed with this statement, while special education teachers strongly disagreed. As for general education teachers, a 1996 review of four decades of attitudinal research by Scruggs and Mastropieri claimed that 65% of general education teachers supported the general idea of

inclusion, but when items were termed more specifically, only 40.5% of general education teachers conceptually agreed with inclusion (Cook et al; 1999).

Administrators are so distant from the implementation of inclusion programs that they are often unaware of the many problems an inclusion program can pose. Once these problems become evident, many administrators are unable or unwilling to deal with these problems. Some of the problems include lack of general education teacher buy in, lack of special education teacher buy in, lack of resources, lack of adequate personnel, and lack of training for both the special education and general education teacher (Cook, Semmel & Gerber, 1999). Conflicting attitudes among principals, special education teachers and general education teachers may explain why inclusion reforms are simultaneously expanding while being criticized as disappointing throughout much of the country (Cook et al, 1999).

It has been noted that lack of resources and lack of training are the two most common complaints of both general education and special education teachers (Cook et al, 1999; Ritter, Michel & Irby, 1999). In order for inclusion to work, both the general education teacher and the special education teacher must work together to create a positive learning environment for students. Oftentimes, however, the general education teacher has not been trained in how to work with a student with mild disabilities causing feelings of inadequacy and uncertainty on the part of the teacher (Cook, et al; 1999). The special education teacher has been trained in how to work with students with mild disabilities, but may be unsure of how to work with the general education teacher. Training via workshops or classes is available, but schools often don't have the funding to train all their teachers.

Another debate has gone on over who is qualified to be teaching in inclusive classrooms. Wilgosh (1992) claimed that only teachers who had been trained in a university program in special education would be prepared to meet the needs of special education students, even in a general education classroom. Hauptman (1983) disagreed, claiming that the responsibility for implementing inclusion falls on the shoulders of all educators whether they were general education or special education trained. Harden and McNelis (1986) sided with Hauptman. They argued that both general education and special education teachers could teach in an inclusive classroom, but also added that both teachers needed to be taught strategies and instructional approaches that would be helpful to all students.

In addition to the above problems, resources are badly needed in the form of extra personnel. Here in Hawaii, inclusion teachers in schools with large special education populations often have to spread themselves thinly, jumping from class to class and never spending more than an hour or two with the students they are to be servicing. Special education teacher positions are allotted to a school according to how many special education students are serviced by the school and what types of disabilities they have. This would work if all students were in a pull-out program, but with an inclusion program, students are spread out through many different classrooms. Therefore, there may be five third-grade classrooms with two or three inclusion students in each room, and all those students need to be serviced by the inclusion teacher. Because resources are spread so thinly, extra teaching personnel is hard to come by. To compensate, some educational aides have been asked to go into the general education class to work with the special education students in place of the special education teacher.

Regardless of what it takes to implement inclusion, the bigger question is whether students with mild disabilities benefit from inclusion either socially or academically. Social issues are a big part of the inclusion argument. Children in a pull-out program can be separated from their general education peers for a large portion of the school day, often leading to lack of self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy or alienation (Peetsma, 2001). It has been theorized that one advantage of inclusive schools is that the school is able to provide social as well as academic support (Stainback, Stainback & Jackson, 1992). In a later study, when Ritter, Michel and Irby (1999) examined perceptions of middle school students, parents, and teachers in an effort to determine whether or not any of these groups saw benefits in an inclusion program, one benefit perceived by all three groups was that children with mild disabilities in inclusive classrooms showed a marked increase in social skills and self-confidence. Due to the fact that students spent all their time with their general education peers and were not singled out for help, students were more confident in the inclusive classroom as well as in various other social situations.

Another common theme in Ritter, Michel and Irby's study (1999) was that students and parents felt that work in pull-out special education classes was too easy. Inclusion required students to adhere to higher standards of academic excellence. Rather than intimidating the special education students, these higher expectations actually began pushing the students to do better in their classes. An overwhelming number of teachers who participated in this study commented that because expectations were higher, the results were increased academic achievement for students with mild disabilities. Programs were not getting "watered down," yet the special education students were able to make academic progress.

It is important to note that both the special education and general education teachers who participated in this study were provided with extensive staff development. Teachers commented that the staff development “made all the difference.” Likewise, adequate personnel were provided to these teachers. One special education teacher was paired with each general education teacher in heterogeneously grouped classes. Parents and students both commented that the support of the teachers greatly contributed to the success of the students participating in the program.

Academically, studies have shown that students in inclusive classrooms do not necessarily perform significantly better than their peers in pull-out classes (Mamlin, 1999; Manset and Semmel, 1997). In fact, in some cases, students with mild disabilities performed better academically in pull-out classes (Mamlin, 1999; Slee, 2001).

One aspect of the inclusion debate has been missing. I have not been able to find any study that examines the academic effects of inclusion on general education students. When students with mild disabilities are included with their general education peers, are the general education students suffering? It would seem that in a class with inclusion students, teachers would have to move slowly to accommodate the needs of the special education students. An inclusive classroom could also have students who disrupt instructional time due to behavioral problems or due to their disabilities, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), attention deficit disorder (ADD) or oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). By carefully considering the rights of the special education students, are we somehow overlooking the rights of the general education students? While this is an important question, my study does not address it.

It would seem, then, that the benefits of inclusion must be weighed against its burdens. Are these benefits worth schools spending money and countless hours to hire and train additional personnel in the form of part-time teachers, educational aides, or paraprofessional tutors to work in inclusive classrooms? Will administrators be willing to make sure teachers have enough support and training to properly help their students? Most importantly, are the social benefits of inclusion more important than a child's academic growth? These are all questions that must be asked and answered by lawmakers, administrators, parents, teachers, and students.

With all these studies being done, it seems clear that we must first determine exactly what the benefits and drawbacks of inclusion and pull-out programs are. The input of administrators and teachers is vital, but so is the input of parents. Parents have the unique viewpoint of seeing how inclusion or pull-out is shaping their child both socially and academically. Through interviews done for this study, parents were able to share their ideas regarding how inclusion or pull-out was affecting their children. The academic data collected will determine whether inclusion or pull-out provided significant academic benefits for the students.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

#### *Participants*

Participants who were chosen for the interview portion of the study were parents of special education students who had experienced at least half of one school year in both inclusion and pull-out programs. Participants were also chosen due to their active involvement in their child's school activities. Two were mothers of third grade students, and two were mothers of fifth grade students. These students qualified for special education services under the category specific learning disability (SLD). This is defined as, "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including such conditions as perceptual disabilities, such as visual and auditory processing, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia (Hawaii State Department of Education, 2000). This category does not include students who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, motor disabilities, mental retardation, or emotional disturbance.

The parents interviewed were of various ethnicities and resided in a low to middle income area in Leeward Oahu. Two were single mothers who did not work outside the home, one was a working single mother and one was a married mother who did not work. I chose these participants because they were atypical. In this area, many parents are single parents who work and do not take an active part in their children's education. In addition, many of our special education parents just want services for their children –

they don't necessarily know or understand what kind of services their children receive. These parents, however, showed considerable interest in their children's school activities and seemed to be well informed about the goals of special education and the types of services their children were receiving. These mothers attended all IEP meetings and parent conferences and made every effort to communicate with their children's teachers. The married mother's husband was also invited to participate in the interview, but declined.

