

American Journal of Education and Practice (AJEP)



Principal Leadership: Raising the Achievement of All Learners in Inclusive Education

Emile Monono Mbua, Ph.D.



Principal Leadership: Raising the Achievement of All Learners in Inclusive Education

Emile Monono Mbua, Ph.D

University Of Bemenda, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Leadership

Email: emilemonono@yahoo.com

Abstract

Purpose: The paper aims to investigate principal leadership in raising the achievement of all learners in inclusive education in Secondary Schools in Fako Division, South West Region of Cameroon. The study had three main objectives.

Methodology: This study was premised on the classical liberal theory of equal opportunities advanced by Sherman and Wood (1982). A qualitative research design was employed using a case study approach. Data was collected by using the interview technique through semi-structured questionnaires. The study group consisted of 10 school administrators who were selected using purposeful sampling technique. Data was analyzed using an inductive thematic content analysis.

Findings: The findings demonstrated the key role of principal leadership in fostering new meanings about diversity, principal's attitude towards and support towards inclusive education, building bridges and visioning and building relationships between schools and communities. The findings also identified negative attitude and behaviors, lack of funding, inadequate facilities, untrained teachers and poor collaboration between families and schools as challenges faced by principal leadership in inclusive education. Lastly, instructional leadership practices supports high expectations for students with disabilities, building a shared vision for inclusive schools and a school-wide commitment to inclusive schools, parental engagement in decision-making and redesigning schools for inclusive education were identified as best inclusive practices needed by principal leadership in promoting inclusive education.

Recommendation: The study recommend school leaders to work collaboratively with school staff to spread the reform so that parents and the community engaged in the implementation of the inclusive education approach.

Keywords: *Principal leadership, inclusive education, achievement*

INTRODUCTION

The most important role for the success of inclusive education (schools) is role played by school leaders. Principal's active involvement and engagement are key success factors for implementing changes, improving services, or setting new directions. School leaders play a central role in enabling change and encouraging staff to adopt new attitudes and practices that promote inclusion. Dyal et al. (1996) noted that a school principal plays a vital role in forming an educational climate, which provides learning opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities. They further reported that school principal's attitude, roles, relationships, and vision are active parts of an inclusive environment. Cohen (2015) claimed that a school principal is the most key agent of change in a school, as they are the central actor who contributes to the creation and promotion of a successful inclusion program. Inclusive schools involve children with special needs in general classrooms and allow these students to interact and socialize with their peers in general education (Jackson et al., 2000; Hussain, 2017).

According to Jackson et al. (2000), inclusive education refers to the use of the inclusion method in education to generate a new type of education characterized by incorporating students with disabilities into classes at regular schools. Specifically, all students benefit from meaningful, challenging and relevant educational elements and individualized teaching methods that accommodate their unique abilities and needs. According to Humpfry and Symes (2014), inclusive education requires all staff to have a clear and shared understanding of what inclusion involves, matched with shared expectations of inclusion that must be supported by the school leadership (Horrocks et al., 2008). Leadership in an inclusive education requires an understanding of the local context and the student's perspective while designing leadership strategies that support inclusion. Therefore, school leaders' skills and knowledge in special education are crucial and must permeate all decision-making (Dotger and Coughlin, 2018). Greater efforts are needed to ensure full access to quality education for all learners, especially those in the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. All her learners must master key competencies that enable them to remain engaged in education and support transitions into employment. This further reduces the risk of social exclusion in the long run.

One of the most important challenges in education is to create and nurture inclusive environments that support learning for all students. There are significant challenges to ensuring that each individual obtains an equal opportunity for educational progress worldwide (UNESCO, 2019). Hoppey and McLeskey (2013) have indicated that while policies call for inclusive education, achieving this goal remains complicated and challenging for principals. To work toward that goal, they suggested school principals should be held accountable for not only managing and organizing their schools but also promoting the inclusive practices. Principals also need to take on a number of roles to ensure that their schools are capable of offering the professional support required to teachers and other professional educators. Inclusive school leaders must have the skills, knowledge and qualities to provide effective leadership. Without the guidance and support of principals, schools will struggle to meet the stringent requirements of providing diverse services to meet the needs of different student groups. Therefore, principals must be aware of the requirements of inclusive schools, which should be effectively established to support teachers and the larger school community. Aims to create inclusive environments for all learners more easily can be realized through strong, inclusive leadership practices from school leadership. While every teacher must be prepared for the vast diversity of today's student population, principals face additional

challenges leading special education initiatives. The aim of this study was to investigate principal's leadership in raising the achievement level of all learners in inclusive education. The specific objectives were:

- a) To find out the role of principal leadership in inclusive education, with particular focus on raising the achievement level of all learners
- b) To explore the challenges faced by principal leadership in inclusive education, with particular focus on raising the achievement level of all learners
- c) To explore the inclusive practices needed by principal leadership in promoting inclusive education, with particular focus on raising the achievement level of all learners

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership for Inclusion

Inclusion is increasingly seen as a key challenge for educational leaders. Leithwood et al (1999) suggest that with continuing diversity, schools will need to thrive on uncertainty, have a greater capacity for collective problem solving, and be able to respond to a wider range of pupils. Fullan (2001) describes five mutually reinforcing components necessary for effective leadership in times of change: moral purpose, understanding the change process, relationship building, and knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making. Sergiovanni (1992) also points to the challenge of student diversity and argues that current approaches to school leadership may well be getting in the way of improvement efforts. Riehl (2000) developed a comprehensive approach to school administration and diversity focusing specifically on the work of school principals. She concludes that school leaders need to attend to three broad types of task: fostering new meanings about diversity; promoting inclusive practices within schools; and building connections between schools and communities. She also considered how these tasks can be accomplished, exploring how the concept of practice, especially discursive practice, can contribute to a fuller understanding of the work of school principals. This introduces the need for a more positive view of the potential for school principals to engage in inclusive transformational developments. She concluded that when wedded to a relentless commitment to equity, voice, and social justice, administrators' efforts in the tasks of sense making, promoting inclusive cultures and practices in schools, and building positive relationships outside of the school, may indeed foster a new form of practice.

Kugelmass (2003) and Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) suggested that the role of school leaders is central in successfully shaping inclusive education. Some studies such as Cambron-McCabe (2006) and Marshall and Oliva (2006) proposed that one way to develop inclusive education in schools is through the creation of leaders who promote social justice and inclusion. Angelides (2011) emphasized the need for transformational leadership, in which the principals influence and change the culture of their school and places this within the context of transformational models of leadership. This is comprehended as promoting distributed leadership which is a form of power distribution in schools that extends the authority and influence of groups or individuals (Arrowsmith, 2007). In an inclusive leadership model Oskarsdottir et al. (2020) mentioned elements from distributed leadership such as staff participation in decision-making, the transformational leadership (changing and developing the school culture) and the implementation of instructional leadership as key components for successful inclusive leadership.

According to the Inclusive Leadership Handbook (2016), an inclusive leadership approach “appreciates diversity, invites and welcomes everyone’s individual contribution, and encourages full engagement with the processes of decision-making and shaping reality. The aim of inclusive leadership is to create, change and innovate whilst balancing everybody’s needs.” Inclusive leaders value people, recognize basic human rights, and are aware of others' perspectives and complex systemic connections. They are also aware of the roles and responsibilities of management structures and dare to collaborate and take responsibility for results.

