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Factors That Impact the Perceived Confidence of Indiana Public School Principals in the Area of Special Education Practices

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FACTORS THAT IMPACT THE PERCEIVED CONFIDENCE OF INDIANA PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE AREA OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify factors that impact the perceived confidence of Indiana school principals in the area of special education practices. This study utilized a web-based survey to assess Indiana principals' perceptions about their confidence related to special education practices. The variables tested included the role prior to becoming an administrator, the years of experience as an administrator, the highest degree attained by an administrator, whether an administrator has ever participated in college coursework in the preparation program related to educating students with disabilities, and whether an administrator has ever participated in any training outside of their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Never has more pressure been applied to school leadership than the era of No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) and President Obama's Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Modern-day school administrators execute an overwhelming compilation of roles such as being educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment overseers, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations directors, budget and facility managers, special programs administrators, and overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives (Fullan, 2003; Feistritzer & Meyer, 2003; Hessel & Holloway, 2002). They are also expected to manage the often-conflicting interests of parents, teachers, students, district office officials, unions, and state and federal agencies; and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of student needs (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). Principals have an increasingly complex role in providing leadership at not only the school level, but also at the district and community level. As school leaders, principals define and shape the culture of schools. This can provide consistent and frequent opportunities for the growth and development of all students including those with disabilities (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Principals must be knowledgeable of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in order to be the change agent that serves all students to raise student achievement.

The national reform efforts have focused school leadership's attention on special populations of students like never before. It is critical that principals have the knowledge and expertise to do all of this as well as meet the needs of students with disabilities by having an understanding of the area of special education and the current issues, as school staff will continue to need support in delivering appropriate instruction to all students including those with disabilities. Arthur Levine (2005) called school leadership programs a "Race to the Bottom" while the federal government is calling for districts and states to "Race to the Top." Farkas, Johnson, and Duffett (2003) reported that principals feel it is unreasonable to demonstrate adequate yearly progress for students with disabilities as No Child Left Behind charges that 100 percent of students meet grade-level standards in reading and math by 2014. Principals must also be aware of the latest research as well as federal and state policy requirements that include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, U.S. Department of Education, 2004), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (U.S. Department of Labor, 1973), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, U.S. Department of Justice, 1990).

DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) suggested "the principalship has thus been expanded to include significant responsibilities for the instructional leadership of schools, ensuring that all children achieve to meet high standards, and that the needs of children with disabilities are met" (p. 43). In the past, principals were seen as building managers and disciplinarians and special education teachers were responsible for students with disabilities. With academic accountability becoming such an expectation for all schools, the principal is charged with also being the instructional leader. Principals must still complete the managerial tasks of responding to and reporting accountability measures, managing an increasingly tighter

budget, maintaining a safe school environment, and coping with student behavior issues, while increasing programming and supports available to students. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran surveyed more than 1,500 principals and assistant principals in Virginia to identify concerns in their roles as building administrators. Ninety percent of those surveyed responded that "special education law and implementation" (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 52) were significant or highly significant problems or issues in organizational management. The highest identified professional development need was for "special education law and implementation" (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 52).

Statement of the Problem

Higher education must place emphasis on the skills necessary to lead schools in today's challenging educational environment. Comprehensive reform of educational leadership preparation programs has been called for by many from within the field of education. A more rigorous focus on the student achievement of all students, including students with disabilities, is needed. Petzko (2008) supported this with the following:

> The Southern Regional Education Board, the Levine Report in 2005, and the Stanford Educational Leadership Initiative concur with the professional organizations that educational leadership preparation programs must engage in substantive reform initiatives to provide schools with the leaders they need for the future. (p. 228)

Educational leadership preparation programs must match curriculum and instruction to the needs of those in the position, not the out-of-touch training that has been the reputation of some educational leadership programs (Levine, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the factors that impact the perceived confidence of Indiana school principals in the area of special education practices including providing appropriate access to the general curriculum, instructional supports, the monitoring of progress, and participation in assessments all in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities as mandated by IDEA 2004. This research used a self-reporting web-based survey instrument to determine Indiana principals' perceived confidence of special education practices. Descriptive data factor analysis identified themes that emerged within the data. A multiple regression analysis was used to determine the impact of each of the independent variables upon each of these factors.

Research Questions

The questions that guided the study and have been answered through statistical analysis include

1. How does the role prior to becoming an administrator impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?
2. How do the years of experience as an administrator impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?
3. How does the highest degree attained of an administrator impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?
4. How does whether an administrator has ever participated in college coursework in the preparation program related to educating students with disabilities impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?

5. How does whether an administrator has ever participated in any training outside of their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?

Null Hypothesis

$H_0$1: There is no significant impact on a principal's perceived confidence of special education practices due to their role prior to becoming an administrator.

$H_0$2: There is no significant impact on a principal's perceived confidence of special education practices due to their years of experience as an administrator.

$H_0$3: There is no significant impact on a principal's perceived confidence of special education practices due to the highest degree attained.

$H_0$4: There is no significant impact on a principal's perceived confidence of special education practices due to participation in college coursework in the preparation program related to educating students with disabilities.

$H_0$5: There is no significant impact on a principal's perceived confidence of special education practices due to participation in any training outside of their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities.

Significance of the Study

The building administrator has important responsibilities regarding special education and creating an inclusive environment. Principals communicate with stakeholders about special education services, promote awareness of disabilities, ensure special education services are being delivered, facilitate research-based interventions, provide professional support to educators, and guarantee legal compliance to IDEA and state guidance. Principals have to be ready for the challenge of creating and facilitating appropriate educational opportunities for

students with disabilities (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003), which is quite an impressive goal. Schools are called to leave no child behind and the leaders of the schools are uniquely positioned to make that happen. Other researchers have called for more research around the idea of what is needed from a school administrator to support diverse learners and then utilize those competencies in creating administrator evaluations, informing professional development, and informing principal preparation programs.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following terms have been defined for clarification in understanding this study. These definitions were developed through experience of the researcher as well as those defined by others.

Administrator was defined by the researcher as a building principal in any school building that houses any configuration of K-12 students.

Educational leadership preparation program was defined as a program that provides needed coursework and internships for the obtainment of a building-level administrator's license.

Highest degree was defined as the highest degree earned by the principal from an accredited institution of higher education.

Inclusionary practices was defined as practices that reflect a democratic philosophy whereby all students are valued, educators normalize difference through differentiated instruction, and the school culture reflects an ethic of caring and community.

Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEA) was defined as a United States federal law that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities.

Perceived confidence was defined by the researcher as the whole complex of beliefs about one's own competencies.

Assumptions

Assumptions of this study included:

1. The sample represented the population of administrators in Indiana.
2. The self-rating of special education confidence was a valid measure.
3. Confidence translates to competence.

Limitations

1. The principals located in the population of this study were only a sample of Indiana school principals and not a national sample.
2. Requests for participation in the data collection were sent to each of the 1,936 K-12 public school building principals in Indiana. However, the number included in the sample was limited to the number of respondents
3. The respondents included a small population of special educators prior to becoming administrators.
4. Syllabi were not reviewed for this study to determine appropriate content coverage in specific areas of a principal preparation program.
5. Individuals' ability to self report may not have reflected reality.

Delimitations

This study was limited to the 1,936 K-12 public school principals in Indiana.

Organization and Summary of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 contained an introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study,

definitions of terms, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 contained a review of recent research literature, which includes the history of special education and the law, the *six pillars* of IDEA, the responsibilities of principals, what educational leadership preparation programs do, how special education has changed the role, and evidence of successful projects. Chapter 3 contained the research questions, methodology, procedures, analysis, and summary. Chapter 4 presented the findings. Chapter 5 presented conclusions regarding how educational leadership preparation programs and in-service providers can better prepare principals especially in the area of special education, a general discussion regarding the study, and recommended future research.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

This chapter introduced the concept of the degree to which principals seem prepared to address special education needs, compliance and culture. The review of the literature focused on these major areas: (a) confidence to competence, (b) history of special education and the law, (c) The *six pillars* of IDEA, (d) The responsibilities of principals, (e) What educational leadership preparation programs do, (f) How special education has changed the role of principals, and (g) evidence of successful educational leadership preparation programs.

Confidence to Competence

Confidence (2011) is defined by Merriam-Webster's online dictionary (2011) as a "feeling or consciousness of one's powers or of reliance on one's circumstances and a faith or belief that one will act in a right, proper, or effective way with the quality or state of being certain" (Confidence, 2011). Observation of a person can lead to a perception of confidence in body language, demeanor, and personal surroundings (Moss Kanter, 2004). As a building administrator walks down the hallway or into a classroom, facilitates a case conference, or provides professional development to their staff, he or she is being evaluated as to what signals are being sent about his or her state of being certain. A team or organization's leader shapes the confidence of the staff by modeling and providing resources to be able to get the job down correctly. The leader must develop confidence in their team and empower them in order to

make any change in performance that is needed. The leader provides resources and invests in the team. A confident leader must set high expectations for success for his or her school or organization (Peterson & Deal, 1998). Kanter Moss (2004) described when individuals perform to these high standards they encourage high performance. She stated, "In the midst of winning cycles, people naturally gravitate toward behaving in ways that support confidence" (p. 46). The behaviors that she specifically identified as central to confidence are accountability, collaboration, and initiative. When one is expected to perform well, the level of confidence influences the outcome. "People who believe they are likely to win are also likely to put in the extra effort at difficult moments to ensure that victory" (Kanter Moss, 2004, p. 6).

Patterson and Kelleher (2005) discussed the intimate connection between confidence and competence. Similar to Kanter Moss, Patterson and Kelleher's perception of an increased self-confidence will lead to actively pursuing more challenging work and therefore will lead to the development of a greater level of competence. However, it is possible that overconfidence could result from an individual's inability to estimate the degree of difficulty associated with the task (Perry, 2008). Thomas Jefferson's assertion that "he who knows best knows how little he knows" correlates with Dunning's research, which revealed that most incompetent people do not know that they are incompetent (Perry, 2008). Dunning also stated (as cited in Goode, 2000) that through his research he has found that people "who do things badly are usually supremely confident of their abilities–more confident, in fact, than people who do things well."

History of Special Education and the Law

When one thinks of special education, thoughts of advocates, wheelchairs, lawyers, frustrated parents, and money may come to mind. Historically, students with disabilities have received unequal treatment in the public education system (Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998).

This is apparent in the concerns brought forth in the federal and state courts in the United States. Not until 1918 was there a compulsory education law in each state that required all children to attend school (Yell et al., 1998). Even though this law was in place, students with disabilities continued to be excluded. Beginning in the 1950s, there was an increase in educational programs for students with disabilities. These were primarily students with mild to moderate disabilities and were housed in very restrictive settings (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Finding qualified staff who had the knowledge of effective teaching strategies to work with these children was extremely difficult (Yell et al., 1998). School corporations continued to exclude students with disabilities (Martin et al., 1996).

In 1954, the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* brought changes for not only minority students, but also for students with disabilities. This case determined that public schools had violated students' constitutional rights under the Fourteenth Amendment by segregating schools based on a person's unalterable characteristics. Chief Justice Warren delivered the opinion of the court, stating,

> In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity . . . is a right, which must be made available to all on equal terms. (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954, p. 1)

However, this promise of renewed hope for students with disabilities was short-lived. Another court case in the Supreme Court of Illinois in 1958, *Department of Public Welfare v. Haas,* as described by Yell et al. (1998) "held that the state's existing compulsory attendance legislation did not require the state to provide a free public education for the 'feeble minded' or children who were 'mentally deficient' and who, because of their limited intelligence, were

unable to reap the benefits of a good education" (p. 220). Although parents could cite the *Brown* case, the exclusion, segregation, and discrimination continued with students with disabilities. This was done by moving some students from institutions to public schools but placing them in segregated classrooms.

In September of 1958, only four days after signing the National Defense Education Act of 1958, President Eisenhower signed Public Law 85-926 to provide financial support to colleges for training leadership personnel in teaching children with mental retardation. This Act was expanded in 1963 when Congress included grants to train college teachers and researchers in a broader array of disabilities. The funding for training of teachers was a catalyst to then fund actual services for students.

The first major federal effort to subsidize direct services to selected populations in public elementary and secondary schools came with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. This did not specifically provide for children with disabilities, but Public Law 89-313 provided that children in state-operated or state-supported schools for the handicapped could be counted for entitlement purposes and special Title I funds could be used to benefit this relatively small population of children in state schools. Advocates felt that those enforcing the federal mandates were still providing insignificant assistance to students with disabilities (Martin, et.al., 1996). Congress mandated in 1966 the creation of the Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped (BEH) in the U.S. Office of Education. A progress report for the Fiscal Year 1968 for funds authorized by PL 89-313 was released in May of 1969 by the BEH, U.S. Office of Education. Federal funds allocated to state agencies totaled $24.7 million for 87,000 children. These monies allowed for development and expansion of services, including salaries, travel, purchase of equipment, in-service training of staff, office space,

communications, printing, and utilities if they were necessary for carrying out the approved projects. Remodeling and construction of public facilities were also approved when justified in order to assure the success of a project, but only 5% of the project funds were utilized in this way (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1969).

The central theme of the BEH was to extend and improve direct educational services to handicapped children. This impacted nearly 104,000 students with disabilities. In the state of Indiana, BEH brought services to 3,140 pupils utilizing $805,473 in federal dollars with a majority of students and dollars in the area of mental retardation. An average of $256.42 was spent per pupil. In 1970, Congress then passed the Education of the Handicapped Act. Unfortunately, unrest continued with not only parents but their advocates as well and two decisive cases came to be (Knight, 2010).

The first was a class action suit brought forth by the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in January of 1971. This was the first case that addressed the issue regarding the rights of a student with a disability to be educated in the least restrictive environment. A student would be educated in a setting as close to the regular education classroom as possible. This case dealt specifically with the education of 13 children with mental retardation who were being excluded from public schools. In determining whether there was a constitutional equal protection right to an education, the court had to decide that children with mental retardation, who had been excluded from public education, could benefit from an education. The state argued that because the children could not be expected to meet the standards expected of all students in the schools, they could not benefit from an education. The court found that

> all mentally retarded persons are capable of benefiting from a program of education and training; that the greatest number of retarded persons, given such training, are capable of achieving self-sufficiency, and the remaining few, with such education and training, are capable of achieving some degree of self-care. (PARC v. Pennsylvania, 1971, p. 5).

Shortly after this decision by the court, another class action suit was filed. *Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* (1972) reinforced the PARC decision by extending such a decision to all students with disabilities. This case was brought forth on behalf of seven special-needs school-age children ranging from ages 7 to 16 who sought their right to a free public education, which was being denied by the District of Columbia School Board. The Board of Education alleged these children with disabilities were unable to be educated in public schools due to their exceptional needs, which included that they had been labeled as behavioral problems, mentally retarded, slight brain damage, epilepsy, emotionally disturbed, hyperactive, and an/or orthopedic handicap (Mills v. Board of Education, 1972). Three children resided in public residential institutions with educational services and the other four were at home on waiting lists for private instruction because they had been excluded from the public schools. The Board further claimed the cost of providing private educational services was too expensive; therefore, the children remained at home without access to an education. The decision indicated that no child with a disability should be educated in an environment not within the regular public school unless they were granted due process proceedings, prior to removal, to establish appropriateness of such placement (Mills v. Board of Education, 1972).

On November 29, 1975, Congress passed and President Gerald Ford signed P.L. 94-142, The Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA, Yell et al. 1998). This

ensured that all children ages 3 through 21 were not excluded from a public education with their peers. It did this by providing federal funding to states to assist them in educating students with disabilities. These states then had to submit a plan that described the states' policies and procedures utilized to educate students with disabilities to the BEH. This act also provided for the protections of procedural safeguards and due process and the development of individualized education programs (IEP). The importance of the IEP mandate cannot be overstated.

Since the signing in 1975, the Act actually took effect on October 1, 1977. According to the Department of Education, the EAHCA was for the purposes

- To assure that all children with disabilities have available to them . . . a free appropriate public education (FAPE), which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs;
- To assure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents . . . are protected;
- To assist States and localities to provide for the education of all children with disabilities; and
- To assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate all children with disabilities. (Knight, 2010, p. 381)

The act was amended in 1978 and then reauthorized and renamed in 1990 to IDEA. Yell et al. (1998) discussed the major changes included in this reauthorization were

> (a) The language of the law was changed to emphasize the person first, including the renaming of the law to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as well as changing the terms *handicapped student* and *handicapped* to *child/student/individual with a disability*; (b) students with autism or traumatic brain injury were identified as a

> separate and distinct class entitled to the law's benefits; and (c) a plan for transition was required to be included on every student's IEP by age 16 years. (p. 226)

IDEA is supported by *six pillars* that relied on one another to address the rights of disabled pupils and their families (Hulett, 2009). The six pillars are: (a) the Individualized Education Program (IEP); (b) the guarantee of a free appropriate education (FAPE); (c) the requirement of education in the least restrictive educational environment (LRE); (d) appropriate evaluation; (e) active participation of parent and student in the educational mission; and (f) procedural safeguards for all participants (Hulett, 2009). These pillars will be discussed later in this review. During the reauthorization of IDEA in 1990, the Office of Special Education Programs, commonly referred to as OSEP, also replaced the Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped (Martin et al. 1996).