The academic data was taken from samples of third grade students who were eligible for special education services in the beginning of the 2000 – 2001 school year and who continued to receive services in one particular setting, either pull-out or inclusion, throughout the entire school year. These third grade students qualified for special education under the category specific learning disability. Academic data for fifth grade students were not made available. Their teacher would not release their test scores due to a concern regarding confidentiality.

### *Setting*

The school chosen for this study is located in the Waipahu complex in a low to middle income area. In the Waipahu complex, four elementary schools feed into one Intermediate School and one High School. Three of the four elementary schools are in a low to middle income area. The students in this school are predominantly of Filipino or Samoan ancestry. There are approximately 850 students at this school and over 80% of the student population is considered low income, qualifying for free lunch. Of the other 20%, more than half qualify for reduced lunch. Fourteen percent of the students are ESL (English as a Second Language) students. Eleven percent of the students enrolled have

qualified for special education services and range from students with severe disabilities to students with mild learning disabilities. Eleven special education teachers, seven full time educational aides and ten part time educational aides are employed at this school.

This school was chosen because it is quite unique in the way it has handled the issue of inclusion. The principal at this school is a supporter of inclusion and hopes to have a full inclusion program running throughout the school within three years.

However, there was considerable opposition from both the general and special education teachers. For this reason, the principal chose to begin implementing the inclusion program slowly, in the hopes that teacher buy in will gradually be achieved as teachers recognize the success of the program.

Four years ago, the inclusion program began with kindergarten, first grade and sixth grade. Due to the relatively small number of identified special education students in kindergarten and first grade, one special education teacher was able to work with all three grades. Students in all other grades were serviced in a pull-out program. The following year, special education teachers began doing inclusion with kindergarten, first, second, and fifth grade. The year after that, inclusion was implemented in all grades but pull-out options were offered for all students as well. During this three-year trial period, it was realized that while inclusion did work for some students, it did not work for all. Some students were not successful in the inclusion program and had to be placed in a pull-out class. Instead of being in the general education class all day with support from a special education teacher or educational aide, the pull-out students left their general education class for two to three hours a day to be serviced in the areas of language arts, math, or both. Currently, both pull-out and inclusion models are being used within the school.

Students in all grades are being offered the opportunity to be serviced in either a pull-out or inclusion setting.

The school's unique situation has produced a number of special education students who have been educated in both the pull-out and inclusion models of teaching, four of whom were chosen for this study. Their parents were interviewed and were asked about their educational backgrounds, family life, views on special education and their child's educational development.

### *Instrument*

The instruments used to measure the academic data were the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test and the Key Math Test. Both tests are published by American Guidance Service, Inc. The Woodcock Reading Mastery Test measures word identification, decoding skills, word comprehension and passage comprehension. Using these four key areas, a full scale reading score can be obtained. The Key Math Test measures basic concepts, which include numeration, rational numbers, and geometry; operations, which include addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and mental computation; and applications, which include measurement, time and money, estimation, interpreting data, and problem solving. A full-scale math score can be obtained from these three key areas. The academic data used in this study are the full scale reading and math scores.

Prior to this data collection, it was expected by this researcher that students educated in the pull-out program would make greater academic gains than those educated in an inclusion program. It seemed probable that the smaller, more structured learning environment that the pull-out setting provided would be more conducive to learning. In this pull-out setting, teachers have the opportunity to teach lower level skills such as

phonics or basic arithmetic that are not part of the curriculum in a general education class. In addition, teachers have the option to re-teach skills that need reinforcement. It was also expected that parents would favor the pull-out program over the inclusion program due to the academic benefits their child would receive.

### *Procedure*

First, a list was made of all students who had participated in both inclusion and pull-out programs for at least half of one school year in each setting. The students also had to have qualified for special education under the category specific learning disability. Ten students met the criteria. Of the ten, six were chosen for this study – two third graders and two fifth graders as primary participants and one third grader and one fifth grader as back-ups. The six students were chosen due to their grade levels (third and fifth) and their parents' active involvement in their school activities.

The parents of the four primary participants chosen were then contacted in person or by telephone, and asked if they were willing to participate in an interview. They were told that participation was strictly voluntary and that the interview would ask them questions about their backgrounds, their child's educational background, and their opinions about special education, including their perceptions of pull-out and inclusion programs. Parents were informed that although the interview would be recorded, they would be kept confidential. They were also informed that the interview would be tape recorded, transcribed, and the tapes would later be destroyed. Parents were also told that they would be able to read over the transcribed interviews to check for accuracy.

Three of the four parents readily agreed to participate in the interviews, although one parent asked that the interview not be tape recorded. She felt uncomfortable with the

use of tape recorders. Note taking was done for her interview. A fourth parent declined to be interviewed due to her busy work schedule, so another parent from the back up pool was contacted. She agreed to participate. All participants were sent a consent form that they signed and returned.

Interviews were scheduled and conducted within a two month period. Although a set of questions was used as a guide for the interviews, the interviews were otherwise unstructured. All interviews were transcribed within eight weeks of the interview, and a copy of the transcribed interview was given to each participant. Participants were then given the chance to clarify any statements that they felt misrepresented their views. No follow-up interviews were needed. Tapes of the interviews were later destroyed.

The academic data used in this study were collected during the 2001-2002 school year. Special education students at this school are given a pre-test in reading and math in July, the beginning of the school year, and a post-test in June at the end of the school year to measure academic growth. Special education students who are serviced for language arts are given the reading test and students who are serviced for math are given the math test. Students who are serviced for both subjects take both tests. Tests used are the Woodcock Johnson Reading Test and the Key Math Test. Both are standardized tests published by American Guidance Service, Inc. Tests must be administered by a licensed special education teacher in the morning on a one-to-one basis in a small quiet room. Each reading test takes roughly forty-five minutes while the math test takes from one to one-and-a-half hours.

At the end of the 2001-2002 school year, the data for students in grade three were collected. Data were used only if students completed both the pre- and post- tests. Data

from students who transferred into the school late in the year or students who qualified for special education mid-year was not used.

Data from fifth grade students were also collected. However, the special education teacher for that grade was not comfortable sharing the scores due to his concerns regarding confidentiality. Even though the data were anonymous, the special education teacher would not release the test scores.

### *Data Analysis*

After the interviews were transcribed, they were analyzed. Common themes were sought and categorized for later discussion. Some of the positive common themes that emerged were parents' support of the academic curriculum in the pull-out programs, some support for the social benefits that the inclusion program provides, and support of the school's use of both programs. Common concerns were also found regarding lack of adequate support from special education personnel with inclusion placement and lack of academic progress when students were placed into inclusion settings.

The academic data taken from the third grade students were analyzed and charted. Each child's pre- and post- test scores were recorded along with their yearly growth. An average growth was found for students in reading pull-out and inclusion programs. An average growth was also found for students in math pull-out and inclusion programs. Students' individual growth in the areas of reading and math was also charted in an effort to examine whether one setting, pull-out or inclusion, was better for one subject than the other.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

In the following case studies, the four parents interviewed describe their experiences with pull-out and inclusion. Several themes emerged from the interviews. All parents interviewed admitted that they had a negative, preconceived notion about what special education programs were like. Most believed that in order to be in special education, a child had to be “retarded.” Three of the parents interviewed actually envisioned their children spending time in a class with students with severe disabilities.