The Inclusive leadership model is based on the assumption that all, people are entitled to basic human rights. Inclusive leadership promotes attitudes and actions that take conscious steps to break down barriers for people at risk of discrimination and social exclusion (Ryan, 2006). Inclusive leaders also avoid the traditional hierarchical management approach and encourage the community to participate in the life of the school or educational system. In many societies, traditional hierarchical power structures do not encourage inclusion. Communities need to be empowered through inclusive leaders to develop policies, curriculum, and interventions that benefit all children (Bourke & Dillon, 2018). Bringing together an adaptable and responsive team with a shared vision enables leaders to build the policies, processes, curriculum approaches, and interventions needed for their school community (Bourke et al., 2018).

Inclusive leadership calls for the establishment of a collaborative, intentional process for school improvement that is mindful of all stakeholders, bringing together people with diverse skills and knowledge and accessing a variety of resources (Bourke & Titus, 2020). Ryan (2006) explained that inclusive practices include advocating for inclusion, educating participants, developing critical consciousness, nurturing dialogue, emphasizing student learning and classroom practice, adopting inclusive decision- and policymaking strategies, and incorporating whole school approaches. Inclusive leaders in general recognize and embrace the need to make significant systemic changes. Such transformations require empathic and visionary leaders to navigate the collaborative planning required to address the interconnected needs of fiscal, human resource, technological, and pedagogical supports (Devecchi & Nevin, 2010).

According to James et al. (2020), effective, inclusive leadership within the field of education also requires the knowledge and wisdom to examine the systems and attitudes within an education system and challenge the policies and practices to ensure they are not biased, exclusionary, or harmful to children. Such leadership can impact school culture, student outcomes, and teacher morale and effectiveness. Inclusion is a process that continuously searches for the best ways to respond to the diversity of children and their learning needs. An inclusive leader needs to ensure that stakeholders or community members understand the importance of inclusion and how a school’s leadership team plans to address the community’s changing needs (Normore, 2010). Inclusion is a process that continuously searches for the best ways to respond to the diversity of children and their learning needs. An inclusive leader needs to ensure that stakeholders or community members understand the importance of inclusion and how a school’s leadership team plans to address the community’s changing needs (Moya et al., 2020).

The Inclusive Leadership Handbook (2016) identifies four key development areas for inclusive leadership as:

1. Practicing self-awareness. Self-aware leaders admit mistakes and show vulnerability, practice self-reflection and mindfulness, and challenge stereotypes.

2. Living a shared vision. Inclusive leaders co-create and live a shared vision with other stakeholders.
3. Building relationships with colleagues and community members. Relationship building entails creating a sense of belonging and purpose in a safe environment while avoiding deficit thinking.
4. Creating and managing change. Leaders share responsibility, empower individuals, and develop strategies for handling the complexities of various projects.

According to the Inclusive School Network (2019), there is no single model for the ideal inclusive school. An inclusive leader should understand the importance of remaining curious, flexible, and committed to improving all their students' learning outcomes and achievement. Employing a wide range of strategies and collaborating to address problems and challenges will lay the groundwork for continued success in building an inclusive school. Leaders embarking on significant change initiatives in their schools need to clearly and consistently articulate their vision for an inclusive environment. Leaders also must provide the necessary support for others to understand this vision through dialogue, resource provision, and skill development. Without consistent support, individuals may find it challenging to embrace a philosophy of inclusion and change in current practices (Garrison-Wade et al., 2007). Education is a human right and the key to building more democratic, sustainable, and peaceful societies. To meet the goals of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims at ensuring inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2016) by 2030, we need inclusive education leaders who are ready to put in place the policies and practices that will make this goal a reality.

Challenges Faced by Principal Leadership in Inclusive Education

One of the key challenges in education is to create and cultivate inclusive environments that support learning for all learners. The degree to which students can be adequately trained is directly related to a staff training system that results in qualified staff so that each student has highly trained and competent teachers and administrators. Any administrator will appreciate how the quality and quantity of teachers are directly linked to student learning outcomes. However, many students receiving special education do not have access to highly qualified or competent special education teachers due to the critical shortage of fully licensed special education teachers (Boe & Cook, 2006). The findings of a report prepared by the President's Commission on Special Education Requirements and endorsed by the Council for Exceptional Children (2001) showed that the most pressing issues facing educators and special education systems are ambiguous and conflicting responsibilities. They include overwhelming paperwork, insufficient administrative and district support, significant teacher isolation, insufficient attention to better learning outcomes, increased demand for well-trained specialist teachers, poorly trained general and specialist teachers, and fragmented licensing systems. York-Barr, Sommerness, Duke and Ghere (2005) detailed the problem predicting that an emerging crisis in special education, if left unaddressed, will lead to reduced quality of services and educational outcomes for children. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the lack of specific preparation of school leaders challenges their ability to meaningfully serve all students (Garrison-Wade, 2005; Goor, Schwenn & Boyer, 1997).

Striving to more easily create inclusive environments for all students can be achieved through strong and inclusive leadership practices by school administrators. While every teacher must be prepared for the sheer diversity of today's student population, school leaders face additional challenges in conducting special education initiatives. Sindelar, Shearer, Yendol-Hoppey and

Liebert (2006) argued that the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education is a complex and challenging reform. Given this complexity, inclusion is often misunderstood and sometimes opposed by teachers and not fully understood or supported by school administrators.

Praisner (2003) found that administrative training programs provided school leaders with a minimum level of knowledge deemed relevant by special education teachers to implement inclusion. She also found that the characteristics of disability, special education law and behavior management can be adequately addressed in preparatory programs, but specific themes that represent genuine strategies and processes in support of inclusion are lacking. In addition, many administrators are unaware of the legal issues of special education, especially the compliance and procedural requirements of the law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Rhys, 1996; Nardone, 1999). Despite the implication that school administrators should be trained in special education laws and policies, many school administrators have received little or no special education training in their leadership preparation training (Anderson, 1999; Garrison-Wade, 2005). Instead, many school leaders find that they have to rely on central government staff. Similarly, Patterson, Bowling and Marshall (2000) concluded that school leaders do not are not sufficiently trained to lead special education, so it is not only a question of the quality and quantity of teachers, but also of sufficiently qualified administrative staff.

There are specific challenges associated with negative attitudes and behaviors of both educators and parents regarding the learning ability of children with disabilities. These challenges can be overcome by raising awareness of human rights in communities and by publishing optimistic examples of children with disabilities who are successful in inclusive education and then in life outside school. Other possible methods include: supporting disabled children to express their aspirations and participate in planning processes, as well as promoting action research and critical pedagogy among teachers (Croft, 2010).

Another major challenge for inclusive education in Cameroon is the lack of funding. UNESCO (2009) found that funding is a major barrier to practicing inclusion. Teaching children with disabilities in general education classrooms requires additional specialists and classrooms to meet student needs. Coordinating services and providing individual support to children requires additional funds that many schools do not have, especially in a tight economy. As a result, insufficient funding can hinder ongoing professional development, which helps keep specialists and classroom teachers abreast of best practices. However, Cortiella (2009) argues that a severe shortage of learning resources is a major limitation; lack of schools, inadequate facilities and lack of teachers and lack of professionally trained and qualified personnel, lack of modern teaching/learning materials. Again, policy makers who do not understand the concept of inclusive education can be a barrier to implementing this wonderful aspect of education (Ainscow & Booth, 2005). The lack of strong policies to support the implementation of inclusive education programs in Cameroon is another problem facing this aspect of education. Policy makers often take a no-chalet stance to promote inclusive education.