In 1997, the 105th Congressional Committee on Labor and Human Resources, led by Chairman Jeffords, proposed amendments to clarify, strengthen, and improve IDEA. The U.S. Senate Report (1997) stated, that

> This authorization is viewed by the committee as an opportunity to review, strengthen and improve IDEA to better educate children with disabilities and enable them to achieve a quality education by:
>
> (1) Strengthening the role of parents;
>
> (2) Ensuring access to the general education curriculum and reforms;
>
> (3) Focusing on teaching and learning while reducing unnecessary paperwork requirements;
>
> (4) Assisting educational agencies in addressing the costs of improving special education and related services to children with disabilities;

(5) Giving increased attention to racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity to prevent inappropriate identification and mislabeling;

(6) Ensuring schools are safe and conducive to learning; and

(7) Encouraging parents and educators to work out their differences by using nonadversarial means. (p. 5)

On June 4, 1997, President Clinton signed these improvements to reauthorize this law. His statements reflect the impact that the previous legislation has had on students with disabilities and their families. He stated in his remarks to the public:

> For 22 years now, the IDEA has been the driving force behind the simple idea we have heard restated and symbolized here today, that every American citizen is a person of dignity and worth, having a spirit and a soul, and having the right to develop his or her full capacities. We believe in your potential and we are going to do everything we can to help you develop it. To the millions of families who are depending upon us to help them prepare their children to take their place in the world, we are saying, we are proud of you for your devotion to your children, for your belief in them, for your love for them, and we are going to do everything we can to help you succeed in preparing them . . . To the teachers and the administrators who make all the difference, we are saying, we are depending upon you and we are going to do what we can to support you. To the American people, we are saying that we do not intend to rest until we have conquered the ignorance and prejudice against disabilities that disables us all. (U.S. Department of Education, Special Education & Rehabilitative Services, 1997, p. 1)

Students with disabilities still had little exposure to peers, regular classroom teachers, and most importantly exemplary instruction in the core curriculum. In 2004, IDEA was

reauthorized once again. There was a greater alignment to legislation passed, entitled *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) (2002). Congress felt that improved student outcomes were the intent of special education, but not necessarily seen in implementation. In their committee's findings, they made that very apparent stating that a

> Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 118).

Bateman and Bateman (2004) wrote in *A Principal's Guide to Special Education*, "IDEA 2004's support for inclusive classrooms requires general education teachers to be able to adapt to differing learning styles and develop classroom accommodations and modifications–often before a student is even evaluated for special education services" (p. 6). Currently, special education may be viewed less as a place and more as a service or support to specific students in the general education classroom (National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials, 2010).

The *Six Pillars* of IDEA

IDEA was supported by six pillars to address the rights of disabled pupils and their families. Each of the states have enacted their own statutes and regulations to comply with the IDEA and, in many cases, have gone beyond what is mandated by the federal government in providing services. Included in this group are Indiana's special education rules, entitled Article 7, which are promulgated in the Indiana Administrative Code at 511 IAC 7-32 through 7-47.

In 511 IAC 7-42-6 (2008), the rules are defined for developing an IEP and what components must be completed. Section 6 states an IEP is a written document for a student who is eligible for special education and related services that is developed by a Case Conference Committee (CCC). Article 7 also gives guidance that when developing a student's IEP, a CCC must consider the following general factors: (a) the strengths of the student; (b) the concerns of the parent for enhancing the education of the student; (c) the results and instructional implications of the initial or most recent educational evaluation and other assessments of the student; and (d) the academic, developmental, communication, and functional needs of the student.

The components of an IEP are defined to include the following 11 pieces:

1. A statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.
2. A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to meet the student's needs.
3. A description of how the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports on the progress will be provided.
4. A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel. An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with nondisabled students in the general education environment and in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities.
5. A statement regarding the student's participation in statewide or local assessments of student achievement, and must include any individual

appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the student.

6. The projected date for initiation of services and modifications and anticipated length and frequency, location, and duration of services and modifications.
7. A statement of the student's need for extended school year services.
8. Identification of the placement in the least restrictive environment.
9. Beginning not later than one year before the student becomes eighteen years of age, a statement that the student and the parent have been informed that parent's rights under this article will transfer to the student at eighteen years of age.
10. Written notes documenting the meeting of the CCC.

Auspiciously, IDEA, the courts, and Article 7 have defined an appropriate education for us. In summary, it is an education that is provided in accordance with the student's IEP and the student who must benefit from the educational program and services. *Board of Education of the Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Amy Rowley* was a case that eventually found its way to the US Supreme Court in 1982. The case had already been through the District Court and the District Court found that

> Amy is a remarkably well-adjusted child who interacts and communicates well with her classmates and has developed an extraordinary rapport with her teachers. It also found that she performs better than the average child in her class and is advancing easily from grade to grade, but that she understands considerably less of what goes on in class than she would if she were not deaf and thus is not learning as much, or performing as well academically, as she would without her handicap. (p. 3).

The discrepancy between Rowley's achievement and her potential without her handicap caused the court to make the decision that she was not provided with a free appropriate public education. The U.S. Supreme Court interpreted the Act from Congress differently and reversed the decision, stating,

> Insofar as a State is required to provide a handicapped child with a free appropriate public education, we hold that it satisfies these requirements by providing personalized instruction with sufficient support services to permit the child to benefit educationally from that instruction. Such instruction and services must be provided at public expense, must meet the State's educational standards, must approximate the grade levels used in the State's regular education, and must comport with the child's IEP. In addition, the IEP, and therefore the personalized instruction, should be formulated in accordance with the requirements of the Act, and if the child is being educated in the regular classrooms of the public education system, should be reasonably calculated to enable the child to achieve passing marks and advance from grade to grade (p. 3).

The guarantee of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) is also described in Indiana's Article 7 at 511 IAC 7-42-10, and mandates special education and related services (a) are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and at no cost to the parent; (b) meet the standards of the state educational agency, including the requirements of Article 7; (c) include an appropriate early childhood education, elementary education, or secondary education in the state involved for students with disabilities ages 3 through 22; (d) are provided in conformity with an IEP that meets the requirements of this article; and (e) include the award of credit and diploma for completion of academic requirements to the same extent the credit is awarded to students without disabilities. Based on IDEA, court cases, and

Article 7, for a student with a disability to receive FAPE, the child must receive meaningful educational benefit as documented in his or her IEP and determined by the case conference committee, however the student is not entitled to an education that "maximizes" the student's learning.

The requirement of education in the least restrictive educational environment (LRE) is described in 511 IAC 7-42-10. School corporations are responsible to the maximum extent appropriate that students with disabilities, including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with nondisabled students. This is a decision that is made through the CCC and is based on the student's IEP. The CCC must consider any potential harmful effects the placement could have on the student with a disability.

A continuum of placement options must include: (a) the general education classroom with special education and related services provided during the instructional day; (b) the resource room with special education and related services provided outside the general education classroom during the instructional day; (c) a separate classroom in a general education school building with special education and related services provided outside the general education classroom during the instructional day; (d) a separate public or nonpublic nonresidential school or facility with special education and related services provided; (e) a public or nonpublic residential school or facility with special education and related services provided to students living at the school or facility; and (f) a homebound or hospital setting with special education and related services provided at the student's home, a hospital, or other non-educational site selected by the corporation. (Indiana Department of Education, 2008). The placement decision must not be based on the student's disability but rather on what special

education or related services are needed and to what extent those cannot be provided in the general education classroom.

Appropriate evaluation must occur prior to a student receiving special education services under IDEA. It is not one assessment but rather a gathering of a multitude of data about the student. In Indiana per 511 IAC 7, the student is assessed, information is collected, in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, the following: (a) Development; (b) Cognition; (c) Academic achievement; (d) Functional performance or adaptive behavior; (e) Communication skills; (f) Motor and sensory abilities, including vision or hearing; (g) Available educationally relevant medical or mental health information; and (h) Social and developmental history. The multidisciplinary team must use a variety of assessment tools as well as existing data to create a comprehensive educational evaluation report. The CCC will then determine whether the student is eligible for special education services under the suspected disability category.

Parent and teacher participation remain central to IDEA and have been so throughout history. The reason IDEA is what it is today reflects the work of parents and professionals in the area of special education (Hulett, 2009). The safeguards provided to students and their families focus on one main responsibility: Parent participation in the consent for anything to happen during the process for a student with a disability–the evaluation, the IEP, placement decisions, services provided, and anything else pertaining to the education of the student.

Procedural safeguards as required by IDEA are intended to protect the students with disabilities and their parents, as well as the special education and the early intervention systems (Martin et al. 1996). Procedural safeguards are the checks and balances of the system of special education. These specifically pertain to prior written notice; reviewing student records; the

CCC and the parent's participation and consent; assessment and independent evaluations; filing formal complaints, mediations, due process hearings, and appeals; civil court actions; discipline; parental placement in private schools; development of IEPs; placement decisions and instruction in a LRE; and confidentiality. (Indiana Department of Education, 2008).

Responsibilities of Principals

DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) stated, "As a nation seeks significant reforms in education through standards and accountability, it increasingly looks to principals to lead the way" (p. 43). Goldhammer et al. (1971) summarized characteristics they found in effective principals: "In schools that were extremely good we inevitably found an aggressive, professionally alert, dynamic principal determined to provide the kind of educational program he/she deemed necessary, no matter what" (p. 2). DiPaola and Tshannen-Moran (2003) described this amazing responsibility of a principal as the task of manager, disciplinarian, instructional leader, and change agent. Levine (2005) also detailed this in his depiction of school leadership programs and how these programs are faring in preparing leaders. He stated that principals and superintendents "are being called on to lead in the redesign of their schools and school systems" (p. 12), especially in the public school sector.

Indiana State Superintendent Tony Bennett is asserting reform and educational gains as Levine has called for despite the $300 million cut to public education handed down from Governor Mitch Daniels in 2010. Levine (2005) continued to describe how administrators can accomplish reform and educational gains by "leading their schools in the rethinking of goals, priorities, finances, staffing, curriculum, pedagogies, learning resources, assessment methods, technology, and use of time and space. School leaders must also recruit and retain top staff members and educate newcomers and veterans alike to understand and become comfortable

with an education system undergoing dramatic and continual change" (p. 12). Leaders have to employ constant data-based decision making, evaluation and reflection, and the entire school improvement process while creating a climate for learning and culture for change in a time of transformation. (Peterson & Deal, 1998).

In the past, being an effective manager of a building was the definition of an effective principal: one who ensured a safe environment, managed the budget, and maintained discipline (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Although movies in the 1980s portrayed the principal's role as power-hungry and arrogant, the role had already begun to change. DiPaola and Walther-Thomas (2003) reflected back to the 1970s as this was the evolution of the principal's role due to emerging research on effective schools. In the 1970s, research made links from the principal to student achievement, learning communities, collaboration, effective communication, and high-quality instructional programming that set the way for the new term *instructional leadership* to emerge. The ever-changing population in public schools has also impacted the role of the principal. Principals must create a school that envisions inclusive education (Lasky & Karge, 2006).

A study that specifically examined elementary principals' perceptions of their problems was conducted in 1971 by the University of Oregon's Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration. Led by Goldhammer et al. (1971), this study made it apparent that the state of educational leadership was in crisis. After review, the researchers deemed some educational institutions as "beacons of brilliance" and some as "potholes of pestilence." They found eight common characteristics among the beacons of brilliance. These include

(1) Most did not intend to become principals. Most indicated that they had intended to teach but were encouraged to become principals by their superiors.

(2) Most expressed a sincere faith in children. Children were not criticized for failing to learn or for having behavioral difficulties. The principals felt that these were problems that the school was established to correct, thus the administrators emphasized their responsibilities toward the solution of children's problems.

(3) They had an ability to work effectively with people and to secure their cooperation. They were proud of their teachers and accepted them as professionally dedicated and competent people. They inspired confidence and developed enthusiasm. The principals used group processes effectively; listened well to parents, teacher, and pupils; and appeared to have intuitive skill and empathy for their associates.

(4) They were aggressive in securing recognition of the needs of their schools. They frequently were critical of the restraints imposed by the central office and of the inadequate resources. They found it difficult to live within the constraints of the bureaucracy; they frequently violated the chain of command, seeking relief for their problems from whatever sources were potentially useful.

(5) They were enthusiastic as principals and accepted their responsibilities as a mission rather than a job. They recognized their role in current social problems. The ambiguities that surround them and their work were of less significance than the goals they felt were important to achieve. As a result, they found it possible to live with the ambiguities of their position.

(6) They were committed to education and could distinguish between long-term and short-term educational goals. Consequently, they fairly well had established philosophies of the role of education and their relationship within it.

(7) They were adaptable. If they discovered something was not working, they could make the necessary shifts and embark with some security on new paths.

(8) They were able strategists. They could identify their objectives and plan means to achieve them. They expressed concern for the identification of the most appropriate procedures through which change could be secured (Goldhammer et al., 1971, p. 3).

These characteristics continue to be seen in effective leaders. Davis and Thomas (1989) reiterated that many of the characteristics of effective principals fall into the four categories of strong leadership skills and traits, effective problem-solving and decision-making abilities, high social skills, and good professional knowledge and competence. Other researchers identified leadership styles to categorize or identify effective principals. Peterson (1986) utilized interviews and observations of 17 principals who were deemed effective by their superiors. He sorted them into four styles: Entrepreneur, Problem Selector, Caretaker, and Firefighter. He found that the Entrepreneur was the only style that could be truly considered effective and should be the desired style for school leaders.

The Entrepreneur as described by Peterson (1986) is ". . . an energetic principal with a strong vision for the direction and goals of the school, which is a relatively smooth-running school with low problem density, . . . delegates responsibility to teachers and teacher planning groups; and uses shared decision making in solving problems, . . . may create heroes among the staff and students, individuals whose behavior reflects values consistent with his or her vision for the school. The focus of the school is on excellence; the staff feel they are professionals; and students felt wanted and encouraged" (p. 98).

In 1996, Dyal, Flynt, and Bennett-Walker indicated, "The school principal plays a critical role in shaping an educational climate that provides opportunities for interaction

between nondisabled and disabled students" (p. 33). Leaders can be the stewards and coaches in the development of a school culture of inclusiveness (Burrello & Lashley, 1992). As an Entrepreneur styled principal, this can be done effectively. Garrison-Wade, Sobel and Fulmer (2007) stated, "One of the most important challenges in education is to create and nurture inclusive environments that support learning for all students" (p. 117). To do this, school leaders have major roles and responsibilities that they must fulfill. The IRIS Center described 12 responsibilities in their 2009 research that include

- Responsibility for all children: The fundamental responsibility of the school leader is to convey and demonstrate the belief that the adults in the schoolhouse own—that is to say, have an equal responsibility for—*all* of the students. This sense of ownership involves setting high expectations and giving serious consideration to post-school outcomes—in a culture that strives to accept and value students with disabilities and their families.
- Leadership and vision for inclusion education: To be a leader means to set the tone and the instructional bar and to guide the school as a community. It includes cultivating a vision of teaching and learning to create a school wide vision wherein the needs of children and the focus of teaching and learning are clearly articulated and sensibly and effectively implemented. To accomplish these tasks will involve an interweaving of the relevant federal, state, and local requirements in order to create a cohesive and meaningful approach to equity and excellence within the school.
- Infrastructure and coordination: The school leader's responsibility is to create an infrastructure that supports personnel during whatever implementation is taking place in the school (e.g., shared or distributed leadership; mutual communication among general

educators, special educators, and related service providers; management of change). School leaders must also strive to establish priorities.

- School Law: School leaders must be familiar with the requirements of state and federal rules and regulations and disseminate that information to their staff. Such regulations include understanding the connections between NCLB and IDEA and the flexibility that is there for supporting whole-school programs.
- Resource Allocation: The school leader is responsible for overseeing and balancing the fair allocation and spending of often limited resources, deciding what is appropriate on a case-by-case basis.
- Data-driven decision making: School leaders must understand the data-driven school improvement process, ensuring multiple assessment measures, and using outcomes (including state and district assessment data and formative assessment data) to assess the performance of students, staff, and the school. This includes assisting staff with the data collection process.
- Support for effective instruction: The role of the school leader is to be the instructional leader of the school, meaning that she is responsible for ensuring that the staff has undergone sufficient *practical* (as opposed to merely *theoretical*) training on instructional strategies, accommodations, and differentiated instruction.
- Personnel: The school leader is charged with hiring teachers who possess the skills to meet the needs of the school's population. She must also play a strategic role in FTE (full-time equivalency) assignments and staff evaluations. The school leader must also ensure that the school staff receives the professional development that it will require to realize the school's vision.