Once their children had been placed in special education, all four parents stated that they now supported special education completely. All parents expressed strong support for the resource pull-out program, even those parents who initially feared that the pull-out program would alienate their children from the rest of their classmates. Parents cited substantial academic gains in the areas of reading and math and improvements in writing as well as an increase in their child’s self-confidence. Without being asked, three of the four parents interviewed suggested that placement in pull-out should be done before placement in an inclusion program due to the academic benefits of the pull-out program. For the most part, parents expressed support for the inclusion program’s social benefits, but most parents also cited major concerns with the program including lack of adequate support from special education personnel and lack of adequate academic progress.

#### *Case Study: Mrs. S*

Mrs. S is the married parent of four children, all of whom have attended this school. Her son, the youngest in the family, is currently a fifth grade special education

student. Her son first qualified for special education in the fourth quarter of second grade, but the teacher's strike that year prevented him from being serviced for much of the quarter. He only received two to three weeks of services in second grade. Her son then spent third grade in a pull-out setting, the first semester of fourth grade in a pull-out setting, the second semester of fourth grade in an inclusion setting, and in fifth grade was placed in an inclusion setting from the beginning of the year. When asked about her initial attitude towards special education, Mrs. S expressed this point of view:

*I think that if a kid needs extra help, what's wrong with getting it? I don't think special ed. is a bad thing like some other parents. [My son] needed help – badly! . . . he was at the point where he just hated school. . . . He always said he was 'dumb' and 'stupid.' Just getting him to school was starting to be a major problem in the morning because he hated school that much. . . . We used to fight every morning. After months of fighting and plenty of phone calls and notes from his teacher, I was so relieved he got in special ed. . . . it really helped him to learn. He enjoyed being in special ed.*

When first tested for special education at the end of second grade, Mrs. S's son was showing a significant delay in the areas of reading and math. He was reading, writing, and doing math at an early Kindergarten level even though cognitive test scores showed that he was capable of much more. Due to the fact that he qualified toward the end of the year, Mrs. S's son only received two to three weeks of special education servicing in a pull-out setting at the end of second grade. Mrs. S said that even in that short amount of time, she saw a difference immediately.

*Oh, I noticed the change right away. From the second day in that class he was a totally different person – so unreal. He stopped fighting with me about school – he actually wanted to go for a change. . . . The homework he got was easier than the stuff he used to get in his other class, so he could do it himself – and it was amazing 'cuz he wanted to do it himself. He never like my help anymore! I think he was just really jazzed that he could do something on his own ...*

When Mrs. S was asked if at the time she had any concerns about the work in his pull-out class being too easy, she answered:

*You know, I never thought of it that way, but I guess at first the work did seem kind of easy. But then again, it was totally at his level ... just right for him. Doing the work helped him learn, but at the same time it wasn't so hard that he couldn't do it by himself. So actually, as he improved the work did get harder...*

The next year in third grade, Mrs. S's son again had a pull-out placement. He went to his special education class for two and a half hours for language arts in the morning and returned for one hour in the afternoon for math. According to Mrs. S, there were six other students in his language arts class and five other students in his math class. They were placed into three different reading groups and two different groups for math. Mrs. S had a lot to say about her son's experience and academic growth that year.

*If I had to pick the year that [my son] did the best, I would have to say it was in third grade. He totally turned around that year. I would say he went from reading at a kindergarten level to reading at about a early second grade level. ...it wasn't just reading, he had plenty gains in math and even his writing. Before, he never like write at all. He would totally refuse to do the work – that was his attitude. But that year, he was writing so good that one of his writings got put into a school bulletin. I swear, [my child] was so proud of himself, and we were proud of him too. I never thought I would see that kind of writing from him.*

When asked what she attributed her son's success to, Mrs. S answered,

*...had to have been the special ed. 'Cuz one small group was real good for him. . . I never like him get pulled out because I thought he would hate it, but it turns out that was the best thing for him . . . was one small class and the teacher was real strict with him. But he knew she was trying to help him, you know what I mean? So he listened to her ... (smiles) that was a first, getting good reports from a teacher about him! . . . Then too, they got to work on actual reading. You know what I mean? Instead of getting assigned books to read that he couldn't even read, he actually learned to read. His homework that came home for reading was phonics stuff. And since he got better reading, he actually started to read a lot at home. Had one 25 book campaign at the school where they gotta read 25 books in one year. That year he read over 75 – on his own! Before that he would never have read on his own.*

The following year, Mrs. S said that her son was initially placed in a pull-out setting. By the end of the first semester, he was doing so well that his special education teacher approached Mrs. S to ask if she would agree with his being placed in an inclusion setting. By this time, Mrs. S had grown comfortable with the idea of pull-out, and was now wary of having her son in the general education classroom. Although she was happy that her son had made enough progress to be considered for this change, Mrs. S worried that now he would have a hard time adjusting to the work in general education. She agreed to inclusion placement only after the special education teacher assured her that if inclusion did not work out, they could always switch her son back to pull-out.

Mrs. S's son did fairly well in his inclusion placement that year. By the time he was placed in inclusion, he was reading very close to grade level and was also doing math close to grade level. Mrs. S believes that this had a lot to do with his success:

*Now that I look back, I can see that if he wasn't in pull-out first, he could never have made it in inclusion. Inclusion was good for him because he finally got the chance to stay with his class. But for [my son] the social part was never an issue, because he always had lots of friends no matter where he was placed. ...but as far as inclusion goes, I saw lots of problems with the program. Do you know that the sped teacher only saw [my son] for half an hour every day?*

Mrs. S's last statement echoed a concern all of the interviewed parents shared. She had been assured that although her son would be placed in an inclusive setting, he would be getting help from a special education teacher in the classroom. What she did not realize was that the teacher would not be there for the whole language arts or math period, and the teacher would not always be the person in the class with her son. For most of the school year, Mrs. S's son reported that an educational aide was the person

who came in to work with him. The following year, when Mrs. S's son was in fifth grade, she saw the same problems.

*I was kind of disappointed with the inclusion program, but I let [my son] stay in it because I didn't see him falling behind in his work. I didn't know the teacher wasn't gonna be the one in the class – I thought she was gonna work with [my son], but actually it was a EA that did it. And actually, the EA that [my son] had was okay, but those people aren't trained teachers, you know what I mean? I couldn't see why the teacher wasn't the person in there with [my son].*

When asked to elaborate on other drawbacks to the program she saw, Mrs. S spoke about the limited amount of time anyone – special education teacher or educational aide – was actually in the classroom assisting her son.

*When [my son] was in pull-out classes, he spent three and a half hours a day in special ed. Now that he's in inclusion, a teacher is only with him for one and a half hours a day – one hour for language arts and half an hour for math. That doesn't seem like enough. It was fine in fourth grade, but now the work is a lot harder and he's starting to have problems. He said that he's okay when the teacher is there, but once she leaves he has a hard time doing his work without her. He's doing okay though.*

When asked about her overall attitude towards inclusion, Mrs. S was very adamant about making sure this interviewer understood that inclusion was a good thing for some students, but not for all. For her son, social issues were not a concern because he was a friendly, outgoing child with many friends. Mrs. S stated that she supported inclusion for those students who needed the social benefits, but if she had to choose for her son, she would have chosen pull-out for its academic benefits. Mrs. S also shared that her son preferred the pull-out setting for an interesting reason:

*When [my son] was gonna be pulled out, I thought he would feel singled out ... because he would actually have to leave the classroom to go to a special ed. class. But actually, he told me he feels more singled out now that he's in inclusion. All the kids know that the teacher or aide is there to help him and the rest of the sped kids. And now he said that he's shame when he has to ask them questions, because the whole class can tell that he's having a hard time. In his*

*pull-out class, all the kids were special ed, so they were all having a hard time and it wasn't a big deal if they didn't understand something. Now, he feels shame to have to move so slowly when it's in front of his classmates. He thinks he can do it himself now, so he doesn't want the extra help.*

Mrs. S commented that the only problem she had with pull-out was her initial worries that a pull-out program would negatively affect her son's self-image, but in fact it worked the opposite way. Due to his academic growth in a pull-out classroom, he now feels much more confident in his ability to learn.

