

**INFLUENCE OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION POLICY GUIDELINES ON
THE PROVISION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN KENYA: A CASE OF
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NAKURU MUNICIPALITY**

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ABSTRACT

Educational opportunities for children (learners) with special needs and disabilities are a major challenge to the education sector. The national education system has been characterized by inadequate systems and facilities that respond to the challenges faced by learners with special needs and disabilities. The Government of Kenya in response to this came up with the National Special Needs Education (SNE) Policy framework in 2009 to guide in the implementation of inclusive education among others in all public schools in Kenya. However, four years after the launch of the policy, little is known as to the extent to which the Special Needs Education Policy has been implemented at the school level and its subsequent influence on the provision of inclusive education. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of Special Needs Education policy on the provision of inclusive education in public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality, Kenya. The study was guided by the following objectives: examining the influence of policy guidelines for teachers' in-service training; infrastructural development funding; and policy for procurement of teaching and learning materials on the provision of inclusive education; and coming up with strategies that can be employed by school managers in mitigating the challenges facing the implementation of SNE policy in public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality. The study utilized the descriptive survey research design. The study used a population census and all the head teachers from the 59 public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality were used in this study. Questionnaires were used to collect data. To ensure validity of the instrument, the questionnaires were reviewed by the supervisor and other two research experts at the Mount Kenya University for expert judgment and to ascertain the validity of the instrument. The questionnaire was pilot-tested on small samples of 10 teachers. Reliability analysis aimed at reaching the threshold for acceptable reliability of $\alpha \geq 0.70$. Data was analyzed for descriptive statistics and presented using tables and charts, and inferential statistics using spearman rank correlation coefficient. The study found out that most head teachers in public primary schools in Nakuru Municipality were male and majority of them were aged 41 years and above and hence may have been long in the service. The government had not provided clear guidelines to schools in the municipality on procurement of teaching and learning materials; Special Needs Education Policy had positively influenced enrolment of special needs and disabled students in the Municipality schools and that integrating special needs education learners in the regular school programs had not slowed down at all the regular school program. The state and implementation of policy guidelines for teachers' in-service training; infrastructural development funding; and policy for procurement of teaching and learning materials had a negative influence on the provision of inclusive education. The study also found out that the Municipality schools lacked adequate supportive and assistive devices to aid special needs and disabled students, lacked adequate funds to support the special needs learners, stigmatization and attitude towards special needs and disabled learners and common cases of misplacement of Special needs learners were still major challenges facing inclusive education. The study recommended proper equipping and capacity building on special needs education in the Municipality by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the school administrators.