- Behavior, discipline: The school leader sets expectations in terms of responses to behavior and cultivates dialogues to help teachers to identify effective behavioral strategies. Particularly important is to understand IDEA's discipline language, as well as to establish school wide strategies that can serve as alternatives to "zero tolerance," suspension, and expulsion.
- Working with parents: The school leader strives to make the school a welcoming place for parents and families and can connect with other relevant agencies and centers that serve or support families. Carrying out this role involves advocating for disadvantaged students and families and making certain that their voices are heard.
- Community involvement: The school leader must understand the nature of the surrounding community and its culture in order to ensure that this culture is positively reflected in the daily workings of the school. She must stimulate connections between the school and local community services (e.g., YMCA, YWCA, recreation centers), business leaders, advocacy groups, the faith community, and colleges and universities.
- Cultural competence: The school leader is responsible for ensuring that instruction and services are responsive to the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the school's population. (IRIS Center, 2009, pp. 1-2.)

What Educational Leadership Preparation Programs Do

"Is a degree in education a better predictor of a superintendent's success than, say, a track record of turning around distressed companies?" (Rotherham 2010, p. 1). One would think that knowing something about children and their development would assist in the leadership of a "company" such as a school or corporation and that having a degree in education would therefore be beneficial. On November 2, 1996, the Interstate School Leaders

Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) adopted common standards for school leaders. The team worked for two years to craft model standards for school leaders. The consortium stated that there were two reasons for the document: the first intent of the document was to stimulate vigorous thought and dialogue about quality educational leadership among stakeholders in the area of school administration. A second intent was to provide raw material that would help stakeholders across the education landscape (e.g., state agencies, professional associations, institutions of higher education) enhance the quality of educational leadership throughout the nation's schools (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996).

Therefore a common set of standards was created that would apply to nearly all formal leadership positions in education, not just principals. The consortium settled on a set of six standards that included only topics that formed the heart and soul of effective leadership as to not lose sight of the key issues in the amazing magnitude of possible standards. These include

- Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
- Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
- Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

- Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
- Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context**.**
- Standard 7: Internship provides significant opportunities for educational leaders to synthesize and apply the knowledge and practice and develop the skills identified in Standards 1-6.

This began the push for school leadership programs to align to these standards for school leaders. Redesign of programs and curriculum, as well as the choice of instructors, also followed. However, not all states were in alignment and some still struggle today as it continues to be an ongoing process. A study completed by Machado and Cline in 2010 of over 222 survey respondents found that, either directly or indirectly, school leadership programs are aligned with the ISLLC or Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards. Interview data received from eight different faculty members indicated that faculty felt their programs were most aligned in the areas of (Standard 7) internship and (Standard 3) managing organizational operations and resources (Machado & Cline, 2010). The study also found a significant difference in whether or not faculty perceived their programs were in alignment with specifically standards 5 and 6 as to whether they were accredited by the National Council for

Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or not. Those that were not accredited by NCATE perceived their programs to be better aligned to Standards 5 and 6.

This was an interesting finding with many possible explanations. One explanation is that there tends to be more independence for faculty of programs that are not undergoing rigorous reviews for accreditation (Cline & Machado, 2010). Faculty believe that they are teaching to the seven standards, but then the question becomes is it what faculty believe and does that differ from what really gets taught in principal preparation programs?

Hess and Kelly (2007) asked exactly that in their 2004 study that examined which skills and knowledge were being taught in principal preparation programs–not by asking about perceptions, but through the collection of syllabi from a variety of programs around the United States. At the time of the Hess and Kelly study, there was no existing research that assessed content, instructional focus, or assigned readings in principal preparation programs via the use of syllabi review and evaluation. Hess and Kelly considered previous research on effective school leadership to determine where they would pay particular attention to when evaluating the syllabi. These included managing for results, managing personnel, technical knowledge, external leadership, norms and values, managing classroom instruction, and leadership and school culture. They were able to collect 210 syllabi from 31 different programs including 13 "elite" programs as ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* in 2004, 11 of the "largest" programs or those that awarded the largest number of M.Ed. degrees as reported by Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) in 2003 and 7 "randomly drawn" programs from IPEDS. They analyzed the syllabi by course week, or what was typically studied during the week in a given course. The findings from syllabi review indicate that the focus of courses does not adequately align to the needed knowledge/content areas of principals. Results

revealed that aspiring principals are not adequately prepared for what they will be facing in their day-to-day roles and responsibilities. For instance, with NCLB and aggressive state reforms to ensure that every child including those with disabilities is educated, understanding and using data from state and local assessments in the area of managing for results is a vital piece of effective school leadership.

How Special Education Has Changed the Role of the Principal

Generally, literature regarding the principal and special education is often limited to inclusive practices (Garrison-Wade et al., 2007, Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999; Praisner, 2003) and legal issues (Patterson, Marshall, & Bowling, 2000; Smith & Colon, 1998). With the reauthorizations of NCLB and IDEA, the emphasis has been placed on improving the instruction for students with disabilities. NCLB created additional safeguards for students with the greatest learning needs. Students with disabilities were not to be neglected in standards-driven learning environments. It also called for states to establish standards and progress must be measured for all, therefore students with disabilities must take tests designed to measure achievement of the standards. Education leaders are under pressure due to the three percent cap limiting the number of exceptional students required to complete state-developed alternative assessments, commonly known in Indiana as Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting (ISTAR) and Indiana Modified Achievement Standards Test (IMAST). They also require schools to disaggregate the scores to determine how well each group did in comparison to the others. For instance for students with disabilities, a school must report how well students identified for special education performed in comparison to those in the general education students (Indiana Department of Education, 2007).

In addition to the pressures of accountability measures, leaders must ensure the development and implementation of students' IEPs. They must lead and promote the practice of inclusion of students with disabilities (Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999). The principal's leadership abilities can ensure improvement of the educational opportunities for all children, especially those with disabilities. Based on Hess and Kelly's (2007) work, the percentage of course weeks for principal preparation programs spent on three specific areas related to special education concerns advocates of students with disabilities. These include *leadership and school culture* (6%), *managing classroom instruction* (10.9%), and *managing for results* (15.7%). Special education is one of the most challenging responsibilities that face leaders today. A principal must have a basic knowledge of special education law in order to create the most appropriate programs for students with disabilities. They must understand the laws that provide protections to students with disabilities, so that they can administer appropriate services in their school (Bateman & Bateman, 2006).

However, the purpose of special education is not just the law, but it is to provide students with disabilities individualized instruction to meet their needs in the least restrictive environment (Patterson et al., 2000). Leaders must create a school that provides appropriate access to the general curriculum, instructional supports, the monitoring of progress, and participation in assessments all in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities (Jacobs, Tonnsen, & Baker, 2004). A principal who is focused on instructional issues by providing professional development on improving outcomes for students with disabilities demonstrates support for special education. Unfortunately several principals lack the coursework and/or experiences to be able to create this environment for students with disabilities. (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Crockett (2002) asked the question, "When

it comes to offering programs designed to make a difference for all students, are school leaders knowledgeable about special education and skillful in supervising its implementation?" (p. 158).

Wakeman, Browder, Flowers, and Ahlgrim-Delzell (2006) surveyed 362 secondary school principals belonging to the National Association of Secondary School Principals related to special education knowledge sorted into two domains–fundamental and current issues–and variables that were associated with that knowledge. In order to interpret the results, the researchers conducted a factor analysis that supported a five factor structure. These five factors included daily routine, current issues, evaluation, legislation, and fundamental knowledge. The highest ranked items were related to daily routine and the lowest ranked items related to evaluation, which indicated higher knowledge. The variables that had statistical significance included the percentage of students with disabilities in the principal's school, having a special education certification, and having a personal experience with an individual with a disability. Principals who had special education licensure indicated they had more knowledge across all five indicators. Most principals reported that they received little information about special education in their educational leadership preparation program (Wakeman et al., 2006). They also made the recommendation for licensing programs of administrators to reevaluate program requirements and include special education instruction.

Project Forum at National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) in collaboration with LeadScape at Arizona State University held a policy forum on principal preparedness to support students with disabilities and other diverse learners. One of the discussion topics was the roles and responsibilities of the principal in relation to the ISLLC standards. The participants felt that two standards were most relevant in a discussion about the

challenges with preparing principals. The first was Standard 2: an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth; and the second was Standard 5: an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; these were seen to be key to the role of the principal especially to sustain the vision of supporting all students. It was felt by the participants that two areas, as related to special education, were not addressed satisfactorily by the ISLLC standards. These areas were

> (1) "a perspective on continuous learning about current trends and legal aspects in special education; and (2) how principals can exercise leadership in supporting students with diverse needs given sometimes competing pressures from teachers, parents and the district office." (Burdette, 2010, p. 3)

The participants then identified other challenges and categorized them (Burdette, 2010). See Appendix C for a complete listing. The participants from the forum made recommendations for seven of the challenges under Preparation/Ongoing Learning and Recruitment/Retention (Burdette, 2010). The group called for an expansion of the research base on what is needed from leadership to support students from diverse populations and to leverage the work from federally funded projects to provide these already developed resources to preparation programs, school corporations and state departments of education. They identified a lack of targeted principal preparation and proposed embedding continuous work with diverse learners into principal training as well as assess their ability to support diverse learners on a structured evaluation tool. They recommended an alignment between the principal evaluations, preparation and standards and all of these should be infused with the knowledge needed to

serve students with disabilities especially current trends in special education. This could include utilizing training centers as presenters in preparation programs as well as incentives for creating "caring" schools where principals support populations that are not currently being well served. There are many recommendations for not only school corporations to provide in-service, but implores educational leadership preparation programs to address these challenges (Burdette, 2010).

The principal must create opportunities for all staff and students to interact and learn from each other. At times, special education teachers feel that they are not an important part of the school community because typically they have a small population of students and are not always included. (Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001). Building-level support from principals and general education teachers had strong effects on "virtually all critical aspects of (special education) teachers' working conditions" based on a study by Gersten et al. in 2001. Bateman and Bateman (2006) stated that the principal has the responsibility of creating structures and opportunities that incorporate the special education teacher into the total school experience. Wakeman et al. (2006) called for school leaders to provide on-going opportunities of interaction for special education teachers and their leaders.

The job of a special education teacher is very physically and emotionally demanding (Payne, 2005)In return, this has caused a shortage in special education teachers for the past 20 years. (Payne, 2005.). However projections data from the national employment matrix, it is projected that the need for special education teachers in the next ten years will increase by 17% (US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010).

Experts owe the need for more special education teachers to advances in early diagnosis and medical treatment especially for those students that have Traumatic Brain Injuries or who

have been diagnosed with the group of developmental disabilities known as Autism Spectrum Disorders (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) stated that it is estimated that between 1 in 80 and 1 in 240 with an average of 1 in 110 children in the United States have an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (CDC, 2009). In this same study, a consistent finding in all sites was that ASD prevalence was significantly higher ($p < 0.001$) among boys than among girls. In only two years in the state of Indiana, there was an increase in students identified with an ASD of 1,928 students from December 1, 2007 to December 1, 2009 (Indiana Department of Education, 2010). Therefore retention of special educators is crucial to being able to support students with disabilities.

Peterson and Deal (1998) portrayed how the principal functions could be directly linked to student achievement. Creating teaching communities that emphasized high academic standards and expectations, shared leadership and collaboration, high quality instructional programming, and effective communication for all students did this. A principal is also accountable for the adequate yearly progress of all students, including those with disabilities. At a time when school reform and achievement stakes are high, teachers and leaders tend to feel pressured to perform triage with students and get as many students able to pass the "test" as possible.

Another set of legislation enacted to protect students from lowered expectations to an extreme that they were left behind.. In 2002, NCLB, a reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, created additional safeguards for students with the greatest learning needs. Students with disabilities were not to be neglected in standards-driven learning environments. It also called for states to establish standards and progress must be measured for all; therefore students with disabilities must take tests designed to measure achievement of the standards.

The federal government also required schools to disaggregate the scores to determine how well each group did in comparison to the others. For instance, for students with disabilities, a school must report how well students identified for special education did in comparison to those who are considered general education students.

Although some researchers may question whether this is a fair comparison, but some advocates would argue that if schools are not held accountable for all kids, some will be left behind. The principal's leadership abilities can ensure improvement of the educational opportunities for all children, especially those with disabilities (Lasky & Karge, 2006). If the goal of NCLB is to ensure all children an education, Lasky and Karge (2006) appealed to institutes of higher education and school corporations to work together to hire principals with training in special education that included practical experiences with students with disabilities.

Evidence of Successful Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

There is plenty of research to support the need for adequately trained principals in the area of special education (Lasky & Karge, 2006; Wakeman et al., 2006). To address this issue, a few universities have begun to evaluate how their programs were preparing principals and what could be added to prepare principals to lead inclusive schools that meet the needs of students with disabilities. The School of Education and Human Development at the University of Colorado at Denver is one of these. In collaboration among faculty from special education and administrative leadership and policy studies, a critical look was given to all core courses to determine if key content, knowledge, and skills related to special education were part of the administrative preparation program. Garrison-Wade et al. (2007) surveyed alumni graduates and current students from the principal licensure, master's, and specialist in education programs. From their study,

> forty percent of the participants identified a lack of understanding regarding legal issues related to special education; twenty-eight percent self-reported a lack of skills in their ability to provide constructive feedback and mentoring of special educators and support staff; and twenty-eight percent reported a lack in their ability to generate options and solutions in resource management (i.e. planning time, paperwork demands, and alternative scheduling (Garrison-Wade et al., 2007, p. 123).

During a qualitative portion of the study, practicing and aspiring principals requested more training in four specific areas. These were: (a) special education law; (b) strategies for organizing a school to best utilize the special and general education teachers; (c) concrete strategies and resources about the variety of diverse needs; and (d) managing discipline issues with students displaying special education needs. (Garrison-Wade, et al., 2007, p. 127). Faculty took these recommendations and began to evaluate assignments that were given in courses and how they could improve upon what was being taught by adding enriched readings and discussions about inclusive leadership. They also created a seminar for future principals in special education. This was an example of collaboration between special educators and an educational leadership preparation program to integrate special education competencies into the preparation of future educational leaders at a time when principals are begging for relevant and practical training on special education issues.

The IRIS Center for Faculty Enhancement (n.d.) at Vanderbilt University is another example of faculty working to incorporate special education training into educational leadership preparation programs. The IRIS staff has created teaching modules that focus on special education and were infused into three principal preparation programs including the University of Texas at San Antonio, California Polytechnic University or Cal Poly's educational leadership

and administration program, and Vanderbilt University. The use of online instructional modules is taking the place of current lecture-type ways of providing instruction. The topics include accountability, high stakes testing for students with disabilities; supporting beginning special education teachers, and addressing the revolving door–how to retain your special education teachers (Rodriguez, Gentilucci, & Sims, 2006).

Rodriguez et al. (2006), who are all faculty from each of the three schools, presented examples of how each of the modules were utilized in the courses as well as lessons they have learned from integrating the IRIS modules at the annual meeting of the University Council for Education Administration in 2006. The colleagues encouraged faculty to use the free resources in their courses so that they would more effectively prepare aspiring principals in the area of special education.

Angelle and Bilton (2009) found that by adding one course related to special education issues to educational leadership preparation programs, principals felt a significant increase in their ability in dealing with special education responsibilities. However, they cautioned against adding only one course on special education topics and instead recommended embedding special education skill and knowledge into existing coursework. "As universities mold programs to better fit the needs of aspiring principals in an era of accountability for all children, consideration of special education issues remains critical" (Angelle & Bilton, 2009, p. 9).

One state is providing guidance for their universities to do exactly this. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (DOE) created a framework and guidelines for principal preparation programs to establish highly effective preparation programs within Pennsylvania to meet the increasing need for highly qualified instructional leaders in their schools (Pennsylvania DOE, 2008). They present best practices as well as evidence that could be

provided of these. The Pennsylvania leadership standards, candidate competencies and measurement processes address the assessment of the quality of the candidate's knowledge, skills, and disposition. The Pennsylvania DOE also provides a standards chart that correlates each of these to the standards. There are Special Education Competencies for School Leaders included as well. These address the over-representation of diverse students in special education, prevention and early intervention, and effective instructional strategies for students with disabilities in inclusive settings. For a complete listing of Special Education Competencies for School Leaders in Pennsylvania see Table 1.

Table 1

Special Education Competencies for School Leaders

Special Education Area	Competencies
Over-Representation of Diverse Students in Special Education	• Identify factors contributing to the over-representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in programs for individuals with disabilities and implement strategies for reduction of the over-representation. • Demonstrate an understanding of over-representation of minorities in special education so as to not misinterpret behaviors that represent cultural, linguistic differences as indicative of learning problems. • Demonstrate ability to interact and meet effectively with families. • Distinguish between the culture of the family and the economic situation of the family and how poverty affects families. • Identify how the family's culture and values affects how they view disabilities. • Celebrate heritages and cultures and link directly to learning. • Incorporate stories and resources from many cultural and ethnic traditions. • Build on students' strengths when teaching literacy skills to language minority students. • Directly use best, evidenced-based practices for teaching students from diverse backgrounds. • Implement processes that successfully prevent inappropriate placement and ensure that the opportunities for educational achievement to minority students equal those offered to the majority group.