*Case Study: Mrs. R*

Mrs. R is a single mother of two boys and one girl. Her oldest son is currently in the fifth grade and has been placed in a pull-out setting. He attended this school since he was in the second grade and was first identified as a special education student in the third grade. Mrs. R's son was placed in an inclusion setting right away:

*When [my son] was having problems and they (the school) wanted him to be tested for special ed, I went home and cried. I did not want him to be in a special ed. class. I asked them if there was another option, like if they could just leave him in the class and have somebody in there to help him.*

What Mrs. R had requested was an inclusive setting for her son, a request she later regretted:

*...I was so upset that I asked for that (inclusion setting). I thought it would be good for him, but it turned out to be the worst thing. . . . He hardly made any progress that year. He started off reading at a first grade level and it seemed like he ended third grade reading at the first grade level.*

Mrs. R's main concern regarding inclusion was a common one. There is a point where a child is learning to read – and this is where her son was. The other students in the class were reading to learn – and that proved to be too difficult for her son. That year, Mrs. R's son had been fortunate enough to be in a grade level where there was enough

personnel to have an inclusion teacher in the general education classroom for the entire language arts and math period. He was also only one of two inclusion students in that class, so he was receiving a lot of attention. But still, Mrs. R was unhappy with his progress:

*Even when the special ed teacher was in the class, they told me he couldn't concentrate, wasn't paying attention, and would disrupt the class. He got sent to the principal's office three times that year because he was walking around, talking to other kids and he wasn't doing any work. . . . Later on he told me that he couldn't read or understand what was going on, so he just found other things to do.*

The following year, a few weeks after Mrs. R's son started fourth grade, an IEP meeting was held. At that time, the IEP team recommended that her son be placed in a pull-out class for language arts and math. Concerns the team brought up were her son's lack of academic growth, behavior, and need for structure. Although she still had misgivings about having her son pulled out, Mrs. R agreed to the pull-out setting.

*Yes, I still wasn't sure if that was the right place for him but everything they were telling me was true. He was still having trouble reading. He was a behavior problem. He did need structure. So I decided that we might as well give it a try.*

Mrs. R was asked to elaborate on her reasons why she still was hesitant to place her son in a pull-out setting:

*Oh, for me it was completely the social thing. [My son] has a hard time making friends, and when we came here we moved in the middle of second grade. All the kids had their own friends by then, you know? So he didn't really have any close friends. It doesn't help that [my son] is really shy. In third grade I wanted him with the class so maybe he could make some friends. By fourth grade, I was even more worried because he still didn't seem to have made any friends. He told me he had one other child he played with at recess, but he never, like, brought anybody home to play with him ...*

The year Mrs. R's son was placed in a pull-out setting, he made good academic gains. According to Mrs. R, when her son started the fourth grade he had difficulty

reading simple picture books such as “Clifford The Big Red Dog.” By the end of fourth grade, he had moved up to easy chapter books and was even attempting to read “Charlotte’s Web” on his own. In math, Mrs. R’s son had also made great improvements:

*When he started fourth grade he was totally lost in his (general education) math class. They were doing addition and subtraction with fractions and decimals and he still didn’t know how to add seven plus seven without using his fingers. Once he got to be pulled out, it seemed like he just started moving. They actually started with simple addition and moved slowly from there. But I think because they went so slow, he caught on. He actually learned to multiply and divide that year!*

Test scores Mrs. R shared with this interviewer showed that Mrs. R’s son made a gain of 2.1 grade levels in word attack skills, a gain of 1.6 grade levels in reading comprehension, and a 1.8 grade level gain in broad reading. He also made a 1.4 gain in grade levels in math that year. (For a child with a learning disability, a gain of more than one year in any subject is considered outstanding).

Currently, Mrs. R’s son is in the fifth grade and is being pulled out for language arts and math. When asked about her opinion of pull-out now, Mrs. R expressed her approval. She spoke about her feeling regarding the pull-out program:

*I love it. [My son] is doing so much better, and a small class is better for him. I can actually see the progress. And no more notes or phone calls from his teachers, no trips to the principal’s office!*

As for her concerns regarding the social drawbacks of the pull-out program, Mrs. R had this to say:

*It actually worked the opposite way. When [my son] was pulled out, he had some other special ed. students who were with him in the pull-out class for fourth grade and now for fifth grade. His regular ed. classmates change every year, but these kids have been in the same pull-out program for almost two years now. So he has friends (from that class) that come over to play with him now!*

As the interview ended, Mrs. R was asked to comment about which setting she preferred for her child, pull-out or inclusion. Her response was one echoed by other parents interviewed:

*I like both. Even though inclusion didn't work for him in third grade, I think it would have been better if we went the other way around. Pull-out first, then inclusion. In fact, I was thinking about asking for that next year but it depends on what the teacher says. It seems like once he learns all the basics in the pull-out class, then he might be ready for inclusion. Plus, I want him to be ready for intermediate school, so he has to get used to staying in the class and doing the same work as everybody else.*

*Case Study: Mrs. K*

Mrs. K is the single parent of two boys. Her youngest son is currently in the third grade and has been eligible for special education since he was in pre-school. He initially qualified for special education speech under the category speech language impairment (SLI). He received only speech services in preschool and Kindergarten. When he was in first grade, his eligibility was changed to specific learning disability (SLD) and he began receiving language arts special education services in an inclusion setting.

When Mrs. K's son's eligibility was changed to SLD, it was because the team felt that his speech delays were beginning to affect his ability to read and write. As an inclusion student, his special education teacher spent thirty minutes a day in his general education class helping him with his reading. That year, Mrs. K's son made a gain of 0.5 grade levels in the area of reading. He was still in the pre-writing stage. He was unable to spell simple words such as 'cat' or 'dog' and could not write all the letters of the alphabet. When asked to comment on the inclusion program, Mrs. K had this to say:

*I thought it was okay. He made some progress. At the time I didn't think it was too bad because he wasn't all that far behind. The only thing I had problems with was that the teacher was only in there thirty minutes a day. That didn't seem like enough, you know?*

As for her son, Mrs. K reported that her son enjoyed the inclusion program because he enjoyed having someone there to help him:

*It didn't hurt that he really liked his special education teacher. ...he felt special because he knew she was there to help him. Sometimes she would tell me that he would get mad if she helped other kids in the class because he wanted her all to himself.*

Although Mrs. K's son was not too far behind when he started first grade, he started second grade more than one grade level behind his classmates. He had been behind to start with, and had gained less than one grade equivalent over the course of the first grade school year.

*I think it was after the first quarter of second grade that I realized the program (inclusion) wasn't working. [My son] was getting more and more behind. His report card came home all 'N's. His IEP report card said he was making very slow progress. . . . By that time all his classmates were reading and doing writing, and he was still having problems reading simple words. He couldn't write at all. Eventually I asked to meet with his teacher to find out what I could do with him at home.*

As it turned out, the special education teacher had also been concerned about Mrs. K's son's lack of progress. While she did offer Mrs. K some tips as to ways she could work with her son at home, the special education teacher also asked Mrs. K if they could try a pull-out placement for her son.