According to DeMatthews et al. (2020), principal leadership plays a vital role in improving the performance of all learners and implementing a more inclusive system. In the context of educational leadership, there is a significant body of literature documenting how school leadership affects learning outcomes and academic improvement, with limited focus on students with disabilities (Leaver et al., 2019; Mbiti et al., 2019; Day et al., 2016). Considering the existing literature,

transformational, distributed and didactic leadership have been identified as the most relevant leadership models for addressing the challenges of inclusive education (Honingh & Hooge, 2014; Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004; Goddard et al., 2015). Pedagogical leadership is seen as important in providing the link between school leaders and teachers to ensure that all students have access to quality education (Slater, 2012). Pedagogical leadership is seen as important in providing the link between school leaders and teachers to ensure that all students have access to quality education (Slater, 2012). Researchers promoting this framework note that instructional leadership is essential in guiding educators in delivering instructional programs to meet the needs of diverse students with disabilities (Voltz & Collins, 2010). The literature also suggests that fostering shared leadership through collaboration (Spillane, 2008), community involvement, and developing others is relevant in the context of inclusive education (Mullick et al., 2012).

International research is also increasingly recognizing that one of the main factors behind the ineffectiveness of interventions to make education more inclusive is the inadequate training of school leaders, who play a key role in addressing inclusive education in schools (Esposito et al., 2019; Poon-McBrayer, 2017). Esposito et al. (2019) cite at least three ways in which the role of the principal has changed: 1. He must be able to promote “fair and socially just” inclusive schools; 2. They need sufficient knowledge in the field of "special education"; and 3. know how to make the necessary curricular and pedagogical adjustments to meet the needs of students in a diverse classroom. The challenge for school leaders is to promote collaboration between the different actors of the school community to ensure quality services for all students (Bai and Martins, 2015).

Inclusive Practices Needed by Principal Leadership in Promoting Inclusive Education

Principals have critical roles in developing and supporting inclusive schools that improve student outcomes for students with disabilities (McLeskey et al., 2014). An emerging body of literature demonstrates the work of principals as they create the conditions necessary to build and support inclusive practices in their schools. Some research emphasized the importance of distributed and shared leadership among principals, teachers, and parents in developing and sustaining inclusive schools (Billingsley, 2012; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013).

Today, the stress on principal leadership is on activities that promote student’s learning by creating a learning culture and a strong instructional leadership program (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Principals have varied roles in leading and managing schools, the primary focus is on their roles as instructional leaders alongside the knowledge and skills they need to support the learning of all students in inclusive settings. As instructional leaders, principals are expected to be goal directed and engaged in strategic action to align the school’s academic mission with strategy and action (Hallinger, 2009). To provide leadership for effective inclusive schools, principals must understand the needs of students with disabilities and recognize that these need vary greatly even within the same disability population and at different stages of their development (Hehir, 2005).

It is imperative for principal leadership to understand the needs of students with disabilities while recognizing these needs vary therefore, instructional leadership will require that for these needs to be addressed, the students should be given opportunities within the general education curriculum. In addition, based on the diverse needs of these students, principals must engage in distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006) and collaborative (Hallinger & Heck, 2010) forms of leadership to ensure that the necessary expertise is available to meet the needs of the full range of students with disabilities. Effective principals focus their curricular efforts on establishing high expectations for

all students in their schools (Hitt & Tucker, 2016), and they encourage teachers to help students with disabilities meet content standards.

According to Lee et al. (1999), students will be more successful when goals and standards for achievements are high and clear to everyone and there is accountability. Robinson et al. (2008), pointed out in high achieving schools academic goals in the priority of leadership, principals are therefore expected to set high standards for achievements. Lee et al. (1999) pointed that students who experience strong academic press in schools accompanied with a strong social support achieve more. An important quality of inclusive education is therefore to ensure high expectations for all students most especially those with disabilities (Waldron et al., 2011). Principal leadership should therefore establish high standards for all students by improving achievement expectations for all students with disabilities by challenging the status quo.

Principal needs to work with school staff and students to create a safe, orderly and protective learning environment (Robinson et al., 2008). Supporting positive student behavior helps to eliminate disruptions that can have a negative effect on students learning (Hattie, 2009). Research suggests that principals can use School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) to improve achievement, behavior management and addressing disruptive problems (Sugai et al., 2012). The aim of SWPBS was to prevent problematic behavior by identifying problems and to establish priorities for group interventions in schools and classrooms.

Principal leadership for inclusion promotes effective instructional practices and set clear performance standards for high quality instruction (Robinson et al., 2008). Promoting effective instruction means teachers have to learn and effectively use the instructional practices that research shows are most powerful in promoting student learning (Deshler & Cornett, 2012). To address the needs of students with disabilities, principals must be aware and promote effective instructional practices to improve student learning (Cook & Smith, 2012). As suggested by Tomlinson (2008), differentiated instructions should be promoted in schools with the idea of instruction adjusted to help students who are not making adequate progress in standard-based curriculum. Principals also must understand effective instructional practices that teachers use to provide intensive and focused instruction for students with disabilities.

Effective principal leadership for inclusion requires principals ensure there is a system in place to monitor students' progress and that these data are meaningful to teachers and useful for improving instruction (Robinson et al., 2008). Monitoring systems are used to link student performance data to changes in instruction needed to increase learning. The monitoring system also requires that teachers be knowledgeable and skillful in using data to identify the extent to which instruction or intervention was effective and modifies instructional plans to improve performance (Batsche, 2014).

Leadership for inclusion will require the creation of a professional learning community (PLC) of teachers, an environment of trust where teachers learn together, address problems practice, and share resources to enhance student learning (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Principal leadership facilitates these relationships by establishing a clear expectation for collaboration and encouraging teacher leadership (Brownell et al., 2012). Collaboration will mean teachers need to engage in ongoing progress monitoring to determine the extent to which students with disabilities are moving towards short-term curriculum goals long-term achievement standards, meaning that leaders must create the structures and schedules to ensure that staff members have the time, schedules, and preparation

to plan for the needs of students with disabilities and engage in collaborative instruction such as co-teaching (Brownell et al., 2012).

This study concerns principal leadership with a particular focus on creating and promoting an inclusive educational environment as well as realizing the goals of inclusive education policies. The aim of this study was raising the achievement level of all learners through principal leadership. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the role of principal leadership in inclusive education, with particular focus on raising the achievement level of all learners?
2. What are the challenges faced by principal leadership in inclusive education, with particular focus on raising the achievement level of all learners?
3. What are the inclusive practices needed by principal leadership in promoting inclusive education, with particular focus on raising the achievement level of all learners?

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on Sherman and Wood's classic liberal equal opportunity theory (1982) quoted in Orodho (2009). Orodho (2009) expressed the view that there should be equal opportunities in education for all. This theory states that every individual is born with a certain ability. According to this theory, education systems should be designed to remove barriers of any kind, for example barriers based on socio-economic factors, socio-cultural factors, geographical factors, school-related factors that prevent students with intellectual disabilities from taking advantage of their innate talents, as disability is not an incapacity. The education offered to such groups of pupils will accelerate them towards social advancement, as education is a great equalizer which increases the life chances of children with special needs (Orodho, 2009). The theory calls for opportunities to be provided for people to progress through all levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary) to which access will not be determined by student disability, but on the basis of ability of individuals.