Table 1 (Continued)

Special Education Area	Competencies
Prevention and Early Intervening	• Connect general education curriculum, compensatory and special education in providing high quality standards-based instruction/intervention that is matched to students' academic, social emotional and behavioral needs. • Demonstrate high-quality instruction for all students, through scientific research and evidence-based practice to produce high rates of learning for all students. • Implement universal screening of all students with periodic monitoring of students' progress in the curriculum. • Provide interventions for struggling learners provided at increasing levels of intensity and matched to individual student need.
Prevention	• Implement an integrated system of assessment and data collection for identification of students struggling to meet academic and behavioral expectations. • Monitor students' learning rates and levels of performance and use that information in ongoing problem solving and decision-making. • Determine which students need additional help regarding the intensity and likely duration of interventions, based on each • Participate in school wide approaches to intervention and effective instruction. • Demonstrate evidenced-based practices for use in both the special and regular education settings in the school.
Effective Instructional Strategies for Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings	• Identify effective instructional strategies to address areas of need. • Scaffold instruction to maximize instructional access to all students. • Monitor student progress to provide mediated scaffolding and increase academic rigor when appropriate. • Provide feedback to students at all levels to increase awareness in areas of strength, as well as areas of concern. • Strategically align standard based curriculum with effective instructional practices. • Identify and implement instructional adaptations based on evidence-based practices (demonstrated to be effective with students with disabilities) to provide curriculum content in a variety of ways without compromising curriculum intent. • Analyze performance of all learners and make appropriate modifications. • Design and implement programs that reflect knowledge, awareness and responsiveness to diverse needs of students with disabilities. • Use research-supported methods for academic and non-academic instruction for students with disabilities. • Develop and implement universally designed instruction. • Demonstrate an understanding of the range and the appropriate use of assistive technology (i.e., no tech, low tech, high tech). • Demonstrate efficient differentiated instruction and an understanding of efficient planning, coordination, and delivery for effective instruction required for inclusive settings.

Source: Framework and Guidelines for Principal Preparation Programs, Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2008.

Based on Witt's (2003) findings when she surveyed department chairs of educational administration programs, only half of the programs have school law courses that devote more

than 10% of the time to address special education issues and nearly half have no plans to change the way they address special education issues in leadership preparation programs. She also found that half of all the programs that offer an administrative certificate do not require principals to learn about special education law at all.

This compilation of research indicated a need for principals to have knowledge in the area of special education and that educational leadership preparation programs will need to assess their approaches to meet these needs. Chapter 2 presented the concept of the degree to which principals seem prepared to address special education needs, compliance and culture. The review of the literature focused on these major areas: (a) confidence to competence, (b) history of special education and the law, (c) the *six pillars* of IDEA, (d) the responsibilities of principals, (e) what educational leadership preparation programs do; (f) how special education has changed the role, and (g) evidence of successful projects. Chapter 3 provided the description of the sample, methodology, data collection process, and statistical analysis used in the study.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that impact the perceived confidence of Indiana school principals in the area of special education practices. The following theoretical constructs have been identified as framework for survey development: providing appropriate access to the general curriculum, instructional support, the monitoring of progress, and participation in assessments. Survey items were situated within the potential for providing the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities as mandated by the IDEA. This research used a web-based survey instrument to determine by self-report Indiana principals' perceived confidence of special education practices. Descriptive data were reported; factor analysis identified factors that emerge within the data and also provided reliability properties of the instrument. A multiple regression analysis helped to determine the impact of each factor identified.

Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was assumed to be valid unless the actual behavior of the data contradicts this assumption. Thus, the null hypothesis was contrasted against another or alternative hypothesis. Statistical hypothesis testing which involves a number of steps was used to decide whether the data contradict the null hypothesis. The following null hypotheses were tested as part of this study:

$H_0$1: There is no significant impact on a principal's perceived confidence of special education practices due to their role prior to becoming an administrator.

$H_0$2: There is no significant impact on a principal's perceived confidence of special education practices due to their years of experience as an administrator.

$H_0$3: There is no significant impact on a principal's perceived confidence of special education practices due to the highest degree attained.

$H_0$4: There is no significant impact on a principal's perceived confidence of special education practices due to participation in college coursework in the preparation program related to educating students with disabilities.

$H_0$5: There is no significant impact on a principal's perceived confidence of special education practices due to participation in any training outside of their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities.

Participants

The population for this study was limited to the administrators in Indiana. According to the Indiana Department of Education (2011), there are 1,936 K-12 public building principals in the state of Indiana. From this database, email addresses were acquired. Surveys were disseminated to all building leaders across Indiana via an invitation email asking them to participate in the study; see Appendix A for the email text. A reminder email was distributed to all email addresses one week prior to the close of the survey window. The responding sample was considered a representative sample of administrators in schools in Indiana for this study.

Method

This study utilized a quantitative mode of inquiry. In quantitative research, the researcher generalizes or makes claims about a population (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) further stated, quantitative research is when the researcher utilizes strategies of inquiry such as surveys and collects data to analyze statistical data. This section of the methodology chapter presented a description of and a rationale for the type of research used in this study. The research instrument consisted of two parts (a) participant personal information, and (b) perceived confidence of special education practices. The participant personal information asked administrators (a) what the principal's role was prior to becoming an administrator, (b) how many years were served as an administrator, (c) highest degree attained, (d) whether the administrator has ever participated in college coursework in the preparation program related to educating students with disabilities and (e) whether the administrator has ever participated in any training outside of their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities.

The survey instrument was designed from combining the work of Garrison-Wade et al. (2007), the IRIS Center (2009), and Bateman & Bateman (2006). It consisted of 54 statements using a Likert scale ranging from *I could not do this* (0) to *I have confidence in doing this* (5). Participants were asked to t rate their confidence in areas related to special education practices. (see Appendix B).

Data Analysis

For this study, both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze the data using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). First descriptive data were analyzed by looking at means and standard deviations. A factor analysis was conducted to

determine the factor structure of the survey. Finally a multiple regression analysis was used to determine the impact of each of the independent variables upon each of these factors.

Research Questions

1. How does the role prior to becoming an administrator impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?
2. How do the years of experience as an administrator impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?
3. How does the highest degree attained of an administrator impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?
4. How does whether an administrator has ever participated in college coursework in the preparation program related to educating students with disabilities impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?
5. How does whether an administrator has ever participated in any training outside of their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that impact the perceived confidence of Indiana school principals in the area of special education practices. The following theoretical constructs have been identified as framework for survey development: providing appropriate access to the general curriculum, instructional supports, the monitoring of progress, and participation in assessments. Survey items were situated with the potential for providing the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities as mandated by the IDEA.

Survey

The survey instrument was designed from combining the work of Garrison-Wade et al. (2007), the IRIS Center (2009), and Bateman and Bateman (2006). It consisted of 54 statements using a Likert scale ranging from *I could not do this* (0) to *I have confidence in doing thi*s (5). Participants were asked to respond to their perceived confidence in areas related to special education practices. (see Appendix B). Surveys were disseminated to all building leaders across Indiana via an invitation email asking them to participate in the study (see Appendix A for the email text). A reminder email was distributed to all email addresses during the middle of the period the survey was open and then again one week prior to the close of the survey window.

The survey consisted of two sections with the first section asking for demographic information. There were 92 total respondents, which was a return rate of 5%. Of the 92 total responses, 69 (77%) were general education teachers prior to becoming administrators, nine (10%) were special education teachers, two (2%) were school counselors, 10 (11%) held other positions (see Figure 1) and two (2%) were left blank but typed descriptions in the text box. Therefore, a few responses in the data have been changed to accommodate for recoding the data for comparison. These are described in Table 2.

Table 2

Recoded Role Prior to Becoming an Administrator

Participant	Participant response	Recoded response
1	Dean of Students	Admin
2	Agriculture Education Teacher / FFA Advisor	Gen Ed
3	ESL District Coordinator	Admin
4	Vocational Education Teacher	Gen Ed
5	Principal	Admin
6	All of the above	Special Ed
7	Elementary Principal	Admin
8	Special Education Director	Special Ed
9	Music Teacher	Gen Ed
10	Literacy Coach/Interventionist	Gen Ed
11	Curriculum Director	Gen Ed
12	Both Gen Ed and Spec Ed	Spec Ed

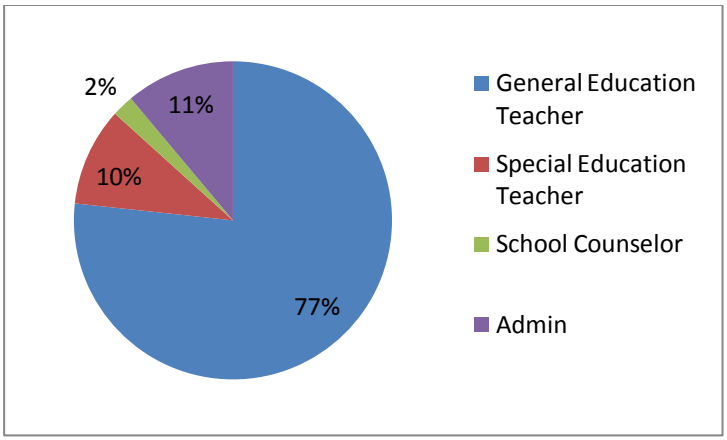

Figure 1. Sample by role prior to becoming an administrator.

For the purpose of this study, four other demographics were important: (a) the years of experience as an administrator, (b) the highest degree the participants had attained, (c) whether they had participated in college coursework related to students with disabilities, and (d) if they had participated in other training outside their program that related to students with disabilities. As shown in Figure 2, there were 18 (20%) respondents with five years or less, 24 (26%) respondents in the 6 to 10 year category, 19 (21%) respondents with 11 to 15 years as an administrator, and 31 (34%) in the 16 years or more category.

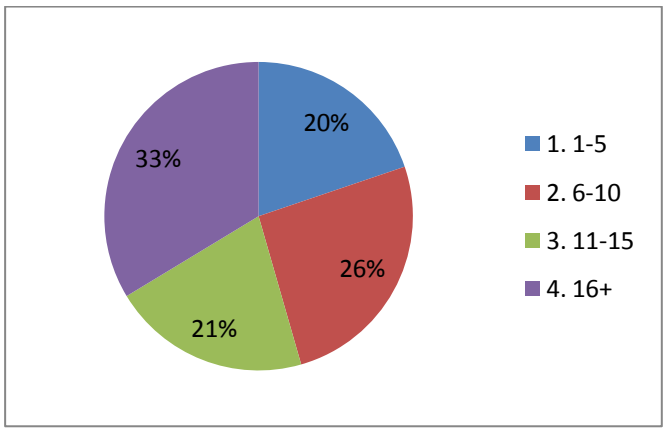

Figure 2. Sample by number of years as an administrator.

The highest degree attained by administrators surveyed ranged from master's to doctorate degrees. As shown in Figure 3, there were 21 (23%) respondents with a master's degree, 44 (48%) respondents with a master's + 30 semester hours, 19 (21%) respondents with an educational specialist degree, and 8 (9%) with a doctorate degree.

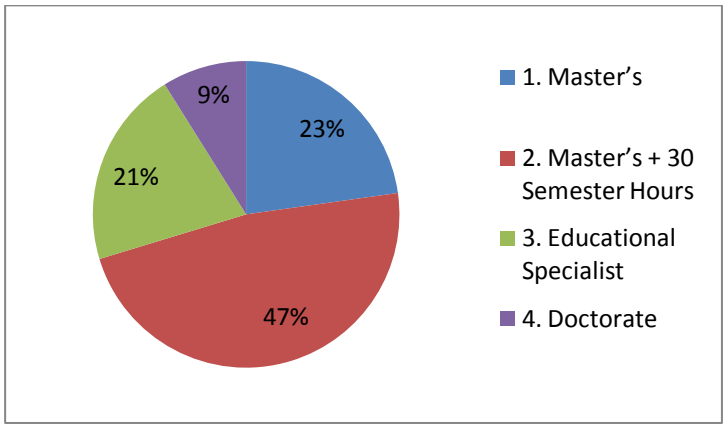

Figure 3. Sample by highest degree attained.

As shown in Figure 4, over three-fourths (78%) of the respondents had participated in college coursework in their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities and 20 (22%) stated they had not.

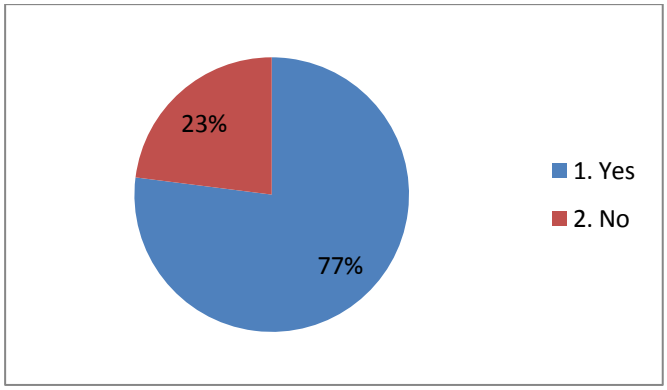

Figure 4. Sample by participation in college coursework related to educating students with disabilities.

Finally, as shown in Figure 5, almost all of the respondents (97%) had participated in training outside of their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities that

was locally provided professional development. Additional college courses was selected 22 times (25%), state provided professional development was selected 54 times (61%), nationally provided professional development 13 times (15%), self-guided learning: web modules or presentations on the internet was selected 24 times (27%), self-guided learning: professional reading of books and/or articles 61 times (69%), self-guided learning: community organized events 27 times (31%), and four (5%) wrote in other ways such as training with state mental health association, on the job training, finishing license for Director of Exceptional Needs and serving on the Governor's Council for Disabilities.

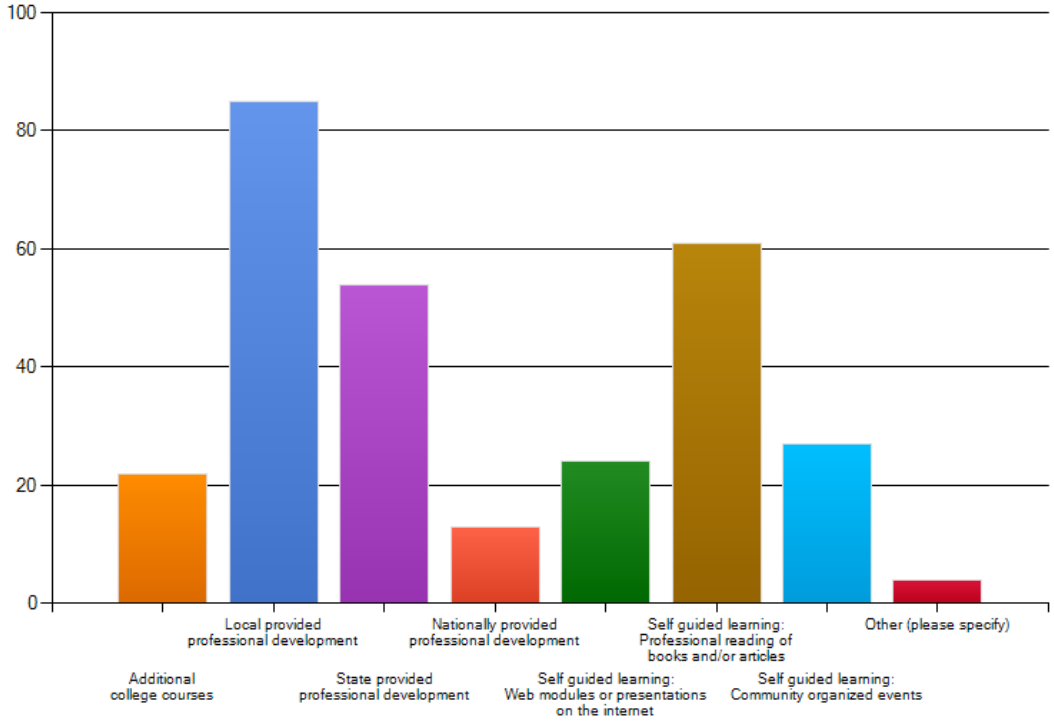

Figure 5. Sample by participation in training outside preparation program.