*This was a hard decision for me. At first I agreed to placement in special education because I knew he needed speech services. But I really didn't want him there because I didn't want him to be labeled. [T]hat was my biggest fear that everyone would just see him for the special education label and not for who he was.*

Regardless of her concerns, Mrs. K did agree to pull-out placement because she was very concerned about her son's academic progress. He was pulled out to a special education classroom for language arts, which came out to roughly two and a half hours a day. According to Mrs. K, the focus in her son's reading class was mostly phonics.

*In the beginning I was upset because I thought that the work he was bringing home was clearly too easy for him. He had simple worksheets that were very repetitive, and even his spelling words that he brought home were very simple. 'Cat,' 'dog,' 'mat'... it just seemed like a waste of time.*

Mrs. K reported that she actually considered asking to change her son's placement, but she decided to wait one quarter to see what kind of progress her son would make.

*I'm so glad I waited. I thought the work was too easy. What I didn't realize was that for [my son], it was on his level. Even though it was way easier than the work the other kids in his class were doing, that's where he was. . . . and having him do those repetitive exercises really made them stick in his head. All the time before this, he was learning that stuff but it wasn't sticking. Eventually the work did get harder as his level got closer to grade level ... I just had to be patient.*

In addition to the academic growth she saw, Mrs. K reported that in second grade, she also saw a change in her son's personality.

*[My son] used to be very shy, very quiet.. His teachers always told me that he didn't like to participate in discussions, he did badly in small groups ... basically, he just would never talk unless they talked to him, and sometimes even then he didn't want to answer. I always thought it was because of his speech. But after he started his special ed. class – in second grade I mean – he really opened up. All of a sudden I got calls saying he talked too much in class! And his special ed teacher said that he was always volunteering to share his writing with his (special education) class.*

Later, Mrs. K also noted that the “easy” work that her son brought home helped with his self-esteem too:

*[H]e was very proud that he could do the work all by himself. And he was so proud that the answers were right! I think it really made him feel better about himself.*

Mrs. K's son continued in his pull-out placement for the rest of his second grade year, making great progress in reading and writing. He went from a K.5 grade equivalent in reading to a 1.7 grade equivalent. At the end of second grade he was also able to write simple sentences and put them together into short paragraphs.

This year, Mrs. K's son is in the third grade. He is receiving services in a pull-out setting, but Mrs. K reported that his special education teachers seem optimistic that by the end of the year, he'll be in an inclusion setting. When asked to comment about which setting her child preferred, Mrs. K stated:

*I never asked which one he liked more. But if I had to guess, it would be the inclusion. Even though he doesn't talk much, he likes to be with all his classmates. But he really liked the pull-out class too.*

While Mrs. K's son might have preferred inclusion, Mrs. K indicated that she preferred the pull-out setting.

*[F]or me, I liked the pull-out better. . . . I think he learned more, and it stuck with him longer. He can always make friends later – I'm concerned about his school work first!*

*Case Study: Mrs. B*

Mrs. B is the single mother of two children. Her son is a medically fragile special education student who attended this Oahu school from third to sixth grade. He is now attending eighth grade at a nearby intermediate school. Her daughter attends this Oahu school and is in the third grade. Mrs. B was interviewed regarding the experiences of her daughter, though she did at times mention in passing her son's schooling experiences.

Mrs. B's daughter was originally tested for special education when she started the second quarter of first grade, but was found ineligible. Due to her young age, the team opted to try in-class modifications and an after school tutoring program offered by the school instead of deeming her eligible for special education services. Although Mrs. B's daughter was tutored for the remainder of her second grade year, she was still reading at a kindergarten level and doing math at an early first grade level when she began the second grade. After another eligibility meeting, she was declared eligible for special education under the category specific learning disability (SLD).

Initially, Mrs. B's attitude towards special education was very negative.

*I was happy she wasn't eligible (in first grade). To me, special education isn't for kids like her ... it's for handicapped kids like my son. All I ever saw at that school was the rooms my son was in. All the kids were tube fed or had oxygen tanks ... I thought to myself, 'she don't belong there!' I was just relieved that they told me they wanted to do the tutoring instead ...*

Unlike some of the other parents interviewed, Mrs. B's negative attitude did not change even after she was given the opportunity to visit a resource pull-out classroom.

*It was different. It wasn't what I expected ... but I still didn't like it. The class was so small, only had about six kids, and all of them were boys. She would have been the only girl in the class. Uh uh. No. She needed to be able to stay with her friends.*

Although the IEP team strongly recommended pull-out for Mrs. B's daughter in the area of language arts due to her delay in reading, Mrs. B asked that her daughter be placed in an inclusion setting instead. Her daughter was placed in an inclusion setting with a total of one and a half hours of services a day -- one hour for language arts and half-an-hour for math.

When asked why she felt so strongly about inclusion, this is what Mrs. B had to say:

*...she had enough problems without the other kids thinking that she's stupid so she has to go to special ed. I didn't want that for her. I thought it would be best for her to stay with her classmates. To me, I thought it was the same thing – she was still getting help from the (special education) teacher, it was just in her homeroom (general education) and not in a special ed. class.*

For one semester, Mrs. B's daughter received inclusion services. However, when the special education teacher called her for a parent conference at the beginning of the second semester, Mrs. B had changed her mind. Mrs. B asked that her daughter be pulled out for services instead. She talked about why she changed her mind:

*... to me she wasn't doing so bad in school. Seemed like she made some progress, but I don't know exactly how much. . . . I still wasn't gonna pull her out, but from her own side she asked me if she could go to the class. She would cry and say she hated being in her class, she didn't want somebody to come in and sit by her for half the period. I think she felt like everybody was looking at her, wondering why [my daughter] had to have special help.*

At Mrs. B's request, her daughter was placed in a pull-out program. Her servicing time changed from one and a half hours a week to three and a half hours a week. Mrs. B reported that her daughter enjoyed being in the new class even though she was the only girl.

*She said she liked it better than the other class. When I asked her why she said 'cuz she had friends in that class, she liked the teacher, and she thought the work in there was easier. She liked it that she could do the work. . . . I guess it was good for her because she was really proud to bring home her good grades and papers she wrote and stuff. But to me it seemed like the work was too easy. I really wanted her to stay in the other class.*

During her second grade year, Mrs. B's daughter went from a K.5 grade equivalent to a 1.2 grade equivalent in reading. She also made some progress in math, going from a K.7 grade equivalent to a 1.4 grade equivalent. (Academic data breaking

down how much progress she made during each semester was not available because she was only tested at the beginning and the end of the school year).

Mrs. B's daughter is now in a third grade pull-out class. She reportedly enjoys her class and does not want to be placed in an inclusion setting. When Mrs. B was asked if her feelings towards special education had changed, this is what she said:

*It's been a while that she's in pull-out, and now I guess it's okay with me too. I can really see that she's making progress now – it takes time, yeah? The work ain't as easy now but she still can do it herself. . . . now I can totally see her reading better, writing better. Even her math is better. I'm still hoping that she gets out of special education soon, but now I understand why she needed to be in the program.*

#### *Case Study Discussion: Common Themes*

A common theme among the parents interviewed was the misconception about what special education was like. Three of the four parents initially had negative attitudes towards special education. For the most part, their attitudes were based on prior experiences they had with special education when they were in school. Although all the parents stated that they had heard of learning disabilities, only one parent actually understood the term – the other three parents interviewed stated that they thought a child in special education with learning disabilities was “mentally retarded.” Only one of the four parents interviewed stated that they were supportive of special education before their child qualified.