In this way, education would create at least an economic equality in which all classes, races and sex could economically benefit from excellent academic results. The theory further asserts that society mobility is fostered by equal educational opportunities for all citizens. Many economists have argued the policy of inclusive education, launched by many government advocates radical policies, school reform in terms of curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and student grouping. Leadership through the initiatives of the United Nations (UN) and the commitment of almost all governments to EFA and the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action undoubtedly contributed to strengthening these programs. Local authorities, parent-teacher associations, associations of people with disabilities, churches and community leaders have worked tirelessly to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in partnership with government and local school professionals. By improving the implementation of it is hoped that inclusive education in all secondary schools in Fako Division will overcome barriers to access appropriately reduced or eliminated entirely on the education of these children.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design to investigate principal leadership in raising the achievement of all learners in inclusive education in Secondary Schools in Fako Division, South

West Region of Cameroon. The qualitative research approach more specifically, the case study was beneficial as it offered the researcher the best way to elicit the required data and a better understanding of the phenomenon that was being studied. This study focused on Secondary school principals in Fako Division, South West Region of Cameroon. The study targeted the principals to elicit data on their leadership practices that foster inclusive education in their schools. Purposively sampling was used as the researcher chose ten (10) principals from selected secondary schools where inclusive education is practiced. The semi-structured interview type was selected to elicit data for the study, due to its nature of one-on-one interviews with the participants. In this study, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the data generated. Seven steps were used to analyze data as follows: Preparing field notes and transcripts; Read through all the data; Theme identification/generation; Theme representation; Coding the data; Visualizing and displaying the data and Interpretation of data.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Role of Principal Leadership in Inclusive Education

The first research question investigated the role of principal leadership in inclusive education. The following themes were retrieved, which highlighted the role of principal leadership in inclusive education.

Fostering new meanings about diversity

The first theme implied principals highlighted their roles of fostering new meanings about diversity. Given the current school demographic changes sometimes elicit educators to resist change. Some principals recounted questions from students and teachers such as “*why are they sending those type of students to our schools, they should be sent to special school for we won’t be able to accommodate them*”. Other principals’ recounted negative comments from teachers such as “*we are definitely not ready for such*”. In giving new meanings about diversity, most of the principals facilitate an understanding and appreciation of diversity and its contribution to preparing all students to navigate an increasingly diverse society. This is corroborated by Cooper et al. (2011) who suggested that principals can influence meaning-making through a variety of common school activities/events. This is also supported by Strike (1993) who emphasized on principals engaging different stakeholders in fostering new meanings about diversity by seizing opportunities such as official school ceremonies, school meetings (e.g., Parent Teacher Student Association), and public school-community relations events.

Principal’s attitude towards inclusion

The second theme implied principal leadership through support and attitude towards inclusion has a substantial role to play in inclusive education. Some principals narrated expressing positive attitudes and care, visiting their classrooms and asking teachers whether they required any support for their activities. A principal recounted “*I like and care for them*”. Other principals reported having regular meetings with teachers to discuss their progress and the needs of the students. They stated that “*they hold regular meetings with teachers to discuss how to improve leaning for all*”. They concluded that if principals express a positive attitude, care and support to these students, all the stakeholders with work cooperatively to assist these students. The findings of this study are buttressed by Praisner (2000) in his study of 408 principals to examine the relationship regarding attitudes toward inclusive education, training and experience, and placement perceptions.

Findings of the study pointed out that where principals' attitudes are positive, it substantially encourages inclusive education. The findings of this study are also supported by Brown (2007) where he studied the attitudes of school head toward inclusion of special students in the normal classroom and factors affect those decisions. The study revealed a where the attitudes of school heads are positive; it greatly contributes in successful inclusion.

Principal's support behaviors

The third theme focused on the principal's support behaviors towards inclusive education. Several principals see themselves as a "support" for staff, offering whatever means and forms of assistance needed. Without adequate support, teachers may find themselves teaching in a bubble and isolated in their efforts to achieve the goals and address the numerous day-to-day challenges presented to them. One principal indicated "*I give my staffs the necessary support needed to meet the needs of the diverse learners in my school*". Similar comments from other participants reflect this understanding that one of the most critical roles of an inclusive leader is to offer the support needed for teachers to teach, and for students to learn most effectively. The concerns expressed by leaders have the potential to encourage teachers to do their best to help learners with special needs. Leader support indicates that educators are not alone and that structure is available when needed. This dispels any doubts that may have previously existed about the lack of leadership support. In line with these findings, Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) highlighted that the school principal's behaviors toward inclusion is fundamental to the successful implementation of inclusive practices in a school. In agreement with this finding, Konza (2008) discussed the importance of peer coaching and cited studies and models that emphasized this concept. The findings of this study suggest, principal's support behavior has a significant impact on other teachers and can be a great motivation for them to perform to a high level and promote inclusion.

Building bridges and visioning

The fourth theme focuses on the role of school leaders in bridging and vision-forming. Several participants shared the understanding that it is the principal's duty to bring people together and establish a common direction among those with different perspectives and interests. One principal described his role in this regard as "*building bridges between people who have different views...others have visions too, so what we all believe and connect what we are all thinking.*" Building bridges is about teachers, students, parents and society. Nearly all school leaders interviewed for this survey found it helpful in facilitating the process of creating and maintaining a shared vision. The findings of this study are supported by Dyal et al. (1996) where they noted the vital role of the principal is to form an educational climate, which provides learning for all. They further emphasized on principal's roles attitudes and vision as active parts of fostering inclusion.

Promoting Inclusive School Cultures and Instructional Programming

Evidence from the fifth themes, shows the role of principals engaged in creating a positive, welcoming and inclusive environment for these students and their parents to actively participate in the learning process. Most of the principals stated as follows "*we create cultures that welcome diversity and ensure instructional practices meet the needs of the diverse learners*". Principals are tasked with creating conditions for inclusive school environment where all members feel a sense of belonging. A particular principal noted "*in creating an inclusive culture, diversity is celebrated*

monthly wherein students with special needs are being celebrated". According to the findings, principals indicated playing a key role during supervision of instruction to ensure the instructional program addresses the needs of the diverse learners. The findings of this study align with Riehl (2000) wherein he highlighted the role of principals in creating an inclusive school for diverse students centered on three tasks: fostering new meanings about diversity, promoting inclusive cultures and instructional programs, and building relationships between school and communities. The findings are also supported by Angelides (2011) where he emphasized the need for principals to influence and change the culture of their schools.

Building Relationships between Schools and Communities

The sixth theme is dedicated on the role of principals in building relationships between the school and the community. Building such a relationship between the school and the community holds that the different stakeholders become engaged and supportive of the vision and mission of the school with respect to inclusion. Principals are therefore mandated to lead and establish healthy relationships with the community that benefits the students. Most principals recounted "*efforts which included reaching out to community organizations, conducting home visits to students with special needs*". Due to these efforts, principals recounted "parents were grateful and appreciative" which led to the school and the community getting to know and understand the concept of inclusiveness. The findings of this study align with what Bank (2004) calls empowering school culture. That is, the process of restructuring the culture and the school organization so that minority students can experience educational and cultural empowerment. The findings also bring into line what Bagin, and Gallenger (2012) propose that paying attention to school-community relations is important because "Citizens in the community hold the status of part owners in the schools.

In summary, drawing from my interview with principals, it is quite evident that they play an active role in raising the achievement level of all learners. The analysis presented here show how principals fostered new meanings about diversity, promoted inclusive school cultures, principal's attitude towards inclusion, support behaviors, building bridges and visioning and instructional programs, and built relationships between schools and communities.

Challenges Faced by Principal Leadership in Inclusive Education

The second research question explored the challenges faced by principal leadership in inclusive education. The following themes were retrieved, which highlighted the challenges faced by principal leadership in inclusive education.