Data Preparation

The following were steps followed in setting up the data to prepare for analysis. Variables were defined to represent each question on the survey. Missing responses were

replaced by using the series mean method. Table 3 display scores (mean and standard deviation) for the respondents ($N = 92$). The question regarding whether the administrators felt they had the ability to foster collegial relationships between special and general education personnel had the highest mean ($M = 4.64$, $SD = .53$) of the 54 questions. The question regarding whether the administrators felt they had the ability to create outreach programs to the community regarding students with disabilities had the lowest mean ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.07$) of the 54 questions. Patterns that were revealed in the data included that the means for the questions regarding instructional support were much higher than all others and the means for the questions regarding inclusion were lower than all others.

Table 3

Confidence in Special Education Survey Item Means and Standard Deviation

Perceived competence	N	Mean	SD
Q1…ability to assess impact of disabilities on student performance?	83	3.71	1.06
Q2…ability to monitor referral-to-placement procedures?	84	3.94	1.10
Q3… ability to provide expertise on various service delivery models?	84	3.51	1.06
Q4…ability to facilitate student support teams by utilizing collaborative problem solving?	83	4.28	0.88
Q5…ability to provide feedback to student support teams who are utilizing collaborative problem solving?	82	4.17	0.84
Q6…ability to improve outcomes for all students by ensuring the increase of the delivery of academic interventions in the general education settings?	82	3.98	0.85
Q7… ability to improve outcomes for all students by ensuring the increase of the delivery of behavior interventions in the general education settings?	84	3.78	0.85
Q8…ability to provide guidance about differentiation of instruction by providing professional development opportunities to all staff?	80	3.88	0.95
Q9… ability to provide guidance about differentiation of instruction by providing coaching to all staff?	83	3.86	0.90
Q10… ability to provide arrangements for teachers to observe each other?	84	4.37	0.98
Q11… ability to field questions that parents and family have about special education teaching practices?	82	4.15	0.84
Q12…ability to develop school-wide positive behavior support programs?	80	4.07	0.91
Q13… ability to facilitate effective collaboration between general and special education teachers?	83	4.39	0.68
Q14… ability to make differentiated learning recommendations for learners with diverse needs?	83	3.84	0.83
Q15… ability to implement differentiated learning recommendations for learners with diverse needs?	81	3.83	0.89

Table 3 (Continued)

Perceived competence	N	Mean	SD
Q16…ability to lead an initiative that creates a learning environment that allows for alternative styles of learning?	82	4.06	0.80
Q17…ability to develop activities for professional development training regarding inclusive practices?	84	3.67	1.02
Q18… ability to make recommendations for professional development training regarding inclusive practices?	82	3.83	0.97
Q19… ability to generate possible solutions in resource management (i.e., planning time, paperwork demands, and alternative scheduling)?	82	4.04	1.09
Q20… ability to coach special education staff?	84	3.78	1.10
Q21… ability to coach general education staff?	84	4.45	0.63
Q22… ability to coach support service personnel?	84	4.20	0.76
Q23… ability to provide constructive instructional feedback to general education staff?	82	4.61	0.55
Q24…ability to provide constructive instructional feedback to special education staff?	83	4.27	0.83
Q25… ability to provide constructive instructional feedback to support service personnel?	82	4.41	0.67
Q26… ability to provide mentoring to general education staff?	82	4.51	0.61
Q27…ability to provide mentoring to special education staff?	83	4.14	0.83
Q28…ability to provide mentoring to support service personnel?	82	4.35	0.68
Q29…ability to foster collegial relationships between special and general education personnel?	81	4.64	0.53
Q30…ability to understand the challenges parents of children with disabilities frequently encounter?	82	4.02	0.70
Q31… ability to make recommendations regarding the challenges parents of children with disabilities frequently encounter?	84	3.94	0.78
Q32… ability to understand legal issues related to special education?	84	4.04	1.00
Q33… ability to make recommendations regarding legal issues related to special education?	84	3.80	1.13
Q34… ability to develop inclusionary practices in schools?	82	4.08	0.91
Q35… ability to implement inclusionary practices in schools?	82	4.13	0.90
Q36… ability to assess whether an IEP is compliant based on federal and state regulations?	84	3.80	1.20
Q37…ability to understand characteristics of a student with a specific disability?	83	4.06	0.94
Q38…ability to provide programming recommendations for a student with a specific disability?	83	3.94	0.91
Q39…ability to assess Behavior Intervention Plans for students with disabilities?	81	3.98	0.95
Q40…ability to implement Behavior Intervention Plans for students with disabilities?	83	4.02	0.87
Q41…ability to assess whether a goal is a measurable goal for an Individual Education Program?	81	4.06	0.80
Q42… ability to assist in the writing of a measurable goal for an Individual Education Program?	81	3.89	0.99
Q43…ability to provide knowledge about research-based instruction/interventions?	83	3.95	0.97
Q44… ability to provide knowledge about tiered intervention approaches?	84	4.00	0.93
Q45… ability to provide knowledge about curriculum-based measurement/evaluation?	84	3.96	0.91
Q46…ability to provide knowledge about data-driven decision-making?	84	4.31	0.82
Q47… ability to provide knowledge about progress monitoring?	82	4.16	0.85

Table 3 (Continued)

Perceived competence	N	Mean	SD
Q48… ability to provide knowledge about the role of RTI in special education eligibility decisions?	82	4.05	0.78
Q49… ability to hire staff who have high expectations for all students?	83	4.58	0.66
Q50… ability to hire staff who have knowledge about IDEA and Article 7?	84	4.13	0.94
Q51… ability to hire staff who accept students with all types of disabilities?	84	4.46	0.61
Q52… ability to hire staff who are familiar with current instructional strategies?	84	4.40	0.68
Q53… ability to create outreach programs to the community regarding students with disabilities?	84	3.43	1.07
Q54… ability to discipline students with disabilities in compliance with IDEA and Article 7?	83	4.28	0.93

The principal component factor analysis with a varimax rotation was used for factor extraction purposes. As a stopping rule, eigenvalues greater than 1 were used as well as standard deviation of greater than .50, factor loadings greater than .50, and a cross-load less than 0.15 using three items. Based on an examination of the initial eigenvalues and the scree plot, the decision was made to retain 10 factors. Results of this analysis are in Table 4.

Table 4

Rotated Factor Loading Matrix for Analysis Including 10 Factors

Survey Question Stems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Impact on student performance	.16	.09	.07	**.72**	.14	-.02	.31	.20	.20	.06
Monitor referral-to-placement	.17	.21	.15	**.74**	.13	.15	-.02	.13	.34	.17
Service delivery models	.16	.25	-.03	.29	.27	.12	.18	.15	.04	.22
Facilitate student support teams	.25	.02	-.07	.37	.24	.21	.12	.09	**.68**	.07
Feedback to student support teams	.34	.23	.02	.19	.09	.21	.01	.30	**.61**	.13
Delivery of academic intervention	.19	.18	.13	.21	.14	.04	.14	**.68**	.21	-.05
Delivery of behavior intervention	.27	.37	.03	.21	.23	.08	.18	**.57**	.24	-.12
PD on differentiation of instruction	**.58**	.06	.16	.11	.27	.09	.12	.48	.04	.14
Coaching on differentiation of instruction	**.54**	.10	.15	.22	.30	.16	.15	.47	.01	.15
Teachers observe each other	.11	.13	.17	.05	.36	**.52**	.21	.08	.40	-.19

Table 4 (Continued)

Survey Question Stems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Field questions	.25	.37	.21	.41	.43	.02	.27	.06	.21	.01
School-wide positive behavior support program	.07	-.05	.11	.23	.45	.10	.16	.15	.49	-.07
Collaboration between general and special education	.14	.05	.21	.06	**.69**	.13	.05	.01	.40	.16
Recommend differentiated learning recommendations	.14	.10	.08	.33	**.75**	-.01	.01	.23	.04	.13
Implement differentiated learning recommendations	.11	.11	.13	.25	**.74**	.13	.11	.28	.04	-.02
Lead an initiative for alternative styles of learning	.19	.07	.07	-.13	.43	.17	.41	.45	.23	.15
Develop PD on inclusive practices	.30	.17	.19	.13	**.61**	-.06	.47	.10	.07	.19
Recommend PD on inclusive practices	.24	.19	.15	.15	.46	.07	**.59**	.15	.09	.24
Solutions in resource management	.32	.36	.17	.20	.42	.27	.35	.06	.02	.04
Coach special education staff	.45	.31	.34	.47	.25	.09	.32	.08	.02	-.12
Coach general education staff	.08	.05	.45	-.02	.11	.13	.08	**.72**	-.08	-.03
Coach support service personnel	.26	-.05	**.69**	.16	.15	-.05	.06	.37	.11	-.08
Constructive feedback to general education	.12	.08	**.68**	-.07	.03	.33	.03	.27	.04	.03
Constructive feedback to special education	.19	.44	**.51**	.27	.42	.07	.31	-.09	-.01	-.04
Constructive feedback to support service personnel	.20	.03	**.81**	.05	.14	-.02	.02	.15	.14	.08
Mentoring to general education staff	.20	.08	**.67**	.15	.11	.39	.05	.08	-.11	.08
Mentoring to special education staff	.25	.40	**.58**	.30	.34	.14	.17	-.11	-.01	-.04
Mentoring to support service personnel	.22	.09	**.78**	.14	.07	**.65**	.03	-.04	-.04	.16
Foster collegial relationships	.01	.38	**.51**	-.04	.13	.20	.23	-.04	.47	.15
Understand challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	-.06	.16	.14	.27	.11	.22	.21	.01	.10	**.77**
Make recommendations regarding challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	.14	.32	.08	.19	.15	.08	.19	-.04	.01	**.79**
Understand legal issues related to special education	.13	**.76**	-.07	.24	.04	.20	.20	.24	.06	.18
Make recommendations regarding legal issues related to special education	.20	**.61**	-.06	.41	.10	.31	.28	.11	-.07	.11
Develop inclusionary practices in schools	.08	.20	.09	.29	.12	.05	**.85**	.16	.11	.15

Table 4 (Continued)

Survey Question Stems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Implement inclusionary practices in schools	.10	.23	.05	.29	.07	.15	**.79**	.23	.06	.13
Assess whether an IEP is compliant	.37	**.53**	.06	**.56**	.08	.20	.15	.02	.03	.17
Understand characteristics of a student with a specific disability	.38	.16	.27	**.64**	.24	.12	.19	-.00	.04	.09
Provide programming recommendations for a student with a specific disability	.14	.38	.21	**.61**	.37	.03	.18	-.07	.06	.28
Assess Behavior Intervention Plans	.30	**.69**	.27	.19	.15	-.12	.16	.21	.08	.21
Implement Behavior Intervention Plans	**.50**	.49	.30	.10	.06	.13	.16	.30	.20	.16
Assess whether a goal is measurable for an IEP	.36	.46	.37	.09	.31	.04	.08	.17	.22	.15
Assist in the writing of a measurable IEP goal	**.50**	**.58**	.16	-.03	.17	-.03	.08	.20	.16	.30
Provide knowledge about research-based instruction/interventions	**.73**	.27	.27	.16	.33	.20	.02	.13	-.13	.04
Provide knowledge about tiered intervention approaches	**.81**	.12	.14	.19	.22	.10	.02	.13	.16	.04
Provide knowledge about curriculum-based measurement/evaluation	**.71**	.36	.15	.23	.27	.06	.17	.03	.02	.01
Provide knowledge about data-driven decision-making	**.78**	.21	.14	.07	.00	.29	.15	.14	.14	.00
Provide knowledge about progress monitoring	**.81**	.08	.22	.11	-.01	.04	.08	.10	.19	-.04
Provide knowledge about the role of RTI in special education eligibility decisions	**.63**	.15	.23	.34	.04	.20	.05	.03	.27	-.04
Hire staff who have high expectations for all students	.23	.15	.33	.05	.01	**.69**	.11	.08	.24	.04
Hire staff who have knowledge about IDEA and Article 7	.25	.55	.17	.31	.25	.48	.12	-.06	-.15	-.03
Hire staff who accept students with all types of disabilities	.08	.12	.34	.12	.01	**.70**	.01	.14	.14	.24
Hire staff who are familiar with current instructional strategies	.43	.12	.10	.10	.28	**.66**	.05	.07	.05	.19
Create outreach programs to the community	.36	.37	.15	.18	.26	.16	.00	-.14	.11	.26
Discipline in compliance with IDEA and Article 7	.14	**.62**	.14	.26	-.06	.49	.10	.08	.26	.13

Note Loadings above .50 are shown in bold.

Three of the factors were excluded due to not meeting the rule of having three highly loaded items and another principal component factor analysis with Varimax rotations was

completed with the seven factors using the same criteria. Therefore the second factor analysis specified only the seven factors and was confirmatory in nature. As a stopping rule, eigenvalues greater than 1 were used as well as standard deviation of greater than .50, factor loadings greater than .50, and a cross-load less than 0.15 using three items. Both the scree test and eigenvalues supported the use of a seven-factor rotation. There were 17 items that did not meet the criteria and were removed from the data set represented in Table 5 due to the fact that they did not load on any of the seven factors. This identified which items went with which factors and aided the regression. The seven factors were named by categorizing the questions based on Wakeman et al.'s (2006) research and the IRIS Center's (2009) major roles and responsibilities of school leaders in inclusive education. Factor one was labeled Current Issues (Current) as the items were related to many of the current topics identified in the literature such as positive behavior support, Response to Intervention, and differentiated instruction. Factor 2 was labeled Legislation (Legisl) as these items related to IDEA and Article 7. Factor 3 was labeled Evaluation (Eval) as these items related to best-practice instructional strategies, program evaluation, and evaluating staff. Factor 4 was labeled Daily Routine (Routine) as these items related to activities that principals engage in on a daily basis during the year such as discipline, collaboration, and advocacy. Factor 5 was labeled Fundamental Knowledge (Fun. Knowl) and included items regarding characteristics of disabilities. Factor 6 was labeled Inclusion (Inclusion) as these items related to instruction in general education settings. Finally, factor 7 was labeled Personnel (Persnl) as these items related to hiring and providing feedback to staff.

Table 5

Rotated Factor Loading Matrix for Analysis Including 7 Factors

Survey Question Stems	Current	Legisl	Eval	Routine	Fun. Knowl	Inclusion	Persnl
Impact on student performance	.13	.19	.04	.21	**.73**	.30	.08
Monitor referral-to-placement	.21	.23	.12	.15	**.71**	.08	.33
Service delivery models	.18	.40	-.01	.26	**.63**	.14	.11
Feedback to student support teams	.39	.12	-.04	.18	.22	.29	**.55**
Delivery of academic interventions	.28	.03	.12	.15	.22	**.66**	.17
Delivery of behavior interventions	.40	.17	.04	.20	.26	**.59**	.19
PD on differentiation of instruction	**.59**	.09	.17	.31	.08	.40	.11
Coaching on differentiation of instruction	**.55**	.16	.18	.30	.17	.39	.13
Teachers observe each other	.13	.08	.22	.35	.13	.16	**.58**
School-wide positive behavior support program	.25	-.09	.07	**.55**	.30	.20	.34
Collaboration between general and special education	.15	.11	.18	**.74**	.08	-.01	.31
Recommend differentiated learning recommendations	.20	.15	.09	**.70**	.30	.12	-.00
Implement differentiated learning recommendations	.18	.12	.18	**.67**	.25	.21	.11
Develop PD on inclusive practices	.26	.36	.18	**.69**	.16	.25	-.07
Coach general education staff	.14	.00	.49	.10	-.04	**.68**	.05
Coach support service personnel	.27	-.16	**.65**	.19	.18	.35	.01
Constructive feedback to general education	.15	.06	**.71**	.01	-.09	.23	.27
Constructive feedback to support service personnel	.20	-.01	**.77**	.20	.06	.14	.06
Mentoring to general education staff	.19	.16	**.74**	.07	.11	.03	.21
Mentoring to special education staff	.29	.37	**.60**	.28	.34	-.03	.02
Mentoring to support service personnel	.20	.18	**.80**	.08	.11	-.06	.14
Understand challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	-.13	**.64**	.12	.23	.13	.01	.27
Make recommendations regarding challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	.10	**.74**	.06	.24	.06	-.04	.10
Understand legal issues related to special education	.28	**.71**	-.04	-.05	.23	.31	.18
Make recommendations regarding legal issues related to special education	.28	**.67**	.02	-.00	.39	.19	.15
Understand characteristics of a student with a specific disability	.35	.27	.29	.25	**.64**	.03	.08
Assess Behavior Intervention Plans	.43	**.59**	.23	.13	.20	.27	-.07

Table 5 (Continued)

Survey Question Stems	Current	Legisl	Eval	Routine	Fun. Knowl	Inclusion	Persnl
Implement Behavior Intervention Plans	**.58**	.41	.28	.07	.11	.34	.21
Provide knowledge about research-based instruction/interventions	**.77**	.23	.33	.25	.15	.04	.05
Provide knowledge about tiered intervention approaches	**.80**	.06	.14	.25	.20	.08	.17
Provide knowledge about curriculum-based measurement/evaluation	**.73**	.31	.17	.25	.26	.07	.01
Provide knowledge about data-driven decision-making	**.76**	.17	.17	.03	.10	.17	.29
Provide knowledge about progress monitoring	**.77**	-.02	.19	.07	.16	.13	.14
Provide knowledge about the role of RTI in special education eligibility decisions	**.61**	.07	.23	.08	.38	.05	.30
Hire staff who have high expectations for all students	.22	.21	.41	.01	.05	.09	**.66**
Hire staff who have knowledge about IDEA and Article 7	.34	**.55**	.29	.08	.30	-.06	.21
Hire staff who accept students with all types of disabilities	.08	.28	.43	-.01	.05	.06	**.64**

Note: loadings above .50 are shown in bold.