When their children initially qualified for special education, three of the four parents strongly pushed for inclusion services instead of pull-out for their child. Most had common concerns about the pull-out program including not wanting their child to be labeled “stupid” or “dumb,” by classmates, not wanting their child to be alienated from

peers due to being pulled out of class, and not wanting their child to be singled out as a special education student. These three parents all stated at some point in their interview that their child had difficulties with low self-esteem and making friends. The fourth parent interviewed admitted that she had some concerns about her child being singled out as a pull-out student, but was prepared to place her child wherever it would help him the most. She described her son as “friendly” and a “social butterfly” with many friends.

Three of the four students in question were initially placed in an inclusion setting, mainly due to parental concerns regarding pull-out which were voiced at the initial eligibility conferences. Of those three students, all were eventually switched to pull-out settings due to a lack of academic growth in inclusion and/or behavior problems in the general education class. Parents of the three students reported that they now support the pull-out program and can see the benefits pull-out can offer. In the pull-out placement, all three students showed significant academic gains in reading and math as reported by their parents or test scores.

The fourth student was initially placed in pull-out and has now transitioned to an inclusion program. Although his mother did state that she is “disappointed” with the inclusion program, he is reportedly doing “okay.” She and another parent both suggested that inclusion would be best for students who have already been in pull-out. They suggested that the academic gains, structure, and higher self-esteem that a pull-out program can provide would be beneficial to the students before placing them in an inclusion setting. This way, the children would have learned to read in a pull-out program and would be able to focus on reading to learn in an inclusion program.

Another common theme that emerged was the concerns parents had regarding the inclusion program. Several parents commented on the lack of resources available to their child. Due to a shortage in personnel, their children were being serviced for a limited amount of time, and all of the parents felt it wasn't enough. Parents also voiced concerns regarding the use of educational aides in the general education classroom. All parents felt that if their child was in an inclusion setting, a special education teacher who was specifically trained to teach children with disabilities should be in the general education classroom. Parents had no problems with educational aides being present in conjunction with the special education teacher, but felt that the aides should never be the only person servicing their child.

All parents were asked which program they preferred for their child. Three of the four strongly preferred pull-out, while one parent stated that she preferred inclusion. All of the parents stated that if the inclusion program were implemented differently, with a special education teacher servicing their child for the entire period of language arts and math, they would be more supportive of the inclusion program.

When parents were asked which program they thought their child preferred, three of the four chose pull-out. The fourth parent thought her child preferred inclusion, but quickly stated that "he likes pull-out too." Parents all stated that their children "enjoyed being pulled out of the class into a smaller class," "liked the attention he/she received in a small class," and "made close friends with their special education classmates." Parents also stated that they noticed increased self-esteem as their children realized that they could do the assigned work on their own.

One unexpected common theme came up when three of the four parents interviewed mentioned that their child felt more “singled out” in an inclusion setting than in a pull-out setting. The three children felt uncomfortable and “shame” to be receiving extra help in the general education classroom because they thought the other students would notice how much help they needed or wonder why they needed the extra help. Although parents felt their child would feel more singled out in a pull-out environment, this was not the case. In a pull-out class, the children reported to their parents that they felt comfortable because they were placed with other students at their level and they “weren’t afraid to ask questions.”

#### *Academic Data Results*

Academic test data was gathered from both pull-out and inclusion students in the third grade during the school year 2001-2002. All of the students tested were special education students who qualified for special education under the category specific learning disorder (SLD), and all students tested were in their respective inclusion or pull-out programs for the entire school year. Pre-tests were administered in July, 2001 and post-tests were administered in June, 2002. Tests administered were the Woodcock Reading Mastery test and the Key Math test, standardized tests that are published by American Guidance Service Inc. From these tests, a full scale reading score and/or a full scale math score in grade equivalent was obtained for each child.

Test data was broken up into four categories: Woodcock Reading Mastery test scores for pull-out students, Woodcock Reading Mastery test scores for inclusion students, Key Math test scores for pull-out students and Key Math test scores for inclusion students. Data shows pre-test scores and post-test scores in grade equivalent

and the variance (amount of gains) for each child. Some students took both the reading and the math test while others took only the reading or math test, depending on which subjects they were serviced for in special education.

Table 1 presents pull-out data obtained from eight students. The average pull-out student was reading at a 1.3 grade equivalent in the beginning of the school year. The lowest student was reading at a K.8 grade equivalent while the highest student was reading at a 1.7 grade equivalent. By the end of the school year, the average pull-out student was reading at a 2.4 grade equivalent with the lowest student reading at a 1.9 grade equivalent and the highest student reading at a 3.0 grade equivalent. The average gain made by a pull-out student in the area of reading was a 1.1 grade equivalent.

**Table 1. Third Grade Students, Pull-Out: Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, Full-Scale Reading Scores in Grade Equivalent**

	Pre-test July, 2001	Post-test June, 2002	Difference
Student A	1.2	2.0	0.8
Student B	1.1	1.9	0.8
Student C	1.7	2.6	0.9
Student D	1.6	2.7	1.1
Student E	1.6	2.5	0.9
Student F	1.2	2.6	1.4
Student G	1.4	3.0	1.6
Student H	K.8	2.1	1.3
<b>Average:</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1.1</b>

Table 2 presents reading data obtained from five inclusion students. The average inclusion student began the year reading at a 2.0 grade equivalent with the lowest student reading at a 1.8 grade equivalent and the highest student reading at a 2.2 grade equivalent. At the end of the school year, the average student was reading at a 2.8 grade

equivalent. The highest student was reading at a 3.0 grade equivalent and the lowest student was reading at a 2.5 grade equivalent. The average reading gain made by an inclusion student was a 0.8 grade equivalent.

Overall, pull-out students on the average started the year reading at a much lower level (1.3 g.e.) than the inclusion students (2.0 g.e.). Pull-out students also ended the year reading at a lower level (2.4 g.e.) than the inclusion students (2.8 g.e.). However, the average gain made by a pull-out student (1.1 g.e.) was 0.3 grade equivalents higher than the gains made by inclusion students (0.8 g.e.).

**Table 2. Third Grade Students, Inclusion: Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, Full-Scale Reading Scores in Grade Equivalent**

	Pre-test July, 2001	Post-test June, 2002	Difference
Student M	1.9	2.5	0.6
Student N	2.2	2.9	0.7
Student O	1.8	3.0	1.2
Student P	1.9	2.7	0.8
Student Q	2.0	2.9	0.9
Average:	2.0	2.8	0.8

In the area of math pull-out, Table 3 illustrates data obtained from seven students. The average math pull-out student began the year doing math at a 1.5 grade equivalent. The lowest student was doing math at a 1.3 grade equivalent while the highest student was performing at a 1.6 grade equivalent. At the end of the school year, the average pull-out math student was performing at a 2.5 grade equivalent with the lowest student at a 1.9 grade equivalent and the highest student at a 2.9 grade equivalent. The average gain made by a pull-out math student was a 1.0 grade equivalent.