Negative Attitude and Behavior

The first theme attributed to the challenges faced by principal leadership in inclusive education is negative attitude and behavior towards inclusion. Based on the findings, most of principals expressed the concern related to negative attitude and behavior. Principals cited some "*teachers are willing to include children with special needs within the mainstream classroom when adequate support is directly available to them, while other teachers believe that the inclusion of children with special needs may be detrimental to the education of the rest of the class*". A principal stated "teachers feel that with disabilities would be better provided for within special schools where it is supposed that they receive a higher quality and level of support than that provided within mainstream schools. These findings are greatly supported by the work of Hwang and Evans (2011) who conducted a study to determine the attitude of general education teachers to inclusion. The

research revealed 55.16% of the participants were unwilling to follow inclusion models within the general education classrooms. If these teachers are reluctant to change their best practices to suit the unique needs of these learners, there will be a declination of achievement for those students. These findings of this study align with the work Forlin et al. (2008) where they identify teacher's attitude as a barrier to inclusive education.

Lack of funding

The second theme associated to the challenges faced by principal leadership in inclusive education is lack of funding. Adequate funding is a necessity for inclusion and yet it is rare. Schools often lack adequate facilities, qualified and properly-trained teachers and other staff members, educational materials and general support. Funding is a key issue for governments to consider when implementing inclusive education. Most of the participants stressed that "*lacking of funding is a major challenge to inclusive education*" The results of this study support previous research emphasizing the importance of funding inclusive education seems to be effective in helping achieve inclusion (UNESCO, 2003). A participant noted "*Centralized policy and funding approaches to education remains a key barrier to introducing financing reforms that support the implementation of inclusive education*". This is supported by the findings of Chireshe (2008) where funding was cited as a major challenge for governments in Africa to implement inclusive education.

Inadequate Facilities

The third theme related to the challenges faced by principal leadership in inclusive education is lack of facilities that support inclusion. The successful accommodation of learners with special educational needs requires facilities, infrastructure and assisting devices. The principals lamented over lack of facilities that support inclusion. Causton and Theoharis (2013) point out that including learners with special needs in regular schools remains a goal and challenge for most educational systems around the world. Evidence suggests that the lack of relevant facilities and materials is a major obstacle to the implementation of effective inclusion (Beyene & Tizazu 2010).

Untrained Teachers

The fourth theme perceived as a challenge faced by principal leadership in inclusive education is untrained teachers. The teachers are the most important human resource for inclusive education. The Teachers' training, abilities and attitudes can be major limitations for inclusive education. The participants expressed concern such as "*The teachers are not trained adequately to teach the children with special needs. So, all teachers do not have proper skills and positive attitudes towards learners with special needs*". The results of this study are supported by McCray and McHatton (2007), were they identified teacher preparation as a major challenge to inclusion. They call on teachers to take a more active role in the education and achievement of students with disabilities. Research results by Weiner (2003) align with the findings of this study where teacher unpreparedness was seen as a challenge to inclusion. She further recommended that, during the teacher preparation, teachers should be given a chance to internalize their knowledge of inclusion and commit to its practices.

Poor collaboration between families and schools

The fifth theme observed as a challenge faced by principal leadership in inclusive education is collaboration between families and schools. Families and schools are two essential stakeholders in

enabling healthy development and educational success of children and adolescents. Therefore, a well-functioning collaboration between the two actors is very important. Participants expressed a very poor collaboration between the families and schools. Principals cited “*communication problems, poor parental attitudes and lack of confidence in the child’s future*”. The results of this study are in line with previous studies Beecher & Buzhardt (2016) who conducted a study which shows there is lack of collaboration between schools and families and calls for family-school cooperation as a backbone for success in inclusive school.

In summary, drawing from my interview with principals, it is quite evident principal leadership faces many challenges in inclusive education with regards to raising the achievement levels of all learners. From the findings, the principals cited negative attitude and behavior; lack of funding; facilities; untrained teachers; collaboration between families and schools as major challenges in inclusive education.

The Inclusive Practices Needed by Principal Leadership in Promoting Inclusive Education

The third research question focused on the inclusive practices needed by principal leadership in promoting inclusive education, with particular focus on raising the achievement level of all learners. The following themes were retrieved, which highlighted the inclusive practices needed by principal leadership in promoting inclusive education.

Instructional leadership practices

The first theme related to inclusive practices needed by principal leadership in promoting inclusive education is instructional leadership. Based on the findings from the principals on the best practices in promoting inclusive education to raise the achievement level of learners, they all emphasized on instructional leadership. They recounted “*leadership should focus on activities that promote learning through a strong instructional program*”. The findings of this study are supported by Pietsch et al. (2016), they found that instructional as well as transformational leadership had a significant positive effect on collaboration. With respect to lesson development, empirical studies conducted in regular schools suggest, that the instructional leadership style is especially effective. A meta-analysis by Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) including 22 empirical studies concluded that instructional leadership had an approximately four times higher effect on student outcomes than transformational leadership.

Supports High Expectations for Students with Disabilities

The second theme associated with inclusive practices needed by principal leadership in promoting inclusive education is to support high expectations for students with disabilities. Research findings indicate the participants expressed “*a focus on curricular efforts on the establishment of high expectations for all students and encouraging teachers to help students with disabilities meets the content standards*”. Research also suggests that an important quality of inclusive schools is ensuring high expectations for all students, including those with disabilities (Dyson, Farrell, Polat, Hutcheson, & Gallannaugh, 2004; Waldron et al., 2011). For example, Dyson and colleagues (2004) conducted case studies in 12 high-performing inclusive schools in England to identify the distinctive factors that supported the success of these schools. One factor that emerged was academic press, or “strong achievement orientation,” (p. 72) because staff had high expectations for all students in these settings, including those with disabilities, and enacted these expectations by providing a range of strategies to improve achievement.

Building a Shared Vision for Inclusive Schools

The third theme linked to inclusive practices needed by principal leadership in promoting inclusive education is building a shared vision for inclusive schools. Some participants highlighted the importance of “*a shared vision and emphasizing on the role of the principal in building that vision*”. A participant recounted “*I have established rules and facilitate the school environment to welcome these students*”. A common theme found in most studies of inclusive education is the need to place emphasis on students with disabilities and inclusion as a part of a shared vision. Several investigations emphasized the important role the principal plays in recognizing the need for a shared vision that addresses students with disabilities and inclusion and working to promote inclusion as a core value in the school (Burstein et al., 2004; Fisher et al., 2000; Salisbury & McGregor, 2002; Waldron et al., 2011). In line with this finding, Guzman (1997) in a case study investigating six inclusive schools, found that principals across the schools worked with staff to develop a shared vision for the school that “included a belief in the right of all students to learn, a belief that inclusive classrooms are beneficial for all students, and a commitment to ensuring optimal academic success for all students” (p. 446).

Building a School-Wide Commitment to Inclusive Schools

The fourth theme aligned to inclusive practices needed by principal leadership in promoting inclusive education is building a school-wide commitment to inclusive schools. The participants highlighted the important role of the principal in ensuring a school-wide commitment to developing an effective inclusive school that will respond to the needs of students with disabilities. The principals expressed how they work with teachers, students and parents in developing a shared vision while building a school-wide commitment that is needed to endorse the vision. In line with these findings, Hoppey & McLeskey, (2013), posited in a study to investigate principals who have good relationships and develop trust with teachers and parents are more likely to successfully develop effective inclusive schools relationship. Their findings revealed the principals viewed their most important role as building positive relationships with teachers by “(a) displaying trust in teachers; (b) listening to their ideas, concerns, and problems; and (c) treating staff fairly” (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013, pp. 248-249).