Table 6

Total Variance Explained with Initial Eigenvalues

Component	Initial Eigenvalues	
	% Variance	Cumulative %
1	44.24	44.24
2	7.84	52.09
3	6.20	58.30
4	5.51	63.81
5	4.86	68.68
6	3.37	72.05
7	3.03	75.09
8	2.38	77.47
9	2.17	79.65
10	1.86	81.51

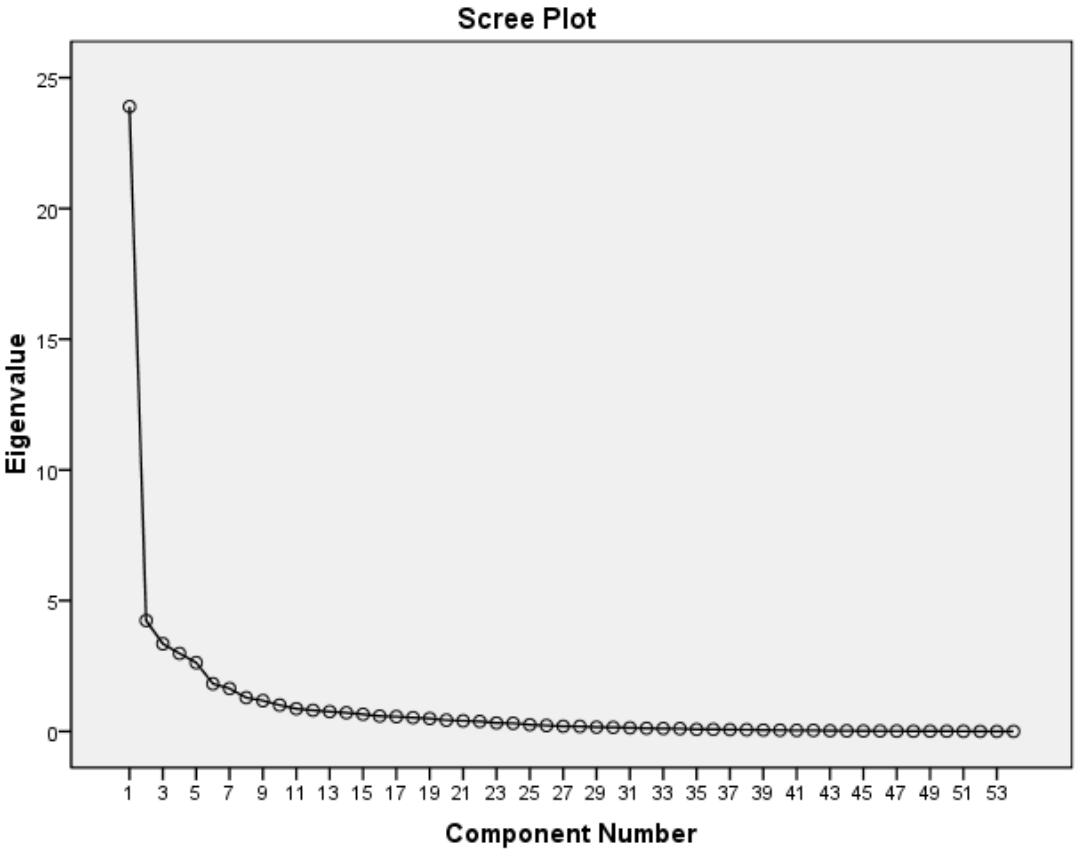

Figure 6. Scree plot.

Research Questions

How does the role prior to becoming an administrator impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices? This research was addressed by comparing adjusted means between administrators with general education experience and administrators with special education experience. Results of the comparison are displayed in Table 7. The greatest mean difference of 1.41 was reported for the question regarding confidence of having the ability to provide expertise on various service delivery models. The lowest mean difference of 0.04 was reported for the question regarding confidence of having the ability to provide mentoring to support service personnel. There were only three out of the 54 questions where administrators who were general education prior to becoming an

administrator felt more confident than administrators who were special education prior to becoming an administrator. These questions asked about confidence level of their ability to provide arrangements for teachers to observe each other, ability to coach general education staff, and ability to make recommendations regarding the challenges parents of children with disabilities frequently encounter. The mean differences were -0.03, -0.11, and -0.17 respectively with the negative sign representing the fact that general education was more confident than special education. In all seven of the regression models, the partial regression coefficients were statistically significant for special education as being the role prior to becoming an administrator.

Table 7

Comparison of Adjusted Means for Role Prior to Administrator

Survey Question Stems	Gen. Ed. Only (N = 72)	Without Gen. Ed. (N = 20)	Difference of Means
Impact on student performance	3.54	4.38	0.84
Monitor referral-to-placement	3.70	4.75	1.05
Service delivery models	3.22	4.63	1.41
Feedback to student support teams	4.06	4.63	0.74
Delivery of academic interventions	3.86	4.57	0.57
Delivery of behavior interventions	3.68	4.25	0.71
PD on differentiation of instruction	3.70	4.63	0.57
Coaching on differentiation of instruction	3.73	4.50	0.93
Teachers observe each other	4.41	4.38	-.03
School-wide positive behavior support program	3.97	4.25	0.71
Collaboration between general and special education	4.30	4.75	0.28
Recommend differentiated learning recommendations	3.62	4.50	0.88
Implement differentiated learning recommendations	3.65	4.38	0.73
Develop PD on inclusive practices	3.54	4.50	0.96
Coach general education staff	4.49	4.38	-0.11
Coach support service personnel	4.16	4.25	0.09
Constructive feedback to general education	4.54	4.88	0.33

Table 7 (Continued)

Survey Question Stems	Gen. Ed. Only (N = 72)	Without Gen. Ed. (N = 20)	Difference of Means
Constructive feedback to support service personnel	4.35	4.50	0.15
Mentoring to general education staff	4.43	4.88	0.44
Mentoring to special education staff	3.97	4.75	0.78
Mentoring to support service personnel	4.33	4.38	0.04
Understand challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	3.95	4.13	0.18
Make recommendations regarding challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	3.92	3.75	-0.17
Understand legal issues related to special education	3.92	4.75	0.83
Make recommendations regarding legal issues related to special education	3.65	4.50	0.85
Understand characteristics of a student with a specific disability	3.86	4.63	0.76
Assess Behavior Intervention Plans	3.78	4.71	0.94
Implement Behavior Intervention Plans	4.08	4.75	0.67
Provide knowledge about research-based instruction/interventions	4.00	4.75	0.75
Provide knowledge about tiered intervention approaches	4.00	4.75	0.75
Provide knowledge about curriculum-based measurement/evaluation	3.92	4.75	0.83
Provide knowledge about data-driven decision-making	4.41	4.63	0.22
Provide knowledge about progress monitoring	4.19	4.57	0.38
Provide knowledge about the role of RTI in special education eligibility decisions	4.03	4.71	0.69
Hire staff who have high expectations for all students	4.68	4.88	0.20
hire staff who have knowledge about IDEA and Article 7	4.14	4.75	0.61
Hire staff who accept students with all types of disabilities	4.54	4.63	0.08

How do the years of experience as an administrator impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices? This research question was addressed by comparing adjusted means between administrators with one to five years of experience, 6 to 10 years of experience, 11 to 15 years of experience, and those with 16 or more years of experience. There were only five out of the 54 questions where administrators who had one to

five years of experience felt more confident than administrators that had more experience. These questions asked about confidence level of their ability to understand and hire staff all based on legal issues related to special education as well as data-based decision making. Administrators with 6 to 10 years of experience were most confident with adjusted means scoring higher on 12 of the 54 questions. Leadership, Instructional Support, and Professional Development were the factors they felt most confident in. Administrators with 11 to 15 years of experience scored confident on 11 out of the 54 questions throughout all seven factors with the Inclusion factor reported as the most confident. Finally, administrators with 16 or more years of experience felt most confident on 9 out of the 54 questions. These administrators reported the most confidence in the Organization Vision factor. Results of the comparison are displayed in Table 8. There was a curvilinear relationship regarding years of experience with those new to the field of administration not as confident, those between 6 and 15 years very confident and those with 16 or more years not as confident. Again, based on Dunning's research, it is possible that overconfidence could result from an individual's inability to estimate the degree of difficulty associated with the task (Goode, 2000), reminding us of Thomas Jefferson's assertion that "he who knows best knows how little he knows" (Goode, 2000, p. 2).

Table 8

Comparison of Adjusted Means for Number of Years of Experience

Survey Question Stems	1-5 years experience (N = 18)	6-10 years experience (N = 24)	11-15 years experience (N = 19)	16+ years experiences (N = 31)
Impact on student performance	3.78	3.06	3.79	3.52
Monitor referral-to-placement	3.56	3.37	3.71	3.72
Service delivery models	3.00	2.68	3.29	3.40
Feedback to student support teams	3.89	3.89	3.93	3.96
Delivery of academic interventions	3.67	3.89	4.00	3.72
Delivery of behavior interventions	3.56	3.63	3.79	3.68
PD on differentiation of instruction	3.89	3.83	3.92	3.42
Coaching on differentiation of instruction	3.78	3.74	3.92	3.56
Teachers observe each other	3.89	4.11	4.21	4.40
School-wide positive behavior support program	3.78	3.94	3.77	3.88
Collaboration between general and special education	4.33	4.42	4.23	4.20
Recommend differentiated learning recommendations	4.00	4.00	3.77	3.68
Implement differentiated learning recommendations	3.67	3.84	3.85	3.87
Develop PD on inclusive practices	3.44	3.47	3.79	3.56
Coach general education staff	4.22	4.53	4.57	4.40
Coach support service personnel	4.00	4.37	4.21	4.00
Constructive feedback to general education	4.22	4.61	4.38	4.44
Constructive feedback to support service personnel	4.11	4.53	4.31	4.16
Mentoring to general education staff	4.22	4.53	4.17	4.40
Mentoring to special education staff	3.67	3.95	4.08	3.92
Mentoring to support service personnel	4.11	4.37	4.23	4.21
Understand challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	4.00	3.74	3.85	4.17
Make recommendations regarding challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	4.00	3.68	3.64	4.00
Understand legal issues related to special education	4.00	3.47	3.93	3.96
Make recommendations regarding legal issues related to special education	3.78	2.95	3.64	3.76

Table 8 (Continued)

Survey Question Stems	1-5 years experience (N = 18)	6-10 years experience (N = 24)	11-15 years experience (N = 19)	16+ years experiences (N = 31)
Understand characteristics of a student with a specific disability	3.67	3.63	4.15	3.72
Assess Behavior Intervention Plans	3.56	3.58	3.92	3.63
Implement Behavior Intervention Plans	3.78	3.95	3.79	3.75
Provide knowledge about research-based instruction/interventions	3.78	4.00	3.83	3.67
Provide knowledge about tiered intervention approaches	3.89	4.00	3.77	3.72
Provide knowledge about curriculum-based measurement/evaluation	3.89	3.95	3.71	3.80
Provide knowledge about data-driven decision-making	4.33	4.26	3.71	4.28
Provide knowledge about progress monitoring	4.11	4.16	3.71	4.04
Provide knowledge about the role of RTI in special education eligibility decisions	3.78	4.00	3.93	4.00
Hire staff who have high expectations for all students	4.56	4.53	3.85	4.64
hire staff who have knowledge about IDEA and Article 7	4.22	3.89	3.79	4.08
Hire staff who accept students with all types of disabilities	4.44	4.42	4.46	4.40

How does the highest degree attained of an administrator impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices? This research question was addressed by comparing adjusted means between administrators with a master's degree, master's degree plus 30 semester hours, educational specialist, and those with a doctorate. There were only two out of the 54 questions that administrators who had only a master's degree felt more confident than administrators who had more education. These questions asked about confidence level of their ability to discuss challenges with parents. Administrators with a master's degree plus 30 semester hours were most confident with adjusted means scoring higher on 15 of the 54 questions throughout the seven factors with the Professional

Development factor reported as the most confident. Administrators with an educational specialist degree felt most confident on 10 out of the 54 questions. These administrators reported the most confidence in the Administration factor. Finally, administrators with a doctorate degree felt most confident in 10 out of 54 questions as well. These administrators reported the most confidence in the Instructional Support factor. Results of the comparison are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

Comparison of Adjusted Means for Types of Degrees

Survey Question Stems	Masters (N = 21)	Masters+30 (N = 44)	Educational Specialist (N = 19)	Doctorate (N = 8)
Impact on student performance	3.31	3.43	3.71	3.20
Monitor referral-to-placement	3.31	3.77	3.64	3.40
Service delivery models	2.88	3.33	3.21	2.80
Feedback to student support teams	3.53	4.14	4.07	3.60
Delivery of academic interventions	3.44	3.97	4.00	3.40
Delivery of behavior interventions	3.19	3.93	3.64	3.40
PD on differentiation of instruction	3.60	3.79	3.64	4.00
Coaching on differentiation of instruction	3.63	3.86	3.71	3.40
Teachers observe each other	3.31	4.47	4.71	4.00
School-wide positive behavior support program	3.44	3.96	4.07	4.00
Collaboration between general and special education	4.06	4.37	4.43	4.50
Recommend differentiated learning recommendations	4.00	3.87	3.64	3.50
Implement differentiated learning recommendations	3.69	3.93	3.82	3.60
Develop PD on inclusive practices	3.25	3.60	3.86	3.80
Coach general education staff	4.31	4.47	4.57	4.20
Coach support service personnel	4.06	4.20	4.07	4.20
Constructive feedback to general education	4.38	4.46	4.50	4.40
Constructive feedback to support service personnel	4.25	4.20	4.43	4.50
Mentoring to general education staff	4.31	4.41	4.36	4.50
Mentoring to special education staff	3.81	3.90	4.00	4.50
Mentoring to support service personnel	4.25	4.23	4.31	4.50

Table 9 (Continued)

Survey Question Stems	Masters (N = 21)	Masters+30 (N = 44)	Educational Specialist (N = 19)	Doctorate (N = 8)
Understand challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	4.13	3.86	4.21	3.60
Make recommendations regarding challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	4.13	3.77	3.93	3.80
Understand legal issues related to special education	3.75	3.97	3.86	3.40
Make recommendations regarding legal issues related to special education	3.31	3.70	3.57	3.00
Understand characteristics of a student with a specific disability	3.50	3.90	3.64	4.25
Assess Behavior Intervention Plans	3.69	3.70	3.57	3.67
Implement Behavior Intervention Plans	3.69	3.97	3.79	3.60
Provide knowledge about research-based instruction/interventions	3.69	3.97	3.54	4.00
Provide knowledge about tiered intervention approaches	3.63	4.10	3.57	3.80
Provide knowledge about curriculum-based measurement/evaluation	3.75	3.97	3.71	3.80
Provide knowledge about data-driven decision-making	4.00	4.40	4.14	4.00
Provide knowledge about progress monitoring	3.94	4.13	3.86	4.50
Provide knowledge about the role of RTI in special education eligibility decisions	3.69	4.13	3.71	4.00
Hire staff who have high expectations for all students	4.38	4.69	4.71	4.20
hire staff who have knowledge about IDEA and Article 7	3.88	4.13	4.00	4.00
Hire staff who accept students with all types of disabilities	4.38	4.43	4.57	4.40

How does whether an administrator has ever participated in college coursework in the preparation program related to educating students with disabilities impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices? This research question was addressed by comparing adjusted means between administrators with college coursework in their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities and those who did not. Both groups felt most confident with the ability to hire staff with high expectations and be accepting of students with disabilities. The administrators with no college coursework felt

more confident than those who had coursework related to educating students with disabilities regarding the ability to facilitate effective collaboration between general and special educators. The administrators with college coursework related to educating students with disabilities felt more confident than those who did not regarding having the ability to provide constructive instructional feedback to general education staff. Results of the comparison are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10

Comparison of Adjusted Means for College Coursework

Survey Question Stems	Yes (N = 72)	No (N = 20)
Impact on student performance	3.74	3.50
Monitor referral-to-placement	3.83	3.61
Service delivery models	3.57	2.94
Feedback to student support teams	4.09	4.06
Delivery of academic interventions	4.02	3.72
Delivery of behavior interventions	3.93	3.50
PD on differentiation of instruction	3.98	3.47
Coaching on differentiation of instruction	3.98	3.41
Teachers observe each other	4.30	4.11
School-wide positive behavior support program	4.06	3.82
Collaboration between general and special education	4.53	4.22
Recommend differentiated learning recommendations	4.19	3.61
Implement differentiated learning recommendations	4.08	3.83
Develop PD on inclusive practices	3.93	3.22
Coach general education staff	4.43	4.44
Coach support service personnel	4.24	4.11
Constructive feedback to general education	4.49	4.53
Constructive feedback to support service personnel	4.38	4.28
Mentoring to general education staff	4.42	4.41
Mentoring to special education staff	4.13	3.83
Mentoring to support service personnel	4.25	4.35
Understand challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	3.98	4.19
Make recommendations regarding challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	3.94	3.83
Understand legal issues related to special education	4.09	3.89
Make recommendations regarding legal issues related to special education	3.85	3.33

Table 10 (Continued)

Survey Question Stems	Yes (N = 72)	No (N = 20)
Understand characteristics of a student with a specific disability	4.06	3.50
Assess Behavior Intervention Plans	3.98	3.53
Implement Behavior Intervention Plans	4.11	3.76
Provide knowledge about research-based instruction/interventions	4.11	3.44
Provide knowledge about tiered intervention approaches	4.15	3.67
Provide knowledge about curriculum-based measurement/evaluation	4.13	3.56
Provide knowledge about data-driven decision-making	4.35	4.11
Provide knowledge about progress monitoring	4.23	3.89
Provide knowledge about the role of RTI in special education eligibility decisions	4.04	4.00
Hire staff who have high expectations for all students	4.57	4.65
Hire staff who have knowledge about IDEA and Article 7	4.24	3.67
Hire staff who accept students with all types of disabilities	4.41	4.50

How does whether an administrator has ever participated in any training outside of their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices? This research question was addressed by comparing adjusted means between administrators who had ever participated in any training outside of their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities and those who did not. Interpretation of these results should be done cautiously as the number of respondents is too low to be statistically significant. Administrators who had participated in any training outside of their preparation program related to education students with disabilities felt more confident than those who did not in 46 of the 54 questions across all six factors. Administrators who had never participated in any training outside of their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities only included two respondents and these respondents felt more confident in eight of the 54 questions answers with more confidence on

two questions in Organization Vision, Inclusion, Instructional Support, and Administration. Results of the comparison are displayed in Table 11.