**Table 3. Third Grade Students, Pull-Out : Key Math Test, Full-Scale Math Scores In Grade Equivalent**

	Pre-test July, 2001	Post-test June, 2002	Difference
Student A	1.5	2.3	0.8
Student B	1.6	2.8	1.2
Student F	1.4	2.4	1.0
Student G	1.3	1.9	0.6
Student I	1.5	2.4	0.9
Student J	1.4	2.6	1.2
Student K	1.6	2.9	1.3
Average:	1.5	2.5	1.0

Table 4 presents data obtained from six math inclusion students. The average math inclusion student began the year at a 2.0 grade equivalent. The lowest performing student was at a 1.8 grade equivalent while the highest student was at a 2.2 grade equivalent. At the end of the school year, the average inclusion student was performing at a 2.8 grade equivalent with the lowest students performing at a 2.5 grade equivalent and the highest students performing at a 3.1 grade equivalent. The average gain made by an inclusion student in the area of math was a 0.8 grade equivalent.

On average, pull-out students began the year performing at a much lower level (1.5 g.e.) than inclusion students (2.0 g.e.). Pull-out student also ended the year performing at a significantly lower level (2.5 g.e.) than inclusion students (2.8 g.e.). However, pull-out students made slightly more gains (1.0 g.e.) throughout the year than the inclusion students (0.8 g.e.), a difference of a 0.2 grade equivalent.

**Table 4. Third Grade Students, Inclusion : Key Math Test, Full-Scale Math Scores In Grade Equivalent**

	Pre-test July, 2001	Post-test June, 2002	Difference
Student M	1.9	2.6	0.7
Student N	1.8	2.7	0.9
Student O	1.9	2.5	0.6
Student P	2.1	2.8	0.7
Student Q	2.2	3.1	0.9
Student R	1.9	3.1	1.2
Average:	2.0	2.8	0.8

Data presented in tables 1 through 4 shows that pull-out students made more gains in the areas of reading and math than inclusion students. Although the differences in reading (0.3 g.e.) and math (0.2 g.e.) may not seem significant, these are substantial gains for students with learning disabilities. Students with learning disabilities often have difficulty making a gain of 1.0 grade equivalent in a single school year. An additional gain of 0.2 or 0.3 grade equivalent each year may be the difference between children continuing in special education throughout their school years or eventually being rescinded from special education placement.

Table 5 examines the individual reading and math gains of each pull-out student. Some students took only the reading test, some took only the math test, and some took both tests depending on which subject/s they were serviced for. Of the four students who took both tests, two made more gains in reading than math, one student made more gains in math, and one student made the same amount of gains in both reading and math. There was insufficient data to show that the pull-out program helped students perform better in one subject than the other.

**Table 5. Third Grade Students, Pull-Out: Reading and Math Gains in Grade Equivalent**

	Reading Gains	Math Gains
Student A	0.8	0.8
Student B	0.8	1.2
Student C	0.9	N/A
Student D	1.1	N/A
Student E	0.9	N/A
Student F	1.4	1.0
Student G	1.6	0.6
Student H	1.3	N/A
Student I	N/A	0.9
Student J	N/A	1.2
Student K	N/A	1.3
Average:	1.1	1.0

Table 6 examines the individual reading and math gains of inclusion students in grade equivalent. Five out of the six students in inclusion programs took both the reading and math tests. Two students made more gains in reading than in math. Two students made more gains in math than reading. One student made the same amount of gains in both subject areas. There was insufficient data to suggest that the inclusion program helped students perform better in one area than another.

**Table 6. Third Grade Students, Inclusion: Reading and Math Gains in Grade Equivalent**

	Reading Gains	Math Gains
Student M	0.6	0.7
Student N	0.7	0.9
Student O	1.2	0.6
Student P	0.8	0.7
Student Q	0.9	0.9
Student R	N/A	1.2
Average:	0.8	0.8

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *Discussions and Implications*

This study looked at parents' perceived benefits and drawbacks of pull-out and inclusion programs at one Oahu school. This study also looked at whether differences occurred between the academic gains of students in pull-out programs vs. students educated in inclusion programs. The purpose of this investigation was to determine which placement was best for special education students. Through parent interviews and data gathered from third grade special education students, this study shows that pull-out seems to be the best placement for these particular special education students.

Through the interviews conducted with parents, perceived benefits and drawbacks of the pull-out and inclusion programs were found. Before beginning the study, this researcher believed that parents would prefer the inclusion program due to its social benefits, while students would favor the pull-out program because they were being taught at their level. In actuality, all the parents interviewed and three of their children preferred the pull-out program. The only perceived drawback to the pull-out program for the parents was that their children would not get to interact socially with their non-disabled peers throughout the day. Most parents, however, indicated that they favored academics over social issues, and therefore preferred pull-out, even if their child was not in the general education class for a substantial amount of time.

The pull-out program got high praise from both parents and students. Parents reported that their children enjoyed being in a pull-out program. Pull-out students

enjoyed being in a smaller, more structured classroom with more opportunity for one to one interaction with their teacher. Students reported to their parents that they felt comfortable in pull-out classes because they were placed with other students who were at their level; they no longer felt inferior in the classroom. Students also appreciated being able to do work at their own level instead of struggling with grade level work.

Parents praised the pull-out program because they reported seeing great academic gains as well as a positive change in their children's self-esteem. Providing success experiences for these students may be one of the most important benefits of a pull-out class. A common comment made by parents was that their children had been "turned off" to school because of their difficulties in general education. With placement in the pull-out program, parents reported that their children began to enjoy school. Parents also noted that even children who had a hard time making friends were able to bond with their special education classmates. Parents also appreciated that their children were not separated from their peers all day. Pull-out students only left their general education classes to be serviced in language arts and/or math, and for the rest of the time were able to stay in their general education classes.

Before their children were placed in any special education program, parents were more prone to favor inclusion due to the social benefits of the program. Parents viewed inclusion as a way their child could receive assistance from a special education program without ever having to leave their peers in the general education classroom. During the interviews, this was the only benefit mentioned regarding inclusion.

After their children began the inclusion program however, parents had many concerns regarding inclusion. The concern all parents had was in regards to the amount

of time their children were actually being serviced by a special education teacher. This concern had two parts.

First, parents were surprised that after being placed in an inclusion program, some of their children were only being serviced by a special education aide instead of a licensed special education teacher. Other children were being serviced part of the time by an aide and at other times by a special education teacher. None of the children were being serviced full time exclusively by a special education teacher. Parents commented that although aides in the classroom were helpful, and should definitely be there as a support for the teacher, a licensed teacher was more qualified to modify assignments or use specific teaching techniques to assist their child in the general education class. Due to limited availability of personnel, this was not always possible.

Parents were also concerned that in an inclusive setting, their children did not get enough servicing time. While a language arts period usually covered reading and writing and lasted up to two and a half hours, their children were only being serviced for language arts for an average of one hour per day. Parents noted that although their children would be able to do the work while someone was in the general education class with them, once the help was gone their children often struggled and could not complete assignments. One parent brought up a concern that when the special education teacher or aide was not in the class, the general education teacher had difficulty helping her child because of the twenty-five other students in the class.

Another concern mentioned by three parents had to do with their child's actual feelings regarding being serviced in the classroom. Most parents and this researcher initially believed that students would feel more singled out by being pulled out for special

education services. This was not the case, as three students reported to their parents that they felt more singled out in an inclusion setting. Due to the fact that one person was assigned to help them in the classroom, the special education students were embarrassed to be receiving assistance in front of their peers.

A final concern voiced by all parents had to do with the limited amount of academic gains they believed their child had made. All parents reported that in an inclusive setting, their child did not make noticeable or what they deemed acceptable gains in the areas of reading, writing or math. Most parents seemed to feel that reading levels in particular did not go up when their child was placed in an inclusive setting.