Parental Engagement in Decision-making

The fifth theme ascribed to inclusive practices needed by principal leadership in promoting inclusive education is parental engagement in decision making. According to the perspective of the principals, parental engagement in decision-making is very vital in promoting inclusive education. Principals cited instances of engaging parents as part of the group that developed and shared a vision for inclusive schools. These findings are corroborated by Ryndak and colleagues (2007) related to a district-wide initiative to support the development of inclusive schools found that parents were actively involved on leadership teams at the district and school levels. Leadership teams included district and school administrators, instructional staff, support personnel, and parents. Teams frequently met to identify and address barriers to effective inclusive practices, provide support for the school-wide development of inclusive programs, and engage teachers in PD related to inclusive practices.

Redesigning schools for Inclusive Education

The sixth theme is redesigning schools for inclusive education, which is critically important for principal leadership in fostering inclusive education. Based on the findings, the participants expressed different ways in which they engage in redesigning their schools for inclusive education. A participant recounted “*I frequently engage in activities towards addressing beliefs of school staff and other stakeholders regarding students with disabilities*”. Another participant described how in tries to “*change the curriculum and instructional practices to meet the needs of the students*”. Most of the participants reported on “redesigning the school by changing the school culture”. The above-mentioned findings are substantiated by McLeskey & Waldron, 2006; Ryndak et al., 2007 where they reveal that principal leadership should engage in critical leadership roles as they participate in school change to develop a plan and implement an inclusive program. These leadership roles include (a) forming inclusion planning teams; (b) evaluating current school practices related to students with disabilities and other struggling students; (c) developing plans for inclusion; (d) reviewing and revising inclusion plans with school staff and other stakeholders; (e) arranging for PD; (f) implementing substantial changes in school organization, teacher roles, and teaching and learning programs; and (g) evaluating and adjusting inclusive programs as needed inclusive schools because substantial evidence reveals that most schools require extensive redesign or systemic change to successfully develop an effective inclusive school, and the principal is often the most important school leader as change occurs. Further research by Waldron et al., (2011), confirms the findings by suggesting that systemic changes in schools and school culture that are needed as inclusive schools are developed will not occur or be sustained over time without the active support and leadership of the principal.

In summary, drawing from my interview with principals on inclusive practices needed by principal leadership in promoting inclusive education with particular focus on raising the achievement level of all learners, the following themes were retrieved: instructional leadership; Supports High Expectations for Students with Disabilities; Building a Shared Vision for Inclusive Schools; Building a School-Wide Commitment to Inclusive Schools; Parental Engagement in Decision-making; and Redesigning schools for Inclusive Education.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The analysis of the findings related to research question one, revealed that the role of principal leadership in inclusive education is quite significant in raising the achievement level of all learners. The findings publicized the role of school leaders is central in successfully shaping inclusive education. The analysis presented in research question one, highlighted the role of principal leadership in inclusive education under the following themes: principals fostered new meanings about diversity; promoted inclusive school cultures; principal’s attitude towards inclusion; support behaviors; building bridges and visioning and instructional programs; and building relationships between schools and communities.

Based on the findings of research question two, which engrossed on challenges faced by principal leadership in inclusive education, with particular focus on raising the achievement level of all learners, it revealed principal leadership faces many challenges in fostering inclusive education. The analysis in research question two, accentuated the challenges faced by principal leadership in inclusive education under the following themes: negative attitude and behavior; lack of funding; facilities; untrained teachers; collaboration between families and schools.

Findings on research question three which centered on inclusive practices needed by principal leadership in promoting inclusive education with particular focus on raising the achievement level of all learners revealed the following themes: instructional leadership; Supports High Expectations for Students with Disabilities; Building a Shared Vision for Inclusive Schools; Building a School-Wide Commitment to Inclusive Schools; Parental Engagement in Decision-making; and Redesigning schools for Inclusive Education.

Principals are charged with leading schools so that all students, including those with disabilities, achieve college- and career-readiness curriculum standards. In inclusive schools, principals work to ensure that all members of the school community welcome and value students with disabilities, and they encourage everyone in the school, as well as parents and those from other agencies, to collaborate and share their expertise so that students with disabilities have opportunities to achieve improved outcomes in school and post-school life

In the context of the study's results, the following recommendations can be presented:

1. Principal leadership should formulate their vision for fostering leadership for inclusive education and inform educators accordingly. By creating the belief in educators that they can achieve something great, educators would possibly buy into the concept and be inspired to implement inclusive education as it was intended.
2. It is also recommended school leaders develop and initiate team building programs amongst teachers. By doing such, teachers will be motivated hence creating a support system that embraces inclusive education.
3. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to develop pedagogical strategies for inclusive teaching. It is recommended for school leaders to promote the development of PLC as space for collaborative learning and to improve teaching quality for inclusive students through pedagogical strategies.
4. Promoting inclusive values within the school, working with school staff and the community to improve school climate for inclusion, and developing PLC to enhance pedagogical strategies for inclusive teaching.
5. It is equally recommended that school leaders work collaboratively with school staff to spread the reform so that parents and the community engaged in the implementation of the inclusive education approach.

REFERENCES

- Aarons, G.A., Ehrhart, M.G., Farahnak, L.R. and Sklar, M. (2014), "*Aligning leadership across systems and organizations to develop a strategic climate for evidence-based practice implementation*", Annual Review of Public Health, Vol. 35, pp. 255-274.
- Aarons, G.A., Ehrhart, M.G., Torres, E.M., Finn, N.K. and Beidas, R.S. (2017), "*The humble leader: association of discrepancies in leader and follower ratings of implementation leadership with organizational climate in mental health*", Psychiatric Services, Vol. 68, pp. 115-122.
- Ainscow, M. (1999), *Understanding the Development of Inclusive Schools*, Falmer, London.
- Ainscow, M. and Booth, T. (2002), *Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools*, Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, Bristol.

- Ainscow, M., 1999. *Understanding the development of inclusive schools*. London: Falmer Press.
- Ainscow, M., Booth, T. and Dyson, A. (2004), “*Understanding and developing inclusive practices in schools: a collaborative action research network*”, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 125-139.
- Ainscow, M., Booth, T. and Dyson, A. (2006), *Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion*, Routledge, London.
- Angelides, P. (2011), “*Forms of leadership that promote inclusive education in Cypriot schools*”, *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 21-36.
- Arrowsmith, T. (2007), “*Distributed Leadership in secondary schools in England: the impact on the role of the head teacher and other issues*”, *Management in Education*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 21-27.
- Ashby, D., & Maki, D. M. (1996, February). What first year principals don't know: *How you may be able to help new colleagues succeed*. Paper presented at National Association of Secondary School Principals Annual Convention, San Francisco.
- Boe, E. E., & Cook, L. H. (2006). The chronic and increasing shortage of fully certified teachers in special and general education. *Council for Exceptional Children*, 72(4), 443-460.
- Bai, H., & Martin, S. M. (2015). Assessing the needs of training on inclusive education for public school administrators. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 19(12), 1229-1243.
- Banks, J. A. (2004). Multicultural education: Historical development dimensions and practice. In 2nd ed., ed. J.A. Banks and C.A. Banks (Ed., 2nd ed.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education*, pp. 3–29. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Barnett, C., and Monda-Amaya, L. E. (1998). Principals' knowledge of and attitudes toward inclusion. *Remedial Spec. Educ.* 19, 181–192. doi: 10.1177/074193259801900306
- Bass, B. (1999), “*Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership*”, *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 9-32.
- Batsche, G. (2014). Multi-tiered system of supports for inclusive schools. In J. McLeskey, N. L. Waldron, F. Spooner, & B. Algozzine (Eds.), *Handbook of research and practice for inclusive schools* (pp. 183-196). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Beecher, C., & Buzhardt, J. (2016). Mobile technology to increase parent engagement. *IxD&A*, 28, 49-68.
- Beyene G., Tizazu Y 2010. Attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education in Ethiopia. *Ethiopian Journal of Education and Science*, 6(1): 89-96.
- Bourke, J., & Dillon, B. (2018). The diversity and inclusion revolution: Eight powerful truths. *Deloitte Review*, 22, 81-95.
https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/4209_Diversity-and-inclusion-revolution/DI_Diversity-and-inclusion-revolution.pdf