Table 11

Comparison of Adjusted Means for Participation in Professional Development

Survey Question Stems	Yes (N = 90)	None (N = 2)
Impact on student performance	3.75	1.50
Monitor referral-to-placement	3.83	3.00
Service delivery models	3.44	2.50
Feedback to student support teams	3.07	4.00
Delivery of academic interventions	3.98	4.00
Delivery of behavior interventions	3.83	3.50
PD on differentiation of instruction	3.90	3.50
Coaching on differentiation of instruction	3.88	3.00
Teachers observe each other	4.26	2.50
School-wide positive behavior support program	4.03	2.50
Collaboration between general and special education	4.41	4.00
Recommend differentiated learning recommendations	4.00	3.50
Implement differentiated learning recommendations	3.96	3.00
Develop PD on inclusive practices	3.74	2.50
Coach general education staff	4.44	4.50
Coach support service personnel	4.22	4.00
Constructive feedback to general education	4.49	4.50
Constructive feedback to support service personnel	4.35	4.50
Mentoring to general education staff	4.43	4.00
Mentoring to special education staff	4.11	3.00
Mentoring to support service personnel	4.30	4.00
Understand challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	4.05	4.00
Make recommendations regarding challenges parents of children with disabilities encounter	3.94	4.00
Understand legal issues related to special education	4.00	4.00
Make recommendations regarding legal issues related to special education	3.76	2.00
Understand characteristics of a student with a specific disability	4.01	1.50
Assess Behavior Intervention Plans	3.89	4.00
Implement Behavior Intervention Plans	4.04	3.50
Provide knowledge about research-based instruction/interventions	3.99	2.50
Provide knowledge about tiered intervention approaches	4.04	2.50
Provide knowledge about curriculum-based measurement/evaluation	4.00	2.50
Provide knowledge about data-driven decision-making	4.34	3.00
Provide knowledge about progress monitoring	4.20	2.50
Provide knowledge about the role of RTI in special education eligibility decisions	4.06	3.50
Hire staff who have high expectations for all students	4.58	4.50
Hire staff who have knowledge about IDEA and Article 7	4.15	3.50
Hire staff who accept students with all types of disabilities	4.46	4.50

Regression Analysis

Regression models were run using simultaneous multiple regression analyses with role prior to becoming an administrator, years of experience as an administrator, highest degree attained, and whether or not the administrator participated in college coursework related to special education as predictors of each confidence factor. Due to the fact that only two respondents said that they had not participated in any training outside of their preparation program related to education students with disabilities, this independent variable lacked the variability necessary to be an appropriate predictor, so it was dropped from the analysis.

Legislation Confidence

In the first regression model, perceived confidence of legislation was regressed on role prior to becoming an administrator, years of experience as an administrator, highest degree attained, and whether or not the administrator participated in college coursework related to special education. Taken together, the four predictor variables account for 12.1% of the variance in the Legislation factor. ($R^2 = 0.12$), and the resultant relationship is statistically significant, $F(4, 73) = 2.51$, $p < .05$. The partial regression coefficient was statistically significant for the role prior to becoming an administrator ($b = 0.62$), $t(4) = 2.63$, $p < .05$. With all other predictors held constant, having a role of special education prior to becoming an administrator leads to an increase in legislation confidence of .62. No other predictors were found to be significant. The assumptions of multiple regression were also verified. Homogeneity of variance was examined via the scatterplot of residuals and these indicated a random scatter between +2 and -2 and therefore met this assumption as well as indicating general linearity between predictor variables and the criterion variable. Normality of residuals was assessed using a histogram of residuals and the normal probability plot. The histogram

showed a roughly normal distribution and no major deviations from normality were noted on the normal probability plot.

Current Issues Confidence

In the second regression model, perceived confidence of current issues was regressed on role prior to becoming an administrator, years of experience as an administrator, highest degree attained, and whether or not the administrator participated in college coursework related to special education. Taken together, the four predictor variables account for 13.4% of the variance in the Current Issues factor ($R^2 = 0.13$), and the resultant relationship is statistically significant, $F(4, 69) = 2.68$, $p < .05$. The partial regression coefficient was statistically significant for the role prior to becoming an administrator ($b = 0.58$), $t(4) = 2.20$, $p < .05$. With all other predictors held constant, having a role of special education prior to becoming an administrator leads to an increase in current issues confidence of .58. No other predictors were found to be significant. The assumptions of multiple regression were also verified. Homogeneity of variance was examined via the scatterplot and these indicated a random scatter between +2 and -2 and therefore met the assumption as well as indicating general linearity between predictor variables and the criterion variable. Normality of residuals was assessed using a histogram of residuals and the normal probability plot. The histogram showed a roughly normal distribution and no major deviations from normality were noted on the normal probability plot.

Evaluation Confidence

In the third regression model, perceived confidence of evaluation was regressed on role prior to becoming an administrator, years of experience as an administrator, highest degree attained, and whether or not the administrator participated in college coursework related to

special education. Taken together, the four predictor variables account for 9.4% of the variance in the Evaluation factor ($R^2 = 0.09$), and the resultant relationship was not statistically significant, $F(4, 73) = 1.90$, $p > .05$. The partial regression coefficient was statistically significant for the role prior to becoming an administrator ($b = 0.48$), $t(4) = 2.54$, $p < .05$. With all other predictors held constant, having a role of special education prior to becoming an administrator leads to an increase in confidence of .48. No other predictors were found to be significant. The assumptions of multiple regression were also verified. Homogeneity of variance was examined via the scatterplot and these indicated a random scatter between +2 and -2 and therefore met the assumption as well as indicating general linearity between predictor variables and the criterion variable. Normality of residuals was assessed using a histogram of residuals and the normal probability plot. The histogram showed a roughly normal distribution and no major deviations from normality were noted on the normal probability plot.

Daily Routine Confidence

In the fourth regression model, perceived confidence of daily routine was regressed on role prior to becoming an administrator, years of experience as an administrator, highest degree attained, and whether or not the administrator participated in college coursework related to special education. Taken together, the four predictor variables account for 12.0% of the variance in the Daily Routine factor. ($R^2 = 0.12$), and the resultant relationship is statistically significant, $F(4, 71) = 2.51$, $p < .05$. The partial regression coefficient was statistically significant for the role prior to becoming an administrator ($b = 0.50$), $t(4) = 2.11$, $p < .05$. With all other predictors held constant, having a role of special education prior to becoming an administrator leads to an increase in confidence of .50. No other predictors were found to be significant. The assumptions of multiple regression were also verified. Homogeneity of

variance was examined via the scatterplot and these indicated a random scatter between +2 and -2 and therefore met the assumption as well as indicating general linearity between predictor variables and the criterion variable. Normality of residuals was assessed using a histogram of residuals and the normal probability plot. The histogram showed a roughly normal distribution and no major deviations from normality were noted on the normal probability plot.

Fundamental Knowledge Confidence

In the fifth regression model, perceived confidence of fundamental knowledge was regressed on role prior to becoming an administrator, years of experience as an administrator, highest degree attained, and whether or not the administrator participated in college coursework related to special education. Taken together, the four predictor variables account for 22.5% of the variance in the Fundamental Knowledge factor. ($R^2 = 0.23$), and the resultant relationship is statistically significant, $F(4, 76) = 5.53$, $p < .05$. The partial regression coefficient was statistically significant for the role prior to becoming an administrator ($b = 1.16$), $t(4) = 4.20$, $p < .05$. With all other predictors held constant, having a role of special education prior to becoming an administrator leads to an increase in confidence of 1.16. No other predictors were found to be significant. The assumptions of multiple regression were also verified. Homogeneity of variance was examined via the scatterplot and these indicated a random scatter between +2 and -2 and therefore met the assumption as well as indicating general linearity between predictor variables and the criterion variable. Normality of residuals was assessed using a histogram of residuals and the normal probability plot. The histogram showed a roughly normal distribution and no major deviations from normality were noted on the normal probability plot.

Inclusion Confidence

In the sixth regression model, perceived confidence of inclusion was regressed on role prior to becoming an administrator, years of experience as an administrator, highest degree attained, and whether or not the administrator participated in college coursework related to special education. Taken together, the four predictor variables account for 9.0% of the variance in the Inclusion factor. ($R^2 = 0.09$), and the resultant relationship was not statistically significant, $F(4, 76) = 1.88$, $p > .05$. The partial regression coefficient was statistically significant for the role prior to becoming an administrator ($b = 0.52$), $t(4) = 2.35$, $p < .05$. With all other predictors held constant, having a role of special education prior to becoming an administrator leads to an increase in confidence of .52. No other predictors were found to be significant. The assumptions of multiple regression were also verified. Homogeneity of variance was examined via the scatterplot and these indicated a random scatter between +2 and -2 and therefore met the assumption as well as indicating general linearity between predictor variables and the criterion variable. Normality of residuals was assessed using a histogram of residuals and the normal probability plot. The histogram showed a roughly normal distribution and no major deviations from normality were noted on the normal probability plot.

Personnel Confidence

In the seventh regression model, perceived confidence of personnel was regressed on role prior to becoming an administrator, years of experience as an administrator, highest degree attained, and whether or not the administrator participated in college coursework related to special education. Taken together, the four predictor variables account for 9.0% of the variance in the Personnel factor. ($R^2 = 0.04$), and the resultant relationship was not statistically significant, $F(4, 75) = .68$, $p > .05$. No predictors were found to be significant.

CHAPTER 5

Discussions, Implications, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to assess the factors that impact the perceived confidence of Indiana school principals in the area of special education practices including providing appropriate access to the general curriculum, instructional supports, the monitoring of progress, and participation in assessments all in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities as mandated by the IDEA. This research used a web-based survey instrument to determine by self-report of Indiana principals' perceived confidence of special education practices. The sample size was a limitation as the principals located in the population of this study were only a sample of Indiana school principals and not a national sample. Requests for participation in the data collection were sent to each of the 1,936 K-12 public school building principals in Indiana. However, the number included in the sample was limited to the number of respondents. The respondents included a small population of special educators prior to becoming administrators.

Research Questions

The questions that guided the study and have been answered through statistical analysis include

1. How does the role prior to becoming an administrator impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?
2. How do the years of experience as an administrator impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?
3. How does the highest degree attained of an administrator impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?
4. How does whether an administrator has ever participated in college coursework in the preparation program related to educating students with disabilities impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?
5. How does whether an administrator has ever participated in any training outside of their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities impact the perceived confidence of the principal regarding special education practices?

Discussion

The importance of the principal's position cannot be understated. In my 12 years as an educator, I have witnessed firsthand how valuable the leadership of a principal can be to a school building and the culture of that building. A principal who is focused on instructional issues by providing professional development on improving outcomes for students with disabilities demonstrates support for special education. The purpose of special education is not just following legislation, but it is to provide students with disabilities individualized instruction to meet their needs in the least restrictive environment. Leaders must create a school that provides appropriate access to the general curriculum, instructional supports, the monitoring of progress, and participation in assessments all in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities.

After being employed in roles from special education teacher to principal to state Department of Education consultant to now assistant director of special services in a large urban district, I have had the pleasure of working closely with many building-level administrators and have seen those who create the culture of an inclusive school and the passion and leadership that it takes to impact the outcomes of students with disabilities. A question continues to arise in my mind regarding the knowledge of special education legal issues compared to the knowledge and implementation of best inclusive practices. As a state, building, and district administrator, I continue to feel that both are equally as important. One has to have confidence in their decision-making in both areas to really impact outcomes for students with disabilities that will then lead to their competence as Patterson and Kelleher (2005) have discussed the intimate connection between confidence and competence. Determining which drives our actions, confidence or competence, is often difficult to assess.

The initial intent of this study was to help those involved in education understand the importance of a principal's confidence regarding special education practices and to determine factors that impact that confidence. The results of the survey indicated an average perceived confidence level of special education practices among the sample group. I had developed assumptions for each of these research questions prior to surveying the administrators. My first assumption that administrators with a special education role prior to becoming an administrator were much more confident than those that did not was correct. This assumption was based on my personal experience of being a special educator and then becoming an administrator, and my prior experiences provided me with knowledge that made me confident in my skills and practices related to special education. One of the most interesting findings was that those administrators with no college coursework felt more confident than those who had coursework

related to educating students with disabilities regarding the ability to facilitate effective collaboration between general and special educators. However this could be due to the fact that they have been in the situation of collaborating with other colleagues prior to becoming an administrator and feel they are capable of facilitating this due to that experience.

The administrators with college coursework related to educating students with disabilities felt more confident to provide constructive instructional feedback to general education staff than those who did not. My assumption had been the opposite. As a general educator it would seem that they would be able to easily provide feedback to their colleagues, but a special educator might struggle to do this. Although, a special educator could have possibly worked in a team teaching experience where providing feedback on how they could assist in the differentiation was part of an everyday occurrence.

Another interesting finding was that administrators who had one to five years of experience felt more confident about their ability to hire staff with knowledge of special education legal issues. My assumption was that the more experience that administrators had dealing with special education issues, the more confident they would be to hire staff knowledgeable about special education issues. The data challenged my assumptions and I now have developed more questions as inclusive practices are more prevalent in today's classrooms and general educators have experience with students with disabilities on a regular basis, which could be an explanation of this. There was a curvilinear relationship regarding years of experience with those new to the field of administration not as confident, those between 6 and 15 years very confident and those with 16 or more years not as confident. Again, based on Dunning's research (Goode, 2000) that it is possible that overconfidence could result from an individual's inability to estimate the degree of difficulty associated with the task (Goode, 2000)

reminding us of Thomas Jefferson's assertion that "he who knows best knows how little he knows " (p. 2).

Implications

There are many implications that can be made from this study. One implication is that administrators who have previous experience in special education feel more confident regarding special education practices and therefore general education teachers pursuing an administrative track should gain some experience in the area of special education. This could be done by co-teaching, working with special education legal issues, studying the history of special education, gaining knowledge in effective inclusive practices, data analysis, progress monitoring, how to lead staff in utilizing all of these, as well as gaining a knowledge of current research regarding early intervening services and "Response to Intervention." Stainback and Stainback (1989) stated, "As inclusive principals, they accept the ownership of all students, support inclusive placement decisions, promote the policy that students with disabilities are the responsibility of all school personnel and work to ensure an effective environment for all students" (p. 17). Many educational institutions are providing dual licensure for general and special education. This study would show that that would be beneficial to those with a goal of administration.

There are implications for districts developing ongoing professional development for their leaders. The challenge is how to incorporate the knowledge in special education legal practices and support the collaboration of general and special education teachers relative to serving students in special education. Due to the increasingly complex role of principals and the correlation between administrators who have received training and their higher perceived confidence related to students with disabilities, it is imperative that districts offer continued learning for their administrators in implementing and monitoring inclusive instructional and

behavioral practices, current trends and practices in special education, effective strategies for educating students with diverse needs, special education legal issues, and collaboration and team work between general and special educators and how to best utilize staff.