It was theorized by this researcher that students in the pull-out setting would make more gains than students in an inclusive setting. This researcher was very aware that I strongly supported pull-out and that my bias may have affected my guiding of my interviews. I was very careful to present the interview questions and the follow-up questions in an unbiased manner. A pull-out setting would allow students to receive instruction at their level in a small, highly structured environment with less distractions and more opportunity to work with the teacher. In addition, a pull-out class would allow the teacher to revisit skills that were previously taught to ensure optimal retention.

Students in pull-out classes did make more gains than inclusion students in both reading and math. Pull-out students gained an average of a 0.3 grade equivalent more than their inclusion counterparts and gained an average of a 0.2 grade equivalent more than inclusion students in the area of math. Although the academic data does show that pull-out students performed better than inclusion students, these gains may not seem to be substantial enough to conclusively suggest that pull-out is a better placement for students

than inclusion. However, one must take into consideration the fact that students with learning disabilities have difficulty making a gain of one year within the academic year. This is why they fall behind and require additional services. A seemingly small difference of a 0.3 or 0.2 grade equivalent is actually a substantial gain for a special education student, and thus can suggest that pull-out is a better placement for students academically.

The data gathered through interviews and academic testing suggests that pull-out is the better placement for these particular special education students both academically and socially. Parents preferred pull-out services and felt that social needs were still being met within the pull-out program. Parents saw too many drawbacks with the inclusion program. However, it is important to note that these drawbacks are all due to lack of funding and personnel. With adequate personnel available, an inclusion program may be able to meet the academic and social needs of students.

An interesting suggestion was made by one of the parents interviewed. She suggested that pull-out is a better placement for younger students and students whose reading or math skills are far below grade level. She suggested that if students were first placed into a pull-out setting to learn basic skills, students may be better prepared for later placement in an inclusion setting.

### *Limitations*

This study was limited in many ways. First, the interviews done reflect the views and opinions of less than 4% of the population of parents of special education students in this school. Additionally, these parents were atypical because they were so involved in their children's education. Although there are 112 special education students in the

school, only four parents were interviewed, and their comments regarding their children's feelings towards special education pull-out and inclusion program may be very subjective. Students were not interviewed directly regarding their feelings. Other parents of students receiving services may have had different opinions regarding the two programs.

Another limitation is in regards to the consistency of the programs implemented by the school. Each child had a different experience depending on whether they were first placed in inclusion or pull-out. Each child also had a different mix of special education teachers and aides servicing them. The child's actual curriculum implemented and overall educational experience thus varied accordingly.

Data gathered were also limited to a small percentage of the special education population at this school. Data were limited to students in third grade due to the fifth grade teacher's concerns regarding confidentiality. Data gathered from students in other grade levels may have had different outcomes. Also, data were gathered from students who were serviced for language arts, math, or both. In order to get more consistent data, data should have been gathered from students in all grades, and only from students who were serviced in both areas. In addition, data should have been gathered from equal samples of inclusion and pull-out students.

### *Recommendations*

This Oahu school now offers both inclusion and pull-out programs for students in all grade levels. The suggestion made by one of the parents for initial placement in pull-out seems to be a good one. Basic skills can be taught at the pull-out level, and once

those basic reading, writing and math skills are acquired, students will be ready for servicing in an inclusion setting.

Personally, this researcher favors the pull-out program. I strongly believe that pull-out is the better setting to ensure academic gain. In a pull-out classroom, students are given the opportunity to succeed at their level – something they may not be able to do in a general education classroom. Pull-out has many benefits both academically and socially. The pull-out program at this school has been responsible for students making consistent academic gains. Pull-out has rarely been responsible for alienating students from their peers because they still interact with them on a regular basis.

This researcher also favors pull-out because I have seen many students begin to fall behind once placed in an inclusion classroom. Although inclusion may work for a select few, it is not for every student, and should not be mandated as such. Both programs should be offered in every school to ensure that students receive the placement that is most beneficial for their needs.

At this school, changes should be made to the inclusion program currently being implemented. Unfortunately, the majority of these changes will not be possible without additional funding from the state. Many of the problems noted in Cook, Semmel and Gerber's 1999 study on inclusion are problems noted at this school. General education teachers have not bought into the idea that special education students can be successfully educated within the general education classroom. Teachers have cited lack of resources, lack of adequate personnel, and lack of training for both the special education teacher and the general education teacher as major obstacles to the successful implementation of inclusion.

In order to successfully implement inclusion at this school, major changes must be made. Whenever possible, special education teachers should be the primary person in the inclusion classroom working with the students, not an educational aide. Special education teachers should be communicating with the general education teacher about the lessons beforehand so that modifications to the lessons can be made. General education teachers should also be trained in how to work with students with mild disabilities.

Successful implementation of inclusion will also require that special education personnel be available to work with a student for the entire period. A child being serviced for language arts cannot possibly get the full benefit of special education assistance if the teacher is only in the classroom for one hour out of a two and a half hour period.

In order to find which program, inclusion or pull-out, works best for special education students, a longitudinal study may be done. Academic data should be obtained yearly for students in inclusion and pull-out programs in each grade. Data should then be analyzed in order to determine where students performed the best academically. Data may show that younger students perform best in pull-out classes, while older students in the upper elementary grades perform best in inclusion programs.

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**Appendix A**  
**Sample Consent Form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ give consent to be interviewed by Jody Agpalsa for academic purposes. I understand that I will be one of four to six people who will be asked to participate in an interview regarding the special education pull-out and inclusion programs at Honowai Elementary School. This interview should last about an hour and is to be used in a thesis inquiring into the benefits and drawbacks of the pull-out and inclusion models of special education. It is my understanding that my participation in this interview is strictly voluntary. There are no risks involved and all information gleaned through this interview will remain confidential, as I will never be referred to by name in the research paper. I understand that I will receive a copy of the interview transcript and will be allowed to read over the transcript for accuracy. If the interview is tape recorded, the tape will be destroyed after I have approved the transcript. I am aware that I may decide to withdraw from the interview/research at any time. I am also aware that I will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this interview, however it may help to improve special education practices.

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Signature

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Date

\* If you have any questions or concerns please contact Jody Agpalsa at 387-6198.

\*\* If you cannot obtain satisfactory answers to your questions or have any comments or complaints about your treatment in this study, please call the Committee on Human Studies, University of Hawaii, 2540 Maile Way, Honolulu Hawaii 96822. Phone: 956-5007.

**Appendix B**  
**Sample Interview Questions**

## **Sample Interview Questions**

1. Tell me a little bit about your child. (Personality, likes and dislikes, etc.)
2. How long has your child been attending this school?
3. When (what grade) was your child referred for special education? Discuss.
4. What are your feelings about special education programs in general?
5. Let's talk about each year your child spent in special education. For each year, can you explain whether your child was in an inclusion or pull-out program? Describe each situation.
6. What do you see as the benefits and drawbacks of an inclusion program?
7. What do you see as the benefits and drawbacks of a pull-out program?
8. Did your child seem to prefer one setting more than the other? If so, which one, and what were the reasons for this preference?
9. As a parent, did you prefer one setting more than the other? If so, which one and why?
10. Did you notice that your child made more progress (academically or socially) in one setting than another? Which one? Why do you think that happened?
11. Do you have any comments about the effectiveness of special education at this school?
12. Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding inclusion, pull-out, or special education programs in general?