- Bourke, J., & Titus, A. (2019, March 29). Why inclusive leaders are good for organizations, and how to become one. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2019/03/why-inclusive-leaders-are-good-for-organizations-and-how-to-become-one>.
- Bourke, J., & Titus, A. (2020, March 6). The key to inclusive leadership. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2020/03/the-key-to-inclusive-leadership>
- Braun, V., & Clark, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for Beginners*. London: Sage Publication.
- Brown, L. A. (2007). Attitudes of administrators toward inclusion of students with disabilities. (Doctoral dissertation, Mississippi State University, 2007).
- Burstein, N., Sears, S., Wilcoxon, A., Cabello, B., & Spagna, M. (2004). Moving toward inclusive practices. *Remedial & Special Education*, 25(2), 104-116. doi:10.1177/07419325040250020501
- Cambron-McCabe, N. (2006), “Preparation and development of school leaders: implications for social justice policies”, in Marshall, K. and Oliva, M. (Eds), *Leadership for Social Justice*, Pearson, Boston, MA.
- Causton J, Theoharis G 2013. Inclusive schooling: Are we there yet? Making legal U-turns from outdated principles and practices to better serve students with disabilities. *School Administrator*, 70(2): 19-25.
- Chireshe, R. (2008). The State of Inclusive Education in Zimbabwe Bachelor of Education (Special Needs Education) Students’ Perceptions, South Africa, 2013. and Sukhraj, P. *The Implementation and Challenges to Inclusive Education Policy and Practice in South Africa*, Durban South Africa.
- Cohen, E. (2015). Principal leadership styles and teacher and principal attitudes, concerns and competencies regarding inclusion. *Procedia Soc. Behav. Sci.* 186, 758–764. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.105
- Cook, B. G., & Smith, G. J. (2012). Leadership and instruction: Evidence-based practices in special education. In J. B. Crockett, B. S. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 281-296). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Cooper, C., Riehl, C., & Hasan, A. (2011). Leading and learning with diverse families in schools: Critical epistemology amid communities of practice. *Journal of School Leadership*, 20(6), 758-788.
- Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. US: Sage Publication.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Mixed methods procedures. Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Boston: Pearson Education.

- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five Approaches*. US: Sage Publication.
- Day, C., Gu, Q., & Sammons, P. (2016). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: How successful school leaders use transformational and instructional strategies to make a difference. *Educational administration quarterly*, 52(2), 221-258.
- DeMatthews, D. E., Kotok, S., & Serafini, A. (2020a). Leadership preparation for special education and inclusive schools: Beliefs and recommendations from successful principals. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 15(4), 303-329.
- Deshler, D. D., & Cornett, J. (2012). Leading to improve teacher effectiveness: Implications for practice, reform, research, and policy. In J. B. Crockett, B. S. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 239-259). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Devecchi, C., & Nevin, A. (2010). Leadership for inclusive schools and inclusive school leadership. In A. H. Normore (Ed.), *Global perspectives on educational leadership reform: The development and preparation of leaders of learning and learners of leadership* (pp. 211-241). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/s1479-3660\(2010\)0000011014](http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/s1479-3660(2010)0000011014)
- Dotger, B. and Coughlin, A. (2018), “Examining school leaders' simulated interactions in support of students with autism”, *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 27-38.
- Dukmak, S. J. (2013). Regular classroom teachers' attitudes towards including students with disabilities in the regular classroom in the United Arab Emirates. *J. Hral* 9:26.
- Dyal, A., Flynt, W., and Bennett-Walker, D. (1996). Schools and inclusion: principals' perception. *Clear. House* 70, 32–35. doi: 10.1080/00098655.1996.10114355.
- Dyson, A., Farrell, P., Polat, F., Hutcheson, G., & Gallannaugh, F. (2004). *Inclusion and pupil achievement* (Research Report No. 578). Retrieved from National Archives website:
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR578.pdf>
- Esposito, M. K., Tang, K., & Kulkarni, S. S. (2019). Ensuring inclusive environments for students with disabilities: School leaders play a linchpin role. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 51(1), 43-52
- Fisher, D., Sax, C., & Grove, K. (2000). The resilience of changes promoting inclusiveness in an urban elementary school. *The Elementary School Journal*, 100(3), 213-227.
doi:10.1086/499640
- Forlin, C., Keen, M., & Barrett, E. (2008). The Concerns of Mainstream Teachers: Coping with inclusivity in an Australian context. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 55(3), 251–264. <http://doi.org/10.1080/10349120802268396>
- Fullan, M., 2001. *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Garrison-Wade, D. (2005). Principals' training or lack of training in special education: A literature review. In C. L. Fulmer & F. L. Dembowski (Eds.), *National summit on school leadership: Crediting the past, challenging the present, and changing the future* (pp. 235-241). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Garrison-Wade, D., Sobel, D., & Fulmer, C. L. (2007). Inclusive leadership: Preparing principals for the role that awaits them. *Educational Leadership and Administration*, 19, 117-132.
- Goddard, R., Y. Goddard, E. S. Kim, and R. Miller (2015). A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis of the Roles of Instructional Leadership, Teacher Collaboration, and Collective Efficacy Beliefs in Support of Student Learning. *American Journal of Education* 121 (4): 501– 530.
- Grieve, A. M. (2009). Teachers' beliefs about inappropriate behaviour: Challenging attitudes? *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 9(3), 173–179.
<http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-3802.2009.01130>.
- Guzman, N. (1997). Leadership for successful inclusive schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 35(5), 439-450.
- Hallinger, P. (2009). *Leadership for 21st century schools: From instructional leadership to leadership for learning*. Hong Kong, China: The Hong Kong Institute of Education. Retrieved from
<http://www.ied.edu.hk/cplectures/include/getfile.php?file=1267581769.pdf&filepath=resource&filename=Hallinger%20-%20Booklet%20-%20Final.pdf>
- Hattie, J. A. C. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hehir, T. (2005). *New directions in special education: Eliminating ableism in policy and practice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Hillman, A., & Lapham, K. (2016, September 15). *Why inclusive education is for all children, everywhere*. Voices; Open Society Foundations.
<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/why-inclusive-education-all-children-everywhere>
- Honingh, M., and Hooge, E. (2014). The Effect of School-Leader Support and Participation in Decision Making on Teacher Collaboration in Dutch Primary and Secondary Schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 42 (1): 75–98.
doi:10.1177/1741143213499256.
- Hoppey, D., & McLeskey, J. (2013). A case study of principal leadership in an effective inclusive school. *Journal of Special Education*, 45, 245-256.
doi:10.1177/0022466910390507.
- Horrocks, J.L., White, G. and Roberts, L. (2008), "Principals' attitudes regarding inclusion of children with autism in Pennsylvania public schools", *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, Vol. 38 No. 8, pp. 1462-1473.