The results of this study suggest that principal preparation programs should incorporate coursework that provides the education necessary for an administrator to be successful in addressing special education issues. Angelle and Bilton (2009) found that by adding one course related to special education issues to educational leadership preparation programs, principals felt a significant increase in their ability in dealing with special education responsibilities. This could be done through the development and implementation of a seminar for future principals in special education. The current coursework provides a minimal amount of specificity in ISLLC standards on legal issues for diverse populations and inclusive standards and does not focus on special education competencies for school leaders. Ensuring that the proper courses are offered and eliminating the kinds of coursework that are not relevant is suggested based on the data gathered for this study. Some examples of course offerings based on the ISLLC standards would strategically focus enhanced readings, discussions, and assignments, including how to

- Create and promote a vision of an inclusive environment where every student can succeed;
- Develop strong instructional programs that use effective research-based inclusive practices;
- Maintain a safe and productive learning environment using behavioral intervention strategies;

- Facilitate the collaborative problem solving process amongst the many stakeholders involved with inclusive schools;
- Follow special education regulations and ensure implementation by staff;
- Provide training and support to staff regarding strategies conducive to the needs of students with disabilities; and
- Collaboration and planning among educational leadership preparation program staff to assess where leadership skills for inclusive practices could be added to enhance program courses.

Conclusions

The data that were gathered through the use of surveys indicated a relationship between the perceived confidence in addressing special education issues and the role prior to becoming an administrator, the years of experience as an administrator, the highest degree attained by an administrator, whether an administrator had ever participated in college coursework in the preparation program related to educating students with disabilities, and whether an administrator has ever participated in any training outside of their preparation program related to educating students with disabilities. When one is expected to perform well, the level of confidence influences the outcome. "People who believe they are likely to win are also likely to put in the extra effort at difficult moments to ensure that victory" (Moss Kanter, 2004, p. 6). Patterson and Kelleher (2005) discussed the intimate connection between confidence and competence. Similar to Moss Kanter, their perception of an increased self-confidence will lead to actively pursuing more challenging work and therefore will lead to the development of a greater level of competence.

Future Research Recommendations

The following recommendations need to be considered for future reference:

1. A replication of this study should involve a sample size that represents a greater proportion of the population.
2. This study should be enhanced to interview assistant principals as they are often given special education responsibilities.
3. This study should be conducted in another state for comparative analysis.
4. Additional research is needed to determine the most effective delivery method of updating principals on a regular basis regarding special education.
5. A study is needed to determine the emphasis placed on special education in principal preparation programs and specifically where leadership skills for inclusive practices are addressed including legal issues regarding special education, current issues in special education and the administration of special programs.
6. A study should be conducted to determine the level of legal knowledge in the issues of special education law and inclusive practices in comparison to their confidence level.
7. A study should be conducted to determine how well graduates of the Indiana principal preparation programs feel they are prepared to lead inclusive school practices.
8. A study should be conducted to determine the most crucial skills that administrators need to have for inclusive leadership.

9. A study should be conducted to determine the relationship between confidence and competence.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the perceived confidence level of administrators regarding special education. The data generated from this study did indicate a significant difference among the participants. As described by Stainback and Stainback (1990), "An inclusive school is a place where everyone belongs, is accepted, supports, and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met" (p. 3). Leaders committed to inclusive practices push the boundaries of a traditional way of thinking, value diversity, and lead by what they model. As almost all administrators included in the study participated in locally provided professional development, it is critical that that professional development bring administrators the most up-to-date research–based practices that they can use to lead their buildings in inclusive practices. Those professional developers would benefit from this study by utilizing the research to create professional development in the areas of the least perceived confidence to make the greatest impact on the profession.

Garrison-Wade et al. (2007), stated "One of the most important challenges in education is to create and nurture inclusive environments that support learning for all students" (p. 117). To do this, school leaders have major roles and responsibilities that they must fulfill. Research has recommended an alignment between the principal evaluations, preparation, and standards, and all of these should be infused with the knowledge needed to serve students with disabilities especially current trends in special education. Peterson and Deal (1998) portrayed how the principal functions could be directly linked to student achievement. Creating teaching

communities that emphasized high academic standards and expectations, shared leadership and collaboration, high quality instructional programming, and effective communication for all students did this. Therefore, at a time when school reform and achievement stakes are high, leaders are compelled to ensure students with disabilities meet and even exceed expectations.

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APPENDIX A

Introductory Email to the Special Education Practices Confidence Survey

March 17, 2011

Dear Administrator:

As a fellow administrator, I am well aware of your hectic schedule, the demands of your position, and the time restraints you work within. This is a special request for your support of important research!

You are being invited to participate in a research study about principals' perceived confidence in the area of special education practices. My study focuses on the responsibilities that of administrators in regard to special education issues in our public schools. This study is being conducted by Tara Rinehart and Dr. Steve Gruenert, from the **Educational Leadership, Administration & Foundations** Department at Indiana State University. The study is being conducted as part of a dissertation.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. There are no costs to you for participating in the study. The information you provide will add important information in the body of research involving special education issues faced by administrators on a daily basis. The questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study should provide more general benefits.

This survey is anonymous. This is a web-based survey, and information will not be collected as to where the survey came from. However due to it being a web-based survey, absolute anonymity cannot be guaranteed over the Internet. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. Individuals from the Institutional Review Board may inspect these records. Should the data be published, no individual information will be disclosed.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. By completing the survey of short responses available at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/specialeducationconfidence and completing a brief demographics page, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact at Tara Rinehart at 317-374-6029 or send an e-mail to tara.rinehart@gmail.com or Dr. Steve Gruenert at **812-238-2902 or send an email to steve.gruenert@indstate.edu.**

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or if you feel you've been placed at risk, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Indiana State University, Office of Sponsored Programs, Terre Haute, IN, 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or by e-mail at irb@indstate.edu.

Sincerely,

Tara L. Rinehart
Doctoral Candidate

Date of IRB Approval: *3/16/11*
IRB Number: *214893-1*
Project Expiration Date: *(expiration date is not applicable, the study is exempt)*

APPENDIX B

Special Education Practices Confidence Survey

Demographic questions

Please answer the following questions about yourself to help interpret the results.

1. What was your role prior to becoming an administrator?
    1. General Education Teacher
    2. Special Education Teacher
    3. School Counselor
    4. Other: _____

2. How many years have you served as an administrator?
    1. 1-5
    2. 6-10
    3. 11-15
    4. 16+

3. Indicate the highest degree you have attained.
    1. Master's
    2. Master's + 30 Semester Hours

3. Educational Specialist
4. Doctorate
5. Other (Specify)_____

4. Have you ever participated in college coursework in your preparation program related to educating students with disabilities?

1. Yes
2. No

5. Have you participated in any training outside of your preparation program related to educating students with disabilities? Check all that apply.

- Additional college courses
- Local provided professional development
- State provided professional development
- Nationally provided professional development
- Self guided learning
  - Web modules or presentations on the internet
  - Professional reading of books and/or articles
  - Community organized events

Confidence rating

Please check one number to indicate to what degree your current level of confidence: 0 indicates "I could not do this" and 5 indicates, "I have confidence in doing this."

1. Do you feel you have the ability to assess the impact of disabilities on student performance?

0 1 2 3 4 5

2. Do you feel you have the ability to monitor referral-to-placement procedures?

0 1 2 3 4 5

3. Do you feel you have the ability to provide expertise on various service delivery models?

0 1 2 3 4 5

4. Do you feel you have the ability to facilitate student support teams by utilizing collaborative problem solving?

0 1 2 3 4 5

5. Do you feel you have the ability to provide feedback to student support teams who are utilizing collaborative problem solving?

0 1 2 3 4 5

6. Do you feel you have the ability to improve outcomes for all students by ensuring the increase of the delivery of academic interventions in the general education settings?

0 1 2 3 4 5

7. Do you feel you have the ability to improve outcomes for all students by ensuring the increase of the delivery of behavior interventions in the general education settings?

0 1 2 3 4 5

8. Do you feel you have the ability to provide guidance about differentiation of instruction by providing professional development opportunities to all staff?

0 1 2 3 4 5

9. Do you feel you have the ability to provide guidance about differentiation of instruction by providing coaching to all staff?

0 1 2 3 4 5

10. Do you feel you have the ability to provide arrangements for teachers to observe each other?

0 1 2 3 4 5

11. Do you feel you have the ability to field questions that parents and family have about special education teaching practices?

0 1 2 3 4 5

12. Do you feel you have the ability to develop school-wide positive behavior support programs?

0 1 2 3 4 5

13. Do you feel you have the ability to facilitate effective collaboration between general and special education teachers?

0 1 2 3 4 5

14. Do you feel you have the ability to make differentiated learning recommendations for learners with diverse needs?

0 1 2 3 4 5

15. Do you feel you have the ability to implement differentiated learning recommendations for learners with diverse needs?

0 1 2 3 4 5

16. Do you feel you have the ability to lead an initiative that creates a learning environment that allows for alternative styles of learning?

0 1 2 3 4 5

17. Do you feel you have the ability to develop activities for professional development training regarding inclusive practices?

0 1 2 3 4 5

18. Do you feel you have the ability to make recommendations for professional development training regarding inclusive practices?

0 1 2 3 4 5

19. Do you feel you have the ability to generate possible solutions in resource management (i.e., planning time, paperwork demands, and alternative scheduling)?

0 1 2 3 4 5

20. Do you feel you have the ability to coach special education staff?

0 1 2 3 4 5

21. Do you feel you have the ability to coach general education staff?

0 1 2 3 4 5

22. Do you feel you have the ability to coach support service personnel?

0 1 2 3 4 5

23. Do you feel you have the ability to provide constructive instructional feedback to general education staff?

0 1 2 3 4 5

24. Do you feel you have the ability to provide constructive instructional feedback to special education staff?

0 1 2 3 4 5

25. Do you feel you have the ability to provide constructive instructional feedback to support service personnel?

0 1 2 3 4 5

26. Do you feel you have the ability to provide mentoring to general education staff?

0 1 2 3 4 5

27. Do you feel you have the ability to provide mentoring to special education staff?

0 1 2 3 4 5

28. Do you feel you have the ability to provide mentoring to support service personnel?

0 1 2 3 4 5

29. Do you feel you have the ability to foster collegial relationships between special and general education personnel?

0 1 2 3 4 5

30. Do you feel you have the ability to understand the challenges parents of children with disabilities frequently encounter?

0 1 2 3 4 5

31. Do you feel you have the ability to make recommendations regarding the challenges parents of children with disabilities frequently encounter?

0 1 2 3 4 5

32. Do you feel you have the ability to understand legal issues related to special education?

0 1 2 3 4 5

33. Do you feel you have the ability to make recommendations regarding legal issues related to special education?

0 1 2 3 4 5

34. Do you feel you have the ability to develop inclusionary practices in schools?

0 1 2 3 4 5

35. Do you feel you have the ability to implement inclusionary practices in schools?

0 1 2 3 4 5

36. Do you feel you have the ability to assess whether an IEP is compliant based on federal and state regulations?

0 1 2 3 4 5

37. Do you feel you have the ability to understand characteristics of a student with a specific disability?

0 1 2 3 4 5

38. Do you feel you have the ability to provide programming recommendations for a student with a specific disability?

0 1 2 3 4 5

39. Do you feel you have the ability to assess Behavior Intervention Plans for students with disabilities?

Emergent Proficient Exemplary

0 1 2 3 4 5

40. Do you feel you have the ability to implement Behavior Intervention Plans for students with disabilities?

0 1 2 3 4 5

41. Do you feel you have the ability to assess whether a goal is a measurable goal for an Individual Education Program?

0 1 2 3 4 5

42. Do you feel you have the ability to assist in the writing of a measurable goal for an Individual Education Program?

0 1 2 3 4 5

43. Do you feel you have the ability to provide knowledge about research-based instruction/interventions?

0 1 2 3 4 5

44. Do you feel you have the ability to provide knowledge about tiered intervention approaches?

0 1 2 3 4 5

45. Do you feel you have the ability to provide knowledge about curriculum-based measurement/evaluation?

0 1 2 3 4 5

46. Do you feel you have the ability to provide knowledge about data-driven decision-making?

0 1 2 3 4 5

47. Do you feel you have the ability to provide knowledge about progress monitoring?

0 1 2 3 4 5

48. Do you feel you have the ability to provide knowledge about the role of RTI in special education eligibility decisions?

0 1 2 3 4 5

49. Do you feel you have the ability to hire staff who have high expectations for all students?

0 1 2 3 4 5

50. Do you feel you have the ability to hire staff who have knowledge about IDEA and Article 7?

0 1 2 3 4 5

51. Do you feel you have the ability to hire staff who accept students with all types of disabilities?

0 1 2 3 4 5

52. Do you feel you have the ability to hire staff who are familiar with current instructional strategies?

0 1 2 3 4 5

53. Do you feel you have the ability to create outreach programs to the community regarding students with disabilities?

0 1 2 3 4 5

54. Do you feel you have the ability to discipline students with disabilities in compliance with IDEA and Article 7?

0 1 2 3 4 5

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APPENDIX C

Challenges to the Availability of Principals Prepared to Support Students with Disabilities and Other Diverse Needs

Preparation/Ongoing Learning	School Climate/Culture	Miscellaneous Influences	Recruitment/ Retention
A. The lack of ongoing professional development (pre and inservice) including internship, mentoring, networking opportunities, leadership academies, etc. to improve principal ability to serve diverse populations.	A. The need to build a school climate of distributive leadership with staff already stretched thin.	A. Principals often must take on many roles beyond principalship and therefore have low expectations (i.e., leaves principals scattered, not able to work in depth).	A. Working conditions make it difficult to recruit and retain high quality principals who have the ability to serve diverse students.
B. The lack of knowledge about current trends in special education (e.g., court findings are shifting and school practices need to keep up; how to create climate of academic excellence for all (Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, Response to Intervention, etc).	B. The tension between teaching all students and completing the curriculum in a timely manner (tension between equity and excellence —often marginalizes people, including students from diverse populations).	B. The lack of comfortable working conditions. (i.e., demanding work; responsibility for too many students; and too few staff members to share workload).	B. Principals retiring and leaving before retirement (i.e., the need for high-quality replacements [those who are prepared to serve students from diverse populations] for about 60% within 15 years).

Preparation/Ongoing Learning	School Climate/Culture	Miscellaneous Influences	Recruitment/ Retention
C. The lack of training/skills in how to 'lead from the middle' (i.e., lead teachers and work with the district's central office based on district staff expectations of the principal).	C. The mindset of distinct separation of groups of students, teachers and parents. In order to do the best job, teachers need a sense of belonging.	C. The lack of support from district office. (district policies, actions and beliefs might not reflect inclusivity).	C. Principalship is viewed as a risky move for a teacher (i.e., not as desired of a position as in the past).
D. The lack of targeted principal preparation through an induction program, including core components of leadership (i.e., what is needed in preparation to prepare principals to serve diverse populations, in internships, in induction? There exists a lack of opportunity for interns to learn from principals who are good leaders and are familiar with the context of working in a school system.)	D. Ensuring equity for students from diverse populations (e.g., resources, access, quality of education).	D. A lack of school building autonomy (e.g., for hiring staff, using budget, determining programs needed at their school, etc.) leads to less supports for students from diverse populations.	D. A lack of support programs for identifying and preparing teachers to be leaders who are sensitive and aware of the needs of diverse student populations.

Preparation/Ongoing Learning	School Climate/Culture	Miscellaneous Influences	Recruitment/ Retention
E. A lack of sensitivity to issues that diverse populations encounter in education.	E. A need for principals to focus on designing their vision for students from diverse populations and then determine what structures that vary by context (e.g., scheduling, co-teaching, collaboration, response to intervention, instructional support teams, teacher learning centers) need to be in place.	E. A lack of ability to analyze data for decision-making.	
F. The lack of ability to teach principals (pre- and in-service) how to build an effective school climate to support all students.		F. The need to increase consistent data transfer for students with disabilities and other diverse needs who move between schools, districts and states.	
G. The lack of alignment among principal evaluation, principal training and principal standards (including state standards) and the vast amount of knowledge needed to be prepared to serve students with diverse needs.		G. The practice of assigning the least prepared/experienced principals to the most difficult buildings (e.g., often schools with a diverse student population).	

Preparation/Ongoing Learning	School Climate/Culture	Miscellaneous Influences	Recruitment/ Retention
H. A need for more specificity in ISLLC standards on legal issues for diverse populations and how to work with a central office.		H. The scope of principal evaluation is not consistent and typically lacks parent perspective and an examination of how the principal addresses the needs of all students.	

Source: Burdette, P. Project Forum at National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), 2010.