- Humphrey, N. and Symes, W. (2014), “*Inclusive education for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in secondary mainstream schools: teacher attitudes, experience and knowledge*”, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 32-46.
- Humphrey, N. and Symes, W. (2014), “*Inclusive education for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in secondary mainstream schools: teacher attitudes, experience and knowledge*”, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 32-46.
- Hussain, A. S. (2017). *UAE Preschool Teachers’ Attitudes Toward Inclusion Education by Specialty and Cultural Identity*. Doctoral dissertation, Walden University, Washington.
- Hwang, Y. & Evans, D. (2011). Attitudes towards Inclusion: Gaps between Belief and Practice. *International Journal of Special Education*, 26(1), 136-146.
- Inclusive Schools Network. (2019, November 19). *Leadership for inclusive schools*.
<https://inclusiveschools.org/category/resources/leadership-for-inclusive-schools/>
- Irvine, A., Lupart, J.L., Loreman, T. and McGhie-Richmond, D. (2011), “*Educational leadership to create authentic inclusive schools: the experiences of principals in a Canadian rural school district*”, *Exceptionality Education International*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 70-88.
- Jackson, L., Ryndak, D., and Billingsley, F. (2000). Useful practices in inclusive education: a preliminary view of what experts in moderate to severe disabilities are saying. *J. Assoc. Pers. Sev. Handicaps*. 25, 129–141. doi: 10.2511/rpsd.25.3.129
- James, E., Anthony, C., & Creary, S. (2020, December 1). *How to be an inclusive leader*. The Wharton School. <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/how-to-be-an-inclusive-leader/>
- Konza, D. (2008). “Inclusion of students with disabilities in new times: responding to the challenge,” in *Learning and the Learner: Exploring Learning for New Times*, eds P. Kell, W. Vialle, D. Konza, and G. Vogl (Wollongong: University of Wollongong), 39–64.
- Kugelmass, J. and Ainscow, M. (2004), “*Leadership for inclusion: a comparison of international practices*”, *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 133-141.
- Kugelmass, J.W. (2003), *Inclusive Leadership: Leadership for Inclusion*, New York State University, New York.
- Lapinski, M.K. and Rimal, R.N. (2005), “*An explication of social norms*”, *Communication Theory*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 127-134.
- Leaver, C., Lemos, R., & Scur, D. (2019). Measuring and explaining management in schools: New approaches using public data (Center for Economic Performance Discussion Paper No. 1656). Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Lee, V., Smith, J., Perry, T., & Smylie, M. A., (1999). *Social support, academic press, and student achievement: A view from the middle grades in Chicago*. Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

- Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D. and Steinbach, R., 1999. *Changing leadership for changing times*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Liasidou, A. (2015). *Inclusive education and the issue of change: Theory, policy and pedagogy*. Springer.
- Marshall, C. and Oliva, M. (Eds), (2006), *Leadership for Social Justice*, Pearson, Boston, MA.
- Mbiti, I., Muralidharan K., Romero, M., Schipper, Y., Manda, C., & Rajani, R. (2019). Inputs, incentives, and complementarities in education: Experimental evidence from Tanzania. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 134(3),1627–1673.
- McHatton, P. A., & McCray, E. D. (2007). Inclination toward Inclusion: Perceptions of elementary and secondary education teacher candidates. *Action in Teacher Education*, 29(3), 25-32.
- McLeskey, J., Landers, E., Williamson, P., & Hoppey, D. (2012). Are we moving toward educating students with disabilities in less restrictive settings? *Journal of Special Education*, 46(3), 131-140. doi:10.1177/0022466910376670
- Moya, E. C., Molonia, T., & Cara, M. J. C. (2020). Inclusive leadership and education quality: Adaptation and validation of the questionnaire “inclusive leadership in schools” (LEI-Q) to the Italian context. *Sustainability*, 12(13). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12135375>
- Mullick, J., Deppeler, J., & Sharma, U. (2012). Inclusive Education Reform in Primary Schools of Bangladesh: Leadership Challenges and Possible Strategies to Address the Challenges. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 8(1), 1-20.
- Orodho, J.A. (2009). *Elements of Education and Social Science Research in Education* . (2nd Ed.) Kanezja Hp Enterprises.
- Orodho, J.A. (2012). *Techniques of writing research proposals and reports in Education and social sciences*. Kanezja Hp Enterprises.
- Oskarsdottir, E., Donnelly, V., Turner-Cmuchal, M. and Florian, L. (2020), “*Inclusive school leaders – their role in raising the achievement of all learners*”, *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 58 No. 5, pp. 521-537.
- Patterson, J., Bowling, D., & Marshall, C. (2000). Are principals prepared to manage special education dilemmas? *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 84(613), 920
- Praisner, C. (2003). Attitudes of elementary school principals toward inclusion of students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 69(2), 135-145.
- Poon-McBrayer, K. F. (2017). School leaders’ dilemmas and measures to instigate changes for inclusive education in Hong Kong. *Journal of Educational Change*, 18(3), 295-309.
- Rhys, H. J. (1996). The principal’s role in special education: building-level administrators’ knowledge of special education issues as these apply to their administrative role. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, 1996). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 57, 07A.

- Riehl, C. J. (2000). The principal's role in creating inclusive schools for diverse students: A review of normative, empirical, and critical literature on the practice of educational administration. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(1), 55-81
- Riehl, C.J., 2000. The principal's role in creating inclusive schools for diverse students: review of normative, empirical, and critical literature on the practice of educational administration. *Review of Educational Research*, 70 (1), 55–81.
- Robinson, V., Lloyd, C., & Rowe, K. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44, 635-674. doi:10.1177/0013161X08321509
- Ryan, J. (2006). Inclusive leadership and social justice for schools. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 5(1), 3-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700760500483995>
- Salisbury, C. L., & McGregor, G. (2002). The administrative climate and context of inclusive elementary schools. *Exceptional Children*, 68(2), 259-281.
- Sergiovanni, T.J., 1992. *Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sherman L.W. and Wood. D.J. (1982). *Education theories in the eighties*. University of Illinois, Urbana.
- Slater, C. L. (2012). Understanding principal leadership: An international perspective and a narrative approach. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 39(2), 219–227.
- Strike, K. A. (1993). Professionalism, democracy, and discursive communities: Normative reflections on restructuring. *American Educational Research Journal*, 30(2), 255-275.
- Sugai, G., O'Keeffe, B., Horner, R. H., & Lewis, T. J. (2012). School leadership and school wide positive behavior support. In J. B. Crockett, B. S. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 37-51). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2008). The goals of differentiation. *Educational Leadership*, 66(3), 26-30.
- UNESCO (2019). *Inclusion in Education*. Available at: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/inclusion-in-education/> (accessed March 12, 2020).
- UNESCO. (n.d.). Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; 2016. http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/education-2030-incheon-framework-for-action-implementation-of-sdg4-2016-en_2.pdf
- United Nations. (n.d.). Goal 4. Department of Economic and Social Affairs; United Nations. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

- Voltz, D. L., & Collins, L. (2010). Preparing special education administrators for inclusion in diverse, standards-based contexts: Beyond the Council for Exceptional Children and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 33(1), 70-82.
- Waldron, N. L., McLeskey, J., & Redd, L. (2011). Setting the direction: The role of the principal in developing an effective, inclusive school. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 24(2), 51-60.
- Weiner, H. M. 2003. "Effective Inclusion: Professional Development in the Context of the Classroom." *Teaching Exceptional Children* 35 (6): 12–18.
- York-Barr, J., Sommerness, J., Duke, K., & Ghere, G. (2005). Special educators in inclusive education programmes: Reframing their work as teacher leadership. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 9(2), 193-215.